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Editorial

The greater part of this Issue is devoted to a special tribute to Ruth First. The rest of this Number considers questions which have been constant concerns of this Review. Mamdani's discussion of Karamoja continues the analysis of the causes of famine begun in ROAPE 1 and continued in the double issue, Roots of Famine (ROAPE 15/16). What is common to all of these analyses is the view that the roots of famine are not to be found in 'nature', but in the incorporation of the rural areas under discussion into the wider system of capitalism.

Another kind of external intervention, that of merchant capital, is the subject of Zack Williams' contribution. His concern is to support Kay's theoretical work on the relationship between merchant capital and underdevelopment by presenting a case study of the activities of the colonial trading and mining companies in Sierra Leone. Very different types of economic activity are lumped together as the abstract concept of 'merchant capital', but a significant mutation is beginning to take place as trading companies enter the sphere of manufacturing production. Whether this creates a fully proletarianised labour force, will we hope be the subject of future contributions to this Review.

Two very different post-colonial experiences, but both with important international consequences are documented in the Briefings section of this number. Egero's account of the 'Political and Organisational Offensive' in Mozambique should have appeared in ROAPE 24 but had to be held over for reasons of space. It suggests that in the struggle between 'the main conflicting trends in Mozambique today', the forces pushing for 'the essential principle of popular participation' are gaining ground over those supporting 'the creation of a state-controlled planned economy' requiring 'strict management control and good workers' discipline' — matters being taken up at FRELIMO's Fourth Congress as we go to press. But if the contrary view, expressed by Meyns' in ROAPE 22, that it is the Party which wages the Offensive from above, is to be rejected, much more evidence of grass roots activity by participants at that level needs to be gathered.

The post-colonial experience of Chad presents a rather different picture. With a 17-year-long civil war brought to an end, at least for the time being, Chadians can only now begin to consider the problems of national reconstruction, though the nature of the victorious regime would seem to preclude the kind of debate now taking place in Mozambique. In this number Joffe updates his account (ROAPE 21) of the civil war in Chad, of the Libyan and French involvement and
of the wider internationalisation of the conflict, with increasing US military aid arriving via the Sudan to support the now victorious Hissan Habre. This account highlights the way in which national and regional conflicts can quickly become internationalised, in particular because of the US government’s paranoid analysis of all events in the Third World in terms of potential or actual East-West conflicts of interest. Thus Libya’s attempts to annex Chad were seen as proxy interventions by the USSR, even though the latter was known to be against these moves by Qaddafi. They were therefore an excuse for more direct US involvement in the region. Similarly in southern Africa, where the US and South Africa are able to point to the presence of Cuban troops in Angola as a direct example of the spread of Soviet influence and control, and of course as a ready excuse for perpetuating the South African occupation of Namibia.

In a third Briefing, Dafe Otobo returns to the subject of Nigeria’s General Strike of May 1981, his account of which we published in ROAPE 22. His follow-up details the disputes among different parts of the ‘political class’, businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats, around the level of the new minimum wage, around the question of trades union organisation and labour legislation in general, and around the fringe benefits and salary increases for the middle and higher echelons of public service. All these issues were important enough to cause a general strike, but they only express the surface of the political and economic crisis that affects Nigeria. The second part of Otobo’s Briefing surveys the financial crisis of Federal and State governments, an accumulating debt crisis resulting from extensive borrowing against future high oil prices and a subsequent sharp drop in those prices when repayments fall due.

Finally we continue the debate on the character of Ethiopian ‘socialism’, a debate begun in these pages by Markakis (ROAPE 21), in the form of two reviews, one by Markakis himself, of Halliday and Molyneux’s study of the Ethiopian revolution. That a revolution has taken place in Ethiopia was never in doubt, but what kind of revolution and in which direction it is moving is highly debateable. Halliday and Molyneux’s answer and that of our reviewers will, we hope, provoke a continuing debate in these pages.

The world recession’s acceleration of, arguably, internally generated economic crises in Africa suggests a parallel sharpening of political repression. Whether Nigeria’s expulsion of its ‘foreign’ minorities is a sign of worse to come is open to debate, but across the continent in Kenya political repression is dominating daily life. We reproduce a selection of documents on these Kenyan events. Later, in 1984, we also hope to organise a conference on the effects upon African economies of the world recession and the possibilities which may lie open to them to find their own way out.

Robin Cohen, Peter Lawrence
A Tribute to Ruth First

We have already carried a short obituary to Ruth in ROAPE 23. The purpose of this tribute is to help in the task of constructing a memorial worthy of her life's work. Members of the Review will be associated with the setting up of the Ruth First Memorial Trust (see announcement on later page), while one of our Editors, Gavin Williams, is immersed in writing a biographical sketch under the title 'Ruth First — A Socialist and A Scholar'. The bibliography prepared in conjunction with this account of her life appears later in this tribute, and the Review expects to be associated with the publication of Gavin's account. We would like to urge our readers to make a contribution to the Trust according to their means. There is a good prospect that one or two large contributors will be more generous if we can show the strength of our collective support for the aims of the Trust.

In this tribute we have tried to indicate some of the variety of Ruth's work, but it is undoubtedly the case that some of her best writing was on the question of migrant labour in South Africa. 'The Gold of Migrant Labour', published in Africa South in Exile in 1961, shows her characteristic strengths. Meticulous attention to detail, drawing on facts supplied by 'the other side', and a kind of controlled, but barely suppressed, passion on behalf of the subjects of her study. As Ruth comments in the article, 'Chasing down figures of African mine wages is like pursuing dandelions through thick mist'. Yet the Chamber of Mines who 'sheltered behind generalities and averages' were never tracked by a more determined huntress or one with a clearer vision.

Another piece we carry is entitled 'Eritrea and the Right to Self-Determination'. Ruth was the Vice-President of the Permanent People's Tribunal of the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples which convened a Session on Eritrea in Milan on 24-26 May 1980. She was one of the nine jurors who heard 15 reports and 18 'testimonies' from Eritreans. Ruth associated herself with the findings and publically presented the report. The crucial finding was that, 'The Eritrean people do not constitute a national minority within a state. They have the characteristics of a people according to the law of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples'. Though many would find this judgment uncontroversial, it was contrary to the official
policy of the African National Congress which held to the current Soviet and Ethiopian position that Eritrea was an integral part of Ethiopia. While Ruth remained loyal to the ANC all her life, it was typical of her force of personality that she was prepared to hold a dissenting opinion when convinced of its correctness.

The tribute also includes two pieces that reflect her Mozambican period. The first titled ‘Strategies of Social Research in Mozambique’ was collectively drafted by Ruth and her colleagues at the Centre of African Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University. The article captures both the dilemmas and excitement of conducting applied research in a state committed to socialism. How is a research problem chosen? How is a unity of theory and practice achieved? How can the results of research confer immediate or long-term benefits to the workers and peasants of Mozambique? The second selection from her Mozambican period consists of three extracts from Black Gold, the posthumous book which Ruth assembled, edited and largely wrote. It is a culmination of her numerous previous works on migrant labour and a practical demonstration of the unity of theory and practice which informed the work of the Centro de Estudos Africanos in Mozambique. With the kind permission of the publishers, we have reproduced here a fragment of this detailed, informed and politically committed study. The extract contains the principal objectives of the study which was conducted ‘... to assist in the elaboration of a socialist alternative to a system of labour-use which grossly exploited the working class and which disfigured agricultural production in the southern regions of the country’. Over 1,000 miners or their families were interviewed; much of the richness of the book emerging in the poignancy of the interviews that were collected and the songs that were transcribed and interpreted. We include one song and one interview schedule as examples of the material to be found in the book.

The remaining items in this tribute comprise the bibliography previously referred to, and finally, Ronald Segal’s address at the memorial meeting held in London on 8 September 1982. Of the number of addresses that were given to a packed meeting at the Hampstead Town Hall, we felt it most appropriate to reprint this speech by one of Ruth’s closest friends and colleagues.
The Gold of Migrant Labour

Ruth First*

The days when each country in Africa was an island are over, and few know this better than South Africa’s vast and wealthy gold mining industry.

Migrant labour for the Union’s mines — long the fly-wheel of Union ‘Native policy’ — is today being drawn not only from the Union, but from nine countries in Southern and Central Africa, reaching as far north as Tanganyika.

The Witwatersrand has become the capital of an economic empire which is influenced by events and policy not only in Cape Town, Pretoria and Windhoek, but also in Maseru and Lobatsi, Luanda and Lisbon, Salisbury, Blantyre and Lusaka.

Of a labour force of 432,234 African workers recruited in 1959 by the Chamber of Mines, only 182,561 came from the Union. Fifty-eight per cent (a total of 249,673 men) came from territories over which the Union has no direct political control.

Of the Africans employed during 1959 only 35.2 per cent, or roughly one in three, came from the Union; and 64.8 per cent of the African labour force came from other countries in Africa.

In 1958, 19 per cent, or one man in five working on the gold mines, came from Africa’s tropical areas (Angola, Northern Bechuanaland, Nyasaland, Tanganyika); and it is of key significance that the proportion of miners drawn from the heart of Central Africa has risen sharply year by year.

In 1941, the first year that the annual reports of the Chamber of Mines list TROPICAL AREAS as a separate source of labour, only 26,067 workers came from these areas. By 1959 the figure was near 70,000, and it probably rose another 10,000 in 1960. By agreement between the Chamber of Mines and the Nyasaland Government, from Nyasaland alone there was a target of 20,000 to be recruited for the mines last year.

The preoccupation of South African politicians with the white man’s ‘civilising mission’ in Africa is thus really the need for a common ‘Native policy’ as far north as possible, and arises from the ever closer identity of interest in matters of labour supply and control between the Union, Portuguese colonies in Africa,

*First published in Africa South in Exile Vo.5, No.3, April-June 1961 pp.7-31. Reprinted here by permission of the editor.
and the Central African Federation. The future of Federation; an African majority in the Nyasaland Legislative Council; Nyerere leadership of a Tanganyika approaching self-rule: these are all matters of vital interest to the mining houses dominating Hollard Street and the lower ends of Commissioner and Main Streets in Johannesburg.

Ominous indeed to the mining empire are the giant strikes towards independence and African self-rule being taken by East and Central African countries; and the powerful moves towards Pan-African unity and solidarity with the non-white people of South Africa. For the mines are about to see gains, earnestly striven for since the end of World War II, snatched from their grasp by events in Africa during the next handful of years.

Evan before the Boer War at the turn of the century, the mines tried to extend their labour recruiting areas to West Africa, to India, Italy and Armenia, even to the West Indies, and the chronic labour shortage of this period resulted in the ill-fated scheme for the importation of Chinese labour.

Successive governments and commissions grappled with the ever-present shortage of cheap labour. A 1929 Inter-Departmental report said there was "insufficient Native labour in the Union", and the 1931 Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) report hoped that the government would "move in permitting Native labour for the mines to be drawn from fields further afield than the present limit".

In 1951 the mines estimated they were short of 70,000 workers, and in 1953 were 15 per cent below their labour capacity. The shortage began almost immediately after the Second World War, but was aggravated by the development of the new Free State mines, the fillip given to existing mines by uranium and the expansion of secondary industry in the Union.

As recently as 1953 the Chairman of Anglo-American, the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, issued a warning for the future of the producing mines if the African labour shortage was not overcome.

Only during the middle '50s has the labour supply at last been found to be adequate. In 1955 the Colonial Secretary of Mauritius enquired whether WNLA was still interested in a supply of Native labour from the island. That official was advised that "as the Native labour position of the mines has changed, no further action was intended by the Association for the time being".

It was with the establishment — its headquarters in Salisbury — of the Tropical Areas Administration of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the labour organisation of the Chamber of Mines, that the picture started to change.

Over the last 21 years the mines have been in an extensive, and, on the whole, unpublicised, venture into the interior of Southern and Central Africa. Africa has been opened up anew by 200 labour engagement stations. Top security labour treaties with other States have been concluded. International Labour Organisation Covenants on migratory and forced labour have been carefully studied and recruiting practices adapted to skirt round international labour control provisions.

By 1952 the General Manager of the WNLA Tropical Areas Administration
could write that there was an ever-growing reservoir of African labour for the mines and that:

the total population of the countries north of latitude 22 degrees south, excluding territories north of Angola and Tanganyika, is now more than 20 million, of whom about one-fifth are male adults physically fit for work (Optima 1952).

An inviting picture — for the labour recruiter — of the new Africa; but even in this article on the triumphant outcome of the scramble for labour in Africa, the note of panic sounds:

As the Natives become more conscious of the advantages of wage-earning there must be far more than enough surplus labour to supply the needs of the gold mines, provided — and this is an essential provision (my italics) — that no government or administrative restrictions are placed on the free choice by the Native of the employment he desires, in other words, provided he be allowed the elementary right of selling his labour in the best market available to him.

For, even as the labour appetite of the mines at last seems sated, three continent-wide pressures are starting to undo the years of careful negotiation and planning by the labour recruiting organisations of the Chamber of Mines. Colonial governments are giving place to African governments by no means willing to inherit the labour agreements concluded with other countries and agencies under the old order. African independence must at last get to grips with the problem of poverty and economic under-development; and, inevitably, the system of migrant labour must come under fire. Thirdly, the continent-wide antagonism to South Africa's apartheid rule is speeding up the boycott movement against the Union, and already items on the boycott list in East and Central Africa will include not only canned goods and mining equipment, hoes, sherries and shark fins, but African labour.

Johannesburg's Hollard Street Stock Exchange could not have liked the sound of the 1st All-African Peoples Conference resolution which, in December 1958, called on the Rhodesias and Nyasaland to withhold their labour from the South African mines and to divert such labour to the development of their own countries, both as part of the economic boycott of South Africa and as an essential measure to put a stop to the disruption of family life in Central Africa. If the mines hoped that the resolution would remain pious, they must have reacted sharply to the Tanganyika government announcement in October 1960 that it would end the agreement signed in 1959 by the British colonial government and WNLA, under which government facilities are used for the recruitment of African labour for the South African mines. The agreement ended this March, just when the Tanganyika labour quota was due to reach the record figure of 12,000.

For too long in South Africa, ‘Native policy’ has been based on the maxim that what is good for the gold mines must be good for South Africa as a whole.

The glossy publications that specialise in idyllic pictures of the mining industry boast that employment on the Witwatersrand gold mines is 'one of the greatest civilising factory' in the whole field of African labour. The gold mines have established themselves as a magnet that attracts for employment Africans from Central Africa 'because the system of migratory labour is particularly suitable for them'. Here they learn the habits of regular work, of cleanliness, first aid and hygiene — to glean a few phrases from the Chamber of Mines
glossies. Here ‘mining employment cushions the impact of Western industrial society upon the tribesmen brought into contact with the white man’s way of life’. (Gold — Chamber of Mines PRD Services No.66).

The mines have always possessed the marvellous facility for believing that their own self-interest coincides with the general good. For 74 years they have posed as South Africa’s fairy godmothers. Men were trained to be recruited for the mines so that the ‘civilising habit of labour’ could be inculcated in them. (Profits were a factor too, of course, but not advertised as such in pubic).

It has been said that the wealth of the Reef gold mines lies not in the richness of the strike but in the lost costs of production, kept down by the abundance of cheap labour. The Transvaal mines have been the world’s richest source of gold (61.9 per cent of the world’s supply); but to make the mines pay, enormous quantities of ore have had to be processed. There have been few limits to the amount of gold mined from even low grade ore, as long as a continuous stream of cheap labour could be kept flowing. So, from the start, the mines have had to find not only abundant supplies of labour, but labour that we cheap. These two rather incompatible aims were achieved in two main ways. The first was to use only contracted migrant labour at cut-throat wages, on the assumption that African mineworkers — brought from their rural homes to the Reef for stipulated contract periods — were really peasants, able to subsidise mine wages from the land. The second was to achieve a labour recruiting monopoly and to reduce costs of wages, food and quarters by setting up a highly centralised system for controlling wages. These methods have been preserved intact to this day.

In 1889, only three years after the discovery of uniform banket deposits with cheap coal nearby, the Witwatersrand — later the Transvaal — Chamber of Mines was formed. By 1896 the Chamber had got the mines to conclude an agreement on minimum and maximum pay, hours and rations, and to secure labour recruiting privileges in Portuguese East Africa. A Native Labour Supply Association was early at work trying to recruit and propagandise the mines among the Chiefs. The labour supply rose from 14,000 in 1866 to 97,800 in 1899, workers coming from the Union, but large numbers also from Portuguese East Africa. Yet the demand for labour was never satisfied, due chiefly to the bad conditions, wage reductions (from 1890 to 1898), and recruiting abuses. The 1890s saw attempts to induce Transvaal Africans to work for wages — increased taxes, among them a special labour tax, laws against squatting, and persistent approaches by the Chamber of Mines to the Transvaal Volksraad for the tightening up of the pass laws.

The Boer War in 1899 brought a stop to most Reef mining, and 96,000 Africans on the mines dispersed to their homes. From 1901 mining slowly restarted; but labour returned very slowly, and by 1904 only some 70,000 men were back at work. The Transvaal Labour Commission estimated the labour shortage at over 300,000 and concluded that not only South Africa but even Africa did not contain enough labour!

Except for those from the Transvaal, Union Africans were comparative latecomers to the mines, and only after Union in 1910 was an African labour force on any appreciable scale recruited from the Cape, the Free State and Natal. Year by year, as land congestion in the Reserves got worse and soil
deteriorated, Africans were forced to go into ‘white’ labour areas to make up the deficit between their needs and crop production.

Throughout the years of the greatest labour shortage the mines continued to take steps to get labour as quickly and cheaply as possible, but without altering their system. Vast dividends were being paid in those early years, in some vases at 100 per cent; but though the WNLA came under fire from some quarters for its recruiting abuses, its labour monopoly, its wage policy and compound conditions, rather than put its own house in order and raise wages to attract a more established force, it started even then to cast its eyes beyond the Union’s borders, convinced — like Rhodes — that its labour hinterland lay northwards.

Despite Lord Milner’s efforts, the British government refused the WNLA permission to recruit in Kenya and Uganda. An experiment in 1903 — to bring 1,000 Nyasas to the Reef after a drought — failed. Some Damara labour was brought in from German South West Africa. It was even suggested that American or West Indian labour be imported; but when it was pointed out that the former would demand better conditions and might even ‘play some political part in holding that the Blacks are the equal of Whites’ (John Reeves: ‘Chinese Labour in South Africa 1901-1910’ — Thesis), this plan was hastily dropped. Feelers were thrown out to Madagascar, Somaliland and the Congo, but no labour was forthcoming. The years 1904 to 1910 were those of the Chinese experiment that misfired.

Only Portuguese East Africa saved these early years for the mines. The earliest WNLA records show that in January 1903, 88.9 per cent of the African miners were East Coasters. By 1922 the East Coasters had dropped to 40 per cent, and by 1958 to 26 per cent of the labour force; but — though the percentage of East Coasters has dropped as the mines have found other steady sources of labour — year after year since the last century the Portuguese recruits have flowed underground to reap the gold of the Reef.

A close brotherhood between the Union and Mozambique governments has been sealed by generations of migrant labour, who have supplied the backbone of the mining industry. Early Chamber attempts to centralise recruiting of workers and obtain a labour monopoly were not as successful in the Union as over the border in Mozambique where — Professor Duffy records in his Portuguese Africa — “according to the report of the Rand Native Labour Association, the services of every Labour Agent in Portuguese territory whose opposition was of any moment, was secured at a cost which did not materially affect the price of natives landed in these fields”. From 1904 the mines drew anything from 60,000 to 115,000 Africans from Mozambique annually, with the peak being reached in 1928-9.

1928 was the year of the Mozambique Convention which followed on the pre- and post-Boer War labour arrangements and the 1909 Convention between the Transvaal Republican and Portuguese East Africa governments. The 1928 Convention has been revised and ratified in 1934, 1936, 1940 and 1952. It records the sordid deal between the two governments of the Union and Mozambique by which — in exchange for the sole right of the Chamber of Mines to recruit an annual contingent of contract workers — the South African government guarantees that 47.5 per cent of seaborne import traffic to the Reef will go through Lourenço Marques harbour.
Part One of the Convention fixes the maximum number of Mozambique Africans to be recruited, and the guaranteed minimum. It lays down recruiting and working conditions, provides for the payment to the Portuguese government of registration, engagement and monthly fees for each recruit, and regularises the deferred pay system and the compulsory repatriation of recruits at the end of their contract periods.

Part Two of the Convention deals with railway traffic and rates, and Part Three with customs matters.

In 1940, in an extension of this barter of humans for port traffic, the South African government agreed to export 340,000 cases of citrus each year through Lourenço Marques, while the maximum number of recruits was raised from 90,000 to 100,000. The present maximum quota is still 100,000 recruits.

From Portuguese East Africa the mines get a contingent of labour that could not be bettered for regularity, that can be shunted to the worst and most unpopular mines, that remains on the mines for longer contract periods than any other group of workers. In return, Lourenço Marques has found a place on the map as an important port. Mozambique itself gets steady revenue from contract, passport and recruiting fees (44s p.a. for each African recruited); operates tax collecting posts on the mines; and has benefited from wages earned on the mines but spent as deferred pay in the territory.

The East Coaster signs on for a minimum work period of 12 months or 313 shifts. At the end of this contract, he may renew it for a further six months. After that he must be repatriated, but may sign on again as a recruit after six months have elapsed. On the average the East Coaster signs on for five to six contracts. After 10 or 12 years his working life as a miner is over.

The Chamber of Mines and the Union government deny with horror any suggestion that there is compulsion in labour recruiting for the mines. Workers are not recruits, but volunteers, they insist.

Marvin Harris (in 'A First Hand report on Labour and Education in Mozambique', published by the American Committee on Africa) describes how, caught in the vice of the Mozambique labour code which permits no African to be 'idle', the African escapes to the mine recruiter in order to evade conscription as a shibalo or forced worker. When the hunt for shibalos is on in a particular district, the WNLA recruiting post is deluged by Africans anxious to sign on for the mines.

It is said that the days are now over when labour agents beat the bush for recruits, and chiefs were coerced or bribed to deliver a quota of young men to the mines. Lord Hailey, however, quoted by the 1953 International Labour Organisation Report on Forced Labour, says cautiously:

Though of course the Union cannot be held directly responsible for the fact, it is generally believed that recruitment in Portuguese areas has involved some element of compulsion, though its exact degree is not easy to determine.

The Portuguese Authorities net the fish, while the mines just take delivery.

Apart from the annual labour quota from southern Mozambique, more and more Africans from the north of the territory, or Portuguese Niassa, have been coming to work on the mines since the opening of the rich Free State gold
fields. Mozambique between latitude 22° south and the Zambesi River is outside the recruiting sphere of the WNLA, and officially the Portuguese Authorities do not encourage a labour exodus from this area. Yet it is estimated that 12,000 men make their way to the mines from Portuguese Niassa each year. If the WNLA has no offices in this territory, other recruiting organisations manifestly have. Or the recruit crosses over the border into Nyasaland and signs on at an engagement station there.

A Portuguese worker not signed on by the WNLA under the Mozambique Convention is a prohibited immigrant in the Union and liable to criminal prosecution and deportation. But once he travels south — whether he makes his own way, or his transport is arranged by a labour recruiting organisation — he will be issued with a Portuguese passport at the Ressano Garcia depot of the WNLA, and will fall under the authority of the Portuguese Labour Curator stationed in the Union.

The Protectorates
Whatever their formal constitutional status — and in recent years Basutoland in particular has been striding towards independence — the three British Protectorates in Southern Africa, by virtue of their heavy labour exports each year, remain in large measure economic dependencies of the Union.

The 1953 Report on Basutoland, issued by the Commonwealth Relations Office, confesses that:

apart from employment in the government service, or at trading stores, printing works of the Paris Evangelical Mission and Roman Catholic Church, there is little work to be found in the territory. It is therefore necessary for the Basuto to leave the territory to work in the Union of South Africa.

It is estimated that about 43 per cent of the adult male population is temporarily absent from Basutoland at any one time. This is labour not only on the gold mines, but recruited for work on coal, diamond and manganese mines and on farms. Recruited Basuto mine labour has jumped from the figure of 55,066 in 1957 to 65,249 in 1958 and 71,694 in 1959. (The Native Recruiting Corporation of the Chamber of Mines has head offices in Maseru and branch offices throughout the territory which have labour contracts attested by government officials. The Agent of the High Commission Territories who deals with Protectorate labour now has offices in the new Free State goldfields).

In deferred pay and remittances, the labour agencies paid out £685,000 in Basutoland during 1958. In the same year the recruiting agencies paid £60,000 to the government for tax due by recruits and recoverable from them in instalments, as well as some £20,000 in attestation fees.

From Bechuanaland the Native Recruiting Corporation and the WNLA recruited 19,306 men to work on the mines in 1959. In 1948 the figure was only 9,821. On departure from Bechuanaland, the labourer is debited by the recruiting agency with a sum of £2 for Native Tax and £1 a year for Graded Tax. The total of £3 is paid to the government forthwith and recovered later in instalments from the labourer’s earnings. In this way the government is assured of an annual tax revenue from mine labour of some £55,000.

Swaziland is the smallest but also the wealthiest of the three Protectorates. This country’s peak figure for mine labour was 9,175 in 1959.
Like the recruits from Mozambique, Protectorate labour has been flowing steadily into the mines for most of this century. Together these three Protectorates, on which successive South African governments have cast such greedy eyes, provide one in five of the men who dig out South Africa's gold.

South West Africa

In 1943 the WNLA had discussions with the South West African authorities "for the engagement of surplus natives in SWA". Two years later an agreement had been signed for the recruitment of men, labour rest camps had been built at Runtu and Mohembo, and a new road cut from Grootfontein to the Bechuanaland border. By 1947 the annual SWA recruiting quota had been fixed at 3,000, and no more recent figures are available. The WNLA does not publish separate figures for SWA labour recruited (here following in the footsteps of the Union government, which has illegally annexed South West into the Union, treating it as a fifth province). Today's figure is no doubt higher than the 1947 quota; while, in addition, Africans from the north are making their way through the Okavango Native Territory and are being recruited at Mohembo in Bechuanaland.

During the 1960 South African parliamentary session, the Minister of Mines was asked how many Africans from SWA were employed on the gold mines. He blandly replied: "No organised recruiting is being undertaken in South West Africa, and the information is therefore not available". Even the reports of the WNLA, scanty and secretive as they are, do not bear out this statement.

Tropical Africa

The careful statistics of the gold mining industry conceal as much as they tell. The WNLA's 1959 territorial analysis of Africans employed on the mines that 19.76 per cent were drawn from the tropical areas of Central Africa, and the figure probably reached the all-time record of 80,000 during 1960. Nowhere, however, do the WNLA reports stipulate which these tropical areas are. Even when asked, the Chamber of Mines was not prepared to supply a breakdown of the figures.

The number of Tropical Africans recruited is regulated by the WNLA and the governments concerned; but again the WNLA will not release details of the labour agreements or the quotas fixed for Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Northern Bechuanaland. The agreements are confidential, a Chamber official told the writer, "because they involve foreign governments".

It does emerge, however, that it was after a 1938 conference with the Governors of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland that the WNLA was given recruiting facilities in these territories. In that year the number of Tropical Africans brought to the gold mines was only 15,405.

Once the WNLA could promote its own recruiting bodies within these countries there was no limit to its scale of expansion.

1,300 miles of special WNLA roads have been cut into Bechuanaland; motor barges ply the Zambesi and the rivers of Barotseland. The Eastern Caprivi strip—running from South West Africa to Northern Rhodesia and dividing
Bechuanaland from Angola — is preserved as a game reserve, but the WNLA obtained permission from the Union government to cut a private WNLA road through the strip, on which no transport is allowed other than WNLA vehicles on WNLA permits.

In Nyasaland a network of labour recruiting stations and sub-stations has been established at Dowa, Mlangeni, Dedza, Salima, Fort Manning and Mzimba. Extensive airlifting of recruits is now undertaken, and WNLA operates its own fleet of planes.

Nyasaland has for many years contributed substantially to the labour force of the Union and Rhodesia, but the WNLA is the only Union agency permitted to recruit men for work in South Africa. Unless they are contract workers on the mines — or the farms to which 'illegal' immigrants are sent — Nyasas and, indeed, all non-Union Africans are prohibited entrants to the Union and if arrested are liable to imprisonment and deportation.

During 1957 WNLA was allowed a quota of 16,000 Nyasa recruits (more than double the quota of 3 years earlier); by 1959, it had recruited 19,985 men and had had the 1960 quota fixed at 20,000.

In Northern Rhodesia, Barotseland is the most fertile labour recruiting region for the mines. During 1958 the WNLA recruited 5,125 Africans from Northern Rhodesia.

Some labour also comes from Angola, but no figures are available.

Whereas the earliest Rand experiments with Tropical workers had to be discontinued because of the disastrously high mortality rate, WNLA was able by July 1953 — a year of happy coincidence, for from this time the Free State developed rapidly and needed to suck in great quantities of labour — reduce the acclimatisation period for Tropical new recruits from 26 days to eight.

An analysis of labour supply trends over several decades shows that from 1930 to the present day the Transvaal recruiting figures have remained remarkably constant in the 20,000 to 30,000 region; the Cape Reserves — at 133,359 men recruited in 1959 — is back to the good years of 1936 and 1939, but not yet at the peak years of 1940 and 1941; the Mozambique quota, controlled by Convention, is the most constant of all; and the increased flow of labour needed since the opening of the Free State mines has come from the Protectorates and the Tropical Areas.

The opening up of Africa by the Chamber of Mines has not been without its problems. Evidence by the Gold Producers' Committee to the 1947 Native Laws Commission of Enquiry recorded the plaint of the Chamber of Mines that:

"In the four most important areas — Angola, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa north of latitude 22º south — the WNLA is not permitted to open stations or do anything to encourage the Natives to come out for engagement".

Somehow or another, between 1947 and 1957, the WNLA managed to circumvent these difficulties. Some labour, like that from Portuguese Niassa mentioned earlier, filters south to be signed on at recognised engagement stations. Angola is a closed book — unless one has access to the Chamber's working records.
Even in Tanganyika, where labour legislation is based on International Labour Organisation Conventions and Recommendations, and not only recruitment but event defined wages are illegal, the Chamber managed to conclude an agreement with the Tanganyika government for the opening of the Tukuya depot on 1 April 1959. The labour quota for this country was fixed at 11,000 for 1960 and raised to 12,000 for 1961, but the flow is to be abruptly cut off by Nyerere’s Tanganyika African National Union, in response to the Accra Conference call to stop the supply of labour to South Africa.

Explaining the opening of the Tukuyu depot, the WNLA claimed that here “Africans offer themselves for work and are not recruited”. In Tanganyika particularly, but also in general, the WNLA is these days making great play of this distinction between recruiting and engagement’. This is because the mines — and the South African government — are acutely aware of the international conventions on recruiting migrant labour. Though South Africa has for years flaunted international labour standards with no discernable conscience, it is important to make a pretence of falling in line.

South Africa’s labour record is in reality one of the worst in the world.

Of 111 International Labour Conventions passed since 1917 (and South Africa is one of the oldest members of the ILO) South Africa has ratified only 11. These relate principally to night work and underground work by women, accident compensation and wage fixing machinery. South Africa has NOT ratified Convention 29 of 1930 on forced labour; its successor, Convention 50 of 1937; the Convention (No.97) of 1949; and the Recommendations of 1949 and 1955 for the Protection of Migrant Workers.

Ironically, even South Africa’s partner in labour crimes in Africa, Portugal, no longer finds it politic to fly in the face of the Labour Conventions. In 1959 Luanda, chief town of Angola, played host to a meeting of the ILO Advisory Committee which was attended by nine African States, and Portugal chose this conference publicly to ratify the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention — though this formal recognition of its principles has made little difference to Angola’s ugly labour practices. South Africa boycotted the conference altogether.

The Conventions and Recommendations on forced and migrant labour should be read together. The first attempt to stop forced labour was in 1930. South Africa can clearly not go on record against the use of forced and compulsory labour because — migrant labour apart — both the pass law system and the use of convict labour by railways, mines, farms and other private employers, are blatant contraventions of the Forced Labour Convention, and condemned as such by the 1953 ILO Report on Forced Labour.

The definition of recruiting in Convention 50 of 1936 covers “all operations undertaken with the object of obtaining or supplying the labour of persons who do not spontaneously offer their services at the place of employment, or at a public emigration or employment office, or at an office conducted by the employer’s organisation . . .” Article 10 specifically prohibits chiefs from acting as recruiting agents. Labour from Portuguese East Africa clearly flouts this provision as, in all probability, does labour from areas like South West Africa.

It must remain a fine point whether men ‘spontaneously offer’ their services or are recruited in many areas traditionally reservoirs for mine labour.
Bush-beating by labour recruiters is the most compulsive form of recruiting; but what of the more negative pressure on Africans to stimulate recruiting?

The migrant worker unable to make a minimum living from the land is not a free agent in the sense that he can move into an industrial labour market and offer his labour to the highest bidder. He may not leave a Union Reserve until he gets a pass from the government authorities; and, with exceptions, he gets no pass unless he signs a contract to work on mine — or farm.

Other employment avenues are simply not open to him. Further, only by signing a contract with a labour recruiting agency will the African get a cash advance to pay his fare to the labour market. Incidentally, the mine pays the inward journey of the recruit only if he completes a minimum number of shifts underground.

Once the recruit has signed the contract, he is prosecuted as a deserter if he leaves the mine before completing the contract term. Criminal penalties for leaving work have their counterpart in no civilised labour code.

The Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organisation following the Second World War begin to get to grips with the peculiar labour problems of Africa. Convention 97 on ‘Migration for Employment’ and Recommendation 100 for the protection of migrant workers in underdeveloped countries and territories compose a detailed ‘magna carta’ for migrant workers like those on whom South Africa’s gold mining industry is based.

The general approach of the ILO is that as far as possible the economic and social organisation of the population should not be endangered by demands for the withdrawal of adult male labour. This consideration must be borne in mind by governments before they approved any labour recruiting scheme. An expert investigation done some years ago in the Congo reported that a maximum of 10 per cent of adult males could be absent without detriment to village life and agriculture.

Investigations over the years in Basutoland, Bechuanaland and the Union tell of the havoc wrought by the migrant labour system. In some areas 50 per cent of the men are absent at any one time. This throws the burden of agriculture on to the young, the women and the aged, and — apart from stultifying progress in the Reserves even further and making them even more dependent upon the migrant labour system for cash with which to pay taxes and supplement the grain harvest — has disastrous social effects, shattering homes and depriving children of adequate parental control, among much else.

Article 6 of the Migrant Labour Convention (97) lays down that migrants should receive treatment no less favourable than that given the country’s own nationals, including the right to belong to trade unions, social security provisions, and overture arrangements. Recommendation 100 says firmly that “any discrimination against migrant workers should be eliminated”.

Migrant labour should receive wages enabling workers to meet minimum requirements and take into account normal family needs. Minimum wage rates should be fixed by collective agreements freely negotiated between the trade union and employers’ organisation.
Clause 37 lays down the principle of equal opportunity for all sections of the population, including migrant workers. Clause 41 states: "The right of association and freedom for all lawful trade union activities should be granted to migrant workers".

The employer should pay the journey of the migrant to his place of work and also the costs of his repatriation when his period of service has expired. The Chamber of Mines does not even do this. Every contract sheet has printed in it the repatriation fee of the worker, which is subtracted from his wages, together with other deductions. Clause 13 even says that migrant workers should be free to waive their right to repatriation, or to postpone their repatriation.

International standards and practice in South Africa are poles apart.

The ILO clearly discourages the whole system of migrant labour maintaining: "The governments of the countries of origin and destination of migrant workers should endeavour to bring about a progressive reduction of migrant movements."

South Africa took part in the discussions leading up to the drafting of the Recommendations on Migrant Labour, though she did not endorse these Recommendations any more than their earlier cousins. Her written comment on the migrant labour control proposals smoothly claims that she supports provisions for migrant workers, but that such protection can not be given by "measures designed for universal application. The problems associated with migrant workers vary greatly, and their solution is essentially a matter to be determined between the governments concerned or, in the case of internal migration, in accordance with national laws." The Union government "considers it should be left to national authorities to determine the extent to which any recommendation can be applied to various categories of migrant workers".

Union policy, it was claimed, is against social uprooting: "The movement of workers within the Union is between country and town rather than between territories, and it is considered inadvisable to settle them and their families near their places of employment as they would suffer from the change to crowded urban living conditions. Mining industries are 'vanishing industries', albeit long term (sic) and it is therefore undesirable to create a large working population entirely dependent on these industries.

"It is also advisable from the social and health point of view that Natives employed on mines should return to their rural homes at more or less regular intervals. Natives on the mines are almost unanimous in favour of maintaining the present system of migrant labour."

The only time African miners have ever been able to say what they do or do not want was during the '40s — in the days of the African Mineworkers' Union, which the Chamber of Mines stamped out after the epic African miners strike of 1946. The AMU offered in 1941 to engage a group of architects to design township schemes on mining property if the mining companies would make available information on the space available. It wanted the total abolition of the compound system, and the establishment of townships on mining property as in Northern Rhodesia.

The clauses relating to trade union rights must have been particularly hard for
the South African government to examine, let alone consider endorsing. She neatly hurdled over them by commenting: "The (trade union) matters affect all workers and cannot appropriately be included in a measure dealing only with migrant workers".

Governments and the Chamber of Mines have from time immemorial based wage policy on the assumption that the African mineworker is a peasant, able to subsidise his mine wages from the land. This is a fundamental assumption, but a faulty one. Land shortage in the Reserves and the shattering of the African subsistence economy have turned the peasant into a labourer, and wages from the mines are the sole support of increasing numbers of African families in the Reserves, where the majority live perpetually below the mealie-line.

The 1943 Lansdowne Commission into African mine wages examined the assumptions upon which the wage policy of the Chamber of Mines is based. One witness compared the African migrant miner with a white worker who had a private income in addition to his earnings. Would his wages, asked the witness, not be assessed by the rate for the job, without reference to his private income? The Chamber of Mines spokesman replied:

"this ignores the fact that the ability of the Native to earn a Reserve income is largely due to the fact that he is granted by the Union government land to cultivate, and pasturage, with practically free occupation of both. In effect he receives a substantial subsidy from the intermittent fashion which suits him."

Two chief devices keep African wages low. The first is the recruiting monopoly of the WNLA and the Native Recruiting Corporation of the Chamber of Mines, which eliminates competition between mines in the purchase of labour and keeps wages and working conditions static. The Chamber lays down a maximum average daily wage for African miners which no mine may exceed. This system limits the number of men any may employ at a higher rate of pay, and so prevents any mine competing for labour with another. Even the most unpopular mine is ensured a regular labour supply under the centralised system of recruiting and wage control. Contracted migrant labour keeps the African worker in a permanently weak bargaining position. He has no option but to accept the terms of the prescribed contract form; and there is no way in which the African worker can use a period of labour shortage to ask for higher wages.

The second device is the recruiting of labour from outside the Union, and this tactic is used increasingly to keep Union wages standards depressed.

When South African labour for the mines is scarce, the policy of the WNLA is to cast about in other African countries for labour than can be bought at the current low wage rates. The Union shortage of labour at a particular wage rate might not exist at a higher wage rate, but the mines have taken good care not to test this.

The mines get the best of both worlds. When there is a shortage of labour in the Union, the mines do not raise wages to compete for labour with other fields of employment, but recruit further and further afield. When any shrinking of the economy in the Union forces more African workers into low paid jobs on the mines, less labour is drawn from the extra-Union pool.
More than this, the gold mines and their labour system have over the years set standards for prevailing wages in other industries. There is the notorious reply of the Victoria Falls Power Company to the African Gas and Power Workers’ Union about to go on strike — no increased wages, since these would create disorganisation in the mining industry (Star, 9 June 1943).

The Lansdowne Commission noted that there had been a conscious effort by certain collieries to assimilate the rates of pay and service conditions for African workers to those on the gold mines. If gold mine wages went up, the Commission found, this would have a deterrent effect on recruited labour for the coal mines, so that ultimately the minimum rates of pay would have to be increased.

Every poor farming season in the Union Reserves triggers off an accelerated flow of labour to the mines, because signing a mine contract is the only open door to the Reef labour market. The Chamber of Mines watches the tide of economic and industrial development closely, ready at any time there are signs of economic recession to place an embargo on the outside labour supply from certain territories, or to negotiate for a reduction of the labour quota for the mines from countries to the north.

During 1959 and 1960 the mines anticipated a growing ‘over-supply of labour’ due to recession conditions in some industries and the fact that more and more Africans were leaving their lands for longer and more frequent periods of their working lives. Hard times in the Union are boom times for the mines’ labour supplies and help to keep wage rates static.

There is no industry of the size and prosperity of this that has managed its cheap labour policy so successfully. Migrant labour is wasteful, inefficient and far less productive than stable labour; but as long as it is abundant, it can be kept dirt cheap. The gold mining industry of South Africa has prospered as no other, thanks not only to the opening of the new Free State mines but also to uranium production; profits have reached new heights (a record figure for gold and uranium of £114,908,538 in 1959). African labour productivity has increased, yet African miners’ wages, in terms of real wages, are lower than they were a half-century ago.

Chasing down figures of African mines wages is like pursuing dandelions through thick mist. The Chamber of Mines prefers to shelter behind generalities and averages, and treats detailed queries about wages with barely concealed suspicion. The figures of average wages paid are low enough, but they nonetheless manage with great success to conceal the plight of the great majority of African miners working for the scandalously low starting basic wage.

Early records show that in 1890 the average pay of African miners was £3 3s a month exclusive of keep (Hatch and Chalmers: The Gold Mines of the Rand, published in 1895). From that year onwards the various mining companies attempted to arrive at a concerted policy to reduce wages; and in 1897, in the first effective wage agreement drafted by the miners, African miners took a wage reduction, to a minimum of 1s a day and a maximum of 2s 6d. By 1900 the wage cuts resulted in an average monthly wage of £1 17s. In 1903, when the mines had to reassemble a labour force dispersed by the Boer War, they
reverted to an earlier schedule — an average monthly wage of £2 7s and a maximum of £3. By 1903 the average wage was £2 14s a month.

The price of gold rose by 97 per cent between 1931 and 1940. According to the Gold Producer’s Committee of the Chamber of Mines, African wages increased by 8 per cent during this period.

The most searching investigation into African wages and conditions was in 1943, when the government-appointed Lansdowne Commission sat to investigate the wages and other conditions of employment of Witwatersrand African miners.

Evidence submitted on wages showed that African pay rates had not risen over periods of 20 years. At the time of the Commission, the cash wage of the African miner was 2s per underground shift (£2 19s 6d a month) and 1s 9d (£2 14s 2d a month) for the surface worker. The value of food and accommodation provided by the mines was reckoned to be £2 16s 4d a month.

The Commission recommended an increase of 5d a shift to bring the underground minimum rate to 2s 5d, and the surface rate to 2s 2d. It recommended also a cost of living allowance for all African miners of 3d per shift. These increases, small as they were, were not given in full. Underground workers got the additional 5d recommended, but surface workers only an extra 4d, while the 3d cost of living allowance recommendation was ignored. To help the mines meet the extra labour cost, the government for one year refunded the gold realisation charges of £2,054,000. Subsequently the price paid for gold by the SA Reserve Bank was raised to include the amount previously deducted as a ‘realisation charge’. In effect the government remitted this particular form of taxation to assist the mines meet the increased cost of African labour.

After the Lansdowne Commission, the average pay for underground miners was £3 8s a month (in addition, payments in kind amounted to £1 10s). This should be compared with the figure of £3 3s a month paid in 1890, before the mines combined to slash African wages.

Between 1943 and 1952 the minimum underground wage rate rose by 3d a shift, and in 1953 by a further 4d to 3s. Now, seven years later, 3s remains the basic wage for the underground miner, and the surface worker earns 2s 3d a shift. While there has been an increase of 16 per cent on the average wage of the African miner, made up by small bonus and long service increases and some improvements in the wages of the minority of higher paid ‘boss boys’ and clerks, the basic wages have remained static.

When the mine wages are criticised as being too low, the mines resort to the well-worn argument that the miner is really supplementing his agricultural income by his stints on the mines, and also trot out the figure of services given the miner in addition to his cash wage. In 1957, for example, it cost the mines 3s 1d per African labourer per shift to feed, house and keep him in health. This calculation turns out to be a most revealing one. In 1943 the mines estimated the cost of food and services as 1s 1d, but the figure has risen to 3s 1d by 1957. This represents an increase of 185 per cent over the 14 years 1943-57. Over the same period, however, African underground wages increased by only 24 per cent. The cost of buying essentials has soared for the mines, which buy in bulk, but not for the African miner!
Even more revealing is the Chamber of Mines' method of calculating costs of services per African miner per shift. Figures produced for the Lansdowne Commission show that remuneration in mind was made up of costs of rations, quarters and medical treatment. The total cost of services was 13.4d in 1943. Food per shift amounted to 5.28d, and hospital costs to 1.15d. The remaining amount of 6.97d (more than half the costs) was made up by expenditure on the following items: salaries of compound staff; preparation of food, including wages; fees paid to the NRC and WNLA, the Chamber's labour recruiting organisations; passport and registration fees paid to governments; fees to local authorities for sanitation; assessment rates; maintenance of hospital and compound buildings; Miners' Phthisis Compensation and accident premiums; fuel, water and light; fire insurance; clothing and boots; entertainment, education and religion.

The most costly items are fees paid to the Union and Portuguese governments and the various governments of Tropical Africa, and recruiting fees paid the NRC and WNLA. The Chamber of Mines thus charges its labour recruiting costs against the figure of services in mind spent on the African miner. The Chamber's statistician admitted, when questioned by the Lansdowne Commission, that "while all these items represent costs to the mines of native labour, they are not all chargeable as benefits to the natives". There is no evidence that the Chamber has altered its methods of accounting for services in mind; and the figure has made a spectacular rise to an average of £3 a month for each African.

African miners get no overtime rates of pay for Sunday, holiday or night work; they receive no sick pay and, even while convalescing, can be put to work to earn their keep at surface rates of pay; and they have only two paid holidays a year (Christmas Day and Good Friday). To this day the mines are exempt from paying cost of living allowances to African miners.

The meagre cash wage paid the African miner is even lower than the figures produced on paper, for every migrant worker must pay not only the cost to the mine of equipping him with two blankets, a singlet and pair of trousers, and a protective tunic. The standard contract form of the WNLA for a Nyasa recruit, for instance, deducts a repatriation fee of £4 10s and £2 5s towards the cost of the protective tunic and other clothing. The repatriation fee covers the cost of the return journey and food provided on that journey to the recruiting depot nearest the recruit's home. If this is some distance from his village, he must pay further travelling costs himself.

Also deducted from the miner's earnings during the period of contract is the annual tax, which is collected by the mines through arrangement with the government concerned, as well as the initial outlay of £2 or £3 remitted to the recruit when he signed on at the engagement station. A Nyasa recruit on the mines for his work contract will earn a maximum of £46 in 12 months, one tenth of which will be deducted, the recruit will be left with something like £39 9s 6d for one year's work underground. A second term worker who receives a slightly higher basic wage will earn about £45 in a year of 312 work shifts.

The gold mines ignore the cold facts of exploitation which such figures lay bare and advertise only the 'benefits' which the men of 55 tribes from seven countries get in deferred pay to miners and their families (carefully omitting any
figures of wages and profits). The mines claim that they generate economic
growth; that "the economic distress of the (Union) Reserves is in part relieved
by the gold mining industry"; that "they stimulate and stabilise the economy of
tribal territories". But then the mining industry always has been a past master
at turning economic arguments on their head.

The truth is that migrant labour, the basis for the prosperity of the gold mining
industry, has ruined the Reserves and African agriculture and has been
responsible for the most blatant exploitation of the largest single labour force in
South Africa. Migrant labour impedes agricultural development, keeps wages
to rock-bottom levels, and is an excuse for not training a stable force of skilled
labour. The evils that migrant labour has brought to the Union's Africans and
her economy, it will bring to the African countries whose labour reserves are
being milked dry by this system.

Even the mines have had to face that the increasing flow of labour from
countries adjacent to South Africa and to her north will depend on the tempo of
industrial development in those areas.

Tsopano, a monthly publication which supports the Nyasaland Malawi
Congress Party, maintains that the recruitment of 20,000 Nyasas for the Rand
gold mines each year is stripping the country of its most valuable asset —
labour. "The reason why the WNLA is able so easily to fill the quota each year
is that there are thousands of Nyasas who are unable to find jobs in their own
country. Until Nyasaland has built its economy to the point where there is full
employment for all, there will continue to be a section of the population
prepared to suffer the indignity and hardship of working in South Africa... The
first task of the new Malawi government must be to set in movement economic
planning... Until that time measures will have to be taken by the government
to protect the interests of those who work abroad... This can best be done by
organising a labour exchange and by bargaining with the employers abroad
who wish to employ men from Nyasaland."

The prosperity of the gold mining industry has been based on the poverty of
Africa and her people; but Africa is changing fast and can help to make the
mines change their labour policy too. While two in every three African miners
on the Witwatersrand come from countries other than the Union, and one in
dive from a Central and East Africa rapidly advancing towards independence,
low wages, debased compound life, the suppression of all trade union activity,
contraventions of international labour conventions — all these are the concern
not only of South Africa, but of the peoples of half a dozen African countries,
indeed, of all the continent.
Extracts from Black Gold: A Study in the Export of Labour

by Ruth First and others*

The life and experience of the Mozambican migrant miner, and the condition of the rural economy from which he was drawn, is part of the reality of contemporary struggle, not only in Southern Africa, but in the world of our time. Europe's industrialised economies, despite the cutting back of production and employment during the crisis that began in the 1970s, continue to depend on millions of migrant workers, the majority from former colonial territories. John Berger and Jean Mohr wrote about and photographed Europe's Seventh Man: in some European countries one out of seven manual workers has been an immigrant.

In the South African mining industry in the early 1970s the foreign migrant worker was not one in seven but three out of every four. In the recent period the number of foreign migrants has been reduced, but the mining industry continues to use a labour force that is not permanently proletarianised, that is forced by law to oscillate between home and workplace, and that come from peasant societies which have been under continuing pressure to send men of working age out to labour. Migrant labour has never been a temporary expedient in Southern Africa, always a permanent necessity; migrant labour, drawn from within South Africa's industrialised economy but also during this century from as many as a dozen countries beyond its geographical frontiers, has been indispensable to the accumulation of South African capital. The South African economy thus found the power to command the labour forces of numbers of dependent countries in the sub-continent, which furnish to South Africa an industrial reserve army of labour.

Of all these labour-supply areas, Mozambique has been the most important. There was a time, during their critical formative years, when the Witwatersrand mines could not have been worked without Mozambican miners. Immediately before the Boer War, 60 out of every 100 black miners came from Mozambique. In 1906 the proportion had risen to 65.4 per cent. After Union in 1910, when the South African state was perfecting its coercive machinery for labour supply within South Africa's internal labour reserves, the total of

*Black Gold was written by Ruth First with the help of her colleagues at the Centro de Estudios Africanos, Mozambique. These extracts of what will be her major posthumous work, are reproduced by kind permission of the publishers, Harvester Press, 16 Ship Street, Brighton, England, who will be publishing a hard cover edition of the book in May 1983.
Mozambican miners dropped, but they regularly made up more than a quarter of the total number of workers on the gold mines and collieries affiliated to the Chamber of Mines.

In the years when the mines diversified their labour supplies and spread their catchment area halfway up the continent almost to the equator, Mozambique continued to be the most constant and the largest single source of mine labour. There is no family in the southern part of Mozambique, which was the recruiting zone, that has not sent a father and most likely a son to the mines. This study will show that there are virtually no men in this region who have never worked on the mines, and that many have done so repeatedly, on successive labour contracts.

Because migrant labour is not an African or regional, but an international phenomenon, an account of Mozambican migrant miners, of the impact of such a system on their society and on their individual lives, will resonate with the experiences of migrant workers in the world economy. But this is not the prime concern of the study. Rather the purpose of documenting and analysing this system of using the labour-power of migrants is to contribute to the process of breaking out of colonialism and of capitalism; of restructuring the Mozambican economy; of transforming production, and especially labour’s part in it. FRELIMO, which took power in 1975, characterises the present phase of its revolution as the period of the transition to socialism. Mozambique was, of course, a Portuguese colony for five centuries, which means that a colonial-capitalist state economy with all its ramifications has to be dismantled and restructured. This task involves tackling much more than the colonial system devised by the Portuguese. From the time of South Africa’s mining revolution in the 1880s and 1890s and the development of its characteristic forms of labour extraction and use, it was not Portuguese capital but South African mining capital that was dominant in the region, and during the later colonial economic history of Mozambique there has been no process which has generated more exploitation of African labour or more distortion and under-development of the economy as a whole. Although mine labour recruitment was limited by law to the three southern provinces of Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane, the effects of the export of labour have affected political, financial and economic relations of the whole country.

This study of migrant labour to the mines grows out of the need to make an historical break with the pattern itself; thus it tries to clarify the processes which entrenched it and which have to be understood if the system is to be dismantled. Because the problem is an immediate one, this study concentrates on the contemporary impact of labour export: how does the system operate today, as an inheritance of the past? How has it changed and for what reasons? What have been the consequences of repeated labour exodus for these peasant economics? In other words, the focus is on those aspects which have the most immediate policy implications for the government and the people of Mozambique.

This deals only in passing with the historical roots and causes of labour migration in Mozambique. This is not because the authors do not regard history as important. On the contrary. Continuing historical research on migrant labour forms part of the long-term work of the Centro de Estudos Africanos and of the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane as a whole, and is part of the task of de-
colonising Mozambique's history. A history of migrant labour would involve not only the history of the labour recruitment organised by the South African mines with the collusion of the Portuguese State, and those aspects of the actual organisation of the recruitment process that this book refers to, but the process of penetration and control of African societies. It would need to identify the conditions which first stimulated immigration for wages; the imposition of migrant labour by force; and the way in which rural society has come to depend on earnings from mining, so that the system of labour migration has become economically self-producing.

This would involve a study of the social formations of Mozambique and the impact, in different periods, of the Portuguese colonial state. It would have to analyse the differential impact of these processes of colonial penetration within specific societies and in different regions of the south.

FRELIMO has repeatedly committed itself to the ending of migrant labour, and so the integration, within a transformed and autocentric economy, of that part of the Mozambican working class which has been exploited by South African capitalism and whose skills have been drained from Mozambique. But if an economic process as old, as deeply inlaid and widespread as mine labour export is to be dismantled, all its implications must be analysed. It cannot be combated on the ideological plane alone, by an appeal to the political commitment of the migrant. This would be to dismiss the system of migrant labour as an act of will by a host of migrant workers, to miss the essence of a deep-seated economic system that has permeated the political economy of the countryside of southern Mozambique. Migrant labour was part of the penetration of the money economy, when the social formations of Mozambique were subordinated to the purposes of the spread of capitalism. This penetration left no corner of rural agriculture untouched. The coercion of the colonial state undermined the reproductive base of the rural economy. Eight decades of the system of migrant labour made it a structural necessity for rural producers living under colonialism.

The flow of migration is to a certain extent influenced by the pattern of severe agricultural crises, but on the whole it has remained remarkably stable and constant over the years from 1895 onwards, and especially 1902 to 1977, as the records about recruitment analysed in this book show.

If the ending of labour export, and by extension the subordination of the Mozambican economy to South African capitalism is a necessary prerequisite for the creation of a material base for the construction of socialism, the reintegration of this work force within an autonomous economy moving towards socialism could take two complementary forms. The first would be the use of the work force and the skills it has acquired in Mozambique's industrialisation programme, especially in the heavy industry, transport and mining sectors. The second would be the reintegration within the agricultural sector of this formerly exported labour. But it could not of course be an unchanged agriculture.

The economic priorities of the first phase of the transitional period were formulated in the Social and Economic Directives adopted in 1977 by FRELIMO's Third Congress. 'Our strategy for development', said this programme, 'rests on agricultural production'.
The Revolution demands that we extend the experience of the liberated areas to the entire country. The organisation of peasants into rural communities is essential for the development of collective life in the countryside and for the creation of the necessary conditions for socialised agriculture. Because it generates a common surplus, collective production is the only way of enabling the Mozambican peasant to pass to more advanced forms of work and to introduce mechanised production and the first forms of industrialisation in the rural areas.

The phasing of Mozambique's agricultural policy, the relative weight given to the development of communal villages (*aideais communais*) with co-operative production as their material base, and to the state farm sector — these issues and their contingent policy decisions continue to be formulated within the political structures of Frelimo and the government. The purpose of this study, which was undertaken within two years of Mozambique's independence, was to assist in the elaboration of a socialist alternative to a system of labour use which grossly exploited the working class and which disfigured agricultural production in the southern regions of the country.

Accordingly the study concentrated on two principal aspects, which between them comprise the life and work of the migrant: a study of labour flow to the mines from 1902 to 1977, and especially in the period since independence, and of the workforce itself; and an investigation into aspects of the peasant economy from which this mine labour has been recruited. Had their been other industrial work experience? How did these miners fit into the work process? What skills had they acquired? (How could these skills be mobilised in the transformation of the Mozambican economy? — is the obvious extension of that question). The regularity of mine contracts also raised questions of class analysis. In many cases successive contracts were interrupted by brief stays in the countryside. Are these people peasants or workers or both? How to deal with the specific instance, under the conditions of migrant labour, of the proletarian-peasant? What is the consciousness of this class? Did it, between mine contracts, regard itself as 'unemployed' or simple 'back home'? Where would this class of workers, with considerable experience of proletarianisation, take its place in the struggle of workers and peasants for a transformed Mozambique?

The analysis of the labour flow to the mines and related material on mine labour was based on official statistics of WENELA, the recruiting organisation of the South African Chamber of Mines... which are deposited with the Mozambican Labour Ministry or *Instituto de Trabalho*, and on additional material supplied by WENELA on request. This material was supplemented with archival material and ministry records, but documentary sources apart, the project used extensive interviewing procedures, including with representatives of labour recruiting bodies, but above all with the miners themselves. For although WENELA labour recruiting records are a meticulous stock-taking of the labour flow by week, by month and by year for almost a century, it is not possible to know from these labour tallies the composition and the spread of this workforce. Did the mines draw on a pool of more or less regular contractees? In other words did the same men go again and again or did most men contract for the mines once, spasmodically or regularly? Only interviews with miners themselves could produce answers to these questions.

Miners were interviewed in the WENELA labour compounds of Ressano Garcia and Alta Mae in Maputo; of Xai Xai in Gaza Province, and Maxixe in Inhambane.
province, where men were waiting to take up new labour contracts or were being repatriated after the completion of their contracts; and also in the Inhambane countryside where ex-miners or miners were at home, some in the intervals between contracts. Interviews were conducted with 368 miners over a period of four months, from June to September 1977. As will be seen from the copy of the miners’ questionnaire in the Appendices, the investigation concentrated on the frequency and length of contracts (and thus on material for the construction of employment histories), on the acquisition of work skills, as well as on miners’ family commitments and their earning capacities, and the uses to which mine wages were put after successive contracts.

In addition a shorter version of the miners’ questionnaire was used in interviews with a larger sample of 716 miners . . .

One of the songs discussed in ‘Black Gold’, entitled ‘On the Flat Bare Place’:

Leader: Oh! on the flat bare place
Chorus: Stay there/remain there!
Leader: Even if they leave me there
Chorus: Remain there!
Leader: With the rain falling on me
Chorus: Remain there!
Leader: Even when they insult me/swear at me
Chorus: Remain there!
Leader: Even if they hit me/beat me up
Chorus: Remain there!
Leader: Even if they kick me
Chorus: Remain there?
Leader: Even if they bewitch me
Chorus: Remain there!
Leader: Even if they throw you out
Chorus: Remain there?
Leader: Oh! on the flat bare place!
Chorus: Remain there?

Interviewer: What is the meaning of this song?

The leader (Filomena Mathayi):
This song means that after I got married my husband left and went to Joni after building a small hut for me on an open space with no trees. The hut is badly constructed and it leaks when it rains. My in-laws are not nice to me: they insult me, they swear at me and they even kick or beat me up. But in spite of all these problems, I do not pack up my things and return to my own family — no! I STAY HERE, I REMAIN HERE ON THIS BARE PLACE AND WAIT UNTIL MY HUSBAND RETURNS FROM THE MINES. HE MUST FIND ME HERE WHEN HE COMES HOME!

One of the Interviews of Peasant Households reproduced in ‘Black Gold’. This interview is of a ‘Poor Young Family’ comprising a husband, wife and a two-year-old child.

Armando lived with his parents until 1975 when his father gave him a piece of land, and he received a second piece, the machongo, during the 1977 distribution of this land by the ‘Dynamising Groups’ (GD’s). He owns no means
of production, only a hoe and a *catana* (large knife), but borrowed his father's plough for his land. His land and his trees (15 coconut and 30 cashew) have barely started producing. They have grown small quantities of maize, groundnuts and a little cassava, but have to be careful, in the case of the groundnuts, to leave seed for the next year's crop. Of seven papaya plants, six are producing fruit. The family owns two chickens and a pig which was bought when it was young for $300.00, and which has been fed on papaya for lack of anything better. At the time of the interview the wife was husking rice by hand. The diet of this family consists of cassava, maize porridge and pumpkin leaves which they collect from neighbours now that they have eaten their own. When there is no cassava they eat the leaf of the plant. They eat one meal a day at night-time. They never have meat or fish. The wife’s mother gave them two tins of *milho* some months ago, but their parents do not have enough themselves to support their children. The family live in a hut and have a smaller cooking hut, but no food store; in any case there is rarely any food to store. This is a poor and hungry family. There is no money for fuel for the lamp so they go to sleep in the dark. Armando has worked four mine contracts between 1965 and 1976 and is desperate to return to the mines or to find any work to alleviate his poverty. For his first contract he worked as a labourer on Rand Leases Mine, earning $17.50 per day. The next two contracts were on Durban Deep as a ‘pipe boy’ then ‘store boy’, earning $22.00 per day. His final contract was at Venterpost in 1975/76. As ‘picanin Boss-boy’ he received R1.03 rising to R1.52 a day. After this last contract the mine management refused to give any of his group a bonus card because it was said that the Mozambique government would refuse permission for more miners to return to South Africa. During the past year he has tried to find work on the land of others but succeeded only in earning 50 escudos for two days' work. He borrowed $500.00 to buy soap, kerosene and salt.

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**RUTH FIRST MEMORIAL TRUST**

After a number of meetings of her friends, colleagues and family in London, it was agreed to establish a trust in Ruth First's memory. The objectives of the trust will be:

- to establish an international centre to house records and communicate information, especially to educational institutions in Africa;
- to provide scholarships and travel grants for study at the centre;
- to fund suitable research projects and, where considered necessary, publish the results;
- to finance an occasional lecture in Ruth First's name.

Contributions to the trust are now invited. Cheques or postal orders ($US or sterling) should be made out to the 'Ruth First Memorial Trust' and sent to the trustees, c/o Ronald Segal, The Old Manor House, Manor Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, England.
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STRATEGIES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH IN MOZAMBIQUE
by Members of the Centre of African Studies, Eduardo Mondlane University

As a research and research-training institute, the Centre of African Studies is only one single focus of social research in Mozambique. Within Eduardo Mondlane University, at specialised research institutes, and especially within the research divisions of the various government Ministries, Mozambicans are engaged in expanding the concrete knowledge of Mozambican conditions so necessary for the tasks of transition today, and so neglected by colonial intellectuals. Yet as limited and specific as the experience of the Centre of African Studies is, the history of its development, its ongoing work, and its organisation, express much of what is central and significant to the strategy of social research in Mozambique.

To understand the place of research in Mozambique today, one must begin with its context: Mozambique is a socialist state, with a Marxist-Leninist party, engaged in a struggle which encompasses many fronts to build a socialist society, to develop a socialist economy.¹*

This struggle begins from a base shared by the peoples throughout southern Africa: the deformed class structure and dependent economy which is the heritage of colonial capitalism.

Portuguese colonial-capitalism in Mozambique had several cardinal characteristics: the shortage and weakness of Portuguese capital resulted in heavy reliance on other capitals; capital acting in Mozambique came with the understanding that the colonial state would assume the task of recruiting and assuring cheap African labour: for sugar and tea plantations, for cotton cultivation, for port and rail construction; and the productivity and profitability of enormous sectors of the capitalist economy depended on this activity on the part of the state.² During the colonial period the great majority of the Mozambican peasantry, obliged to sell their labour-power to capitalist producers, or to produce cash crops for the market, were formally subsumed by capitalist production. But the cheapness of their labour-power depended on the maintenance of the family's ability to feed itself, never relying completely on the migrant's wage or the income from cash crop production. Thus the colonial system tried to ensure that the peasantry was not definitively separated from their means of production: communal land tenure was maintained to avoid the emergence of any landless group of fully proletarianised African workers. The

*See Notes at end.
result was that large sectors of the Mozambican population were semi-proletarianised, bound to migrant labour or cash-crop cultivation by their need to survive and yet also bound to their land and rudimentary production of their subsistence. Internal capital accumulation was very weak, and tied to the conditions of colonial exploitation: capitalist agriculture depended on ready supplies of cheap wage-labour on a seasonal basis; the factories processed export crops or simply finished inputs imported from the metropole.

And Mozambique, like its neighbouring peoples within southern Africa, confronted yet another common problem. Internal capital accumulation was tied largely to the interests of South African capital, and this interdependence of colonial Mozambique with the South African economy, made its economy weak, subservient, and even politically vulnerable. In the case of Mozambique, the dependence on South Africa was particularly marked. Mozambique was, in fact, a service economy within the southern African region. These services comprised the provision of railway and harbour facilities for exports and imports from South Africa, and from Rhodesia, and the supply of labour, principally to the South African mining industry, but also to agriculture. For close on a century, Mozambicans have been contracted in large numbers to South Africa. The peasant economy of the southern provinces was made completely dependent on mine labour for its reproduction, and the proceeds of mine labour were one of the most important sources of funds for internal accumulation in the colonial period. Mozambique’s railway and port developments were built and organised in response to the initiatives and requirements of South African capital, and the South African traffic and linked activities, together with the proceeds from the sale of labour, were the principal source of foreign exchange.

After the 1960s, when Portugal’s home economy was buckling under the impact of the liberation wars, Portugal ceded more and more ground to South African capital, which overtook Portugal as the main source of Mozambique’s imports; at this period about two-thirds of Mozambique’s foreign currency earnings came from South Africa.

Mozambique’s experience and condition up to this point is specific and yet not unique. There is a vast common experience within southern Africa of subjection to colonial capitalism in its varied and yet common forms, and to the subordination of all the economies and societies of the region to the domination of South African capital. But in the era of struggles for national liberation, Mozambique’s history and condition diverge into a rather distinct path. There is no country in southern Africa, of course, whose struggle exactly matches that of another country, and these differences are reflected in the different class structures, government policies and economic problems which the countries of the sub-continent confront today. In Mozambique in turn it is not possible to comprehend the present situation without understanding the history of FRELIMO, which began as a national liberation movement, and through a series of struggles conducted during the liberation war, and afterwards and continuously during the independence period, rejected nationalism to emerge with a class line. FRELIMO’s capacity not only to develop a class line, but to apply it organisationally to winning concrete struggles allowed it to take power, and to define a strategy of socialist development. It is this political unity which defines the areas of action for social research in Mozambique today.
The strategy of socialist transition, based on a class-alliance between peasants and workers, defined by FRELIMO, has affected the research of the Centre of African Studies in three principal ways: first in the choice of research problem; secondly in the unity of research with teaching and the application of research; and thirdly, by setting the analytical unity within which the research is conceived and executed, and within which the Centre operates as a whole.

**Choice of Problem**

Building a strong material base for a socialist society means above all transforming the systems of production inherited from the colonial economy. This is why the choice of problems for research by the CEA has focused on problems of transforming production. These studies of production are important not only for the issues of transformation which they pose, but also for the ways in which they help in the building of a stronger historical understanding of the patterns of colonial exploitation from which transformation begins. The purpose of the Centre is thus to provide information on the present conditions of production in order to permit that concrete measures be devised to implement general strategy. Research problems are chosen, then, not only because they focus on particular problems in socialist development but also because the issues they raise can be drawn upon by organised structures within government and FRELIMO, who can not only respond to information, but also put it to work.

The series of CEA field studies on transformation of production within a strategy of social development began with the problems of the Mozambican miner. What kinds of changes in the organisation of the economy in Mozambique would be required to break the dependence on mine-labour, and what kind of immediate measures would best defend the interests of the miners and the process of transition? If the ending of labour export, and by extension, the ending of the subordination of the economy to South African capitalism is a necessary condition for the creation of a material base for the construction of socialism, how can this re-integration of a Mozambican workforce within the domestic economy be achieved? How to use the workforce and the skills it has acquired in Mozambique's industrialisation programme, especially in the heavy industry, transport and mining sectors? How to re-integrate within the agricultural sector this formerly exported labour? One of the conclusions from the miners' study was that the dependence of family agriculture on the supplementary wages from mine labour was so strong that only a major transformation of agriculture will allow for a radical break in the system.

The next series of research studies turned their attention directly to problems in the socialisation of the countryside in southern Mozambique. This was an attempt to see how state farms and agricultural producer co-operatives, growing and consolidating together, could be the basis for transforming family agriculture. In all of these studies the research was concerned to show that the process of transition must be studied as a whole. That one cannot, for example, look at the problem of the co-operative movement by studying co-operatives divorced from an understanding of the present organisation of family agriculture from which they must grow. That the co-operativisation of the countryside is an imperative for the advance of the socialist revolution. This is because in the first instance, if co-operatives cannot provide an income for
peasant families which is at least equal to that which they get from labour migration, it will be impossible to phase out that labour migration, whether out of Mozambique or to the urban centres within the country. It is imperative, furthermore, because if the co-operative sector does not develop as an autonomous and highly productive complement to the state sector, the old relationship between the state and the family sector of the peasantry will not have been dissolved. This is why the socialisation of the countryside, or the rural economy, has two complementary spheres of operation, in the state farm sector and the co-operative sector together, and why research directed at their relationship helps to clarify problems that arise during the process of transition.

Of course the strategy of co-operativisation of the countryside should not be looked at merely at the level of the raising of productivity, as though production and politics are separate. FRELIMO's tradition and leadership enforce the insistence that the mobilisation of productivity is a political act, and needs political organisation, and the raising of productivity is inextricably bound up with the need to reorganise the labour process so that the working class is in power at the point of production, and the worker-peasant alliance wields the power of the state. So socialisation of the countryside means not only the enlargement of the economic productive base, but the re-ordering of class relations, the process of transformation from old production forms to new ones.

These issues of not merely raising productivity, but of developing new forms of production organisation were raised in a series of research studies on which the Centre embarked, as part of a general investigation into the production of cotton in Mozambique.

Mozambique was a major cotton producer in the colonial period, relying first on obligatory cultivation by peasant families and, increasingly, toward the end of the colonial period, on colonial farms using cheap seasonal labour. Cotton-exports are necessary to finance the importation of inputs and equipment, and cotton is needed for the textile factories that will provide good cheap clothing for peasants and workers. The problem is therefore not one of halting production of cotton, but how to produce it in new collective forms. This question was the focus of a series of CEA rural studies conducted over two years in two cotton-growing provinces as well as of two studies on productivity problems in textile mills.

Once again the focus was on the problems and processes of transition, but once again, these studies helped to build a stronger historical understanding of the patterns of colonial exploitation from which transformation begins. Thus: the Portuguese state initiated cotton production in Mozambique in an attempt to reduce dependence of the Portuguese textile industry on imported raw cotton. Capital, much of it foreign, was persuaded to invest in the construction of ginning factories in the colonies by means of special concessions to ensure profitability. These conditions were met even though colonial cotton was sold in Portugal below world market prices. Measures taken included forcing peasant smallholders to produce cotton; the granting of commercial monopolies within fixed zones of cultivation; fixing the price paid to peasant producers at the lowest level in Africa; reducing shipping rates for cotton; granting tax incentives, and credit and marketing facilities in Portugal via the state.

The peasantry were forced to grow cotton in nearly all those parts of
Mozambique unoccupied by plantations or colonial farms, and where climate and soil permitted — and occasionally in unfavourable areas as well. Cotton cultivation became the main means of exploiting the peasantry in the northern provinces of Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa, which had previously acted principally as labour reserves for the plantations. In the central and southern provinces, where men were either forced into contract labour in plantations, or migrated to South Africa or Rhodesia, cotton was cultivated by women, or by men too old or infirm for wage-labour.

Since cotton growing uses land both intensively and extensively, serious problems of soil exhaustion, especially in Nampula, began to emerge. To make matters worse, the peasants had been forced to cut back on food production, particularly of grains because they competed with cotton. There were several severe famines in the 1940s which can be linked directly to the expansion of cotton cultivation. The administration attempted to resolve the situation through forced cassava cultivation in many of the cotton areas.

In the latter part of the colonial period, the major structural change in cotton cultivation was the growth of capitalist settler farming. By the end of the colonial period they dominated production. Settlers were able to appropriate prime cotton land, or to pay only nominal prices for it. The rapid growth of the settler farms meant, of course, a parallel rise in the demand for seasonal wage-labour. Some peasants who had been driven off good cotton land by the settlers turned to occasional wage-labour, and other workers were recruited by the use of administrative pressures, especially at harvest time. By the early 1970s upward pressure on wages had led to substantially increased daily rates of pay (although the piece rate for the harvest was unaffected), threatening the profitability of the settler farms. The situation was resolved when the end of forced cultivation in the family sector released labour for recruitment, and when state extension services to the family sector in certain areas were cut back. The history of the settler farmers was thus inseparably bound up with that of the peasant cotton cultivators.

The cotton industry was particularly hard hit by the flight of many of the Portuguese settlers and state employees after independence. Most of the farmers who had dominated production in the early 1970s left in the first few years, abandoning unharvested crops, broken tractors and unpaid loans. Many state employees also left abruptly, often destroying their records before they went. The private truckers and merchants, without whom in many areas cotton could not be moved or marketed, also fled. The development of the new collective units, state farms and co-operatives was blocked by management problems, market disorganisation and lack of inputs.

Accordingly, when the Centre turned its attention to the cotton sector, it addressed itself to the following questions: How to move from a backward, seasonal and labour intensive form of production, without incurring foreign debts which would threaten cotton's own export earnings? The Mozambican strategy is to articulate state farms and co-operatives and to concentrate them around centres of industrial development. This in turn raises some other issues: how are the problems of seasonal wage-labour in the state sector to be resolved in the transitional period? How can family cotton producers be convinced that co-operative forms produce more and better? How are the concentrated poles of development to be linked to the hinterland areas so that
the whole region develops? How to organise a fast, cheap marketing system to link the producers to the ginning factories? The strategy of grouping production units around an industrial centre provides a longer-term solution; in the short term, however, the issue is how to reduce marketing costs and assure supply to the factories, without tying the state into inefficient marketing patterns and into subsidising private commercial capital. How to obtain favourable terms of trade in an unstable and competitive market, in which Mozambican cotton plays a minor part? In the long term, the expansion of cotton production in Mozambique will be absorbed by the local textile industry, so the question will lose its importance. In the short term, however, it is vital to know which kinds of producer-crops or long-term buying arrangements will most favour Mozambique.

Thus the cotton research project was a study of development problems and policies in a particularly crucial sector of the economy, and by cutting vertically through the economic, social and political aspects of cotton production, the research was able to examine policy for industry as well as for agriculture; and for state services.

It was in the course of this study, that it became clear that one could not study the transformation of production only by studying the various forms of production in themselves — in the state sector, within co-operatives, in family agriculture. That capitalist exploitation in the colonial period depended on the organisational role of the state in production itself; thus the task of transformation includes transformation of the fundamental relation between the state and workers and peasants.

Thus the Centre’s research next began to look explicitly at forms of state action and planning which directly or indirectly affect production: marketing-policy, terms of trade, transport, extension services, education and training.

This focus on the reconstruction of the revolutionary state became particularly important in the study of the labour force on the tea plantations of Zambezia where the newly formed state sector faces the task of maintaining production while trying to transform the entire basis of production of the colonial period: a cheap seasonal labour force recruited by the state. Here the answer is not only transforming labour use on the plantations but also completely changing the organisation of family agriculture whose backwardness has been linked to its role as the source of cheap seasonal labour. Thus the study was concerned to understand not only how the plantations could be transformed but also what role the state sector could play in dynamising the process of socialisation of family agriculture through co-operatives.

With each step of research it has becoming increasingly clear that the choice of problem cannot be determined simply by deciding to look at what FRELIMO’s strategy of socialist transformation means in a particular sector of production. The process of transformation is one of continual struggle. This means that correct tactical positions are as important as strategy, and that good research provides the basis for the definition of tactical positions linked to strategy. This point emerged sharply in research in the port of Maputo which was concerned with the transformation of a labour force based in the colonial period on unstable casual labour and which necessarily needed to consider problems of how to raise efficiency and productivity within the port — in line with the SADCC strategy.
In the port it was found that the basic problem of transformation lay in a contradiction of class structure: the colonial capitalist organisation of labour pitted administrative workers — permanent workers with good salaries, generally colonialists — against a large pool of poorly paid casual Black manual workers. Gradual reforms after the flight of the settlers — the fixing of many workers’ wage increases and promotions — made no fundamental assault on the system. It presently constitutes the major block to socialist transformation of the port, both in its rigid structure of unproductive labour and in its divisive maintenance of conflicting interests among various groups of productive workers. To move against this system above all requires a much more precise and yet simple system of information and control of production at the level of port zones. In short, the investigation of the problems of the labour force led into a much narrower and perhaps more technical area of port management.

In the course of all the research outlined above, the Centre’s researchers have felt the need to respond directly in its choice of problems to the tactical questions which FRELIMO must confront in implementing its strategy of transition. This raises issue of the presentation of research results, and the audience to which they are directed. Who is interested, and involved, in social research? How will they be able to apply it in practice? It has become increasingly clear that not only must there be structures organised to respond to this information but that at some level, research concerns must coincide with those issues which are on the development strategy agenda, and within the general plan of action. This point arrives, then, at the second principal guideline of social research in Mozambique: the unity of theory, teaching and the application of research results.

**Unity of Theory, Teaching and Practical Application of Research**

In the context of Mozambique, social research must play an immediate and active role in the process of socialist transformation. There is often too little time for extended study, for decisions must be taken immediately. When one writes up research results one attends not to the latest state of theoretical debate on the issue, but rather to the language and expectations of people working to implement FRELIMO line in concrete situations. As the Revolution advances, the things they need to know constantly change. Thus the aim of the CEA has not been to produce a series of definitive research studies but rather to make social research an acceptable step in the formulation and implementation of policy.

Here Mozambique confronts the barriers erected by a colonial educational system and a formerly fascist university actively engaged in making sure that social research did not serve as a base for forces of opposition. Economics was the only social science represented in the colonial university and its programme was one which emphasized rote and dogma rather than active analysis.

For their part non-Mozambican researchers — and Mozambique draws heavily on those known as cooperantes (co-operators) — although they have a certain advantage in training and research experience, also have difficulties in contributing to an activist conception of research. There is the difficulty of moving from a work experience which makes critique and opposition the most
important role of the radical researcher to one in which analysis is critical in form, because it operates within a perspective of social transformation, but has to confront actual problems of that transformation process.

To attack both sides of this difficulty in making social research a practical tool of the Mozambican revolution, the Centre decided, firstly to combine research activity within a development course, so that theory and research practice could be undertaken together; and secondly to direct the course at students drawn from government and political structures who would remain within their work places at the same time as they underwent their research training. The intention is that the students will in turn be able to integrate tools of investigation into their work, and thus train others as well through common practice. The students who have thus far been enrolled on the Centre’s development research-training course have come from the national headquarters of FRELIMO, from the Army, from ministries like Agriculture, Education and Information, from the national banks, and so on. The course does not seek to confront the professional preoccupations of each of the students, which would be clearly impossible in an interdisciplinary training of this character, but to identify those issues of production and politics to which specialists can ultimately bring to bear their particular training, given an initial acute analysis of the problems and processes of transformation.

These linkages of teaching and research, and between research and practice, are the product of several years of work. The linkages are not necessarily easy to conceive, and they are even more difficult to maintain in practice. They confront problems and diverse interpretation in the application of Marxist theory and method; they also confront problems of educational method.

Over time a curriculum has been devised which has four principal aspects to reflect the elements considered central in the training of social researchers in Mozambique. In the first place the course aims to give a solid introduction to Mozambican political economy: the colonial economy, the development of FRELIMO, the present strategy of development and practical problems of implementation. Here the Centre relies to a great extent on work already done by the Centre in previous courses; through its investigations the course manufactured texts which can be used both by the Centre and by other educational programmes. Secondly, the course locates the experience of Mozambique within its regional context; it concentrates particularly on the principal contradictions within South Africa itself and how these weigh in regional development. Thirdly the course has to be oriented by a particular research project, linked with a specific problem in Mozambique’s strategy of socialist development. In the first half of the course there is work done on research design — the definition of the questions, formulation of hypotheses, discussion of methods. The research projects chosen involve fieldwork so that students can experience themselves how data is collected and organised and analysed. In part the fieldwork is of course also intended to put students and staff directly in touch with problems of transition at the base level. In the second half of the course the material is analysed and written up, locating this research in more general problems of socialist transformation in Mozambique.

The aim of the course, then, is to come to terms with the concrete reality of transformation in Mozambique. Yet this does not mean that ‘theory’ is considered unimportant. In fact the fourth element of the course — thorough
analytical grounding in the basics of political economy applied to understanding imperialism in Africa and socialist revolution in Mozambique — is the real basis of the course. It is the stress on analytical unity which permits the Centre to join together the other three elements of the course. And it is active and critical use of analytical tools which are considered to be the essential step in the training of Mozambicans in social research.

**Our Analytical Unity as Marxists: Science in Politics**

Within the Centre its ability to function as a collective in teaching, research and publication is based on its participants' analytical unity as Marxists. The Centre's capacity for making this work relevant to the process of socialist transformation in Mozambique is based on the fact that its staff and students share this common position with FRELIMO. This unity is not derived from the expression of common dogmas nor the repetition of invariable laws of history; neither is it simply the result of a common vision of the future society which all would like to create. Rather it is the application of scientific materialist analysis to the problems of socialist transformation in the concrete and specific historical conditions of Mozambique.

FRELIMO's consistent insistence on making Marxist theory serve the particular experience of the Mozambique Revolution is perhaps the most important determinant of strategies of social research in Mozambique. It implies discussion and debate based on knowledge of concrete conditions, and it challenges received wisdoms. The concept of countries of 'Socialist orientation' for example, has been challenged because it does not permit an adequate analysis of the direction of the Mozambique Revolution. There is a strong conception of how the Mozambique experience will contribute to the growth of Marxist theory and thus contribute to the tools of analysis of the international socialist movement.

At the same time the purpose of discussion and debate is to contribute to clarification of line — the definition of strategy of socialist transformation in specific areas and the formulation of tactical measures which will advance the process of transformation. So debate and discussion have limits and must be inserted within organised programmes of change. This is why the CEA does not operate as a broker for independent research projects, as interesting and well-grounded in Marxist analysis as they may be. The unity of analytical approach is based and controlled, in the last instance, by unity of practice.

**Notes**

1. The strategy to construct a socialist state, and economy, led by a vanguard party, is developed in a series of FRELIMO documents. Thus, the Theses of FRELIMO's Third Congress, held in February 1977, state: 'In the present phase of imperialist rule, the national liberation movement can only fulfil its historic task if it adopts, practises and develops the scientific ideology of the working classes, and if it makes the liberation struggle into part of the general struggle against the system of exploitation'. National and social liberation are fused, FRELIMO argues, when armed struggle has developed into revolutionary people's war, and has resulted in the military defeat of the enemy (Portuguese colonialism) and 'a radical break with the old system'. During the liberation war 'questions of people's power and land ownership' were confronted and resolved, and with independence these solutions were generally applied and consolidated. FRELIMO, formerly a national
liberation movement, was constituted a Marxist-Leninist Party at the 1977 Congress, but even during the armed struggle the creation of a party had been theorised. For English texts of the most important documents of the Third Congress, see Central Committee Report to the Third Congress of FRELIMO (London: MAGIC, 1978) and also 'Congress Special Issue' AIM Information Bulletin (Maputo) (9/10).

2. Unfortunately, the majority of helpful materialist and/or empirically rich bourgeois analyses on this topic are available only in Portuguese. However, in English see Perry Anderson's now outdated 'Portugal and the end of ultra-colonialism', New Left Review (15-17) 1962, which lays heavy emphasis on the special weaknesses of Portuguese capital as a source for the political inability of Portugal to resolve the colonial question. Anderson's analysis for many years held more-or-less undisputed sway, with 'ultra-colonialism' acting as an ideological counterbalance to the official Portuguese concept of 'Luso-tropicalism' derived from the Brazilian Gilberto Freyre. In Portuguese, see Armando Castro, O sistema colonial português em África (meados do século XX), 'The Portuguese colonial system in Africa in the middle of the 20th century' (Lisboa: Caminho, 1978), written in 1958 but unpublishable under Fascism. For a recent CEA periodization specifically on Mozambique, see Marc Wuyts, 'Economia Política do colonialismo em Mocambique', (Political economy of colonialism in Mozambique), Estudos Mocambicanos (1) 1980.

3. Immediately after Independence this capacity was essential to the very survival of the Mozambican revolution:

   The establishment of the new people's democratic order led to an intensification of the class struggle in the country at large and at the same time to stepped up imperialist aggression against our revolution. This made it all the more urgently necessary to enable those social classes who were for the continuation of the revolutionary process to assume effective leadership of this process, to repel all manoeuvres of the class enemy and thus to lead the revolution to victory.

   Indeed, FRELIMO is quite explicitly aware that:

   without a revolutionary party capable of leading the masses of workers and peasants as well as the other working people in the economic, political and ideological struggle, socialism cannot be built.


   On the current situation a readily available source of considerable interest is Godwin Matatu's interview with President Samora Machel in Africa (107) July 1980, which discusses strategy for the concrete struggle against underdevelopment both nationally and regionally.

4. The economic priorities of the first phase of the transitional period were formulated in the Social and Economic Directives adopted in 1977 by FRELIMO's Third Congress. 'Our strategy for development', said this programme, 'rests on agricultural production'.

   The Revolution demands that we extend the experience of the liberated areas to the entire country. The organisation of peasants into rural communities is essential for the development of collective life in the countryside and for the creation of the necessary conditions for socialised agriculture. Because it generates a common surplus, collective production is the only way of enabling the Mozambican peasant to pass to more advanced forms of work and to introduce mechanised production and the first forms of industrialisation in the rural areas.

   The phasing of Mozambique's agricultural policy, the relative weight given to the
development of communal villages (aldeias comunais) with co-operative production as their material base, and to the state farm sector, these issues and their contingent policy decisions continue to be formulated within the political structures of FRELIMO and the government.

5. 'In our country Marxism is the product of the War of National Liberation. We did not proclaim Marxism after Independence. The war turned itself, in the process of its development, into a people's revolutionary war. It was this which allowed the Mozambique Liberation Front to change itself into a Marxist-Leninist party. Some people think that Mozambique's socialist policy is produced by a small group. We want to say that this is how it is. The group made a synthesis of aspirations and of practice. It was not a small group which waged people's war in Mozambique. It was the entire people.' Press conference by President Machel, 22 March 1980, Maputo.

ERITREA AND THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION*

I: The Facts

1. The question as to whether the Eritreans really constitute a people or not has been fully debated by the two concerned parties. Ethiopia has constantly denied that one can speak of an Eritrean people. The arguments put forward by the two parties are detailed and complex; they refer to an historical background of considerable depth . . .

(the following 12 sections of the report refer in detail to the cases presented by the Ethiopians and Eritreans and the historical period up to the 1950s) . . .

13. From the outset the Imperial Ethiopian Government considered the United Nations arrangement as unsatisfactory . . .

The Eritrean Government, led by Tedla Bayrou, found itself in constant conflict with the Imperial representative. The Emperor's intentions were openly revealed by him in a speech delivered to the Eritrean Assembly on 22 March 1955 and in which he declared:

There are no internal or external affairs as far as the office of his Imperial Majesty's representative is concerned, and there will be none in the future. The affairs of Eritrea concern Ethiopia as a whole and the Emperor.

It was clear that the Imperial will was going to be imposed upon the Eritrean Government, contrary to the letter and spirit of the UN Resolution, the Federal Act and the Eritrean Constitution which the Emperor had undertaken to observe. This was accompanied by systematic subversion of the Eritrean Government at critical levels. The Emperor used his powers as head of state of the 'Federation' and his powers of appointment to destroy

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the integrity of the Eritrean Government. Pressure was brought to bear on Tedla Bayrou obliging him to resign his post as Chief Executive and accept appointment as ambassador to Sweden. Tedla’s resignation came four months after the above-quoted statement had been made by the Emperor’s representative. Other opponents of Imperial decisions, as well as those who criticised them, were either jailed or exiled.

The democratic principle which lay at the foundation of the Eritrean government — a principle which could not be constitutionally amended — was thus subverted extra-constitutionally. But not without resistance. Eritrean workers, students and teachers protested massively. Their protest led to further violations of fundamental human rights — shooting, arbitrary arrests, banning of labour union activities and closing of industries. The latter was designed, first to weaken Eritrea economically and prove retroactively the Ethiopian view as to the economic non-viability of Eritrea; and second, to eliminate the Eritrean labour movement which constituted an important organised and militant political force. Such measures drove thousands of Eritreans from the country to search for employment elsewhere.

14. With regard to respect of local institutions, cultures and languages, the terms of the United Nation’s Resolution should be recalled; indeed the preamble expresses the desire of the UN General Assembly to insure ‘the fullest respect for their institutions, traditions, religions and languages . . .’. It was, notably, in such terms and under such conditions that the United Nations agreed to federate Eritrea to Ethiopia. Yet barely five years after the ‘federation’ had been proclaimed, Tigrinya and Arabic, considered as official languages under the Eritrean Constitution, were suppressed. Amharic, the official Ethiopian language, replaced them as the official language for communication and instruction. Beyond violating the United Nations Resolution and the Eritrean Constitution, this measure imposed a formidable obstacle to the learning abilities of Eritrean children. The effects of this policy became evident some years later in secondary and university entrance examinations, which barred the way of thousands of Eritreans to higher education.

15. Order No.27 of 1962 put an end to the federal status of Eritrea and placed it under the unitary administration of the Ethiopian Empire. This order was promulgated the day following the supposed vote by the Eritrean Assembly in favour of suppressing the federal regime. It has been asserted that no such vote took place, but rather that the Eritrean Chief Executive merely read a prepared statement. Yet even if a formal vote had been taken, it would be of no value because of the absence of the requisite conditions for a deliberative assembly. Long before the date of the ‘vote’ several members of the Assembly, known for their independence leanings, were subjected to police harassment. Some were arrested and beaten. Others, after a period of absence, were forcibly brought to the Assembly. The Assembly itself was filled with police, armed with machine guns, and placed in strategic positions where they were visible to ‘voting’ members of the Assembly.

Article 2 of Order No.27 of 1962 stipulated the following:

The Federal status of Eritrea and Ethiopia is hereby terminated and Eritrea, which continues to constitute an integral part of the Empire of Ethiopia is hereby wholly integrated into the unitary system of administration of Our Empire.
And according to Article 3:

The Revised Constitution of Ethiopia given by Us as the Sovereign and Crown of the Empire of Ethiopia on 2 November 1955, shall continue to be the sole and exclusive Constitution to apply uniformly throughout the territory of the Empire of Ethiopia.

16. Prior even to the unilateral dissolution of the Federation, the futility of legal and semi-legal activities undertaken by Eritreans had led to the creation in 1959 of the Eritrean Liberation Movement (ELM) which began the struggle for independence. After its annihilation, a new movement was born in 1961, the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). From the moment of its creation, this liberation movement has engaged in armed struggle against the Ethiopian government, and over the years has succeeded in controlling large portions of Eritrea. In 1970, as a result of political differences, a split occurred leading to the formation of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF). These two liberation movements control large portions of Eritrean territory where they have established housing for the civilian population, hospitals, schools, farms, etc.

17. The struggle for national liberation led by the two Eritrean fronts (ELF and EPLF) for 20 years has brought about a profound change in the social and economic conditions of the Eritrean people. These changes concern the creation of new class relations and the development of national consciousness. In all liberated territories, be it those of the ELF or those of the EPLF, the armed struggle has largely contributed to the development of a national identity through the economic and social forms it has occasioned.

18. The agrarian reform carried out in the liberated areas has, in some cases, consisted in a return to the traditional system of communal possession of village arable land; and in other cases, in the organisation of new forms of cooperative or collective farming. Testimony concerning the social impact, throughout the country, of these reforms has been presented to the Tribunal. Likewise, in cities liberated by the Fronts, life has been reorganised on new bases in order to provide citizens with essential products. Economic transformation has sought to insure social control of the means of production, especially in industry. Testimony has been presented to the Tribunal concerning important realisations in the fields of education and rural health in areas liberated and controlled by the ELF or by the EPLF. Proof has also been brought of new forms of participation by citizens, particularly women, in public administration. This new life style in the liberated zones seems, in the opinion of the Tribunal, to have decisively consolidated the solidarity and the unity of the Eritrean people.

19. It seems appropriate to draw, from the proceeding considerations, the following conclusions:

a. A social entity endowed with a national conscience had evolved in the territory of the Italian colony during the colonial period, and was considerably reinforced during the period of struggle. This can be maintained despite a number of evident contradictions: the presence of a small number of Eritrean intellectuals in the Ethiopian administration, social contradictions of class in Eritrea which reveal the dialectical character of the struggle which is not only national but also social, and the existence of two fronts hampering the progress of the struggle. But all of this does not call into doubt the existence of a national consciousness.
b. *Ethnic and religious differences*, which must not be minimised, make themselves felt only on a secondary level given the necessity imposed upon the Eritrean populations to struggle together against successive common enemies. Social objectives today are defined more in class terms than in terms of traditional social stratification. Twenty years of struggle have procured for the two fronts a social base which does not have as its distinguishing characteristic religion or ethnic belonging, be it on the rank and file level or the leadership level.

c. *The task of social construction* in the liberated areas has progressively transformed the social fabric; internal contradictions are much more the expression of class conflict than of differences over the national issue.

These three elements constitute very important social factors of identity and of national consciousness which, in addition, receive in Eritrea a powerful consolidating impetus because of the length of the struggle for national independence.

**II: The Law**

20. Having established the existence of the Eritrean people, it is necessary to ascertain the legal consequences of this fact, both with respect to the law of the United Nations and with respect to the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples.

(Paragraphs 21 to 23 inclusive, refer to parallel cases in international law).

24. The applicability to the Eritrean case of the preceding legal principles is contested by the Ethiopian Government on the grounds that the Eritrean people would supposedly have validly exercised their right to self-determination both in 1950 when the Federal Ethiopian state was established, and in 1962 when that state became a unitary state. From these successive expressions of the desire of the Eritrean people would, it is argued, follow the inadequacy, not only of characterising the Eritrean case as a colonial one, but also of analysing it in terms of a foreign domination with regard to the ties uniting Eritrea with Ethiopia. And thus, in the case in point, neither of the conditions for the application of the principle of self-determination would, on this view, be satisfied. Moreover, one must take note of the fact that the present Ethiopian Government has officially declared its intention to respect, while maintaining the integrity of the unitary Ethiopian state, the regional, linguistic and cultural autonomy of Eritrea, which would allow for a free and individual development of the Eritrean people (Nine Point Declaration of 16 May 1976 by the Provisional Military Government, reprinted in *Class Struggle and the Problem of Eritrea*, Addis Ababa, 1979, pp.57 and following.).

In order to determine whether the Eritrean request is legally well-founded, the above considerations authorise the examination, each in turn, of three questions. In the first place, one must ascertain if, in accordance with the Ethiopian thesis, the creation of a Federal state brought about by Resolution 390 (v) of the United Nations General Assembly and the transformation of the Federal Ethiopian state into a unitary state can be considered as an effective exercise of the Eritrean people's right to self-determination. In the event of a negative answer to this first question, one must ascertain whether, in the case in point, one or the other of the two conditions for the applicability of the right of
peoples to self-determination conjointly considered, are satisfied. These two questions, although logically distinct, will be conjointly considered. In the third place and in the event of a positive answer to the preceding question, it will be necessary to analyse the ways of exercising this right, and more particularly, the compatibility of the autonomy offered by the Ethiopian Government with the norms of international law.

25. The Eritrean problem was encountered by the United Nations General Assembly when the Big Powers were unable to reach agreement concerning the destiny of Italy’s colonies (see above Nos. 14-16) to which this state had renounced all claims in the Peace Treaty, and the question had to be settled in some other manner. Resolution 390(V) of the General Assembly institutes a federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The adopted solution has meaning only insofar as one takes account of the two conditions which underlie it: first, the double recognition by the General Assembly that the Eritrean people are a people and of the fact that they occupy their own territory delimited successively by Italian colonisation and British occupation; secondly, the respect due to the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination. In this regard, the following extract of the Resolution is revealing:

Taking into consideration: (a) the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants of Eritrea, including the views of the various racial, religious and political groups of the provinces of the territory and the capacity of the people for self-government. Desiring that this association assure the inhabitants of Eritrea the fullest respect and safeguards for their institutions, traditions, religions and languages, as well as the widest possible measure of self-government, while at the same time respecting the Constitution, institutions, traditions and the international status and identity of the Empire of Ethiopia,...

As we have seen, this expressly recognised right of self-determination was, however, granted only in the form of the creation of an ‘autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia, under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown’. This imposed form of self-determination can be easily understood if one considered the context in which the United Nations General Assembly decision was undertaken. Adopted within the specific framework of the peace agreement following upon the Second World War, Resolution 390(V) is clearly marked by requirements typical of the settlement of a world conflict. In particular, the international standing of Ethiopia, former member of the League of Nations, its resistance to the Italian war of aggression and its geo-political interests (an outlet to the sea) seem to have weighed more heavily in the balance than the pure and simple recognition of the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination; even if on the other hand, the fact that the General Assembly Resolution was adopted on the basis of the report of the UN Commission to Eritrea which had carried out a direct inquiry into the wishes of the country’s population, attests, nonetheless, to the fundamental importance of the recognition of the right to self-determination as a condition of Resolution 390(V).

The present situation of the Eritrean people must be apprehended in terms of this two-fold constituent dimension of the Resolution. For in fact, the determinate form of self-determination recognised by Resolution 390(V) has been deprived of its substance by the conduct of the power that was to ensure its respect, namely the Ethiopian Government. The violation of the obligations
imposed upon this power, precisely the reason for recognising the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination, found its ultimate expression in what amounts, as we have previously seen, to a unilateral abrogation of the Federal system as a result of the proclamation of a unitary state.

26. One is thus led to conclude that we are dealing with a case of unsuccessful decolonisation; the right to self-determination having been denied to the people occupying the territory of the former Italian colony of Eritrea. The Eritrean people are therefore a colonial people whose right to self-determination, which the United Nations General Assembly had sought to guarantee, was not, in the end, respected. The reason for the failure of the solution proposed by the United Nations can be found, on the one hand, in the very content of the Resolution which gave excessive consideration to the geopolitical demands of Ethiopia and brought together within the federal system two different peoples subjected, moreover, by the Constitution itself to profoundly diverse socio-political structures. On the other hand, the attitude of the Imperial Ethiopian Government towards the Eritrean people has only accelerated their growing national consciousness, and has only fired their desire for autonomy and independence.

When in 1962 the Federation was dissolved by a unilateral decision of the Imperial Government, the Eritrean people left behind a false decolonisation only to take on, purely and simply, foreign domination. In other words, it does not seem possible to assert that Eritrea can, today, be considered as an Ethiopian colony. Ethiopian domination of Eritrea is not based on a colonial conquest or acquisition; the traditional socio-economic characteristics of a colonial situation, likewise, are not present. The Eritrean people must be considered as a colonial people which has never effectively benefited from the right to self-determination, and which, following upon the unsuccessful attempt in 1950, went from colonial domination to foreign domination.

It is for this reason that the Eritrean people, as a former colonial people, is still entitled to exercise its right to self-determination.

27. The right of a people to self-determination can be exercised in several ways. According to the schema developed by the United Nations (Resolution 1546(XV) of the General Assembly), there are three forms of exercise of the right to self-determination: the creation of an independent and sovereign state; free association with another independent state; integration into another state. It seems that, in the present situation, the only way in which the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination can be exercised is independence.

The Eritrean Liberation Front (created in 1961) began guerrilla activities at the time of the Ethiopian annexation, and by 1964 these had evolved into a true armed struggle. As a result of a split within this Front, the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front came into existence in 1971. At present the two fronts are engaged in a war of liberation in the various areas of the country, and are coordinating more and more closely their activities, be it on the military level or on the political and diplomatic level. There are many large areas liberated by the Fronts where new forms of political, economic and social organisations are now well established.

On this subject, the Tribunal has heard a number of witnesses concerning both the areas controlled by the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front and those
 controlled by the Eritrean Liberation Front. The existence of change in former economic and social relations had clearly been established. Particularly, emphasis has been put on the frequent application of agrarian reform and of forms of collective control of means of production.

Twenty years of armed struggle for independence and the consequences of such a struggle for the biggest part of the Eritrean territory as well as for the majority of Eritreans allows one to conclude that independence is today the only possible form of self-determination. Indeed, if one must admit that the choice between the different forms of self-determination belongs to the people concerned, then in the case of the Eritrean people a clear desire to exclude any form of association or integration into another state, and in particular the Ethiopian state, follows from the long and continuous struggle for liberation.

28. Furthermore, the Tribunal draws attention to the fact that the self-determination of the Eritrean people through the formation of an independent and sovereign state cannot be considered as an illegitimate form of secession. The conclusion follows not only from the doctrine of the United Nations but also from that of the Organisation of African Unity as well as that of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples.

29. The doctrine of the United Nations upholds, as we have seen, the principle of respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of states. This is clearly seen in the Declaration on the Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States which was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution 2625(XXV) of 24 October 1970.

According to this Resolution, the principle of self-determination has implications which are of import for all members of the international community, and in particular: the duty of all states to promote decolonisation and to assist the United Nations in carrying out its responsibilities as defined by the Charter in order to bring a rapid end to colonialism; the duty of all states to abstain from all forceful measures which might deprive peoples of their right to determine their own destiny or of their independence; the right of peoples reacting to such forceful measures to receive support in keeping with the aims and principles of the United Nations charter.

However, the same Resolution stipulates that the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination including its internal and international implications cannot take precedence over the principle of respect for the territorial integrity of states:

Nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as authorising or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity of sovereign and independent states conducting themselves in compliance with the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour.

The action taken by the United Nations in the case of the attempts made by the Katanga region of the Congo and the Biafra region of Nigeria to secede, gives witness to the central role which the principles of respect for the territorial integrity of decolonised states occupies in the doctrine of the United Nations.
However, with respect to the particular case of self-determination of the Eritrean people, one cannot speak of infringing upon the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. The fact that Ethiopia and Eritrea constitute two distinct entities has always been recognised by the United Nations (in particular by General Assembly Resolution 390(V). The federal solution proposed in 1950 was only suggested as a means — even if it was not the best — of exercising the self-determination of the Eritrean people. The failure of this attempt — be it because of its intrinsic weakness, or and above all, be it because of violations of, and later, unilateral abrogation of the federal system by the Imperial Ethiopian Government — again raises the problem in terms which, in large part, were already present in 1950. Today it is not a question of judging the legitimacy of the secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia. It is, on the contrary, a question of taking note of the failure of a solution proposed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950, and therefore of re-examining the problem of the self-determination of the Eritrean people. Concerning Ethiopia, it is a question of declaring the termination — and it is the government of this country which bears the principle responsibility in the matter — of the attempt to associate to it, under international guarantees, within a federal system a country having a precise geographic and socio-cultural identity, consolidated, in particular, by Italian colonisation and British occupation.

Concerning the Organisation of African Unity, it seems to base itself on the principle of respect for the territorial integrity of its member states. The fact that the Organisation was founded in 1963, that is to say, after Ethiopia had unilaterally abrogated the federal system, does not mean that the Organisation was then, or is now today, committed to guaranteeing the unity between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The OAU could, at its creation, only take note of the existing de jure and de facto situation: Ethiopia, in 1963 and thereafter, had, and has done nothing more than occupy de facto a territory which it had promised the United Nations to administer in accordance with a federal system. This situation, illegal under the terms of United Nations doctrine, could not, in 1963, and cannot now be legitimised under the doctrine of the Organisation of African Unity, which is a regional pact required to act in accordance with the aims and principles of the United Nations (Article 52, 1st Al. of the Charter).

Moreover, the principle of respect for colonially determined boundaries of states requires precisely that Ethiopia, according to the very principles upon which the OAU is based, respect the autonomous territorial configuration of Eritrea which was fixed at the time of Italian colonisation and British occupation.

The universal Declaration of Rights of Peoples likewise sets out limits to the principles of the territorial integrity of the state. After having set forth the rights of minorities, Article 21 of the Declaration states:

These rights must be exercised without prejudice to the legitimate interests of the community considered as a whole and must not involve a threat to the territorial integrity and political unity of the state, so long as the state conforms to all the principles set out in this Declaration.

In an entirely general formulation, the Algiers Declaration of 1976 takes over and reinforces the assertions already contained in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625(XXV) concerning friendly relations among states by
establishing that the limits for the respect of the territorial integrity of states cannot be invoked by a state which itself violates the fundamental rights of peoples. In such a case the right to secede of an oppressed people, constituting a minority within the state, is established.

Yet in fact, the Eritrean people cannot be considered as a minority group within the Ethiopian state. General Assembly Resolution 390(V) excludes such an analysis by recognizing that the Eritrean people are a people entitled to the right to self-determination. The history of the preceding colonial period does not reveal the existence of historical ties enabling one to consider the Eritrean people as ever having lived within an Ethiopian state. The post-colonial history of Eritrea has likewise shown from the outset the desire of the Eritrean people to resist integration into Ethiopia, a desire confirmed by the long struggle for national liberation which ensued.

However, in application of the aforementioned Article 21, even if the Eritrean people were a minority group within the Ethiopian state, their right to self-determination would be justified because the Ethiopian state has, over a long period of time, ignored the fundamental rights of Eritreans.

32. The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal has also examined a later argument of an essentially political character used by the present Ethiopian Government in support of its own claims. According to the Ethiopian Government, the struggle of the Eritrean liberation fronts had, prior to the 1974 Revolution in Ethiopia, a democratic and progressive character since it was a struggle against a backward and authoritarian regime still endowed with feudal structures. The changes brought about in Ethiopia after 1974 are claimed to have clearly modified the character of this rear-guard war against a progressive regime which has declared itself ready to ensure a very large regional autonomy for Eritrea and to recognise the fundamental rights of its people. The present stand of Ethiopia with respect to the Eritrean problem is set out in the 1976 Nine-Point Declaration (see Class Struggle and the Problem of Eritrea, Addis Ababa, 1979, pp.64ff) which still constitutes today the basis of the Ethiopian position. In this Declaration, the Ethiopian Government states in particular:

2. The Programme of the Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution has affirmed that the right of self-determination of nationalities can be guaranteed through regional autonomy which takes due account of objective realities prevailing in Ethiopia, her surroundings and in the world at large. To translate this into deeds, the Government will study each of the regions of the country, the history and interactions of the nationalities inhabiting them, their geographic positions, economic life and their suitability for development and administration. After taking these into consideration, the Government will at an appropriate time present to the people the structure of the region that can exist in the future. The entire Ethiopian people will then democratically discuss the issue at various levels and decide upon it themselves.

3. Having realised the difficulties existing in the Administrative Region of Eritrea and the urgency of overcoming them, in order to apply in practice the right of self-determination of nationalities on a priority basis, the Provisional Military Government is prepared to discuss and exchange views with the progressive groups and organisations in Eritrea which are not in collusion with feudalist, reactionary forces in the neighbourhood and imperialists.

In opposition to this Ethiopian argument, the Tribunal must at least emphasise the extent to which the right of peoples to self-determination necessarily
implies the freedom of all peoples to adopt the political, economic and social regime they prefer. Consequently, the Ethiopian argument cannot be used with a view to denying the right of Eritrea to independence.

Furthermore, the Tribunal is of the opinion that the long years of struggle undertaken by the Eritrean people and the harshness of Ethiopian repression render completely unrealistic the present Ethiopian proposition for a new form of regional autonomy within a single state embracing the two countries. If there exists a similarity between the socio-political regimes established, both by the ELF and the EPLF, in the liberated zones and that which is being established in Ethiopia, this will facilitate other forms of political and economic collaboration between Ethiopia and independent Eritrea.

III. Consequences of the Established Legal Nature of the Eritrean People's Liberation Struggle

33. It remains to examine two juridical consequences of the above developed principles. The first concerns the application of the rules of the law of warfare to the relations between the Eritrean liberation movements and the Ethiopian Government. The second relates to the duties of the International Community with regard to the presently existing state of belligerency between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

A. The Law of Warfare and the War of National Liberation

34. The war of national liberation fought by the two Eritrean movements must be recognised as an international armed conflict and not simply as a civil war. Indeed, by the terms of Article 1 of the First Additional Protocol of the four Geneva Conventions, adopted in Geneva, 8 June 1977, by the Diplomatic Conference on the Development of Human Rights, international armed conflicts include:

armed conflicts in which people struggle against colonial domination and foreign occupation and against racist regimes exercising thereby the right of peoples to self-determination as proclaimed by the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation Among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

(Article 1, para.4 of the additional Protocol of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949).

It is without doubt true that Ethiopia did not participate in the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva and consequently has neither signed nor ratified the above-mentioned Protocol. It is, however, necessary to emphasise that the reproduced norm does nothing other than codify, specify and perfect a general principle already imposed upon the International Community by the action, spread out over a number of years, of the United Nations General Assembly: the principle according to which wars of national liberation constitute conflicts between several subjects of international law, that is, between colonialist dominating or occupying states on the one hand, and one or more liberation movements on the other. It follows from such a principle that such wars are not governed by national law concerning civil wars but by the norms of international law governing inter-state conflicts. It follows that those fighting for national liberation cannot be considered as common criminals, but on the contrary, must be considered as legitimate belligerents; furthermore, hostilities
and the protection of victims of the conflict are subjected to the general rules of
the law of warfare.

As a member of the United Nations, Ethiopia is bound by the new general rules
whose progressive development was undertaken by the UN. It is, therefore,
obligated to consider the armed struggle carried out by the two Eritrean
liberation movements as an international armed conflict. In other words,
although Ethiopia is not bound to apply meticulously all of the norms of the
aforementioned 1977 Protocol, at least as long as it has not been ratified,
Ethiopia must nonetheless conform to the general principles of the law of
warfare applicable to international armed conflicts, as defined by the common
Among other things, it follows that the Ethiopian Government must treat
fighters of the two Eritrean movements as legitimate belligerents, granting
them in the event of capture the status of prisoners of war. Moreover, Ethiopia
is bound to observe all general prohibitions concerning 'cruel, inhuman and
non-discriminating' weapons. Likewise, Ethiopia (and so too the two Eritrean
national liberation movements) is bound to conform to the principles of
common law concerning the protection of civilian populations and of war
victims.

B. Duties of the International Community

35. The preceding discussion brings out the fact that having once recognised
the international obligations of Ethiopia, precise rights and duties are
incumbent upon all members of the International Community as well as upon
international organisations, and specifically, upon the United Nations
Organisation and the Organisation of African Unity.

36. Concerning the rights and duties incumbent upon members of the
International Community, it suffices to specify that all states, movements of
liberation and all other subjects of international law have:

a. the obligation to refrain from furnishing aid of any sort to the Ethiopian
   Government, insofar as the aid would be directly used to suppress the struggle
   for national liberation carried on by the Eritrean liberation fronts;

b. the right and the duty to further the self-determination of the Eritrean people
   by furnishing to this end any necessary aid and assistance of political,
   diplomatic and material character. Such rights and duties follow from Article 1
   paragraph 2 of the United Nations Convention, from General Assembly
   Resolutions 2625(XXV) and 3314(XIX) as well as from Article 30 of the Universal
   Declaration of the Rights of Peoples.

37. Concerning the obligations of international organisations, it is above all
necessary to emphasise that the United Nations Organisation has the duty and
the power to concern itself with the Eritrean question and this on two grounds:
insofar as it is a question concerning the maintaining of peace and security
(Articles 1 and 10 through 12, chapters VI and VII); and insofar as it is a
question concerning the fulfilling of the right of the Eritrean people to self-
determination (Article 1, paragraph 2; Articles 10, 13, 55).

It would be absurd to maintain that the Eritrean question belongs to a domain
reserved to Ethiopia. Concerning the first of the two indicated grounds, no
question touching upon the maintenance of international peace and security
can be considered to belong to the internal jurisdiction of a member State (Article 2, paragraph 7 in fine) and it is indisputable that the armed struggle carried on by the Eritrean liberation fronts, and the participation of third-party States on the side of the Ethiopian Government, as well as the aid given by some States to the two Eritrean liberation movements, are all elements tending to make the conflict in Eritrea a danger for international peace and security. There clearly exists an explosive situation which can give rise to serious international repercussions even beyond the geopolitical area wherein the conflict is going on.

As to the second of the two mentioned grounds, United Nations practice, and in particular that of the General Assembly, is hence clearly oriented towards the idea that a question involving human rights cannot be considered to belong to the domain reserved to member states when one is in the presence of serious, flagrant and systematic violations of these rights. Now in fact, the right of a people to self-determination is the fundamental condition for exercising any human rights whatsoever, and respecting it is an essential condition for the effective respect of the rights of the different individual members of a people as has, moreover, been confirmed by the fact that the two Covenants on Human Rights adopted in 1966 by the United Nations begin, in the first article, by proclaiming the right of peoples to self-determination.

Since it is a question, therefore, of a fundamental right and since it cannot be contested that the Ethiopian Government seriously violates this right and that this violation has gone on in time, it seems unquestionable that the United Nations is competent to raise the question in order to make recommendations about and to propose solutions to this question in accordance with the principles of the right of peoples to self-determination.

38. As to the Organisation of African Unity, it suffices to recall paragraph 2 of the Preamble of the the Charter: ‘Convinced that peoples have the inalienable right to determine their own destiny;’ as well as paragraph 3 of this same Preamble: ‘Bearing in mind the fact that liberty, equality, justice and dignity are objectives essential to fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of African peoples’. Without doubt, therefore, it clearly comes within the jurisdiction of the Organisation to examine and discuss the Eritrean question in order to fulfill the legitimate aspiration of the Eritrean people. To this end, Article VIII of the OAU Charter attributes general competency to the Assembly of Heads of State and Heads of Government.

For these motives, the Tribunal decides:

I. ON THE QUALITY OF BEING A PEOPLE
1. The Eritrean people do not constitute a national minority within a state. They have the characteristics of a people according to the law of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Peoples.
2. In their quality as a people they have the right to live freely, and without prejudice to its national identity and culture, within the boundaries of their own territory as delimited during the colonial period up to 1950.
3. The identity of the Eritrean people, determined, in particular, by its resistance to Italian colonialism, was recognised by Resolution 390(V) of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
4. The unity of the Eritrean people is today confirmed by the armed struggle which it has been waging since September 1961, and which has resulted in the liberation of numerous regions of the country, now administered by the national liberation fronts and also in the creation of new economic and social relations.

II. ON THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

5. The Eritrean people are endowed with the inviolable and inalienable right to self-determination.

6. The alleged ancient historical ties between Eritrea and Ethiopia, claimed by the Ethiopian Government, are not adequately documented, and are not, at any rate, of such a nature as to constitute an obstacle to the recognition and the exercise of this right to self-determination.

7. The right to self-determination must be exercised without prejudice to the territorial integrity of Eritrea, according to Articles 2 and 3 of the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity, and without prejudice to the integrity of the frontiers inherited from colonialism, in accordance with the principles affirmed by the OAU Resolution of 21 July 1964.

8. The Federal system, organised in 1950 between Ethiopia and Eritrea by Resolution 390(V) of the General Assembly of the United Nations, though recognising the existence of the Eritrean people and its right to self-determination allowed the strategic and geopolitical interests of some great powers to prevail over this right.

9. From the outset the Ethiopian Government did not respect the provisions of Resolution 390(V), above all prohibiting the use of national languages and depriving Eritreans of their civil and political rights. The transgression of the Resolution reached its culmination with the unilateral abolition, by the Ethiopian Government, of the federal regime, which brought the Eritrean people under foreign domination, as defined by the law of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples.

10. The right of the Eritrean people to self-determination does not therefore constitute a form of secession, and can today only be exercised by achieving independence; the will of the Eritrean people having been clearly demonstrated in this regard by the armed struggle which has been carried on by the liberation fronts for nearly 20 years.

III. ON THE DUTIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

11. The Eritrean question lies within the competence of the United Nations on two counts: the maintenance of international peace and security, and the obligation to guarantee the respect of the right of peoples to self-determination.

12. The Organisation of African Unity has the duty to unreservedly dedicate itself to the cause of the total emancipation of African territories not yet independent, because according to the Preamble to the Addis Ababa Charter, all peoples have ‘the inalienable right to determine their own destiny’.

13. The Eritrean people’s struggle for national liberation is an armed conflict to which apply the general principles of the law of war as resulting from the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the First Additional Protocol of 1977.

14. By virtue of Article I paragraph 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, Resolution 2625(XXV) and Resolution 3314(XXIX) of the General Assembly,
as well as Article 30 of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Peoples, the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination imposes on all states and international organisations a double obligation:
— to abstain from all co-operation, military or other, intended to suppress a movement of national liberation;
— to consider it their duty to contribute to self-determination by providing, to that end, every form of diplomatic and material support.

RUTH FIRST: A MEMORIAL ADDRESS

Ronald Segal*

Ruth First's life was essentially a political act. And her death was, of course, a political act as well, of a hideously different kind. She would have wanted our celebration of her life, and our grief and our rage at her murder, to be, above all, a political act. We will not disappoint her. Let those who killed her know that if their motive was to intimidate or dismay us, we are not to be intimidated or dismayed. Indeed: those of us who were falling asleep have been aroused; those of us who were growing tired have been reinvigorated; those of us who have been separately leading our own lives have been made aware again of where together our lives should lead. The revolutionary movement, to which she gave so much of herself, will find in us only a reinforcement of purpose, of resources and of effort.

It is right that in remembering Ruth here, we should remember all the other victims, known and unknown to us, of South Africa's institutionalised terrorism. Ruth would have been the last person to expect her own sacrifice to be regarded as unique. But especially those who knew and who loved her must hope that she will be remembered also for herself, as a person of exceptional qualities.

She was a remarkable journalist: wholly concerned with identifying and exposing the various horrors of racial rule; with reporting and encouraging the course of struggle against it. She was not indifferent to the risks, the costs that were involved. She simply recognised them as the necessary consequences of her choice. Those investigations and reports of hers — into forced labour on the farms, the workings of the pass laws, conditions in the gold mines; on demonstrations, boycotts, campaigns — are classic examples of committed journalism. They do not peddle abstract phrases. They depict the real suffering of the individual victim; the real complex mood of collective defiance. They must not be left for occasional researchers to note in the archives. I hope — no, I am sure — that some of her characteristic articles will be republished in a special collection.

*Text of an address given at a memorial meeting in London, 8 September 1982.
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Many remarkable journalists cannot make the leap from the article to the book. They know where they are in the sentence and the paragraph, but they lose their way in the larger landscape. Ruth was all too aware of this. Those, and there are some, who saw so mistakenly in her a self-assurance amounting to arrogance, never knew the turmoil of uncertainty, of supposed inadequancies, that she brought to the writing of her books. It was a turmoil objectively without reason. For she had the crucial qualities of an author. She had both the sweep and the closeness of vision to see only the necessary pieces that make up the whole. She never succumbed to the temptation, so strong when there is so much space to fill, of using words for how they sound rather than for what they mean. She had a proper respect for language, and that is why she used it so well. She had that rare capacity to recreate a face, a gesture, a smell, a mood, in a phrase or two. She might write, though not often, an untidy sentence. She never wrote a lazy or a meretricious one.

It is no belittlement of her other books to say that 117 Days demands a special place. It is, I believe, one of the best prison books to have come, not only out of South Africa, but out of anywhere in the past few decades. It is totally free of that fault, so common to its kind, of self-indulgence. But then, in its courage, its humour, its vitality, its compassion, and its commitment to the truth, however painful, it is the closest that Ruth ever let the reader come to herself. I am glad to say that Penguin have agreed urgently to republish 117 Days as a tribute to Ruth. So much of Ruth is there, for others, who will never know her now, to know something of the person that she was.

I must mention two other books for particular reasons. South West Africa, her first, was a pioneering study of Namibia, with a recital of its then little known long anguished history and a detailed indictment of the greed and violence which informed South African rule. Few such books can have been researched and written in such difficult conditions. But there are no shortcomings to excuse. Knowledge of those difficulties only illuminates the book’s achievement, as the persecution, in bannings and restrictions, that Ruth suffered as a result only illuminates the book’s impact and value.

The Barrel of a Gun is a masterly analysis of the military regime in Africa, its genesis and nature. It was Ruth’s first extensive consideration of society and political development in independent Africa; and the temptation must have been strong to excuse, extenuate, blame only the imperial past. She was too honest, and she cared too much. The book will survive not only for its original research and analysis but for the passion of its concern with a popular, socialist alternative.

Ruth was an intellectual: though she would doubtless have agitatedly dismissed such a term, as an attempt to limit her with a label. She loved ideas and needed them — no one, more — but not for themselves. They were precious and necessary as instruments in the process of liberation. And it was essentially in terms of that process that she measured their truth.

Her ideas came from the great store of revolutionary socialist thought. But she continually re-examined, readjusted or reinforced them, by what she saw and learnt — and she was always learning — till there was something of herself in them, and they were enriched as a result. It was not, for instance, in her view, a departure from her revolutionary socialism but a vital extension of it that drew
her to the cause of women's liberation; a commitment to which we owe the important biography of Olive Schreiner that she wrote together with Ann Scott.

She was, by all accounts, a superb teacher. For, characteristically, her teaching was directed not at getting her students to give her back what she thought were the right answers, but at getting them to ask the right questions and so set about finding the right answers for themselves. Certainly, as her work at the Centre for African Studies in Maputo so tellingly demonstrated, she saw academic study and research not as some sterile engagement to a safe and separate world, but as a straight road between intellect and action, between knowledge and change.

That is why as journalist, author, intellectual, teacher, she was, first and foremost, a South African revolutionary. And for me, it is not the least of the tributes to the meaning of the African National Congress that Ruth First never wavered in her allegiance to the African National Congress, as the paramount vehicle of the South African revolution.

I cannot conclude without a few words of a more personal kind about someone who was, for so many years, my dearest friend. She was fascinatingly full of paradoxes: seemingly less concerned with the risks to her life than with having her hair done; plainly disapproving whenever Joe and I played cards for money but unable to resist spending much of the little that she had on a pair of Italian shoes; commanding on the platform and in debate, but shy and uncertain in private encounters with those she did not know; profoundly cultured and conscious of all the books she had not read, the pictures she had not seen. She had a striking elegance of body and of mind. And without ever making a single concession to them, from her own high standards, she worried about what others might think of her. She had an enormous capacity for friendship. She was warm and sensitive and generous and always unswervingly loyal. She was such fun. I admired her for what she did. And I love her for what she was. I will feel the loss of her to the last moment of my life.

RUTH FIRST: A PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY
Compiled by Gavin Williams, St Peter's College, Oxford

1. Newspapers and Journals Edited
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With Ann Scott


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*Centro dos Estudos Africanos*

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9. Biographical Sources

Pp.iv-v gives information on different holdings of the trial record; Karis’s index refers to the microfilm record at the Hoover Institution Library which covers the period from August 1959. Ruth First is listed under her husband’s name as Ruth Slovo on pp.48 and 63 of Karis’s text, and in his index, with a number of entries at p.119.
The trial record includes various excerpts from Ruth First’s published work, and an excerpt from an unpublished speech on ‘War, peace and freedom’ at pp.2239-2242.

10. Obituaries (See also 11 below)
Rand Daily Mail, (Johannesburg) 18 August 1982.*
The Times, (London), 19 August 1982 (Ethel de Keyser).
L’Unita, (Roma), 27 August 1982, Anna Maria Gentili ‘L’ultima riposta di Ruth First’.*
Afrique-Asie, 30 August 1982.*
Domingo (Maputo), 22 September 1982, Terisa Tinga ‘Ruth First’, Minha Vizinha’.*

*included in Recortes de Imprensa cited in 11 below.
Labour Leader, (Leeds), October 1982, Lionel Cliffe, 'Death of a comrade'.
Politique Africaine (Paris), No.7, 1982, Jean Copans.
African Communist (London) No.92, First Quarter 1983 'South Africa's Death Squads Must be Halted', pp.38-45 includes the main speech at her funeral by Moses Mabhida, general secretary of the South African Communist Party.

11. Reports of Ruth First's Death (See also 10 above)
Recortes de Imprensa (Maputo: Centro Nacional de Documentação e Informação de Mocambique/Agencia de Informacao de Moçambique), 'Atentado bombista no Centro de Estudos Africanos. Carta armadilha assassina Ruth First — 1982-08-17'. This includes numerous reports from the international press, as well as reports from Mozambique. Generally, only those from the British and South African press are reported here.
AIM, (Maputo) 17 August 1982, 'Ruth First killed by bomb'.
The Times, 18 August 1982, 'ANC leader killed by bomb', 19 August 1982, 'Pretoria protests innocence'.
Rand Daily Mail, (Johannesburg), 18 August 1982 (?) 'Ruth First killed by bomb'.
Oxford Mail, (Oxford), 18 August 1982, 'Don hits out over killing'.
International Herald Tribune, (Paris), 19 August 1982, 'Bomb kills an opponent of apartheid. Ruth First is a victim of Mozambique blast'.
Daily Telegraph, (London), 19 August 1982 'South Africa denies Maputo bomb plot'.
Sunday Tribune, (Durban), 22 August 1982, 'Ruth First's death rekindles claim of anti-ANC hit list'.

*Included in Recortes de Imprensa.
** = versions of the same Reuters report.


New Statesman, 27 August 1982, Joe Hanlon ‘Why South Africa had to kill Ruth First’.


12. A Note to the User of this Bibliography

This remains a preliminary bibliography. Several sources still need to be checked, or even discovered. Generally speaking, sections 1 to 5 are more complete than the later sections. A revised bibliography will be published with a biographical essay. I have not checked all the references against the originals and would be grateful for any corrections, as well as additions. I still have to check all the issues of the newspapers for which Ruth wrote in Johannesburg, and of Fighting Talk. Most of her contributions to these will be unsigned and difficult to attribute. Advice from people with first-hand knowledge would be welcome. I also need to find references for the newspaper articles Ruth wrote for The Guardian (Manchester & London), Financial Times and Sunday Times (London), Dagens Nyheter (Stockholm) and possibly elsewhere. Did Ruth write articles not cited here for periodicals like Liberation, African Communist, Sechaba or Anti-Apartheid News? What articles appeared in newspapers or journals in languages other than English? It is particularly difficult to get a complete list of reviews, either those written by Ruth, or of Ruth’s books especially, again, in languages other than English. Further reviews of her books will appear, notably of Black Gold when it is published and likely of the revised edition of 117 Days and of Olive Schreiner. Her 1973 curriculum vitae submitted to Durham Universities omits much of her writing but does refer to an essay/essays contributed to ‘a multi-lingual encyclopaedia published in Italian, French and Spanish’.

Numerous additions will need to be made to sections 10 and 11. I should be glad to receive references to or press cuttings from newspapers in Africa, Europe and elsewhere about Ruth and her assassination. For example, I am told her killing was extensively reported in Mexico.

Public tributes were paid to Ruth at her funeral in Maputo, at memorial meetings in London, Roma (Lesotho), Washington and elsewhere and at private meetings in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. Her family have privately published a selection of moving tributes to Ruth from speeches and from private letters. They show how people in many countries were personally aggrieved at the murder of someone they had loved and admired.

This bibliography could not have been produced without the kind of assistance of Phyllis Bishoff of the University of California, Berkeley, Karen Fung of the Hoover Institute Library at Stanford University, Colin Darch of the Centro de Estudos Africanos, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo and the help of the Institute of International Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.
Attati Mpakati

The assassination squads have struck again. As this issue goes to press, we have just had the tragic news that a brave and committed African activist has been shot. Attati Mpakati was the leader and a founder of the Socialist League of Malawi (LESOMA) — a movement with which we have been proud to be associated since its inception. Indeed, its inaugural statement of 1974 was published in ROAPE No.4, and one of its recent statements, on Malawi and SADCC, appeared in ROAPE No.22. Throughout that period we have kept in touch with Comrade Mpakati. So we sorrow over a remarkable African scholar whose commitment to socialism in the practice should be an inspiration to many. But we on the Review also grieve over a friend, whose courage and unfailing good humour we grew to admire.

On March 28, Dr Mpakati's body was found by the roadside in Harare (Salisbury), Zimbabwe. Mpakati — who lived in exile in Maputo, Mocambique — was en route to join his family in Sweden where he had lived and studied for many years. The Zimbabwean government suspects assassination and is investigating; it stated that 'as the leader of LESOMA he has been a target and a wanted man'. The finger of suspicion points naturally to the agents of Hastings 'Kamuzu' Banda, Life President of Malawi. In February 1979, Mpakati received a parcel bomb in Maputo which blew away most of his fingers. Shortly after that incident Banda described Mpakati as 'the most cunning and troublesome of the dissidents' and in 1981, Kamuzu warned that he would be 'shot on sight if he ever comes to Malawi'.

Attati Mpakati joined the nationalist movement in the struggle for independence in the 1950s and left the country after Hastings Banda had tightened his grip. After studying in the Soviet Union, Mpakati lived in Sweden and obtained a doctorate in political science from Stockholm University. In 1974 he established, with others, LESOMA, which has an estimated 15,000 members within Malawi, and seeks the establishment, on socialist principles, of a workers' and peasants' state. Unlike other exile groups, which have concentrated on infiltrating guerillas, LESOMA rejects the simplistic 'guerilla foco' strategy of Che Guevara and concentrates on political and educational work within the country. In an interview in Copenhagen two years ago he said, with a smile, that the bicycle was as useful a tool in the liberation struggle as the Kalashnikov rifle. The League has now pledged its intensified commitment to this struggle.

This brief account of the life and death of a dedicated African socialist from Malawi, highlights several themes. One is our relative ignorance about Malawi — perhaps not surprising since Hastings Banda has effectively banned critical journalism. Another is the totalitarian repression, even beyond the borders of the state. This phenomenon is not unique to Malawi and indeed offences against civil liberties in independent Africa have undoubtedly increased during the last twenty years. It is vital that progressives all over the world take increased interest in such state repression, for not to do so, and to ignore the struggle for socialism as waged against right-wing African regimes, is to forget the issues for which Attati Mpakati fought and died. His memory thus requires us all to embrace with renewed fervour the causes for which he died — for democracy and socialism.

Those who would like information about his death, about the situation in Malawi, about the LESOMA movement and about what they might do are invited to write to The Malawi Support Committee, David Ward, c/o WDM, Bedford Chambers, Covent Garden, London WC2 or phone 01-836 3672.
Karamoja: Colonial Roots of Famine in North-East Uganda

Mahmood Mamdani

Karamoja in Uganda's north-east corner has always been regarded as a backward and troublesome area. The implication always is that it suffers from an inhospitable environment and its people follow a primitive way of life. The problem is either 'natural' and intractable, or due to conservatism.

A review of the historical evidence reveals, to the contrary, that before the colonial presence the Karamojong operated a viable system of land utilisation that left the country a 'grass savanna', where today it is burnt out bush. The deterioration of the environment in fact came about during and as a result of colonial rule and the particular forms of exploitation visited on the Karamojong. This included the alienation of grazing land; the conversion of hunting into 'poaching'; and 'de-stocking' of cattle was, to add insult to injury, urged as the solution to the resulting over-grazing.

The elders of Karamoja recall that at the beginning of the century what is now Karasuk was a 'white country' (meaning: covered with grass). Wreford Smith, a British settler in Kitale in Kenya who used to come to Karamoja in the 1920s to buy cattle for Liebig's, described Kacheliba as being waving grass up to his chest. By 1960, however, Karasuk was no longer a white country but a red country; Kacheliba was completely bush with little or no grass. In his 1962 historical survey of The Soils of Karamoja District, a colonial agricultural officer gathered the above information and concluded: 'There is abundant evidence to show that 40 years ago much of Karamoja was such a grass savanna'. What had been at the outset of colonial rule predominantly a grass savanna was transformed by the end of that same rule into a short-tree savanna, or worse still, barren bushland. Spanning no more than four decades in their long history, colonial rule was the worst and the most deep-seated social catastrophe ever experienced by the people of Karamoja. What happened?

In what follows, I shall show that the present plight of the Karamojong is not the result of their having been 'ignored' by British colonialism, as conventional liberal wisdom would have us believe. Quite the contrary. The roots of the present famine lie in the intense colonial exploitation of the people of Karamoja, an exploitation that systematically destroyed not only the very basis of a pastoral way of life but also hampered the transition to an agricultural mode of existence. It has led them to a cul-de-sac, a dead end.
Karamoja at the Outset of Colonial Rule

Our point of departure shall be the early 1920's. Shrub thickets, so characteristic of much of Karamoja today, were then confined to only the exceptionally dry parts like the Turkana escarpment. The bulk of Karamoja was divided into three natural zones, corresponding to differing climatic conditions. Grass and tree steppe were found in the dry parts. A lush grass savanna covered the moist areas. And forests had arisen in the uplands and the larger mountains.

In spite of their large numbers, game animals did not bring about over-grazing and a deterioration of cover. Because they lived by extensive browsing of shrubs and trees. J.G. Wilson argued in another study on *The Vegetation of Karamoja District*, animals contributed to the stability of the environment by encouraging the occurrence of grass. Under such conditions, a stable plant cover was built up and erosion was negligible.

The people's economic and social life was also organised with one goal in mind; to ensure the best possible conditions for procuring a livelihood given existing natural and technological constraints. Thus was evolved a system of land utilisation whereby permanent settlements (*manyattas*) were located in a long line down the centre of Karamoja, from north to south, situated on permanent water supplies most often found in the beds of sand rivers. During the rainy season, production was organised around the *manyattas*. This included both cultivation (principally sorghum) and the grazing of livestock. During the dry season, young men set up temporary camps in the far-flung eastern and western areas, their herds thriving on grazing left unoccupied during the wet months.

The Karamojong devised extensive regulations to ensure the continued productivity of their grazing areas. The type of grazing they practised was a pastoral version of slash-and-burn agriculture. In the eastern and western areas where seasonal drought was common, they burnt grass annually towards the end of the dry season. The custom of annual burning of dry unpalatable herbages was beneficial to the people on three counts. First, fire controlled the growth of shrubs and directly assisted the growth of tree and grass savanna. Secondly, it was indirectly beneficial by controlling the growth of harmful organisms like harvester ants and termites. Besides removing dead material which would be available to both organisms, sweeping grass fires at yearly intervals impeded the terrestrial movement of roaming harvester ants. Left free to roam, harvester ants would destroy the ground cover, create much bare ground, destroy perennial grasses and replace them with annual grasses, herbs and shrubs. Finally, the nitrogenous ash resulting from the fire was an annual fertiliser for the ground below.

Such, in brief, was the historically evolved balance between the people and their environment, a balance that was harshly disrupted by the intrusion of a hostile and anti-people force in the region. That force was British imperialism.

Land Acquisition and Soil Erosion

Of those who later came to constitute the people of Uganda, the Karamojong were the last to be colonised. British military presence in the form of police patrols began in 1915. A District Commissioner was posted to Karamoja in 1921, marking the beginning of colonial civil administration. Until the early 1950s however, Karamoja was marked as a restricted area by the colonial authorities.
This meant, in essence, a colonial restriction on contact between the people of Karamoja and those of the rest of Uganda.

Colonial intrusion into the productive economy of the Karamojong began with the forcible acquisition of land. By the time this chapter came to a close, access to nearly a fifth of what was formerly grazing and agricultural land was denied to the people of Karamoja. Forcible land acquisition was a protracted process. It took place in several phases.

The first phase lasted from 1920 to 1940. In the span of those two decades, between 1,500 and 2,000 square miles of land, from the Chemerongit Hills to the Kamyangareng River, were transferred to the colonial administration in Kenya. At the same time, the boundaries of Teso were expanded. As a result, the Karamojong lost access to extensive grazing grounds in Usuku County in Teso. Both these were dry-weather grazing grounds. The loss of this massive area through the creation of artificial colonial boundaries constituted a grave blow to the pastoral economy of the people of Karamoja. This much we shall soon see.

The second phase began in the 1930s with the extension of colonial administration and the coming of church missions. Whether it was to build district, county and sub-county headquarters, or to construct police stations and police posts or to establish mission stations, land was grabbed from the people by the simple trick of declaring it Crown Land. Also, what is particularly significant is that usually this was the best watered land, suitable not only for permanent grazing but also for cultivation. In a sample interview of pastoralists around Moroto in April 1981, over half claimed they had lost land to colonial officialdom at some point. One had lost his land to the building of a sub-county headquarters. On another’s land, a school had been built. A third had his land fenced by a British District Veterinary Officer. And so on.

The third phase took place in the fifties. Once again, it included some of the better land in the district — 486 square miles of land were fenced off and declared a game reserve. It included the Kidepo River and the surrounding valley.

The fourth phase is the most recent, beginning in the 1960s. Following in the footsteps of colonial administrators, like the Veterinary Officer who fenced off land for his personal enrichment, local petty bourgeois began the same practice. Opuli-Watum (1980) records instances where, in places like Moru-Ajore, Lolekek, Lomomnyangae, Lodung, well-connected individuals have fenced plots of land at the expense of the broad masses.

The relationship between the loss of such large amounts of land and soil erosion in the remaining area was clear to even some colonial officials. The loss of grazing ground increased the concentration of cattle. What were previously demarcated as dry season grazing areas, like the western grounds, were now grazed well into the wet season. The immediate result was to reduce the bulk of grass available for burning in the following dry season, followed by a double consequence. On the one hand, as grazing ground decreased, the people started to cut down forests on mountain slopes and burn them to turn them into grazing ground. In 1962, Parsons commented:

All the mountains of Karamoja today support a vegetative cover that is a mixture of fire-induced grasslands and relict forest (p.60).
The beneficial influence of what were previously forest-covered mountains on rainfall was reduced, affecting the surrounding area adversely. On the other hand, the custom of annually burning a wide area to rejuvenate the grass savannah could not be continued.

The cessation of annual burnings accelerated the growth of termite and harvester ant populations. Harvester ants wreaked havoc destroying the plant cover on the ground. With exposure to the sun, the loss of soil moisture followed. The cumulative result of this process of erosion was a complete vegetational change. What was once grass savannah now turned into bushland with little grass. Much of Karamoja country became huge expanses of barren soil punctuated with shrubs. Wilson described this process in the following words:

> Overgrazing of the centrally situated grasslands has taken place and is still taking place. This had led to widespread sheet erosion of the biologically active top soil and the loss of much potential soil moisture. The continued loss of soil moisture plus overgrazing has led to the virtual destruction of what were grass savannas and the invasion and multiplication of bushland and thicket-forming trees and shrubs with a very poor coverage. What was once good pasturage is now only marginal ground (p.52).

The problem in the eyes of colonial officials like Wilson and others, however, was the 'overgrazing' of land — because of the 'overstocking'. The solution thus was to 'de-stock' the herds. If we do away with this clinical language designed to make a brutal reality palatable, it means the following: having grabbed the people's land, the only way to restore a balance between limited grazing pastures and livestock was to grab the people's cattle!

Thus began a 'de-stocking' campaign. For political reasons, however, the campaign was disguised to appear as the natural result of the forces of supply and demand. But, as we shall see, the whole exercise was closely supervised, from its beginning in 1934 to independence. Also, instead of solving the problem, it intensified the exploitation of the people of Karamoja.

**Intensified Colonial Exploitation as Solution to the Problem of Soil Erosion**

The original stock market was established in Bugisu in 1934. It was extended to Karamoja in 1935. The Veterinary Department's report for the year 1938 states in no uncertain terms that the point of the market was 'to enable the people to attack their problem of overstocking and soil erosion for themselves without any recourse to drastic legislation'. The point was not only to acquire cattle from the people, but to do so under the guise of a voluntary sale. Let us see how this system functioned in Karamoja.

The first step was to set up a system of taxation: poll tax, African Local Government tax, etc. The efficiency of the tax-gathering bureaucracy was ensured by making the income of chiefs directly dependent on the amount of taxes they collected, and not on the total civilian population under their direct administration. There were thus five levels of payment for sub-chiefs in Karamoja, according to whether they collected taxes from 500, 700, 1,000, 2,000 or over 2,000 persons (see African Local Government Estimates for 1950).

The second step was to open cattle-buying posts where the government-run Karamoja Cattle Scheme was appointed the monopoly buyer. Given this monopoly, the colonial government was now able to set buying prices for cattle
administratively, and in such a way that for the people to get enough money to pay their taxes they would have to sell the government a certain number of cattle! That the volume of cattle sales was directly related to the need for cash to pay taxes is clear from the Annual Report of the Treasurer for 1934. That year, the estimated tax revenue of the government of £3,600 was exceeded by £1,650.15 shillings. The treasurer explained: ‘The opening up of the cattle trade in the District enabled more natives to pay their taxes’ (p.16).

Government-set cattle prices in different parts of the colony varied enormously. No official prices are available for Karamoja. But we can compare prices in Lango, where the point of the cattle trade was also to ‘de-stock’ herds, with those in Buganda to make our point. In 1939, average price paid for cattle was shs27/- in Lango but shs72/- in Buganda; in 1943 it was shs45/- and shs86/-; in 1947 it was shs87/- and shs160/-, according to the Veterinary Department Annual Reports for 1945 and 1947. When in 1964, the government monopoly in cattle buying in Karamoja was ended in favour of private traders, the officially set average price of shs.178/- steeply rose to shs258/-!

The number of cattle sold at the auctions was numbered in thousands every year. The profits of the Karamoja Cattle Scheme also ranged in thousands of pounds, always being the largest single revenue earners, even more than the African Local Government Tax. Below is a comparison of revenue earned from these two sources between 1949 and 1953:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1949</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Local Govt Tax</td>
<td>£7,029</td>
<td>£7,065</td>
<td>£7,235</td>
<td>£7,740</td>
<td>£13,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karamoja Cattle Scheme Profits</td>
<td>£8,700</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>£13,000</td>
<td>£19,000</td>
<td>£19,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: African Local Government Estimates for Northern Province*

The Karamoja Cattle Scheme thus came to perform a dual function. It was not only a vehicle for ‘de-stock’ herds; it also turned a handsome profit for the government. The Karamojong were fleeced, as it were, twice!

The colonial monopoly of the cattle trade was relaxed on two occasions, and then shared with British monopolies. The first time was during the war. Liebig’s Ltd, a British monopoly based in Kenya, was allowed to purchase large numbers of Karamoja cattle for canning of meat at its Athi River factory.

**Cattle Bought by Liebig’s Ltd from Karamoja**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>15,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>10,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>10,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>11,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57,982</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Veterinary Department Annual Report, 1964*

The second instance of monopoly-sharing was just before independence. With the colonial administration preparing to leave the scene, it invited local subsidiaries of British companies to take over the cattle trade. The biggest of these was Fresh Foods Ltd, a subsidiary of A. Baumann Ltd. It entered the market in 1960, purchasing 7,145 of the 21,685 cattle sold for ‘export’ from Karamoja. In 1961,
its purchases were 22,668 out of a total ‘export’ sale of 36,217. What Fresh Foods did not buy went mainly to a government established meat packing factory, set up in Karamoja at Namalu in 1954 to export canned meat to the British garrison in Aden. To the people, it was this factory that came to symbolise the theft of their cattle at nominal prices.

A major anti-colonial resistance movement developed in the 1950s and its focus became the factory at Namalu. The people demanded its closure. Even the coming of Independence in 1962 did not de-fuse this movement. The new government was forced to respond. In 1964 it moved the factory out of Karamoja to Soroti (Opuli-Watum). Cattle were still sold, and meat was still packed, but out of sight of the people of Karamoja! The system was re-formed!

Further Land Acquisition: The Kidepo Valley National Park as a Second Solution

The National Parks Ordinance was enacted in March 1952. By official decree, large masses of land in northern and western Uganda were taken by the government and fenced. Re-named Murchison Falls National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park, these became vacation spots for the propertied classes, mainly foreign. In 1953, tremendous popular agitation developed against this compulsory land acquisition. It was led by the Uganda National Congress. Its demand: land belongs to the people.

Land in the Kidepo Valley in Karamoja was also acquired by the colonial government through legal fiat in 1958. Then it was termed a Game Reserve. In 1962, it was declared a National Park. For the people, however, the difference was nominal. In a game reserve, hunting without a licence is prohibited as it is in a national park; both are equally fenced. Only a national park is actively developed for tourism.

The Kidepo Valley National Park comprised 486 square miles of land with an average rainfall of 30-40 inches. According to Wilson of the Department of Agriculture, it was land suitable for not only grazing but also for the cultivation of cotton or cereals.

Now, it is a historical fact that, at a certain level of social development, there has always been contention between people and animals for the best land. In Karamoja, too, that was the case. Before this struggle could be resolved in favour of the people, British imperialism came on the scene. It was the intrusion of a third force. The land would be used neither for the benefit of local people nor for local animals but for ‘international tourism’. The official government brochure on the Park, addressed to the foreign tourists, said:

Uganda's third, newest, remotest, and by general consent scenically the most astonishing national park is the Kidepo Valley National Park. . . Kidepo will appeal to those who like their nature raw and undisturbed.

My point is neither for nor against national parks. It is simply that all resources, land and animals included, should be utilised to maximise the welfare of the people. And this was hardly the consideration of those who fenced land in Kidepo Valley to create a ‘National Park’ for ‘international tourism’.

The people from whom the land had been taken also understood this. They remained hostile. The promoters of ‘international tourism’ no doubt were
concerned. In 1968, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund gave £11,700 to finance a social scientist to write a report on 'Poaching and Attitudes of Local Inhabitants towards Wildlife in Uganda'. This social scientist, Dr Mary Jean Aerni, writing in the 1969 Report of the Uganda National Parks, came close to a glimpse of the truth: 'The dilemma of the National Parks in Uganda has been the separation of the people from their own wildlife because of the demands of international tourism'.

**Historical Context of Raids and Rinderpest**

Rinderpest is the most important epidemic disease among livestock in Uganda. In Karamoja, it is endemic. For its constant recurrence and spread, there are two reasons. Even though eliminated from the cattle population, rinderpest continues to thrive among the game animals in the national park. From those hosts rinderpest bounces back on its victims and spreads when conditions are favourable. This is why Karamoja has long been considered 'a rinderpest enzotic area constituting a constant threat to the cattle population of the adjacent districts of Acholi, Lango, Teso and Bugisu' (Mahadevan & Parsons).

Conditions most favourable to the spread of rinderpest include a heavy concentration of stock. The forcible acquisition of grazing land from the Karamojong, the resulting changes in vegetation and the search for diminishing pastures and sources of water were conditions that lead to such a heavy concentration.

The conditions making for cattle raids are not very different. It is clear from their reports that colonial administrators quite often recognised the major reason behind raids: worsening conditions of pasture and the chase beyond one's 'traditional area' for new sources of water and grass, and eventually for livestock. It is also clear from these same colonial reports that the years when the rains were exceptionally good were precisely the years when raids were exceptionally scarce.

**Conclusion: A step backward in social development**

In the 1920s, the Karamojong relied on three sources for procuring food: hunting, grazing and cultivation. In that order, these three sources represent a progressive movement in the development of human productive powers. Grazing is a more reliable source of food than hunting and agriculture is yet an advance in comparison to pastoralism under natural conditions.

Now, the point is that at the turn of this century, Karamojong society was in a period of transition, from pastoralism to agriculture. Hunting of wild game was clearly an ancillary activity, undertaken by young men at periodic intervals during the dry season when they moved in search of grass and water, setting up temporary camps. It is not true that the basic diet of the Karamojong was pastoral, milk and blood. In the *manyattas*, daily diet throughout the year consisted 'mainly of sorghum porridge with milk and sorghum beer with perhaps some blood occasionally for men', according to Parsons. Only when young men went into temporary camps during the dry season, did they rely mainly on milk and blood as their daily diet. Even then, a secondary source of food remained the game they hunted and the sorghum their women occasionally brought them.

The principal impact of British colonialism on the productive life of the Karamojong was to throw them back on a pastoral life as the predominant way of procuring their livelihood. It was to choke the transition to an agricultural way of
life well under way. Not only did hunting come to a close, for with the game reserves set up, hunting was now 'poaching'; possibilities for agriculture were also severely constricted as large areas of land most suited to agriculture, including the land that was demarcated as a national park, were confiscated. Colonial authorities, like Parsons, noted the progressive decline of cultivated acreage per head of population in Karamoja: in 1948, it was an average of 0.76 acres per head; by 1959, it had come down to an acreage 0.56 acres per head.

The social scientist hired by the Rockefeller Fund, Dr Mary Jean Aerni, grasped this fact empirically when she described the dilemma of the Napore tribe in the Karamojong nationality. The Napore, she argued, were 'handicapped by an adverse environment and conditions of drought'. Napore men as well as women 'are willing to be cultivators', but the option was not a real one. They were even willing to enter the wage-labour market, but possibilities were 'scarce'. Without a historical perspective on the problem, and tied to the Rockefeller string, she could see no way out.

The dilemma she described was real, but it was viewed from a short-run perspective. The Karamojong had been cut off both from their past (hunting) and from their future (agriculture). They were left to endlessly suffer the crisis of pastoralism with insufficient land and continuously deteriorating environmental conditions. Within the context of the system devised by imperialism, they were left with no option. It is as if they had reached a cul-de-sac, a dead end on a one-way street!

How you define a problem determines the solution you advance. Those who see the Karamoja famine as an internally-generated affair, the result of a combination of a backward way of life and an inhospitable natural environment, see the solution as coming from the outside. They look to philanthropic organisations from imperialist countries as the agents who will deliver the people of Karamoja from their present dilemma! The point of this paper is that the Karamoja problem was created in the first place by imperialism. A long-run solution to this question is not possible without questioning the very system set up by imperialism. And to question that system is not possible without the initiative returning to the people themselves.

For a society, unlike the individual, there is never a dead end. Even in the depths of the worst exploitation, it is possible to identify forces that stand for progress and those that impede it. Such an identification in the Karamoja case requires moving away from the liberal perspective. For the liberal perspective, with its emphasis on philanthropy as the solution, has always seen the people as the problem. Its uncritical, 'natural' bent has always been to blame the victim!

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Merchant Capital and Underdevelopment in Sierra Leone

A.B. Zack-Williams

This article follows up the theoretical work of Kay on the relationship between merchant capital and underdevelopment with an empirical study. Merchant capital in the form of trading enterprises came to Sierra Leone to extract raw materials and sell manufactured goods. Zack-Williams details this process and briefly examines its effects on the social formation. He notes the failure of merchant capital to transform the social formation and as a corollary to make the transition to industrial capital through investment in manufacturing. Only the United Africa Company shows signs of making this transition and that only recently.

Despite the acknowledged importance of Kay’s work on merchant capital and underdevelopment, little or no attempt has been made to follow it up with empirical examples from the underdeveloped world. Here I want to examine the process whereby the Sierra Leone social formation became dominated by merchant capital and try to show that this domination persists. The approach of the paper will be largely historical, and the period under review will be divided into four parts: first, the early colonial period, 1896-1920; secondly, the middle colonial period, 1920-1930; thirdly, the late colonial period, 1930-1945; and finally, the period of the transition to neo-colonialism, 1945-1961.

In recent years, the question of underdevelopment has been premised on the nature of underdeveloped societies. Dependency theorists, led by Frank, have emphasised the capitalist nature of Third World societies, resulting from the penetration of industrial capital from the developed world. Furthermore the dependentistas have argued that it is capitalist exploitation that is responsible for the underdevelopment of these countries, and the development of the now developed world. It is this latter position which has been strongly criticised by Kay. He has argued that the explanation of capitalist underdevelopment in the periphery could be found in the special characteristics of merchant capital.

Merchant capital is trading capital, and operates in the sphere of circulation rather than production. It has no direct control over the labour process and derives its profit by engaging in unequal exchange in order to appropriate the surplus product of society. In non-capitalist society, merchant capital is the only form of capital, and thus has an independent class existence. In capitalist society, this independence is lost and it becomes subordinated to productive capital. Kay drew attention to one importance paradox of merchant capital: while it encouraged the dissolution of pre-existing social relations, merchant capital in its
role as agent of industrial capital tended to maintain the forms of pre-capitalist production and social relations in order to maximise the production of commodities for metropolitan markets.

It is in this role as an agent of industrial capital that exploitation ("the development of underdevelopment") occurs, and unequal exchange is an essential part of this process. Merchant capital from the advanced countries purchases raw materials from their non-capitalist producers in the underdeveloped world, and sells them to productive capital in the developed countries. These are then used to produce manufactured goods some of which merchant capital purchases for sale in the underdeveloped countries.

**Productive Forms in the Early Colonial Period 1869-1920**

The dominant mode of production at the time of the declaration of the protectorate (1896) was the 'subsistence' mode of production. The means of production (land and implements of production) were collectively owned. Production was still within the family, and the technology was rudimentary. Though most of the goods produced were for subsistence some, such as knives, hoes, cloths, mats and beds were destined for the local markets. Not only was family labour used, but slaves were used for porterage, and tribute was paid to the principal chiefs. The role of the chiefs in the articulation of these productive relations was crucial. Not only were they representatives of tribal unity, but they were custodians of the 'people's land', and also in consequence several became prominent slave raiders.

The earliest form (pre-dating colonial rule) which capitalism from the centre assumed in Sierra Leone, was that of 'trading capital', in the form of the colonial trading companies buying cash crops from the peasant producers and selling them manufactured goods. Exports included palm produce, kola nuts, piassava, gum copal, hides and ginger. Most of these items, in particular kola nuts and palm kernels, were obtained through 'forest gathering'. In many cases these extra-subsistence and monetised activities were carried out by women and children thus transforming pre-existing social relationships.

The role of merchant capital within the social formation became more widespread as a result of two important developments; the construction of a railway network, which was designed to facilitate the activities of the trading companies, and the introduction of new cash crops in the 1920s and 1930s. We shall return below to look at the effect of these new crops.

The declaration of the protectorate in 1896, was accompanied by the construction of a railway network, which reached Pendembu in 1908, a distance of 227 miles south-east of Freetown. There was also a branch line from Boia Junction to Kamabai a distance of 104 miles. The rail network covered the major produce areas in the country, and was the major infrastructural provision of the colonial government during this period.

The European trading companies were quick to seize the opportunity which the railway system provided. They started moving into the interior and establishing branches in provincial towns almost immediately after the railhead reached these towns. The railway had an immediate impact on the territory's foreign trade: between 1900 and 1918 exports rose from £362,471 to £1,516,871 in 1918. Over the same period, imports rose from £558,271 to £1,680,336.
Prior to the construction of the railways, the trading companies bought their goods through African middlemen and women and sold their manufactured goods through the same media. Now the companies moved in to control the source of supply of the produce and the means of distribution for their imported goods. This means that the European traders, with access to greater capital resources, were soon to edge the Africans out of the produce business.

Many of the larger trading companies were branches of manufacturing companies in Europe — examples par excellence of merchant capital buying produce below and selling above value. They also exhibited merchant capital's characteristic drive for monopolistic control of the market. We have seen the speed with which the companies moved in to control the source of raw materials once the railway had 'opened up' the protectorate. Furthermore, through the process of mergers, 'pools' and other informal agreements, these firms were able to create territorial monopolies for the purchase of the export crops. Another factor which aided the trend towards oligopoly is the fact that during the period under review, the companies had a free hand in fixing the price they offered to the Sierra Leonean producers. Profits realised from their operations in Sierra Leone went to their shareholders in Europe. No attempt was made to process these raw materials locally and little or no attempt made to train local personnel for the jobs carried out by Europeans.

In his work on merchant capital, Marx made a subtle distinction between commercial capital and money-dealing capital. He wrote:

Merchant's capital or trading capital breaks up into two forms or sub-divisions, namely commercial and money-dealing capital . . .

Money-dealing capital refers to 'the purely technical movements performed by money in the circulation process of industrial — and commercial capital'. In order for these trading companies to operate successfully in Sierra Leone, local financial agencies were needed.

The first successful bank was the Bank of British West Africa (BBWA). It grew rapidly and by 1910 had branches all over West Africa. Though joined in 1926 by Barclays Bank (DCO), BBWA remained the leading bank in British West Africa throughout the colonial period. The operations of these financial institutions tended to generate underdevelopment and to foster financial dependence on the metropole. This is clear from the policy of transferring the reserves to the London Head Office to be invested in the London money market, thus depriving the territory of potential investable funds. Furthermore, the discriminatory policy of the banks against African businesses tended to reinforce the dominance of the trading companies.

The Middle Colonial Period 1920-30

This period was marked by three important developments: The consolidation of the trend towards European oligopolies, the rise of the Lebanese traders, and the introduction of a number of new cash crops. Though the tendency towards oligopoly was becoming apparent in the early years of colonialism, it was in the middle colonial period that it took momentum with 'rationalisation' and the concentration of power in the hands of a small number of important trading companies. This was largely a response to the fall in prices of raw materials. For example, the price (£ per ton) of palm kernels fell from £15.75 in 1924 to £5.50 in
1931. The depression of 1921 and 1929-35 (see below) eliminated most of their rivals. Their elimination meant that a large firm operating exclusively in one area could offer the peasant producer the price that was in line with the company’s policy of profit maximisation. The fact that the companies had complete freedom to fix the prices they offered to the peasant producer during this period renders credence to this conclusion. The middle colonial period, because of the need for rationalisation, unlike the preceding period, was one that favoured large-scale enterprises. Large purchases could make all the difference between profit and loss. Furthermore, the fact that the large companies were allied to manufacturing interests in Europe gave them an advantage over the smaller companies as well as over the African traders.

The important point to note is that the operation of these companies remained unsophisticated. According to Crowder, they:

... bought the peasant’s export crop for processing in the factories of Europe and sold to him only goods imported from those factories ... their capital investment was nearly all short term and the profits from it went to their European shareholders ... (They) did nothing to improve the quality of the cash crops which were vital to their livelihood.

In short they operated a ‘simple form of export and import trade’. They had no interest in revolutionising the productive forces, land, tools, and or the implements of production, of the peasant producers, since they did not have control over the production of the export crops.

European competition was not all that the Africans had to face. By the middle colonial period a new and highly competitive rival, the Lebanese trader had made his presence felt. This ‘new’ group had been involved in the produce trade since the turn of the century, but its impact on the African trader was not felt until the 1920s. Among the factors which accounted for the success of the Lebanese were their low costs, vis-a-vis European and African traders, and collective support. However, the key to their domination over their African rivals was capital.

The Lebanese were able to obtain credit from the banks and also from the large expatriate firms. Crowder has argued that the failure of most companies and the banks to offer credit to African traders struck a deadly blow at any attempt at commercial initiative on the part of Africans. The weak credit position of the African trader was due to his inability to provide collateral.

During this period, the authorities vigorously encouraged the planting of new crops such as coffee and cocoa. This was done through the chief, but these crops did not have an immediate effect upon the territory’s total domestic export. In 1920 this figure stood at £2,247,743, fell to an all time low for the decade at £1,069,803 in 1922, rose to £1,627,916 in 1925, but fell again to £1,047,339 in 1930.

The Late Colonial Period 1930-45
This period was a marked contrast to the preceding periods. The economy was transformed from one dominated by the export of peasant produced cash crops to one where large-scale mining industries predominated. Furthermore, the hegemony of the colonial trading companies was partially challenged by the emergence of colonial Marketing Boards.

This period coincided with the world depression, which was marked by a fall in demand and prices of raw materials. However, the crisis was only in the export
sector. Production of food for the domestic market increased and prices were generally very low. One consequence of the depression is that it forced the colonial authorities to rethink the policy of making the colonies pay for their own development. The result was the Colonial Development Act, 1929, under which the British government took general powers to lend money from its own resources (the Colonial Development Fund) for the economic development of its colonies. Sierra Leone's share went to support the activities of the Sierra Leone Development Company (Delco).

The geological survey of 1926/27 had established a number of minerals in commercial quantities. These included platinum, gold, iron ore, chrome, and diamonds. The first mineral to be mined in Sierra Leone on a commercial basis was platinum. In 1929, one mining licence and eleven exclusive prospecting licences were granted to European firms and individuals. The mining licence was issued to the African and Eastern Trading Company, which had been very active in the produce trade. Platinum mining shared similar features with gold and diamond mining. European and African capital operated in both industries; the exhaustion of the rich deposits led to 'tributing'.

The form which tributing took was very similar in the three industries. It consisted of a licence holder who employed other people to win gold within his lease. Tributors were organised in gangs of about five under a headman. All gold won by the tributors was to be sold to the owner of the mining lease at half price. From 1937 onwards all the important firms and syndicates in the gold field employed tributors. Tributing has been described as a symbiotic relationship. The employer was relieved of the burden of paying wages to labourers who did not contribute to his output, thus keeping down overheads and enabling relatively poor deposits to be mined. The tributors in turn were induced to work as hard as possible, since earning depended on output and not on mere physical presence on the working grounds.

In reality tributing is a very exploitative system with the incidence of the exploitation falling on the tributor. This can be seen from the mode of remuneration which later emerged in the diamond industry. If the licence holder himself recruited his labour force, then the winnings were divided — two-thirds for the licence holder and one-third to the tributors. Where a gang master was involved, 60 per cent goes to the licence holder, 30 per cent for the tributors and 10 per cent for the gang master (the latter is like a personnel officer to the licence holder). The value usually put on the winnings tended to be far below the true value at which they were sold. The latter was usually withheld from the tributors. At times, even the gang master would be ignorant of the market value of such winnings. However, in most cases the gang master and the licence holder connived and deliberately under-valued the winning. Little wonder then that tributors all too frequently withheld large stones from licence holder and the gang master.

In spite of the widespread tributing that took place in the mining industry, there were a number of large-scale mining ventures organised along conventional lines. In what follows we shall discuss two of these organisations: Sierra Leone Development Company (Delco) and Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST).

Sierra Leone's share of £500,000 from the colonial development fund was loaned to float a new company, Delco, which was formed by the Northern Mercantile
Corporation and the African and Eastern Trading Company at a 5½ per cent rate of interest. The terms the new company obtained were so generous that Kaniki has suggested that:

It is difficult to imagine how these terms could be more generous. The government of Sierra Leone was aware that the terms they offered were extremely generous, but believed the development of the concession would benefit both Sierra Leone and British Industry.

In order to aid its mining activities, the company undertook to build a railway line from the mine at Marampa to the port of Pepel, where a jetty would be constructed for exporting the ore. The first commercial export of iron ore from Sierra Leone was made in 1933. By 1940 iron ore was not only an established foreign exchange earner, but had outstripped gold as the second leading export sector.

In the early years of its operations, Delco’s employees were taken on for specific tasks and once these were over they were laid off. This point has been spelt out by Kaniki:

In this way the company created job opportunities and temporarily alleviated the unemployment problem, it also created unemployment by its free dismissal of employees who had just began to appreciate wage employment, and who might be unwilling to return to the rural areas.

In short, at this point not only did Delco depend on migrant workers (or semi-proletarians), but capital had not been developed to the point where labour could be separated from the means of production.

The Sierra Leone Selection Trust was formed in 1934 as a wholly controlled subsidiary of Consolidated African Selection Trust (CAST) to exploit Sierra Leone’s deposit of diamonds. The company had a monopoly to prospect and mine diamonds in the country for a period of 99 years. CAST’s belief that only one party (meaning itself) could mine Sierra Leone’s diamonds successfully meant that in the early years it had to enlist the support of both the colonial administrators and local chiefs. In the case of the latter financial inducements were offered in exchange for an undertaking to refuse entry of strangers into the diamondiferous chiefdoms. The company’s officials rather ingeniously tried to convince local people that diamonds, if touched without having been treated, could severely burn one’s fingers.

Like Delco, SLST spent most of its initial investments on infrastructure, e.g. staff houses and private roads. However, once production started the rate of exploitation was quite intense. For example, total diamonds recovered in 1933 was 10,346 carats, by 1943 it was 1,098,132 carats. Similarly, like Delco, SLST was heavily dependent on migrant labour in the early years of operation; and like Delco the level of capitalisation was very low.

One important consequence of the emergence of the mining economy was the growing importance of the traditional rulers in the monetised sector. We have seen how their position was enhanced in the 1920s when new crops like cocoa and coffee were introduced with their help. With the coming of the mining economy, the chiefs were able to use their position as guardians of traditional land tenure to appropriate ground rent. For example, the concession agreement with the African and Eastern Trading Company in 1927 stipulated that the Tribal Authority of Marampa Chiefdom was to receive £250 as annual rent. There was a
similar agreement with the SLST in 1933, which provided that the company should pay £7,000 into the Mining Benefits Fund, which was to be administered by the tribal authorities in the mining areas. There were also numerous informal agreements between mining companies and local chiefs.

Another feature of the late colonial period was the institution of statutory marketing boards. These were introduced in 1939 throughout British West Africa. For the first time the large expatriate commercial houses were subject to control by the colonial government. The latter now purchased the cash crops, with the former acting as its agents. Prices for these crops were determined by the Ministry of Supply, and their export was controlled in each territory by a Supply Board, which was in turn directed by a West African Produce Marketing Board. The nature of the Board’s operation meant that considerable profits were accumulated by the British Ministry of Food. In 1949 Sierra Leone Marketing Board inherited Sierra Leone’s share, and continued with produce buying on behalf of the government. In the years that followed the Board accumulated considerable profits which were invested in British government securities, used in promoting agricultural education, or spent on improving the physical infrastructure.

The Period of Transition to Neo-Colonialism 1945-61
This period was marked by three important developments: first, the expansion of the mineral sector to the point where it surpassed the agricultural sector as the leading export sector. Secondly, the implantation of a pre-capitalist form, the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme (ADMS), and finally, the implantation of capitalist forms of production in the import-substitute manufacturing sector.

The transition to neo-colonialism was accompanied by the emergence of the mining sector as the leading export sector. In 1931, the minerals accounted for less than 5 per cent of total domestic exports. This figure rose to 73 per cent in 1940 and by 1961, it stood at 86.7 per cent.

By the early 1940s it was becoming clear that the peripheral dependent economy of Sierra Leone was coming under increasing strain. The flow of capital out of the country was beginning to tell, and was particularly acute as no new capital of significance had entered the country since the mid-1930 ‘mining boom’. The government found it increasingly difficult to balance the budget. This led the government to abandon the policy of letting the colony pay for its administration. For the first time the colonial authorities thought of systematically planning the future of the territory as well as expanding the economic role of the government.

Meanwhile the colonial trading companies continued with the programme of rationalisation and streamlining of activities. Many concentrated in specific activities; others like the United Africa Company (UAC) withdrew completely from the produce trade. By 1956, the oligopolistic nature of the produce trade was more or less complete, with six European trading houses controlling between 82 per cent and 95 per cent of it.

In 1956, the ADMS was introduced, enabling capital other than SLSTs to move into the industry. It was thought that this would combat smuggling and pilfering from SLSTs lease. The ADMS shared a number of features in common with SLST: both used migrant labour with strong roots in the agricultural sector; their level of capitalisation was very low; and their operations marked the
beginning of a chain of exchange. In the case of the ADMS, the exchange process is longer, starting with the sale of the stones by the licence holder to a dealer (it could go from dealer to dealer), and from the dealer sold to the government buying office.

In his discussion on the crisis of merchant capital Kay noted:

This crisis of merchant capital can be posed in different terms ... as the rate of exploitation ceased to grow merchant capital faced a crisis. Initially it sponsored an increase in productivity by encouraging commodity production and with it an extension of the division of labour; but subsequently it was unable from its situation in the sphere of circulation to increase it any further. As its profits dwindled merchant capital began to lose the last remnants of independence and was forced to act simply as the agent of industrial capital. But even here it ceased to serve either its own interests or those of industrial capital. To survive as capital it was forced out of trade directly into the sphere of production; that is, it was forced to act as productive capital openly. At the same time productive capital which had previously restricted its activities to the developed world, finding its rate of profit from the underdeveloped countries ceasing to grow if not actually decline, was obliged to intervene directly. The result was a new phase in the history of underdevelopment: the inception of a capitalist mode of production proper in the underdeveloped world .

This phase to which Kay refers started in Sierra Leone during the period of the transition to neo-colonialism. During this period capital started moving into the manufacturing sector. The first example of such a movement was UAC which in 1954, moved into cigarette manufacturing through its *Aureol Tobacco Company* and into beverage brewing with its *Sierra Leone Brewery*. Two years after moving into the manufacturing sector, UAC withdrew completely from the produce trade.

**Conclusion**

In this paper I have tried to examine the different forms of capital that operated within Sierra Leone from the time of the declaration of the protectorate in 1896, to the time of independence in 1961. We have seen that during this time the dominant form of capital was trading capital. This was true of the European trading companies which dominated economic activities in the territory.

We also noted that with the exception of the UAC, the trading companies failed to make a transition to industrial capital. This was mainly due to the manner in which the trading companies (as merchant capitalists) were articulated with the peasant sector. As we have seen, merchant capital in Sierra Leone had no control over production and as such could not regulate production. In other words, there was no imperative on the part of merchant capital to develop and replenish productive forces. This was the task of productive capital which operated in the metropolis. In the case of the UAC, it had to abandon the produce trade, in order to move into the import substitution sector.

We have also pointed out that the trading companies acted as a medium through which capital was drained from the peasant sector to the metropolis via the national metropole, thus generating underdevelopment in Sierra Leone.

In the case of the mining companies, we have seen that their operation was quite rudimentary: extraction and evaluation of the primary products. This is why the African and Eastern Trading Company was able to make a smooth transition from the produce trade into iron ore mining. However, the mining companies
failed to establish what Bromley and Gerry have called 'a lasting, stable business with a permanent workforce'. This is because merchant capital as agent of industrial capital was seeking quick returns while the conditions were favourable. Casual labour enabled the employer to avoid getting involved in permanent social obligation.

Furthermore in the case of diamond, gold and platinum mining, we noted that African capital was relegated to the marginalised areas, which were the least profitable. This marginalisation of potential African entrepreneurs was matched by the strong competition from Lebanese and European traders, thus preventing the formation of a local bourgeois class.

The role of the colonial state was crucial in this process of marginalisation. The colonial state was the product of the bourgeoisie of the metropolis and as such could not tolerate competition. It is for this reason that the state did not take any active part in developing the productive forces in Sierra Leone. Thus industries which could have transformed these raw materials into finished products were not established since this might pose a threat to industries in the metropolis. The interests of the metropolitan country were paramount in its dealings with the colonies through the Colonial Development Fund and the Statutory Marketing Boards.

Furthermore, in order to protect its interests, merchant capital, through the instrument of the colonial state, tried to ally its interests with those of the traditional rulers, thus strengthening the position of the latter vis-a-vis other social classes in Sierra Leone. In this way the traditional rulers were able to accumulate capital, by appropriating ground rent. Much of this accumulated capital was spent on imported goods from the metropolis.

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HISTORICAL SOURCES ON SIERRA LEONE:

ON THE SIERRA LEONE ECONOMY:
MOZAMBIQUE BEFORE THE SECOND PHASE OF SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT

In Mozambique, socialism is the stated objective, reflected consistently in the many political reforms since Independence in 1975. Today a dominant theme in statements about Mozambique's socialist goals is that of material progress on a broad level, witness this from a Frelimo address in October 1980 at the International Scientific Conference in Berlin:

The building of socialism in our country required first of all the overcoming of under-development and putting an end to misery, hunger, disease, poverty, illiteracy and shortage of housing. For this reason we have declared war on under-development on all fronts.

Shortly after this type of declaration was first made in 1979, President Samora Machel himself initiated a series of actions against inefficiency and corruption in all sectors of production, actions popularly known as 'The Political and Organisational Offensive'. Today regarded by the Frelimo party as a permanent feature of the class struggle, the Offensive is no longer confined to sectors of production.

One of the driving forces of the Offensive is the issue of the role and forms of popular participation in Mozambique, a central concern within Frelimo since the early days of armed struggle:

In order to guarantee victory we reckon it is fundamentally necessary to strengthen the popular links of our institutions within the state apparatus, the enterprises and other economic and social structures as well as in the party itself. That is why we have fought without respite against the rise of petty bourgeois ways in leading positions, manifestations of bourgeois ideology, liberalism, left-wing extremism, corruption, indiscipline, neglect, sagging productivity and irresponsibility. This process we call taking the political and organisational offensive. (Berlin Conference)

The present paper concentrates on what the Offensive discloses of trends in political development in a dynamic and active period leading up to the Fourth Congress of Frelimo.

In February 1976 the Eighth Central Committee of Frelimo passed a number of important resolutions on the organisation of the party, the state subordination to popular assemblies, the strategy of communal villages in rural areas etc, leading up to the Third Congress of Frelimo which in 1977 merged these into an overall strategy of economic and social policies.

Referring to the experiences of the armed struggle the Central Committee emphasised the necessity of searching not for the technically most advanced
solution but for one which required popular participation both in decision-making, and in the implementation: 'It is this constant search for popular solutions to each problem which permits us to confront the serious problems emerging and succeed in resolving them on the basis of our own forces'. (National Commission of PCs, Maputo, 1977)

In the state apparatus serious attempts were made to introduce collective methods of work. Productivity Control Councils were to be formed to study and resolve all sorts of problems within government departments. In the hospitals, following the directives of the president, Ward Councils were formed as collective workers' management. In industry, the old 'Dynamising Groups' (GD's) were to have more restricted areas of responsibility, giving room for more firmly worker-based Production Councils through which the workers '... can participate in an active, collective and conscientious way in discussing and resolving the problems, in particular those related to production and productivity ...' (First National Seminar on the State, Maputo, 1977)

It should be stressed that workers' organisations were nowhere intended to replace management structures. Democratic centralism and separation of administrative and political responsibility were the guiding principles of work. Political responsibility in principle rested with the GD's, who since their creation had been functioning as representatives of Frelimo in the workplace or residential area. Frelimo was a front organisation embracing all those prepared to participate as militants in the struggle against colonial rule. GD members therefore represented different strata and tendencies.

The Third Congress of Frelimo in February 1977, analysing the requirements in a phase of intensified class struggle, decided to change the liberation movement into a vanguard party of the workers and peasants, defining the strategy of development and giving political guidance to activities and work in all sectors of society. In 1978, party cells were created in the state apparatus, in industry and elsewhere. Thus three types of structures were gradually formed at each workplace, with, in principle at least, different responsibilities: the administrative management, the workers' organisation and the party cell. Their inter-relationship was, at times, not clear enough, leading to adverse effects on production. These problems were to be one of the targets of the Political and Organisational Offensive.

The first constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique provided for the creation and work of a Popular Assembly, 'the supreme organ of the state'. In 1978 the constitution was revised to include assemblies at local levels, performing their functions through the democratic principle of simple majority decision.

In 1978, for the first time in the history of Mozambique, elections were held in the whole country to allow every citizen to participate in the creation of popular organs designed to defend their interests.

The assembly structure is not independent of, nor a substitute for, the party. The hegemony of the latter is well defined, and the responsibility of the assemblies lies first of all in controlling and supporting the state in its execution of the directives and policies defined by the party. The National Assembly is responsible for legislation, approval of state budgets and central plans, as well as for assemblies on lower levels and their functioning.
Development, Planning and Organisational Obstacles
The first of three years of Independence were characterised by intense efforts to counter the effects of the exodus of Portuguese settlers who had held a virtual monopoly on all positions of responsibility. The restructuring of state and management structures, the creation of popularly based organs of mobilisation and control, including the democratic mass organisations, and the formation of the vanguard party as the guarantor of the interests of the working masses, was to be the new institutional framework for the realisation of social and economic development plans.

Missing still were the plans themselves and the means for their preparation. In May 1978 a governmental remodelling created two new ministerial structures: the National Plan Commission responsible for co-ordinating all economic and social planning into central state plans; and the National Communal Villages Commission, with responsibility for the co-ordination of the Communal Village programme directly affecting 80 to 90 percent of the country’s population. In the same year, work started on the first central plan, intended to co-ordinate all activities in the state sector in 1979-80.

Although the overall picture is by no means clear, it seems certain that in 1979 a real recovery was underway only in some sectors of the economy. In others, this year itself saw the lowest production ever. On the whole, 1980 targets as set by the Third Congress were not achieved, agriculture being one sector with great difficulty in reaching defined levels. Thus as information about production levels improved, it became clear that special measures were required to identify and remove the obstacles preventing growth.

What types of measures to take, by whom and against whom or what, obviously depends on the perception of the obstacles. One of these was the extreme shortage of manpower and the drain of resources over into national defence in the undeclared war by Rhodesian and South African troops. With the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in December 1979, at least there was hope that the military burden in the future would be lighter.

It appears that the state leadership in its analysis had focused mainly on the problem of low work morale, inefficiency and misuse of positions of responsibility. The Portuguese model of strict hierarchical subordination had been replaced by more diffuse collective methods of work. Leadership and work management could therefore be a key problem in getting the economy moving again. And what about the democratic processes at this stage? Which should be the concrete manifestation of party hegemony in relation to the state, the production unit? These were among the central questions raised at the beginning of the Political and Organisation Offensive.

The Political and Organisational Offensive
The Offensive is a specific Mozambican contribution to the struggle for the victory of Socialism, for the world history of Revolution, for the consolidation of Socialism.

In August 1979, the Ministerial Council resolved to start elaborating a plan for the period 1980-90, politically defined as the ‘Decade of the Victory over Underdevelopment’. During its meetings the Council raised issues related to organisation and procedures both in the state apparatus and in the productive sector. Problems of bureaucracy, lack of discipline and leadership were studied,
and some very clear directives aimed at reinforcing the power of leadership at every level. In December 1979 the issues were raised again in a meeting with staff in the health sector, where the President dealt at length with the problems of lack of firm leadership, and the necessity of establishing clear hierarchical relationships of undisputed power of decision.

In January 1980, the President started the Offensive in the second largest city of the country, Beira, the principal port in the transit trade with Zimbabwe and at the time a centre of internal reaction and external infiltration. After inspecting port areas, factories and warehouses where many deficiencies were detected, President Machel moved back to Maputo and set in motion a process of visits and disclosures of totally unprecedented intensity and duration. Unexpected visits, equally unexpected returns a few days later, yielded discoveries which must have been the result of advance information from workers on the site.

Ministers led delegations to all the provincial capitals and started their work with methods similar to those developed by the President. And everywhere the picture was the same: warehouses with goods stored for years despite desperate shortages; essential spare parts or raw materials not reaching their destinations; disorganisation in ports, airports, hospitals; work sites paying salaries to people turning up only on pay-day. The state shop system created to preserve all abandoned shops after Independence was a disaster, employing large numbers of staff at high salaries but without any goods to sell. The national housing authority, APIE, was a centre of advanced corruption in the distribution and use of the housing stock.

The immediate effect of the Offensive, apart from the dismissal and detention of people in leading positions during the campaign itself, was the decision to drop three ministers from the government. But more was to come. In early April 1980, a general remodelling was announced: two important party leaders, Marcelino dos Santos and Jorge Rebelo, were relieved of their ministerial portfolios to carry out their party functions on a full-time basis. New ministries were created, ministers and vice-ministers appointed and leading members of the defence forces and the national bank given ministerial status. Other decisions led to a change of provincial governors and ambassadors. Contrary to Western interpretations the explicit intention was 'to ensure that the party exercises its leading role over state and the society in a concrete and operative way'. This recognition was taken one step further when the Central Committee of the party, in its Seventh Session in July, openly admitted its error in having, since Independence, paid more attention to the state machinery than to the party machinery. A number of far-reaching decisions were taken to strengthen the party and establish its hegemony over the state.

The general concern of the Offensive was echoed in the Popular Assembly which turned to analysing the problems in the state apparatus. The Assembly made it clear that it was erroneous to believe that the Offensive was now over. The Offensive was defined as a permanent instrument in the struggle against underdevelopment, against the internal enemy and for a radical transformation of Mozambican society.

Another phase of the Offensive was launched a year after. The 1980 plan had, on the whole, failed to reach its targets. The youth organisation, OJM, had gone in for severe self-criticism, reflecting the critical work within and by the party itself.
What considerably shook the country was the South African military unit which had infiltrated to the vicinity of Maputo and attacked houses occupied by South African refugees, killing some in the process. Shortly afterwards, an extensive CIA network with links deep into state and other structures was exposed.

The second round of the Offensive was made in a systematic and organised way. As the party organ, Voz da Revolucao commented:

A fundamental aspect which became very much clearer with the second campaign of the Offensive, was that the Offensive only has real results when it manages to get the local structures of the sectors and sites covered to ensure its continuity. The Offensive cannot be limited to a wind which sweeps and passes; it ought to be constant wind, although in certain more intensive phases it sweeps with greater force (June 1981).

The Offensive has also in other ways changed its meaning. Initially it took the form of a general hunt for the 'internal enemy': all those who through irresponsibility, incompetence, corruption, and sabotage, obstructed the way to socio-economic progress.

The second phase was directed to problems in the implementation of the annual plan. However the revelations of the Offensive had forced a number of more fundamental issues to the fore, leading to a kind of 'offensive' within the party itself. Perhaps it is with reference to this that the same issue of the Frelimo theoretical organ admits to the necessity of correcting some of its misconceptions:

The campaigns of the Offensive are precisely what permits us to submit periodically our theoretical conceptions our analyses, our conclusions to the test of practice ... What permits us to direct our actions more and more to the causes of the disease, and not just to its symptoms. This was the qualitative jump that the second campaign of the Offensive permitted, this was the great step forward we achieved.

'Power Concentrated, like in the Head of a Hammer'
Democratic centralism has been the guiding concept for methods of work and power distribution ever since the years of the armed struggle. Its articulation or emphasis has, however, varied over time. In his March 1980 speech concluding the first phase of the Offensive, the President summarised it as follows:

Let us say in clear terms:
At the level of each firm, the power is exercised by the Director.
It is the Director who organises, directs and controls the production.
It is the Director who decides.
It is the Director who has the authority to punish. He is the one responsible for discipline in the firm.

Democratic centralism, practised in the military sector and the civil administration of liberated areas, was not expressly written into the statutes of Frelimo as a liberation movement. Nevertheless, Chapter 7, on 'methods of work', of the Statutes approved by the Second Congress in 1968 contains the essence of what is meant by this principle: free internal discussion, universal acceptance of majority decisions, loyal co-operation in the execution of determined tasks, constant analysis of work and correction of errors.

In February 1975 an important meeting took place in the district of Mocuba in northern Mozambique. There, militants then moving into positions of political
responsibility through the district GD’s, met for the first time with the leadership of Frelimo. At this historic meeting the ideology and politics of the liberation movement were spelled out in a document guiding the formation and work of the GD’s. Democratic centralism and democracy were presented as the leading principles of all GD work. Reference was made to Chapter 7 of the Frelimo Statutes, and the whole text carried the message of collective decision, implementation, and responsibility.

A few months later Samora Machel, in his opening address to the Seventh Central Committee meeting immediately preceding Independence, spoke about the new society to be created. ‘... we want to appraise the energies, the capacities of each one of us, we want to appraise our talents, we want to have collective discussion, collective leadership ...’ That this was not just a theoretical point, is shown by the concern in a seminar on the State, a year later, over how to reconcile the principle of collective leadership with that of individual responsibility: ‘The existence of collective leadership does not signify that the leader limits himself to preside at meetings. He has to analyse his role as co-ordinator and synthesizer of the common thinking and also act in order to implement it, assuming his individual responsibilities ...’

Addressing the seminar, Minister of State Oscar Monteiro referred to President Machel’s meeting with the workers of the Central Hospital in Maputo. The directives concerning the creation of Ward Councils were valid ‘not only for the health sector but for all levels of the state apparatus’. Which then were these directives? The President had said:

It is there where they work that (the workers) first of all must be organised. It is there that we must urgently destroy the colonial structure, based on individualised, bureaucratised and anti-democratic management and substitute it with a new democratic and collective structure, which permits an organised participation of all the workers in the study and solution of the problems of the hospital. Therefore, with effect from today in every ward and every service section of the hospital must be created a structure of collective workers’ management. This structure shall bear the designation Council of the ward, of the laundry ... The ward council has the obligatory duty to promote regular meetings with the patients, at least every two weeks ... (Presidential Address, 6 October 1976)

In the sector of production, similar structures to those in the health sector were formed in 1976. Their relationship with management was a stony one, with workers having no access to basic data about the firms. Meetings with management, if any, were valueless. Thus from an early stage there arose the need to define the relationship between administrative and political structures in the firm.

In April 1977, the National Commission of Production Councils issued a set of instructions from which can be deduced the principles of division of power. The executive power of the firm belongs to the administration, and the management is its exclusive responsibility. However, in all matters regarding employment, training, discipline etc ‘... the administration has to obtain a previous consent from the political structures, without which no decision could be put into effect’. And a point which is made very clear in the document, all planning, management and executive decisions ought to be taken in collaboration with the political structures following a joint study of the questions involved.

The Offensive in its first phase appears to have contributed to reinforcing the old conflicts with management. It is not, therefore, entirely surprising to read in the
new party organ for communication with the cells, Boletim da Celula No.1, 1980, that in many of the factories collaboration between political and administrative organs does not proceed as it should. Apparently relations have deteriorated over the last year, and in particular since the March 18 speech. Referring to the presidential addresses, some directors or administrators refuse to let political organisations in on their work: 'Concretely speaking, the political organs are being isolated, marginalised by the managements which, pretending to fulfill the directives of the Party and the State, refuse these organs participation and involvement in discussions and solutions of the problems of the firm, including questions related to the fulfilment of the annual plan'.

The old conflicts of the first period of the production councils have not been resolved, only temporarily suppressed. Given what can be referred to as a sanction from above, the old relations of power quickly re-establish themselves. The same Boletim da Celula, stated that in order to succeed in his work the director is very much 'dependent on the help he gets' from the party cell and the production council. They have a fundamental role to play in the creation of conditions for plan fulfilment.

As for the workers' organisation, early in 1981 its national co-ordinating council resolved on a number of measures intended to increase its contribution to the implementation of the 1981 Plan. But at the same time, the council stressed the necessity to involve the worker not only in implementation but also in production planning itself. Furthermore, the conclusion of the party itself after the first campaign of the Offensive hardly accords with it accepting a subordinated role as 'helper'. On the contrary, a number of radical measures to strengthen the party were decided, permitting it to assume, in fact, the role it has in the constitution of the Republic and in its own programme.

**Party Reappraisal; New Methods of Party Work**

... our victories have been achieved through the intimate unity with the people, through the capacity of the party to organise and direct the popular masses, the society and the state. Whenever we deviate from these principles, slacken in their application, then there will be a set-back in the work of the masses and subsequent weakenings in the economy and the social organisation (Seventh Central Committee Resolution, 1980).

The Offensive started off as a comparatively limited action. To begin with, the party leadership only felt that there were errors in the state apparatus to be corrected. In the first years, party control over the state had taken the form of the central committee meetings deliberating social and economic questions and providing concrete directives, with party leaders in their capacity of ministers then controlling the day to day work of the state itself. Party cell membership in state organs were to comprise national director down to driver or servant, thus making it difficult to distinguish the party from the state within the state organs themselves.

One of the more far-reaching conclusions of the first phase of the Offensive was that despite restructuring and cell formation, the party itself was still too weak to really fulfil its functions as the guiding, controlling and mobilising force in society. It was necessary to fill party vacancies by picking the best cadres from the state or other organs. Party members must get priority in literacy, basic education, political formation. The creation of new party cells and admission of new members must be given a new push, and all ideological work including the
creation of party organs for internal information must reach much higher levels of activity.

What were the political and economic implications of this situation? Turning to the conclusions of the Eighth Central Committee meeting of December 1980, we find some clues linking up these concerns of the party with the Offensive as it was originally launched — to create the conditions for rapid economic development. The party had to play a leading role in the economic struggle:

... there can be no socialist plan without the party being implanted in all production units. Only the party can direct the workers in the process of elaboration of the plan. Only the party can create the conditions for a conscious, active and creative participation of the workers in the process of realisation (of the Plan).

... Only with the dynamic presence of the party, its militants in all sectors of economic and social life, can we guarantee the force required for the fulfilment of the plan.

In the production units, emphasis today is on the party structures, on the production councils and, to an increasing extent, on the main mass organisations, in educating, informing and mobilising the workers to participate not only in the fulfilment of plan targets but also in the preparation of the plan itself. To realise this task, the party had to be rooted in the people, in the working masses. This in itself, however, required that the party tackle some fairly serious deficiencies in work methods.

It was found, for instance, that the relation between the party and the people was weakened by some of its members who confused ‘party discipline with military discipline’. Such members were more concerned with ‘formal questions’ than with the basic questions of fulfilling tasks. In doing so, they ‘consciously isolate themselves from the masses, living in closed circles; decline invitations to participate in popular meetings or in celebrations organised by the people. Impregnated by the bourgeois spirit of structure they erroneously believe that their contact with the masses make them lose a pretended respectability. For these kinds of party members, to be chief, be responsible, necessarily implies to live far from the masses and be feared by them ...’ (Noticias, 6 July 1981 — Resolution of Department of Ideological Work).

President Machel returned to this when he summarised the experiences of the second phase of the Offensive.

Many of us still carry with us the stigmas of colonial-capitalist training. To work alone, not transmit knowledge to others, despise the opinions of subordinates, is to eliminate potential competitors, to guarantee one’s position. To lock oneself up in one’s office, not submitting one’s ideas to the test of practice, avoid getting close to the concrete reality and the problems of the people, not consult the case for its opinion is many times a manner of imposing oneself as boss. (Ministerial Council, 20 April 1980)

This known by the party leadership, how could it be rectified? The same tendencies had perverted the development of the youth organisation OJM, constitutionally a mass organisation. The party is a party of the political elite. Once formalism and elitism are implanted as a style of the leadership, they might be exceedingly difficult to combat within the party itself.

**Concluding Comments**
The Offensive is a strong campaign with a clear political message, a campaign
forcing the leaders to meet the masses, reaching out to find the means to crack the obstacles holding back development. It has paved the way for more open and concrete debate. It has permitted the admission of weakness, of mistakes and failures, thereby making it possible to tackle a problem from a realistic base, increasing the confidence that actions may give meaningful results. This open climate is in itself a very significant improvement, and certainly one of the necessary conditions for the campaign to have permanent effects.

We can see the Offensive as in itself an expression of the main conflicting trends in Mozambique today. One, the creation of a state-controlled planned economy whose functioning requires clear hierarchical subordination, strict management control and good workers' discipline. On the other, the strength and continuity in the experiences from the armed struggle, the essential principle of popular participation in any struggle successfully defending the interests of the majority of the population.

Within Frelimo campaigns and declarations are now giving way to new work methods, starting from more modest levels and aiming at gradual consolidation of gains made. Some good cadres are removed from other functions to become full-time party workers, but above all the party build-up is done through intensified education of the members, from literacy training upwards. The department for party organisation is turning its attention more and more to the actual conditions down at the base, the party cell, changing its national, formally 'correct', meetings into work sessions with local party structures in a district or a locality. Similar trends are in force in other departments.

If the policies of the first period following Independence could be seen as emphasising participation and leadership, the first phase of the Offensive seemed to try and create a balance by deliberately tuning down the collective aspect. Gradually, however, the collective aspect gained a new entry through the recognition of the role of party and workers' organisation in mobilising their members around the targets of the annual plan.

To understand the meaning of these political developments as reflecting, and also influencing, the balance of class powers in society, would require another type of study than that attempted here. The working class, though numerically not insignificant, historically is a weak political force because of its instability, low level of organisational skills and lack of organisational experience. This lack of a strong class basis for its politics is probably a very important factor behind the trends in party leadership, its expressed commitment to Poder Popular and the de facto politics of centralised hierarchical leadership. The material conditions for development remain unfavourable, and the party line to tackle them in alliance with uncommitted middle strata has complicated the political realities of the strategy for socialist transition.

Bertil Egero

THE INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR IN CHAD

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**THE INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR IN CHAD**

The Libyan intervention in 1980 irreversibly internationalised the civil war in Chad. The external regional and global aspects became far more important than
events inside Chad itself in determining what actually happened to the population.

The purpose of this Briefing is to update the previous one on *Libya and Chad* (ROAPE 21), exploring the international aspects of the civil war in Chad, and their effect on the nature of the prolonged struggle within the country, so as to explain how it was possible for Hissan Habre to win and become Head of State. After all, only six months before he succeeded in occupying the capital, N’Jamenah, it seemed inconceivable that a man who was effectively a defeated outlaw, distrusted and rejected by the majority of political factions in the country should be able to win against such odds. Habre’s success is due in no small part to his determination but, even more important was the way in which major powers saw him as a means of attacking and undermining Libyan influence in Africa and the Middle East.

Throughout 1981 there was a series of abortive OAU conferences in which Libya was pressured to withdraw, to which the Colonel truculently responded with claims that he should be offered the Nobel Peace Prize for ending the Civil War in Chad and that, since he had provided the peace-keeping force that the OAU itself had proved incapable of organising, the organisation should bear Libya’s costs! Nonetheless, it was clear that the Qaddafi regime risked being ostracised in Africa unless it changed its ways. Since Qaddafi was anxious to take over the OAU chairmanship in 1982 and legitimise his regime in consequence, this was to prove a potent threat. Even in June 1981, Libya proved unexpectedly conciliatory during the Nairobi OAU summit.

In addition, Libya was to discover that her opportunistic leap in the Chad issue would lead to reactions from another, much more serious quarter and further internationalise the whole issue. The threats to their security perceived by Egypt and Sudan led to major American interest in the issue of Libya’s intervention. After all, Egypt was the cornerstone of American policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict, a policy maintained, although with much less interest, by the new Reagan administration in Washington as it had been by the Carter administration. Sudan too, had a vital role in American strategy. Not only was it the only state to support Egypt in her isolation in the Arab World as a result of the Camp David Accords, but she was also a vital link in the chain of pro-Western states around the Ethiopia and South Yemen axis, with its implied threat to the entrance to the Red Sea.

In addition, the American administration soon identified Libya under Qaddafi as the major threat to the region’s stability. The Colonel’s regime was considered not only to be a supporter of terrorism — with its support for the Rejectionist Front States in the Middle East, apparent support for terrorist movements, interference in the affairs of neighbouring states, such as Sudan and Egypt, Morocco and Mauritania, and open terrorism against its own opponents abroad — but also a Soviet satellite. The Libyan interference in Chad, was seen as evidence of a concerted Soviet-inspired push into central Africa which would outflank strong American friends there and destabilise the region. It followed, then, that America would inevitably support opponents of Libya such as Habre, even if this ran counter to the proclaimed policy of the OAU and other African States.

The irony was that, for the Soviet Union, Libya represented a maverick ally who
could not be relied on to act in accordance with Soviet strategic designs. In fact, the Soviet Union has been at pains to keep out of regional disputes in North and Central Africa which involve Libya. Support for the Polisario Front has always been extremely limited and it took some four years for the Soviet Union to make any pronouncement on the issue. As far as Chad was concerned, there are grounds to believe that the Soviet Union, although providing a certain amount of technical help in the operation of the weapons systems sold to Libya, expended far more effort in persuading the Colonel to give up his Chad venture! In fact, American attitudes were coloured far more by ideological mis- and preconceptions, about both the Soviet Union and Libya, than by fact. Nonetheless, the months after the Libyan occupation of N’Jamena were to see American military aid flowing to Sudan and to Habre’s forces in eastern Chad as they reformed.

Consequences within Chad
These international features were all to play a major part in succeeding events and would aid in the complete overthrow of the Lagos Accords in the 18 months following the Libyan intervention in December 1980. However, they depended for their effect on a dialectic with internal factors that were also to play a vital role.

Foremost amongst these was the fact that the post-colonial settlement of political power — with the Sara south dominating the Muslim centre and north — had now been reversed. The south, now semi-autonomous under the comité permanent of its leader Abdelkader Kamougue, was marginal to political affairs in Chad, at least in the short term. Instead power had passed to the northerners and, after December 1980, to the Tebu-based FAP of Goukouni Oueddei with its support from the ‘Arab’ backed FDC of Ahmat Acyl, depending on central Chad for its recruiting bases. The FDC also had the all-essential Libyan support. There were other small groups — Frolinat originel of Dr Siddiq and the FAO of Mahamat Aba Said, with Nigerian backing — but they were marginal to the first two groups.

In fact the struggle for power now resided between two extreme northern groups, both based on the Tebu — the FAN of Habre, apparently defeated and in the east, and Oueddei’s FAP, the core of the GUNT (the transitional government set up by the Lagos Accords). This new emphasis on tribal origins in defining the actors in the political struggle that was to ensue mirrored a change in the ideological nature of the struggle as well. For some years, indeed, ever since the original split between Oueddei and Habre in 1976, it had been clear that ethnicity had begun to play an increasingly important role. Nonetheless, certainly until Habre joined the Malloum government in 1978, it had been possible to keep the original aims laid down by Ibrahim Abachta in view and FROLINAT had tried very hard to organise an effective national liberation movement. It contained many members from central Chad and the dominance of the Tebu had been muffled. There were even supporters in the south and FROLINAT itself had demonstrated a national concern when it demanded the release of the popular Minister for Planning, Antoine Bangui, in 1973.

However, after the Habre-Oueddei split in 1976 and particularly after the second civil war broke out in N’Jamena in March 1980, factional support became so important that it was ethnicity that ensured and directed support, not ideology.
Habre looked towards Borkoy and Ennedi, Oueddei towards Tibesti and Libya. The south looked after itself and central Chad suffered increasingly from misguided Libyan attempts to impose Islam on largely Animist populations and Arabic on non-Arab speakers who had long ago accepted French as a lingua franca. Habre, isolated now in eastern Chad and Sudan, was able also to look towards the mass of Chadian exiles there — several tens of thousands strong — as a recruiting base, and enjoyed Sudanese military and logistical help. It was quite clear that early hopes of FROLINAT becoming a truly revolutionary movement in Africa had been lost, as pre-independence characteristics reasserted themselves in the endless struggle as the 'Third Civil War' began.

Buijenhuijs, a noted commentator on FROLINAT, pointed out in an article last year that, contrary to what he had expected and hoped to see in 1978 — when he last visited the guerrillas FROLINAT's military victory had not reinforced the revolutionary character of the movement. In fact, he believed that the reverse had occurred and cited comments by Philippe Decraene, made about the period from August 1978 to February 1979 to the effect that quarrels between General Malloum and Hissan Habre related above all to ethnic and religious factors. Malloum supporters, at a time when the two men were supposed to be allies, accused Habre of favouring northerners, particularly his own Goranes (Tebu), while Habre's partisans claimed that Malloum wanted to perpetuate southern dominance.

He goes on to point out that the same was true of the later conflict in 1980 between Habre and Oueddei and sadly concludes that a truly revolutionary policy in black Africa inevitably comes to grief on obstacles of a political, economic and social nature, obstacles which FROLINAT had not up to that time been able to overcome.

In view of these features, it is hardly surprising that the most recent events in Chad have delineated with clarity these ethnic divides and patterns, while leaving the original nationalist aims of FROLINAT hidden in the shadows of the past. They have exemplified that feature of African political violence often contemptuously described in the Third World as 'petty bourgeois ideology' which, when manifest elsewhere, is typified as ethnic nationalism. The particular pattern they followed was as much the result of the way in which ethnic considerations were exploited by outside influences as it was the consequence of the ethnic divides themselves.

The first six months of 1981 were dominated by Libyan failures to crush the remnants of FAN resistance in eastern Chad, in the provinces of Ouaddei and Biltine, and by the renewed interest shown in west and central Africa by France's new socialist government. After the victory in N'Jamena, the forces of the GUNT, backed up by up to 10,000 to 12,000 Libyan troops and Islamic militia moved eastward towards Abeche. Northern Chad had already been cleared of FAN forces before the Libyan move on N'Jamena and the south had never formed part of Habre's support base. However, it soon became clear that the remnants of Habre's forces, over 1,000 of whom had actually fought their way east from N'Jamena in late December, were determined to resist.

The FAN forces grouped in the mountains north of Abeche and along the border with Sudan, so that by February, border towns and villages such as Adre, Guedera and Irban constantly changed hands. The Libyan forces, supplemented
mainly by members of Acyl's FDC, were increasingly forced back on fixed garrisons and had to resort to armoured columns and air support for effective defence. At the same time, disaffection began to appear amongst populations under their control and strong measures were taken — which only further disillusioned the populations involved. Finally, by August and September, the Libyan air force began to bomb consistently Sudanese border towns in an attempt to prevent FAN forces from sustained guerrilla activity across the border.

Their lack of success — not only did the attacks persuade the United States that Sudan was in imminent danger of Libyan aggression, with the result that $100m of military aid was rushed to Khartoum, but guerrilla activity intensified — led to a major attack on Libyan positions by FAN forces in September. Considerable losses were experienced and it was clear to all that Habre was once again a significant factor in the situation.

At the same time, the GUNT was coming under considerable pressure from African states through the OAU to come to some agreement with the FAN groups, since it was evident that the guerrilla warfare in the east could not be contained for much longer — particularly since every outside power wanted to see an end to the Libyan presence in Chad. This process had begun after the OAU summit in Nairobi, when Libyan discomfort with the general dislike of her Chad adventure had led to hopes that Colonel Qaddafi might be persuaded to retire from the conflict. Suggestions had begun to surface of an OAU alternative to the Libyan troops in Chad, but many states were suspicious and pessimistic about the chances of success. However, the momentum for Libya's enforced departure was gathering strength under the leadership of Nigeria.

The Nigerian role was heavily backed up by America, where the Reagan administration was anxious to embarrass Libya further after the Gulf of Surt incidents in August and by a surprising new alignment of forces. Nigeria found itself increasingly backed by the new socialist government of Francois Mitterand in its anxiety to remove Libya from Chad. From May 1981, it was clear that Paris was anxious to reassert itself in traditional French preserves in Africa.

To a large extent, the post-World War II relationship between Chad and France had been based on paternalism and a sense of comrades-in-arms as a result of recruitment by Leclerc in Chad in the early 1940s. With De Gaulle in power, the relationship reinforced the structural links that buttressed the whole of France's policy in west Africa, as expressed through the Union. Under Giscard d'Estaing, however, the clarity of the general's foreign vision was lost in a welter of contradictory attitudes. Not only did France try to maintain a role in supporting 'legitimate' regimes in west and central Africa — hence the surprising persistence of support for Tombalbaye in Chad, or the absurdities of French support for Bokassa until the latter became too embarrassing — she also tried to operate an aggressive policy towards Arab oil producers, particularly after 1973. The purpose of this was to counter French energy dependence on the Middle East by creating a similar technological dependence on the part of the Middle East. In this respect, the relationship between France and Colonel Qaddafi's Libya became vitally important, as the role of Libyan oil in satisfying French energy needs grew and as French exports — particularly of arms — to Libya increased. The confusion grew so great that, in respect of Chad at least, the belief
grew up in Africa that France and Libya had an understanding about the latter's interests in Chad, particularly after 1978.

In fact, alongside the proclaimed Giscardian policy of 'Africa for the Africans' those Africans who pleased France, that is — there also grew up the Franco-Libyan axis so that, in December 1980, the French government was one of the last to realise what had happened. In addition, French insouciance seemed to have depended on a further belief that, in any case, Chad would break up into two units. The most important, the south, with its cotton and large population, would form a francophile Sara-dominated state and the rest would be left to the northerners. Beyond this, France also apparently tried to exploit the Oueddei-Habre split, giving secret support to Habre, despite the Claustre affair (see ROAPE 21) while officially standing outside the conflict. The final mark of ambiguity and incompetence was provided in January 1981, when a contract signed in November 1980 between Elf-Aquitaine and the Libyan government for an off-short oil concession was made public.

The Mitterrand government, as befitted its socialist origins, was anxious to avoid the taint of previous French administrations, from the neo-colonial paternalism of De Gaulle to the self-interested and self-defeating cynicism of the Giscardian regime. It proclaimed its anxiety to partner African states within the context of an effective north-south dialogue and chose as its primary partner in the Third World the Algerian government of Chadli Ben Jedid. It emphasised its desire to avoid the interference in domestic affairs that had characterised so much of past French dealings with Africa, as well as too close an association with unsavoury regimes, such as Mobutu's Zaire, Hassan's Morocco or Bokassa-type governments elsewhere on the continent. It also proclaimed its intention to end the policy of using arms exports as a cynical means of ensuring French energy supplies. In other words, the close relationship with Libya that had characterised the Giscardian government was to be abandoned.

However, there was another strand to the new government's attitudes in Africa. One of the main complaints of African leaders had been the lack of forcefulness shown by France in the late 1970s, partly because of French perceptions of short-term national self-interest dominating over the longer term view typical of the Gaullist period. The result had been, in the eyes of African leaders such as Senghor of Senegal of Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast, that France had been unable to oppose activities such as those of Libya throughout the Sahel belt and particularly in Chad. Admittedly, towards the end of the decade, French forces in Niger and the Central African Republic had been strengthened, but equally, the French forces in Chad had not done anything to prevent the Libyan invasion. This they hoped the new Mitterrand government would change.

In this they were not disappointed, as the new president and his Minister for Cooperation, Jean-Pierre Cot, demanded that Libya should withdraw from Chad and insisted that French arms supplies to Libya would be halted until this was done. In fact, this demand formed part of a new toughness in French policy towards Africa, for, ironically, President Mitterrand revived much of the attitudes inherent in De Gaulle's West and Central African policy in his demands in Libya. The difference now was that, whereas the General would have acted unilaterally, President Mitterrand intended to act through the OAU or through powerful African states. Given the growing importance of Nigeria in West
African affairs, it was to her that France turned, despite the fact that Nigeria was not a francophone state.

France also, as part of her policy of supporting the OAU, decided to support the OAU's nominee in Chad, Goukouni Oueddei and the GUNT. This was to prove a calamitous mistake, although, at the time it fitted in with African preconceptions as well. By August 1981, technical missions were winging their way into N'jamena with offers of aid and support for reconstruction. The one remaining problem, from the French point of view, was Oueddei's continued reliance on Libyan military support and his inability to reject out of hand Libyan offers of political union between the two countries. By September, however, it was clear that combined French-Nigerian-OAU pressure was about to bear fruit and that Oueddei was ready to take the momentous step of asking the Libyans to leave.

The Libyan Departure and the Collapse of the GUNT
It was apparently during the September 1 Revolutionary celebrations in Tripoli in 1981 that Goukouni Oueddei, attending as an honoured guest, finally told Colonel Qaddafi that union in any form between Libya and Chad was impossible. Later that month Oueddei went to Paris and was received by President Mitterrand. Shortly thereafter it was announced that Paris would grant Chad one billion francs worth of aid and that France had renounced all thought of interference in Chad's internal affairs. The latter point definitely killed any lingering hopes that Abdelkader Kamougue may have had in the south that France would support a secessionist southern state — the prospect that had been held out to him by some sections of the Giscardian administration.

These two decisions, coupled with the increasing success of the FAN forces of Habre around Abeche and in Biltine province, were to be critical. Throughout September and October repeated calls were made for Libyan withdrawal before the next OAU summit in August 1982 by both Nigeria and France. The GUNT too began a gradually escalating campaign for withdrawal, first asking Libyan troops to withdraw from N'jamena and the airport in early October. Libya replied by agreeing to phased withdrawal, then offering to train a new integrated army for the GUNT over a five-year period — thus justifying an extended stay — subsequently by bombing Sudanese border areas again and finally by trying to force Oueddei to reconsider his rejection of Libyan proposals for unity.

Throughout the October of 1981 the tension mounted, as Libya dawdled, on the grounds that the FAN attacks made proper withdrawal impossible, and France called on the OAU to organise a peace-keeping force. At the same time, French support for the GUNT was emphasised by the supply of light arms from French ammunition dumps in Cameroon and the Central African Republic and the OAU was also guaranteed logistical support by France. Finally, at Cancun, during the abortive economic summit between north and south, Mitterrand made a final appeal to the OAU, America expressed her support for the OAU peace-keeping force and Algeria approved French proposals for Libya's departure.

This was critical in more than one respect. Until this point, American support had been expressed through the Sudan, with military aid to the Numeiry regime. Now, however, the Reagan administration was clearly prepared, no doubt as the result of French pressure, to declare support for a government which, until then, it had regarded as a Libyan puppet, the GUNT. Another fascinating, if marginal feature was to be the occurrence of a purported Libyan coup attempt in
N'Jamena. On October 29, reports in France claimed that a Libyan-backed force of FDC troops with tanks was attempting to overthrow the GUNT. It soon turned out that the reports were untrue and subsequent investigations revealed that this was a last-ditch attempt by disaffected elements in the SDECE, the French foreign intelligence bureau, to force France militarily back into Chad and to force war between Libya, Egypt and the Sudan. No doubt, it was calculated that American support would be forthcoming and that domestic opposition would thus be stifled as the policies of the socialist government in Africa were discredited.

Eventually, the ultimate move was made by the GUNT. On October 31 Goukouni Oueddei called for the immediate withdrawal of Libyan forces from N'Jamena and the surrounding area of Chari Banguirmi and the phased withdrawal of Libyan troops elsewhere on Chad territory by the end of the year. Colonel Qaddafi could hardly refuse, nor did he. Four days later the withdrawal began, catching both the GUNT and the OAU (which had imagined that Libyan forces would remain until the OAU was ready to replace them) by surprise. It was clear that French and American pressure together with the fear that Libya would lose the OAU presidency unless withdrawal took place, had forced Qaddafi's hand. There also seemed to be evidence that Moscow had declared it would no longer support even passively the Libyan presence in Chad.

The organisation of the OAU force to replace the Libyan army was delayed by those disputes so typical of the organisation. It suddenly appeared that no provision had been made for a force commander and that Nigeria and Kenya were in dispute as to which country should have the honour. The dispute took some time to resolve in Nigeria's favour and thus the formation of the force was delayed until mid-December, although there were Zairian troops in N'Jamena much earlier and France and the United States had guaranteed logistical support.

The result of the delay was to prove fatal to Goukouni and the GUNT. One consequence of the rapid Libyan withdrawal was to leave a vacuum in central and eastern Chad — to favour, so it was argued, the FDC of Acyl in becoming the predominant force in the GUNT and thus ensuring the continuation of a Libyan presence there. In reality the opposite happened. Although the FAN had declared a truce on hearing of the imminent Libyan departure, its troops soon moved into border towns and finally, on November 17, in Abeche, massive Libyan ammunition dumps were taken over. It was clear that Chad would not be able to oppose Habre's troops. As a gesture, admittedly now from a position of strength, Habre renewed his unilateral ceasefire. In fact, given the slowness of the OAU and the effectiveness of Habre's forces in the face of the disunity and incompetence of the GUNT'S own forces, it was becoming clear that France was in danger of suffering the same sort of humiliation in Chad as Habre had visited on Mitterrand's predecessor, Giscard d'Estaing, in 1974.

By early December, the OAU force began to move in. Only three countries contributed, Senegal, Zaire and Nigeria, and it was clear from the start that there was considerable confusion over its purpose. The GUNT expected aid in its war with Habre's guerrilla force, by then over 8,000 strong and a dramatic improvement on the 2,000 FAN troops that survived defeat in N'Jamena in December 1980. The OAU states involved now realised that there was no way that the FAN could now be excluded from any final settlement. They therefore
saw themselves as ‘keeping the peace’ — preventing both sides from fighting — while negotiations took place. As far as the Sara south was concerned, Kamougue prudently kept out of the way, both because the FAN was irrelevant to the resolution of the conflict and because he had his own problems with rebellious unpaid troops in Moudou and Sarh. Meanwhile, Habre moved slowly eastwards, towards the strategic town of Ati, and northwards into the DET region.

**Habre Wins Control**
By the start of 1982, it was evident to all except the GUNT that Hissan Habre was inevitably going to play a critical role in any final settlement. The French government, embarrassed by the failure of its attempt to support the OAU’s original plan for the solution of the war as embodied in the Lagos Accord, took refuge in claiming that its sole purpose was to support the OAU, force Libya out, help Africans to solve their own problems and aid in reconstruction. Egypt and Sudan said little. Not that they needed to for their preferred client was about to win. For the United States, the problem receded into the background, for the critical factor, Libya, had been removed from the scene.

For the OAU, the problem of finance was critical. The peace-keeping force had cost some 80 million dollars by then and the organisation was finding financial support for the future increasingly difficult. It was evident that Goukouni Oueddei would have to negotiate with Habre, but the GUNT’s position was so weak that he was not able to do so. By early February, two-thirds of northern Chad was in FAN hands and other strong points were falling to negotiation and inducement, rather than through military action, as the support for FAP and the GUNT fell away through sheer exhaustion.

On February 12 the OAU held an important summit in Nairobi. The meeting concluded that there had to be a ceasefire in Chad by the end of the month, negotiations had to start with Habre and elections for a proper government had to take place by the end of the following June. At that time, the OAU force would be withdrawn. The conference had, in fact, neatly reversed long-standing OAU policy and left the GUNT completely isolated. In four short months Oueddei and the GUNT had moved from support from France, francophone Africa, the OAU and the United States to no support at all, not even from the Sara south, where Abdelkader Kamougue, prudently sensing the future, began to criticise his erstwhile allies in the GUNT. France too suddenly realised that the GUNT had no future and, on February 19, stopped arms supplies to its forces on the grounds that the GUNT lacked unity.

The GUNT was left with its obdurate refusal to negotiate and a bleak future as Habre’s forces moved closer and closer to N’Jamena. In the next three months the noose around N’Jamena closed and those who could left the doomed provisional government. Kamougue in the south began to argue for a federal Chad, so that the issue of who controlled in N’Jema would not directly affect the Sara heartlands and the control of the all-important cotton crop. The OAU, sensing that there was little it could do, began to organise the withdrawal of its force in May. The GUNT, in a final desperate gesture, reorganised itself, but it was useless and, on June 6, Habre’s troops took N’Jamena after a few hours of fighting. Oueddei fled to Cameroon and eventually to Algeria. Others, such as
Acyl, after a short hesitation made their peace with Habre. Soon it was clear that the war was at an end.

The only remaining problem was in the south. There, Kamougue was attempting to maximise his autonomy by delaying agreement with the new authorities in N'Jamena, arguing for a federal state, whereas Habre clearly intended to restore a unitary state, although this time under northern control. Kamougue forgot, however, that he was no longer dealing with the GUNT, where his role was pivotal. Habre had no need of his support and his power base in the south had been eroded by corruption and misrule over the past two years. At the end of August, a rebellion by disaffected FAN troops in Sara broke out. At first, France was accused by the authorities in N'Jamena of fomenting further trouble there in a belated attempt to revive the policies of the Giscardian era. Habre's supporters were suspicious of France, despite an agreement signed at the end of July recognising Habre's victory. They believed that France wanted to maintain the divisions of the country so that French business interests in the south would benefit.

Soon, however, it became evident that the rebels were anxious to remove Kamougue and accept the FAN authorities as the overall controllers of Chad. Colonel Rodai, in Sarh, broadcast his support of Hissan Habre and, two days later, Abdelkader Kamougue, in his turn, fled the country to Cameroon as Moundou fell to the rebels. By September 9, the United Nations announced that peace reigned throughout Chad for the first time in 17 years. All that remained was for Hissan Habre, proscribed rebel, sentenced to death for treason in 1981, to be sworn in as Head of State.

Chad and the OAU
Since Habre's success in removing all potential centres of opposition, Chad has been relatively quiet for the first time for many years. In December, despite rumours of revenge executions in the south, and the growing threat in the north, where the defeated Oueddei proclaimed a new government with Libyan backing in late October 1982, little has happened. Rumours of a new armed force under Oueddei's command, numbering some 10,000 men armed and trained by Libya, have yet to be confirmed, although, if true, they indicate a potent new threat to the government in N'Jamena. So far, however, the threat has been confined to Tibesti and Bardai.

On the international stage, however, Chad still exerts an effect. A 30-nation debtors conference in Geneva in December netted promises of 150 million dollars worth of aid over the next two years — half the amount Chad had demanded, given her critical economic plight, with food production sufficient for only three quarters of national need and per capita incomes down to 100 dollars per year. More significantly, though, Chad continued to have a pernicious and deleterious effect on the Organisation of African Unity.

The OAU, which should have been presided over by Qaddafi this year, has had an unhappy 12 months. Quite apart from the fiasco of the peace-keeping force in Chad — mitigated in part by the Organisation's pragmatic change of heart over the GUNT in February — the OAU has been split over the question of Chad and the problem of the Western Sahara. In addition, the United States has seized on the opportunity to counter the danger it perceives in Qaddafi by denying him the opportunity to head the OAU. This has been achieved by American co-operation
with moderate states, such as Egypt, the Sudan and Morocco, to ensure that the OAU Heads of State summits, held in Tripoli in August and November, should be unsuccessful.

On both occasions, the Summits failed because the necessary quorum of 34 states could not be raised. The reasons on both occasions related to the seating of delegations unacceptable to the moderate group of states within the OAU. In August, the threat of a Polisario delegation attending the Summit led to a walk-out by 21 states, with Morocco at their head. In November, although the Polisario problem had been resolved by the movement's voluntary withdrawal, the problem of Chad took its place. Qaddafi, together with most of Africa's radical states, insisted that a delegation from the now defunct GUNT should be seated. The moderate group objected, on the grounds that that government no longer existed and that therefore a delegation from the Habre government should take its place — as such delegations had in most international fora, including the United Nations.

Qaddafi, with his tacit military support for Oueddei in Tibesti and Bardai, could not agree and the Habre government, typically, refused to follow the self-effacing example of the Polisario Front and voluntarily not attend. As a result the November Summit collapsed. Despite the Colonel's threats of creating a radical African movement of the 30 states that did attend the Tripoli meetings — thus echoing the old Monrovia and Casablanca groups that preceded the creation of the OAU — a new contact group of 12 nations was formed to search for a solution to the problem. Thus the OAU remains formally intact, but many states now openly question its usefulness in view of the Chad and Western Sahara issues and its failure to intervene effectively in Chad earlier in the year.

It now seems possible that Libya will repeat its earlier interference in Chad by supporting Oueddei once again. However, it is unlikely that this will involve direct intervention, for the last experience cost Libya dear in terms of money, men and prestige. Nonetheless, the Colonel cannot ignore Chad, for, unless he keeps Habre off balance, Libya is sure to encounter problems in Tibesti and the Aouzu Strip. Habre has reiterated that the Libyan presence there is intolerable. Thus, to his chagrin at the failure of the Tripoli OAU Summits, is now added the genuine fear that Libya might lose Aozou. With such stimulants, it will not be difficult for Qaddafi to intervene in Chad once again. It is doubtful, however, that the OAU could tolerate such action without collapse.

**Conclusion**

In many respects, the civil war in Chad is a paradigm of the problems associated with the creation of nation states in the Third World and of the ability of outside factors totally to distort domestic issues for other, global purposes. It would have been difficult to imagine in 1965, when the revolt in Mangalme initiated the civil war, that France's post-colonial settlement would be reversed, that France herself would be humiliated by the Tebu north on two separate occasions, that Chad would call into question, the bases of French West African policy and that, ultimately, American perceptions of the threat in Africa and the Middle East of global communism would determine the ultimate outcome. Even as recently as September 1981, there were few observers who would have predicted that the policies of socialist France could be so calamitously overturned and that Hissan Habre would succeed.
The American dimension is most significant. It was, after all, specifically American concerns over Libya's involvement in Chad that had made it possible for Habre to reverse a situation which, in December 1980, seemed inevitably to favour the OAU-designated GUNT and Goukouni Oueddi. It was this concern that enabled Egypt and Sudan to give Habre the logistical and material support he needed, together with the facilities for recruitment, so that his FAN forces could be rebuilt for the final attacks.

For France, the situation is still embarrassing. The Giscard presidency caused massive upsets amongst francophone African heads-of-state because of French ambiguity, evasiveness and cynicism. With Mitterrand it seemed as if a latter-day De Gaulle shorn of his paternalism had appeared, even if the price was to be a new closeness with anglophone Nigeria and neutralist Algeria, together with America in the background. However, the errors associated with the support given to Oueddei and the GUNT — too little material aid too late and then continued for too long — together with the lack of prescience have damped early African enthusiasm.

The OAU can hardly look back on its achievements with satisfaction. Apart from the fortunate accident of reversing its policy in time in February 1982, not one of its initiatives has been really successful. The Lagos Accords collapsed in disarray in 1980 and the peacekeeping force, the first the OAU has ever attempted, turned out to be a massive irrelevance and to melt away in a welter of recrimination. Other African states, too, can feel little satisfaction. Nigeria, despite her wealth and power in the region, was not able to impose an effective solution. Cameroun prudently kept quiet throughout. Only Egypt and the Sudan can claim success — at least in the short term.

Chad itself, apart from now enjoying a precarious peace which will allow a certain amount of vital aid to be distributed, as famine and war damage take their toll and as the 200,000 refugees make their way back from Nigeria, Cameroun and Sudan, has nothing to rejoice over. True, the racism of Tombalbaye has gone and the Sara no longer will control. Yet the original hopes of FROLINAT for national revolution and liberation, with a democratic multiparty state to follow, have been replaced by a narrow ethnic tribal-based nationalism which will eventually exclude large parts of the population from a national role. Habre, once a Maoist and considered by most to be a brilliant opportunist, now claims to be a nationalist, although the precise national community involved is not clear. It seems unlikely that it will involve the south!

Yet, such considerations may still be long delayed. Although Libya has suffered a reverse, she is not fully excluded from the disposition of the future of Chad. Her troops occupy the Aozou Strip which Colonel Qaddafi still considers Libyan territory. There are Tebu groups which reject Habre and would accept Libyan aid. Queddei himself has recently demonstrated his willingness to carry on the fight with a pitched battle in Bardai against Habreist forces, the latter suffering heavy losses and retreating. Qaddafi himself has lost surprisingly little face over the Chad episode. He has been able to claim that he had acted on behalf of the OAU, that he had abided by the wishes of the GUNT and that it was America that forced him out as part of an imperialist attempt to intervene in Africa. Even the debacle of the OAU Heads-of-State meeting in Tripoli this year was explained away (in part correctly) as a further example of American interference. America will not tolerate Libyan interference again — with the Soviet threat that the
Reagan administration believes this implies — while Libya can do little else, for passivity to Habre will be considered domestically as weakness and loss of the Aozou Strip is unthinkable. So once again Chadians may become cannon fodder for great power rivalries in a new civil war.

E.G.H. Joffe

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Recent publications in France dealing with Chad include: Decker & Tonini, Pour le Tchad, (Sycamore, 1978); Buitjtenhuijs R., Le Frolinat et les revoltes populaires du Tchad, (Mouton, The Hague, 1978); Chapelle J., Le peuple tchadien, ses cacines et sa vie quotidienne, (Harmattan, Paris, 1980); and Bouquet C., Tchad, genese d’un conflit., (Harmatten, Paris, 1982).

THE POLITICAL CLASH IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 1981 NIGERIAN GENERAL STRIKE

Reactions to the 1981 general strike, which began on May 11 and ended three days after, varied (see ROAPE 22), being particularly bitter among the 'political class' of politicians, business executives and top civil servants. The term 'political class' is used to reflect Nigerian political life: numerous businessmen are party stalwarts and legislators, a number of legislators and other politicians have become businessmen overnight. Top bureaucrats formulate and implement policies — apart from directly participating in the award of an ever-growing number of contracts to party faithfuls and ghost companies (as analysed by Turner in ROAPE 5).

Competition, Status and Decisions
Different state institutions jostled for limelight and wished to be seen as the more crucial element in determining the outcome of the strike. The Senate and the House of Representatives had 'labour committees' seeking to outflank each other over the issue of the minimum wage. Legislators of both houses were united in their grudge against the President for excluding them from the final talks which ended the strike. Their status as the 'law makers', should, in their view, have been recognised by the President: both the Senate and House announced that they could not pass a bill on the minimum wage within 30 days as agreed upon between the President and the workers.

At the expiration of the 30 days the House beat the Senate to the draw by hurriedly adopting a minimum monthly wage of 100 naira, the going rate, against the 150 naira it had proposed earlier. This was clearly designed to make
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At the expiration of the 30 days the House beat the Senate to the draw by hurriedly adopting a minimum monthly wage of 100 naira, the going rate, against the 150 naira it had proposed earlier. This was clearly designed to make
things uncomfortable for the government and annoy workers for if finally passed into a bill, it would have left things where they were already. The Senate then adopted a monthly minimum wage of 120 naira. As required by the constitution both bodies met to reconcile their differences and agreed on 125 naira. Both houses are constitutionally competent to initiate bills on any issue and this tends to encourage rivalry. However, that apparently sympathetic compromise may have been a ploy to draw attention away from the fact that 125 naira was a far cry from 300 naira originally demanded by workers.

The Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA) was publicly accused by several trade union officials of using its enormous ‘slush funds’ to lobby legislators to adopt a much smaller monthly minimum wage. NECA and other spokesmen for industry denounced the new minimum wage. They argued that it would lead to massive retrenchment of workers in the private sector and that it negated collective bargaining, citing the relevant ILO convention adopted by successive governments to buttress the point.

The Counter Attack
NECA co-ordinated the private employers’ approach to the minimum wage and other issues. In most establishments, especially the labour-intensive ones, redundancies and mass retrenchment were the order of the day. Some of the more powerful unions managed to trade off reductions in fringe benefits for fewer redundancies. The more immediate sticking point was the employers’ insistence, loudly backed by NECA and Chambers of Commerce, on no payment for the strike period of three days. Further work stoppages compelled some employers to give in immediately and some others followed later.

Within the labour movement itself discordant noises were emanating from a number of unions in the public sector, the most notable being the Nigerian Civil Service Union led by David Ojeli. Ojeli, after failing to unseat Sunmonu as President at the 1981 February NLC annual conference, had tried to create a rival national centre, in which he seemed to be backed by the Minister for Employment, Labour and Productivity, Alhaji Adebisi Ogedengbe, by NECA, and by several legislators, including Bassey Etienam, Chairman of the House Labour Committee. Ojeli branded Sunmonu and his executive as ‘communists’ and maintained they were bent on throwing the country into chaos: drawing on his experience in earlier Nigerian organisations controlled by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Ojeli pointedly named his rather amorphous organisation the ‘Committee for Democratic Trade Unions (CDTU) — the NLC thought it acted more like a ‘Committee for the Destruction of Trade Union Unity’ and labelled it such!

The legal snag was that Ojeli could not openly declare DCTU a central body because two decrees (now Acts 21 and 22 of 1978), specifically mentioned the NLC as the only central labour organisation in Nigeria. The decrees were products of the military government’s labour control strategies which followed the 1976 probe into the finances and activities of four rival central bodies, and which provided for the ‘restructuring’ of over a thousand trade unions into 69, for compulsory recognition of unions and for automatic check-off union dues. Only a repeal of the 1978 Acts could clear the way for DCTU’s legal existence.

Preparing the ground for a repeal, the Employment Minister declared at a press conference in Geneva, where he was attending the ILO convention, that the
Nigerian government may have been violating the organisation’s Convention 87 on Freedom of Association. When he arrived back in Lagos the Minister further noted that the Acts contravened section 37 of the Nigerian constitution, which endorsed the freedom of association.

Within a few days two prominent senators introduced draft bills to repeal the decrees, supported by a large section of the press, legislators, the eight unions backing the DCTU and the business community. For added measure an anti-strike Bill was thrown in which provided among others, for, balloting before a strike, supervised by representatives of government, with affected employers and members of the press as witnesses.

As both sides marshalled their arguments and the NLC undertook a nationwide campaign against the bills, the illogicality and untenability of the Minister’s and CDTU’s positions became apparent. Indeed, the rather vague argument of freedom of association could very well be used to dismantle the present trade union structure created by the military, including the elimination of provision for compulsory arbitration.

An NLC pamphlet spelt out the other consequences of a repeal returning trade unionism in Nigeria to the pre-1975 situation. Multiple central labour organisations would create (a) rivalry among the centres; (b) incessant industrial actions aimed at outwitting the other centres; (c) in a multi-party situation, political affiliation of centres would lead to national destabilisation; (d) some labour centres might be restricted to particular states and serve definite religious interests; and (e) the transmission of these conflicting interests might be transmitted to industries and plants. The re-emergence of numerous ‘mushroom’ and housecraft unions could lead to (a) the re-introduction of multiple trade unions in the same industry so that management would have to deal with many unions and their claims and counterclaims leading to jurisdictional disputes; (b) these would lead to extensive disorganisation, low productivity and the destruction of the reward system. The abolition of the automatic check-off system could mean lack of funds to carry out such ventures as co-operative and economic investments, workers’ education or to provide benefits to members in times of distress; it would mean ineffective organisation of trade unions, dependence on political and religious funds and reliance on foreign financial aid with strings attached. The anti-strike bill was anti-social and against fundamental human rights and the bill that provides for voting before embarking on strike action should equally well provide for voting before a strike is called off.

The beauty of these arguments lay not in their profundity than in the fact there was something in there for everybody: the Nigerian Security Organisation (NSO) would rather not have foreign intelligence agents camouflaged, as ‘technical assistants’ from international labour organisations; several employers did not fancy having to deal with several unions within their plants; politicians were scared of rivals gaining control of the labour movement or factions thereof; most trade union officials rather liked the constant flow of funds via the check-off system; and from past experience workers had displayed extreme reluctance over calling off strikes even after agreements had been reached.

The proponents of the draft bills found themselves on the defensive as other legislators, prominent employers and even NECA decried the abolition of automatic check-off and other possible consequences of abolishing the Acts. Ojeli
was forced to shift his ground and declared support for the automatic check-off and the current structure of unions: only the section proclaiming the NLC as the only central body needed to be repealed. By October 1981 the bills were relegated to a subcommittee for perusal — the legislators' way of killing a bill. The Employment Minister was himself sent to an innocuous department in President Shagari’s October 1 cabinet reshuffle, and replaced by Dr Osammor, the Minister of Police Affairs whose experience with the police and security agencies probably qualified him to deal with labour.

Despite waning support from legislators and bureaucrats, Ojeli remained undaunted. In March 1982, he got two of the eight unions backing the CDTU to file papers with the Registrar of Trade Unions for the recognition of CDTU. The application was rejected on the predictable grounds that the Trade Union Act which registered the NLC as the only central body in the country had not been repealed. The two unions, the National Union of Hotel and Personnel Service and the Metallic and Non-Metallic Mines Workers Union, took the Registrar to court in May 1982 for refusing to register CDTU as a central body. They also asked the Lagos High court to declare the relevant Acts as unconstitutional, illegal, null and void and of no effect. The court reserved judgment indefinitely.

The Bureaucratic Squeeze
It may be recalled (ROAPE 22) that the general strike was precipitated by the issues of car loans and allowances, the minimum wage, and pension rights. The Nigerian Civil Service Union was particularly concerned about car loans, being the largest public sector union organising mostly upper and middle level bureaucrats, that is, those who would be entitled to loans. The uppermost stratum of the bureaucracy was hardly affected, given their extensive privileges, including a fleet of official cars at their disposal. The monthly minimum wage of 125 naira was only applicable to ‘junior workers’, those earning up to 3,000 naira per annum, while car loans applied to those above Grade Level 08 (3,000 to 12,000 per annum).

The strike ended on 13 May 1981. In early November, the head of the civil service, Grey Longe, sent a circular to all government establishments giving the top bureaucrats' own interpretation of the Minimum Wage Act. The circular, dated 13 September 1981, instructed that all workers on grade levels 01 and 02 and all but the last step of level 03, who were earning below 1,000 naira per month prior to the minimum wage Act 1981, be placed together on 125 naira per month with effect from 1 September.

Given that occupational titles were linked with status and differentials in pay and fringe benefits, collapsing four salary grades into one was bound to provoke fierce resistance. Ordering a chief clerical officer to accept the same salary as his messenger was perhaps carrying matters a bit too far.

The national executive of the Nigerian Civil Service Union met a week after in Jos, Plateau State, and in its communique rejected the circular and called on the Federal government to replace it with a more realistic and equitable adjustment in all salary grade levels as an interim measure pending the total overhaul of the public sector salary structure. The Union also seized the opportunity to reiterate its support for ‘democratic trade unionism’, ‘freedom of association’ and the continuation of the automatic check-off. It also recommended for inclusion in the proposed Trade Union Bill a clause specifically preventing employers from being
observers at any pre-strike ballot.

Throughout December union after union denounced the circular and by January 1982 several of them were threatening industrial action to effect a change. On 9 January 1982 Sylvester Ejiofoh, general secretary of the pro-NLC Civil Service Technical Workers Union, reminded the government that existing salary levels tallied with specific job assignments and by distorting relativities in this fashion, it would thus appear that grade level 04 was now the entry point for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. To maintain existing differentials, Ejiofoh recommended that the salaries of all categories of employees be increased by 300 naira per annum as a result of the 25 naira addition to the previous 100 naira minimum wage. This suggestion was hardly new; the National Council on Establishment headed by Vice-President Alex Ekwueme had recommended the same in August 1981 but was rejected by the National Economic Council, comprising all the 19 state governors, the President, prominent traditional rulers, ex-heads of states and former chief justices. As workers in his union got more restless, Ejiofoh wrote directly to Alhaji Shehu Musa. Secretary to the Government (as distinct from head of the civil service — the former is a new constitutional creation, a political appointee who liaises between bureaucracy and the President and his staff). In a letter dated February 16, Alhaji Shehu Musa asked the union to remain calm and co-operate with the government by ensuring industrial peace. In reply Ejiofoh thought that ‘concrete proposals would be necessary at this stage and to continue to delay issues would not arm us with enough courage to continue to appeal to our members to exercise more patience. This jibe aside, he proceeded to spell out what he considered needed more immediate attention, in particular the fact that the Federal Government had adopted the 100 naira minimum wage on 1 April 1980 without taking account of its own 1980-82 Incomes Policy Guidelines which had made provision for 15 and 10 per cent salary increases for the low and high income group respectively. As a result the current salary structure showed some serious distortions in the form of overlapping of wage levels especially as between levels 01 and 06. More importantly, the salaries of those on level 07 in particular had remained stagnant since the Udoji awards of 1 April 1974; belonging neither to ‘junior worker’ nor ‘senior worker’ (which starts from level 08), this category had gained little from recent adjustments.

There were sporadic ‘warning’ work stoppages. In late February the Civil Service Technical Workers Union embarked on a nationwide strike which was called off four days after the direct intervention by the Minister and the Head of the Civil Service. At the 1 March 1982 talks with the eight public sector trade unions, Government agreed in principle to add 300 naira per annum to the salaries of all public employees on grade levels 01 to 17 (not 07!), effective from the date the Minimum Wage Act was passed — provided this was approved by the National Economic Council not later than 23 March 1982. The government also agreed to set up the machinery for negotiating how the 1980 Incomes Guidelines would be implemented in the public services, and accepted in passing that no member of the unions should suffer any penalties as a result of participation in the industrial action.

Two things are striking in all this; first, that only industrial action is able to compel public employers to negotiate on any issue and, secondly, as with the awards of previous wages commissions, the upper stratum of the bureaucracy
seemed to benefit most from the proceedings. In this case, the minimum wage was meant for 'junior workers' but those in levels 07 to 17 reaped the additional 300 naira per annum. Meanwhile the bureaucracy was informing Hassan Sunmonu, president of the NLC, that it would not renew the leave of absence without pay granted him by the military in 1978. Sunmonu would either have to return to his previous job as a civil servant or be deemed to have resigned, thereby forfeiting his gratuity and other entitlements.

**Elite Bankruptcy and the Uncertain Future**

In July 1981, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the leader of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) attracted unsavoury comments when he announced that the Nigerian economy was in very bad shape. The presidential adviser on economic affairs, Dr Edozien, undertook a tortuous analysis of series upturns, downturns, shortruns and runs of various durations, which all amounted to the counter-claim of an ever buoyant economy.

The degree of economic mismanagement in the states and at the federal level defies rational comprehension. A state government, say Bendel State, whose annual financial allocation amounted to 370 million naira would proceed to undertake projects or expenditure to the tune of 1,000 million naira. This sort of deficit financing was carried out by most of the 19 state governments. In a majority of the cases, highly inflated contracts were awarded, mobilisation fees* released, and contractors simply 'disappeared' with the active connivance of bureaucrats and politicians.

The blatant plundering of public funds was even more widespread at the federal level where the building of a new capital city, Abuja, has provided a cover for the most shocking cases of embezzlement ever in the history of the country. Contracts have not only been dizzily inflated, they have also been awarded to non-existent companies; with the possible exception of the President, there is hardly any top politician or legislator whose openly acknowledged and 'front' companies have not been allocated contracts at Abuja.** This reeking self-enrichment at public expense might have been less odious if contractors faithfully executed the projects; a great many just collected mobilisation fees in millions of naira and abandoned a barely cleared site.

Worse still, contracts kept on breeding more contracts. For a new city being built from scratch, Abuja has earned the rare distinction of having a very high percentage of 'temporary' structures. The runways of the new airport terminated at the foot of some awesome hills and another contract of 25 million naira was promptly awarded to blast away the offending obstacle, although engineers had declared that area unsuitable for the siting of an airport before the original contract was awarded. The temporary presidential lodge/guest house was built at a cost of 32 million naira, a temporary military parade ground at 87 million, and scores of offices and telephone exchanges (all temporary) were built at still undisclosed amounts, then there were the phantom contracts (running into

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*Mobilisation fee' is a percentage, usually 10%, of the contract price released to the contractor to enable him or her to start work.

**For example, the chairman of the President's Party, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in a bid to silence five critics, all prominent members, revealed how they were awarded contracts worth over 500 million naira. See *Daily Times* 10 June 1982 and subsequent issues for fuller details and coverage.
hundreds of millions of naira), the bogus companies, the disappearing contractors, the temporary contractors who traded in contracts and collected commissions, the front men who duped both administrators and potential contractors and then the uncompleted projects due to lack of payments to contractors, not to mention numerous substandard buildings erected by handpicked party members.

By October 1981, both Federal and State governments were broke. By December 1981, seven of the 19 State governments could hardly pay the salaries of their employees; by June 1982 Bendel State, Rivers State, Cross River State, Benue State, Imo State were owing teachers two to four months arrears. It was only when junior workers threatened strike action in Cross River State and teachers actually abandoned classes in Bendel State after not receiving January salaries as at April 1982 that both governments cleared part of the amounts outstanding. In June 1982 Governor Mbakwe of Imo State dismissed all the 45,000 striking workers, asking them to reapply. As the reprocessing of their applications would probably take another month or two, with this simple device, his excellency would not have to pay salaries for that period!

The Federal Government could not pay many of the contractors. The Minister for Steel, Mamman Ali Makele, reportedly advised all contractors involved with the Ajaokuta steel plant to complete various projects using their own financial and other resources upon which they would be reimbursed whenever the government was financially buoyant. The crunch came in February 1982 as the industrialised capitalist countries dumped their crude oil reserves on to the world market and prices plummeted. Nigerian crude oil production fell from slightly over two million barrels a day to about one million in March as prices dropped from a high $43 a barrel to $37; by April the price had drifted to $34 with production falling to half a million barrels a day.*

The drastic fall in oil revenue brought home the extent of economic mismanagement and wanton waste of resources. The President hurriedly addressed a special Joint Session of the national assembly on 19 April and proposed drastic fiscal and monetary measures which were all approved. Gaming machines and frozen chicken were placed under absolute import prohibition. Cereal flours, umbrella handles and various synthetic products were placed under import licensing restrictions. Import and excise duties were increased for every conceivable consumer item. Basic travelling allowances (the amount that can be taken out by anyone going abroad) were reduced to 500 naira from 800 per adult, the allowances for businessmen and companies from 3,000 to 2,500 and for pilgrims to Mecca from 1,000 to 800 naira.** The interest rate was also

* All Western oil companies declined to renew their contracts until the Nigerian government fixed the price of crude below $30 a barrel. To increase the pressure the UK had slashed the price of its crude to $28 per barrel and actually sent officials to Lagos to persuade the government to follow suit. The Nigerian government survived the coordinated pressure only with the backing of Saudi Arabia which gave the companies a deadline within which they should purchase Nigerian crude at $34 a barrel or face sanctions from other members of OPEC.

**In 1981 alone the more comfortable Nigerians expended 367,718,000 naira in foreign exchange in respect of this item. With these reductions the government, according to the Minister of Finance, was expecting to save up to 200 million naira in 1982!
increased by 2 per cent to 16 per cent to restrict the growth of credit and money, restrain inflation and reduce imports.

Typically, the more disadvantaged in society are requested to make sacrifices in difficult times: the legislators and bureaucrats jettisoned all previous agreements in the name of ‘austerity measures’ after they themselves had stoutly opposed a cut in their pay and allowances! In fact the federal government’s 1981 approved estimates have confirmed that legislators collected a total of 15.1 million naira as remuneration and allowances for their aides for the year; 450 members of the House of Representatives received 13,673,700 naira or 30,386 each; and the 95 senators collected 1,462,240 or 15,392 each. Added to these sums were ‘constituency allowances’ which amounted to eight million naira, 18,652 for each senator as against 13,840 for each representative, and then a vaguely titled ‘consolidated allowance’ which enabled each senator to collect another 5,000 naira and 3,000 for each representative. All this amounted to the tidy sum of 24,925,000 naira, apart from the 1.2 million spent by all the legislators on foreign travels when only 656,250 was actually approved for the purpose.

The increase in the price of petrol led to a jump in transport fares. Workers were beginning to complain when government officials informed workers' representatives that all decisions on minimum wage and incomes guidelines could not be implemented due to lack of funds; all workers on levels 01 to 03 still earn the same amount. It was even considered in official circles that the minimum monthly wage of 125 naira could be temporarily reduced to 100 until the economy picked up again. To this the NLC responded with a stern warning after a one-day meeting of its central working committee on 11 May 1982, that ‘any attempt to tamper with the wages, salaries, and fringe benefits of all categories of workers would be vehemently resisted’, and that ‘workers had made more than the sacrifice necessary for the salvation of the economy.

The competition and rivalry among the various factions of the elites were intense as all resisted any reduction in power, fringe benefits and other privileges. The accretion of power and privileges by the political class of businessmen-politicians was clearly resented by top bureaucrats and the intelligentsia. Academics protested against trying conditions of employment in 1980 and precipitated the establishment of the Cookey Commission in 1981 which recommended a new salary scale and better fringe benefits. Arrears were paid from October 1981 and the new scale was to be fully implemented in May 1982. In April the Secretary to the Federal Government informed the Academic Staff of Universities Union (ASUU) that the new salary scales would not be implemented until the economy improved, and for added measure the Vice-President, Dr Alex Ekwueme suggested that the new scale be paid partly in cash and partly in government bonds which would attract interest when the economy improved! A furious academic community stuck to its guns and threatened not to graduate students for the current academic year; the government backed down, having been considerably undermined by the refusal of legislators to suffer cuts in pay.

Within the public service itself, the perennial rivalry between the upper crust of the administrative officers and executives of parastatals had surfaced with great intensity. This time, with central bank, ports, the National Oil Corporation and National Electric power authority and other ‘essential services’ employees going on incessant strikes, the federal government was forced to set up the Onosode Commission in 1980 to review the salary structure of the parastatals. The
Onosode Report, though modified by the government, accepted the argument that parastatals being revenue-yielding establishments (in spite of government subventions) should attract better conditions of employment than the civil service, especially as parastatals competed on the same market as private firms for personnel. The upshot was that the recommended and approved salaries for executives in parastatals exceeded anything earned by the administrative class of the civil service.

This rankled with the civil servants and within a few weeks the prevailing differentials between bureaucrats and academics and parastatals executives in selected Western European countries and the United States of America had been compiled, to show how badly the civil servants had done. On 17 April 1982 the head of the federal civil service, Grey Longe, while speaking at the graduation ceremony of 132 top civil servants at the Administrative Staff college, Badagry, announced the appointment of a special committee to deal with the issue of the 'appropriate places in the approved salary bracket at which permanent secretaries should be placed'. There 'is no reason why it should be assumed that the productivity in the civil service should necessarily be lower than that in the parastatals and so civil service pay should be lower than in the parastatals' and concluded that 'the service should not be a place for those who cannot find a better job elsewhere'. There was no mention of either the 'poor state of the economy' or 'austerity measures' in relation to the projected revision of salaries.

Conclusion
The 1981 general strike in Nigeria was important in many respects: not only that workers' protest compelled both government and employers to accept the very notion of a minimum wage, the minimum wage was twice revalued upward from 60 to 100 and 125 naire respectively. It showed very starkly the unbridled and cynical scramble for privileges and status, the hypocrisy of corrupt elites; and the hopeless attempts to separate the political from the economic. An offshoot of the continuing crisis has been the increasing unionisation of the white collar workers especially doctors, university teachers, accountants, and administrators, in Nigeria as a more effective guarantee of status and privileges. Of equally great import has been what I have elsewhere dubbed 'the crisis of social institutions', namely the tendency for main actors in industrial dispute to bypass supposedly conflict-resolution structures, making such bodies as the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity, the Industrial Arbitration Panel and the National Industrial Court irrelevant. The President, individual ministers and both the Senate and House Labour Committees have had to intervene directly in most important disputes. In fact, the parliamentary labour committee settled far more disputes than did the Ministry of Employment and all other organs put together. All this testifies to a simple truism that there are two sides in industry and government, the bureaucratic elites and employers on the one hand and the workers on the other.

Dafe Otobo

REPRESSION INTENSIFIES IN KENYA: THE NEED FOR SOLIDARITY

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We reprint here extracts from documents dealing with recent events in Kenya. The first two are issued by an international solidarity committee. The third is a
key political tract whose production in Kenya was the occasion for government repression. Possession of it became a criminal offence.

The Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya was formed in London on 2 July 1982 as a response to rising concern about the Kenya government’s campaign of arrests, detentions and harassment of university lecturers, students, writers, lawyers, peasants, workers and members of parliament and the systematic attacks on intellectual, political and cultural life.

The Committee whose objectives are to campaign for the release of the university lecturers and other political prisoners; to express solidarity with Kenyans in their struggle for democratic rights; to sensitise international public opinion on the repressive nature of the Kenyan regime and to support the people of Kenya in their opposition to US military and other foreign military presence in Kenya, is made up of people from Britain and a number of African and Caribbean countries.

The government appears to have used the coup attempt of 1 August 1982 to justify both its previous repressive measures and intensify them. The university was 'dissolved'. Changes were introduced in the legal system to short-cut justice. Hundreds of hurried court proceedings against airforce men, students and others have led to death sentences or jail terms of up to 25 years. There have been more detentions without trial, including house arrests. Whatever one may think of the coup attempt the fact that it happened clearly belies the government’s previous assertion of Kenya being an 'example of stability' and an 'enviable showpiece of democracy'.

Speaking on *The Significance of 20 October 1952*, Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o said:

What is happening in Kenya today is a replay of the events of October 1952 when the British declared a State of Emergency, suspended any pretence of democracy and the rule of law, mounted cultural repression on a mass scale, killed thousands of Kenyans and hounded others to detention, prison or exile . . .

The extreme and well organised repressive measures of the British imposed State of Emergency called forth in Kenyan people organised resistance on a scale that later forced British colonialism to concede independence . . .

After Maina-wa-Kinyatti was sentenced to six years in prison the crown of peasants and workers, some of whom had come from more than 50 miles away, burst into defiant liberation songs. The police charged at them, but they went on singing their defiance. The lesson of that gesture two days before October 20, the 30th Anniversary of the Mau Mau Struggle, was not lost on Kenyans.

This new mood in Kenya has been exemplified by the astonishing composure of dozens of young students who, without lawyers, in court on sedition charges which bring 10 years in jail, bravely call for power to the people as they are led away in chains.

That for me is the revolutionary significance of 10 October 1952 in Kenya today: repression by the powerful met by indomitable resistance from those they thought powerless. And, as Mau Mau was precursor of liberation struggles against colonialism across the world from Asia to Africa, so is today’s struggle in Kenya against US neo-colonialism part of a battle that straddles the Third World.

The horrific conditions in Kenya's jails are exposed in a letter smuggled out of prison:

Since they brought me here I have experienced the barbarity and brutality of prison life. I
have seen inmates dying for lack of medicine. I have seen others going mad after being in solitary confinement. I have seen how starvation, persecution and psychological torture are effectively used to strip inmates of their humanity. The food they give us is half-cooked, raw, dirty and ice-cold. To be given permission to wash our clothes, to shower is a privilege not a right. Our clothes and our blankets are infested with lice and other vicious bugs.

Another inhuman thing that we are subjected to is an external and internal body search. Each time we leave the jail for a court appearance, and upon our return we have to submit to a mouth and rectal examination.

Solidarity Committees for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya have been set up in Sweden: c/o Eva Lanno, Gothenburg Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners in Kenya, PL 5086, S-463 00, Lilla Edet, Sweden; Norway: Norwegian Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners in Kenya, c/o Jorun Berg Slagnes, Sandviksvien 79, 1310 Blommenholm, Norway; in Denmark: Danish Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya, c/o Prof. Bodil Folke Frederiksen, Roskilde University, PO Box 250, 400 Roskilde, Denmark; in the USA: Committee Against Political Repression and Oppression in Kenya (CAPROK), African Studies Outreach Program, Howard University, Washington DC, 20059; International Committee for Academic and Artistic Freedom in Kenya (ICAAFIK), c/o Black Students Alliance, Kerchoff Hall UCLA, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024; Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya (US Branch), c/o 1340 Fair View, Wichita, Kansas 67214. Others are in Nigeria, and India.

The following publications are available from the Committee for Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya, c/o 76 Stroud Green Road, London N4 3EN: Release Political Prisoners in Kenya (July 1982); Law as a Tool of Political Repression in Kenya (August 1982); Repression Intensified in Kenya since August 1 attempt (January 1983).

London, 15 January 1983

Extracts from one of these publications follow:

LAW AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL REPRESSION IN KENYA
On 15 May 1982 Wang’ondu Kariuki a young journalist was arrested and later charged in court with possessing a ‘seditious’ publication, namely, Pambana: Organ of the December Twelve Movement. Pambana is a Swahili word meaning ‘Struggle’ and December 12 is the date Kenya achieved formal independence from Britain. On July 19, after a three-day hearing he was found guilty, convicted and sentenced to 4½ years imprisonment. Throughout the case Kariuki maintained that the publication had been planted on him by the police. He also claimed that he had been tortured.

Weeks before the hearing of the case, the President and other members of the Kenyan government had made public statements calling for the conviction of those found in possession of underground papers like Pambana. Such a public discussion of a case which is sub judice could only unduly influence the court. Indeed during the hearing the prosecution never tried to prove whether Pambana was seditious or not. The Magistrate took the prosecution’s word for it despite strong legal objection from the defence lawyer. When it came to citing the allegedly seditious sections from Pambana the prosecution refused to have it read out in court, yet this was a public trial.
Kariuki had just lost a by-election in the crucial Nyeri constituency in January 1982. During his election campaign he had criticised corruption in high places and particularly in the co-operative movement where peasants over the years have consistently been robbed of millions of pounds.

Kariuki’s is not an isolated case of the Kenya government’s use of law for political repression. In fact during the 16 years tenure of former Attorney General Charles Mugane Njonjo — now Minister for Constitutional Affairs — at Sheria House, the Kenyan law and judiciary have been refined to ensure the conviction of anybody of political substance the state deemed necessary to keep behind bars. This heavy-handed manipulation of the law with the connivance of a willing judiciary supplements the provisions of the notorious Preservation of Public Security Act 1966 which provides for detention without trial. (The document then lists several of the more notable cases since 1970.)

In view of the fact that the prosecution and the sitting magistrate refused to have Pambana read out in court, we attach extracts from Pambana.

PAMBANA: ORGAN OF THE DECEMBER TWELVE MOVEMENT

Kenyans have been massively betrayed. The revolution we launched with blood has been arrested and derailed.

Today, more than 22 years after KANU was formed and almost 20 years after a fake independence was negotiated, the broad masses of Kenya are materially and politically worse off than ever before. The criminally corrupt ruling clique, sanctioned by KANU has isolated itself from the concerns of our daily life and has committed a crime among many others, more brutal than any that British Colonialism ever did: they have silenced all opposition and deprived us, forcibly and otherwise, of the very right to participate in Kenya’s national affairs. The sacred rights of expression and association have been cast aside.

KANU and its government have disorganised all spheres of economic production, have scattered all communal efforts at organisation, have sowed unprincipled discord and enmity among our peoples, and have looted unspeakable sums of money and national wealth. They have finally given our entire country over to US imperialism to use as a political and military base. All these crimes have been wrought in the name of ‘progress and prosperity’ and inane smatterings of ‘love, peace and unity’.

This is NOT independence...

We, the December Twelve Movement, have chosen to make our contribution by starting the first truly revolutionary people’s paper. Hitherto no paper has represented the wishes and activities of the poor and oppressed Kenyans correctly. Henceforth we shall. Others must do whatever they can in order that a principled unity can be built based on concrete acts accomplished and living experiences gained and not on dead words said or written.

12 December 1963 was the day most Kenyan masses united with the hope of a new national reality, a true independence. Unknown to them this was not to be. It signifies to us a betrayal, and the basis of a new, higher unity and a revolutionary rebirth.

This paper is dedicated to gathering, uniting, encouraging and protecting all those who would defiantly stand for our country’s and people’s true interests and
who would sacrifice and fight towards our unity and victory. This is a serious political task and we solemnly dedicate ourselves and our abilities to it. We have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Kenyans stand by this position.

This newspaper:

1. Firmly opposes the robbery of our national resources and wealth by imperialist interests be they multinational corporations, banks or foreign governments. Kenyan wealth and labour must benefit Kenyans only.

2. Condemns in the strongest of terms the criminally corrupt and traitorous band of thieves who govern this country and who have allied themselves with US imperialism to keep us perpetually down.

3. Is totally opposed to the presence on Kenyan soil of US and any other military bases.


This newspaper supports all genuine Kenyan organisations and individuals, fighting any aspect of local or imperialist reaction and in particular:

1. Small farmers and producers against government and ‘co-operative’ theft and mismanagement;

2. Workers against IMF-enforced low wages and anti-strike controls;

3. The millions of unemployed in their right to employment;

4. Small businessmen against foreign monopolies;

5. Indigenous professionals against fake expatriate ‘skills’;

6. Teachers, students and pupils against irrelevant, authoritarian colonial education;

7. Committed intellectuals and journalists against official muzzling;

8. The poor and the landless in their demands for land reform;

9. All poor people against ever-increasing rents, prices and declining real incomes;

10. The entire dispossessed population against a corrupt puppet government and its ever-repressive police rule.

More specifically and immediately this newspaper will seek to raise principled debate, to raise political consciousness and awareness, highlight news that the foreign-run newspapers ignore and suppress, expose reactionary and imperialist plots and intrigues, protect and heighten our entire people’s struggles and generally work towards a united resistance in order to fight and overthrow imperialism and neo-colonialism and achieve the long delayed true independence.

Criminal Government Scandals and Cover-ups
Recently in Parliament a few relatively minor cases of official theft and corruption have been exposed and well documented. We say minor because figures were generally in the region of one or two million shillings — thus the Bank of Baroda gave Kamere Mbathi, Rao and Sokhi a documentable 5,000,000
shillings and helped officially connected companies evade income tax. The MPs concerned must be commended as indeed too should the good Kenyans who defiantly passed on documents and information.

Ridiculous parliamentary procedure and a timid, cowed, or 'bought' (pocketed) majority of 'honourables' mean that the real corruption in the major leagues are not exposed.

*Pambana* then claims to have documents which expose a number of deals, which they list, involving the highest government officials, state financial institutions and foreign banks. It quotes ‘an IMF report’ to the effect that ‘at least 20 top officials have unidentifiable foreign accounts in the millions’. It goes on to refer to corruption in agricultural marketing boards and cooperatives and over land deals in Gatundu, Kenyatta’s home — both of which have sparked off peasant resistance.

KENYAN ACADEMICS DETAINED

Since June 1982 the University of Nairobi has been made a target of government repression for allegedly promoting 'foreign ideology'. Six University lecturers have been detained indefinitely without trial and another has been imprisoned for six years on a dubious charge of possessing a 'seditious publication'. Seventy students spent up to 7 months in prison, and 9 of their colleagues have been sentenced to prison terms of up to 10 years each. The University was shut after the 1 August coup attempt, and remains officially 'dissolved'. Send protests against these arrests and detentions to:

- His Excellency Hon. Daniel Arap Moi
  President of the Republic of Kenya
  State House, P.O. Box 40530
  Nairobi, Kenya

- The Hon. J.J. Kamotho
  Minister for Higher Education
  P.O. Box 30040
  Nairobi, Kenya

- H.E. Mr Bethuel Kiplagat
  High Commissioner of Kenya to the UK
  45 Portland Place
  London W1, England

Write letters of concern to your local MP and to officials in the British Council and Foreign Office. We also ask you to support the resolution adopted by the African Studies Association on 5 November 1982 in Washington, D.C. and agree to suspend all forms of academic and scholarly co-operation with the Kenyan government until the detained lecturers and all other political prisoners have been released. For further information write to the Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya, 76 Stroud Green Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 3EN, telephone (01) 272-4889.

This study of the Ethiopian revolution by Molyneux and Halliday is a Marxist historical study. Its main task is to situate the revolution in 'historical time'. This means clearly identifying the class character of the revolution. Halliday & Molyneux take as their starting point that what has taken place in Ethiopia is a 'socio-political transformation of a depth rare in the contemporary Third World' (p.12). They would argue that the revolution represents simultaneously two historical moments. On the one hand, it is part of the typically 20th century post-colonial revolutionary process. On the other hand, it clearly has features which place it 'in the earlier time of revolutions against a decaying pre-capitalist order' (p.23).

The particular kind of Marxist historical framework which the authors adopt enables them to include the readers in a discussion of a highly controversial political nature with a certain amount of objectivity. The passions which have been aroused in the past by the most tragic and painful moments of the Ethiopian revolution, namely the 'Red Terror' and the Eritrean question, have made it almost impossible for the outsider to engage with the political debates in any meaningful way. According to those who have been involved in these aspects of the revolution, there is no possible objectivity: either one is for or against the revolution and government.

On the British left, and no less in the pages of this journal, the scene has been dominated by supporters of the EPRP and the various Eritrean movements, thus setting the limits to the possible reappraisals of the course of the struggle. It is one of the merits of the book that it has laid the ground for a much more open debate than has been hitherto possible. It has broken the taboo, for example, on criticising the EPRP or the EPLF. This is an important contribution.

In general, Halliday & Molyneux see this work of criticism as both theoretical and political. They want to combat the 'Revolution Betrayed' thesis, insisting that it is a mistake to see the revolution as a series of betrayals and usurpations: it was not 'a voluntaristic enterprise capable of yielding a wide variety of outcomes'. But they would also like to challenge the attempt by the Derg to portray events in a similarly voluntaristic way, 'to write history as if they had planned and executed its course from the beginning'. Whatever the judgment the writers make on the possibilities to socialist transition, they do not want to attribute it to
the ‘subjective factor’, of correct leadership.

Theoretically, their task is to develop the notion of a ‘structural crisis’, which has particular relevance in the case of Ethiopia, where ‘a variety of individual causes, on different time-scales and with extremely divergent particular courses, combined to produce a situation in which the ancien régime was overthrown’ (p.13). By doing this, the authors hope to restore ‘purposive action to its appropriate place’ in analyses of this sort. Whether they succeed or not is something to which I shall return, since it is obviously a question of interest to Marxists.

Briefly, the structure of the book is as follows. In the first chapter, the writers relate the events of the revolution to broader questions of revolution in the Third World. This is a provocative and interesting chapter, well worth reading on its own, in which the authors bring their combined vast breadth of knowledge to bear on a sweep of revolutions in the Third World, from Indo-China to Central America, from Western Asia to Africa, while including passing comparisons with the Japanese, Chinese and Soviet experiences.

The authors argue that the Ethiopian revolution can be compared both to the classic (anti-feudal) revolutions of Europe, i.e., France in 1789 and Russia in 1917; but also to the post-colonial revolutions of the Third World, such as Cuba, Iran, Afghanistan and Nicaragua, which had as their primary target not foreign domination, but the political and social system of indigenous ruling classes. The most striking parallel with Ethiopia that they draw is with Afghanistan, but many interesting reflections are to be found here on the role of the military, the ‘revolution from above’, the nationalities question, and the international dimension of all these various revolutionary upheavals.

The second chapter is where we begin to get the meat of the analysis on Ethiopia. Halliday & Molyneux stress the time depth of Ethiopian history. Prior to the revolution, there co-existed social relations analogous to feudalism’ (they do not trespass on this hotly disrupted ground), side by side with ‘the earlier phases of the transition to capitalism’. The main cause of the crisis was the failure of the ancien régime to resolve the agrarian question in either of these two directions, backwards or forwards, as it were. The crisis manifested itself graphically in the great famine affecting three million people and killing nearly half a million in the early 1970s.

The politically most acute contradiction in Ethiopian society was the way in which these contradictions in the social relations translated into conflict within the state apparatuses (p.70). Molyneux & Halliday proceed to identify the social forces of opposition to the Ethiopian regime, the ‘multiple pressures for dissolution of the ancien régime.’ These were: the landed nobility; the regional nationalities opposed to cultural and political centralisation; the students, subject to manifold ideological influences; the middle ranks of the armed forces, from when came the Derg & Mengistu and the while collar urban workers. Notably absent from the opposition forces were peasants, manual working class, and lumpen-proletariat, according to the authors. They describe the actual moment of revolution, stressing its disparate and unorganised character which met with little resistance from the fragmented forces of the Emperor once the figurehead himself had fallen. By 1974, according to the writers, however, only a political revolution had occurred, and the Derg, having deposed the Emperor, established
itself as the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC).

Chapters 3 and 4, entitled ‘Revolution from Above’, discuss the policies and problems of the new rulers, and the building of a post-revolutionary order in Ethiopia. These chapters are the most interesting and controversial in political terms. Both chapters come down very hard on the EPRP and MEISON (the All-Ethiopian Socialist Moment), the two main and competing Ethiopian student movements of the period. Molyneaux and Halliday first describe the major enactments of policy of the Derg: the ambitious programme of land reform and economic development; the establishment of peasant associations, mobilisation campaigns and urban kebeles; and the steps towards the establishment of a party (Commission to Organise the Party of the Working People of Ethiopian, COPWE). The ambiguity of these reforms, they say, was made all the greater by the social and political conflicts which began to emerge. And here is where the students come in. By 1975, an organised response by the EPRP, together with the white collar unions (CELU, a labour federation looked on with favour by the African-American Labour Centre since the late 1960s) was demanding an elected assembly and the immediate constitution of a people’s democratic republic. Despite being given the opportunity to open a debate in the press in 1976, by the end of the year, the EPRP rapidly turned against the Derg. It was at this stage that the EPRP began its systematic attempt at ‘urban assassination’, and from September 1976, the kebeles became ‘the site of an urban terror campaign’ between the EPRP and the Derg (p.112, 122ff). Molyneaux and Halliday are unequivocal in their condemnation of the EPRP in this respect: ‘it is an inescapable conclusion that, however prone to such actions the PMAC may have been, it was the EPRP’s terrorist policies that encouraged the new phase of PMAC repression’. They go even further, arguing that the changes within EPRP since those days, despite its attempt at ‘self-criticism’, have ‘not gone to the root of the problem’. Why not? Because the EPRP is still wedded to a concept of armed struggle as the main tactic to deploy against the PMAC. This inability to change course, the authors attribute above all to the ‘highly militaristic and dogmatic leftism’ inherited from the ‘exile student days’ of the EPRP.

MEISON does not get much comfort here either. Despite its initial collaboration with the Derg, in particular within POMOA, in 1975-76, MEISON refused to see this as more than a ‘critical and tactical alliance’. According to the writers, MEISON too was influenced by its inchoate student ideological environment, and like the EPRP had a ‘disregard for reality’. Thus, in the midst of the foreign invasion of Ethiopia by Somalia in 1977, they issued a call for ‘the complete liquidation of the bureaucracy’, and attacked the Derg for using officers of the former imperial army. MEISON’s dramatic break with the Derg was, according to Molyneux and Halliday, ‘based on analysis, which, like that of its arch rival (EPRP), led many militants to imprisonment or death’.

Despite all this tough criticism of the student left, Molyneux & Halliday do not wish to condone the Derg. They are dismissive of Mengistu’s claims to a genuine commitment to socialism, pointing to his and the Derg’s ideological move to the left between 1974 and 1978 as in essence opportunistic. They are critical of the attempts to build COPWE. Their assessment is however, somewhat fatalistic: ‘There is no easy democratic alternative in Ethiopia’. this is not to say much, however, in political terms: it is rather to retreat behind the cover of an historical determination.
The final chapters, 5 and 6, again touch on very controversial questions: the national and regional question, and the international dimension. Molyneux & Halliday's well-defined criticisms in these sections will again probably meet with disagreement by readers of this journal.

On the Eritrean question, which the authors argue is simply one most important of the multiple 'nationalities' question in Ethiopia, they note the general tendency of social revolutions in multinational states to stimulate and encourage political activity by national and ethnic movements. Revolutionary governments tend to respond to these in a centralising manner, thereby creating one of the most serious contradictions for the future. The objective basis for this is uneven development. Looking at the evidence, the authors argue that the PMAC did work out a position for negotiation with the Eritrean movements in 1976, with which they approached the latter. They reject the idea that PMAC policy is motivated by 'Amharic chauvinism'. But they argue that the PMAC made the theoretical mistake of dissolving the regional question into a class issue, thereby failing to offer the 'minimum necessary conditions' to woo the secessionist movements back (pp.162-3). This would have been, they argue, a return to federation. In turn they are highly critical of the Eritrean movements. Their weaknesses were 'murderous competition and factional conflict'; competition for foreign support, which even frustrated their benefactors; and a neglect of analysis of events inside Ethiopia. Along with the EPRP, the EPLF damned the Derg as fascist between 1976 and 1978, while the ELF joined up with the reactionary Sudanese-backed EDU. Basically, neither of the major Eritrean movements supported the 1974 revolution.

Once again, however, Halliday and Molyneux leave the readers unsatisfied here, since despite their very political criticisms, they cannot take a political position of their own. Wishing to criticise both sides is admirable, but tends to acrobatics. They argue that the optimal solution would have been a return to the 1952 Federation, but that this possibility was undermined by the lack of cogency and conciliatoriness in PMAC policy, and by the intransigence and factionalism of the Eritrean movements. They thus conclude on a rather vague note, that theoretically the question of the nationalities is closely linked to the of political democracy.

On the international dimension, the authors come up with some fascinating detail about the twists and turns of US policy towards the Horn, and they reject the view that events here have been completely subject to external forces. According to them, the US break with Ethiopia was determined by the US desire to link up with Numeiry and Siad Barre once it became clear which way the revolution in Ethiopia was going. The USSR comes in for both reprieve and criticism. They argue that Soviet policy has had the merit of consistency on the Ethiopian revolution. The USSR has previously given limited diplomatic support to Selassie but never provided such to the opposition movements, or to Eritrea. After the revolution, they stressed the need for the Derg to move slowly and to negotiate over Eritrea. The move away from Somalia was not opportunistic. Halliday and Molyneux's criticisms of the USSR foreign policy are if anything more severe than over policy issues. They would argue that the very theoretical foundations of Soviet analysis of the Third World is flawed, leading them to 'misrepresent the internal processes of Third World countries with the result that Soviet policy suffers rebuffs when these processes reach a certain point of maturity' (p. 250).
They thus reject ‘moralist’ attacks on the USSR.

Cuba, too, comes in for the same treatment: the authors insist that Cuba is not a ‘proxy’ of the USSR, having its own distinct view of the situation, determined largely by its position in the Non-Aligned movement. Cuba originally gave limited support to the Eritrean movements prior to 1970, but since 1974 have steadfastly kept out of the debate on this question, insisting that it is an internal affair. Yet Halliday & Molyneux still accuse them of ‘collusion’ with the PMAC atrocities, given their military presence in the country and their attempts to mediate.

The conclusion, raising the question as to whether Ethiopia will make a transition to socialism will satisfy nobody. The position of objectivity which has assisted the authors in their analysis so far now proves to be their Achilles heel. Thus, for example, they set out the criteria for judging whether a country is moving to socialism by looking at the Chinese and Soviet experiences. On these they argue that ‘insofar as private appropriation has been abolished’, they can be termed socialist, but this is not true of their political systems. Both, therefore, fail to ‘satisfy the criteria of socialism’ (p.269). They conclude that the possibility of a transition to socialism can only exist under ‘peculiar conditions’, and in fact the only two countries in the world which have genuinely begun to take this route from non-capitalism to socialistic orientation are Cuba and Mongolia. It has to be said that the prospects for the rest of the world are not very bright, if these are the only two countries which can even unqualifiedly be described as ‘oriented’ towards socialism. But then this is an inevitable consequence of what I can only call the radical intellectual pessimism of the authors, something which is akin to the positions often adopted in ROAPE.

In conclusion: I think that Halliday and Molyneux’s interpretation of the Ethiopian revolution — its causes, sequence, and current contradictions — are fundamentally original and correct. But it has to be said that there are limits to the degree to which the project they have attempted to undertake is actually possible to fulfil simultaneously on an intellectual and political level. For at political level, everybody is ultimately forced to take sides: where would one stand today in Ethiopia? This is not clear from reading the work of these authors. It would be said that this is not the question they are posing. But then it has to be said that the work is primarily intellectual-theoretical, rather than political-theoretical. Yes, everything is political, but some analyses are more political than others. Ultimately this book is an interesting left-wing study with a degree of detachment from the issues involved. The authors’ own political positions, however, remain personal and in that sense, cannot actually assist anyone else to make up their own mind where they would stand politically on this controversial issue.

This is not to criticise the book, but to point to some of the contradictions in the British left intelligentsia. As a book, with a fascinating theoretical project, it is marvellous reading. It has to be asked, though, even from this angle, whether the authors’ objective of restoring purposive action to its right place in balance with structural determination, has been achieved. In my view, although they seek to avoid reading history backwards, something they would criticise Mengistu and the Derg for doing, there is a strong element of the same tendency in this book. HISTORY tends to become the all-purpose explanation. Things were that way because they couldn’t be otherwise: there is no easy democratic alternative in Ethiopia. The writers’ brilliant attempts to bring some method into the madness
almost ends up turning HISTORY into the purposive actor.  

* * *

This is a timely attempt to take the measure of the revolution in Ethiopia, now eight years in the making, and to place this event in the wider trend of social transformation in the Third World. Well versed in the broad themes, the authors employ an array of sophisticated analytical concepts to the Ethiopian instance, seeking to distinguish the singular and conjunctural among its features from the structural elements that seem to be a common factor in post-colonial societies. Halliday and Molyneux work at a certain distance from their subject; neither of them has had a close connection with Ethiopia. This could well be an advantage, for it affords a clearer view of the subject in historical perspective, and ought to make for detachment. Distance is not without disadvantages however. One of them is the secondhand quality of their information which is not always reliable. Another is the absence of any new data on the later years of the revolution, whose record remains frustratingly sparse from 1977 onwards, when the military regime began to consolidate its power. The authors re-interpret the known facts, and take issue with earlier interpretations, particularly those that question the socialist credentials of the revolutionary regime. A more serious disadvantage of such a distant view is the tendency to endow the subject with a degree of symmetry and the logic implied therein that may proved illusory upon closer inspection. This interpretation of the Ethiopian Revolution is not free from this sort of illusion.

The cornerstone of analysis in this work is the concept of structural crisis, which serves to emphasise the predetermined nature of major social developments, upon which purposive action by men is said to have only secondary effect. Thus the demise of the ancien regime in Ethiopia in 1974 is seen as a collapse brought about by a structural crisis, rather than the result of a planned revolutionary onslaught. Not unlike the crumbling of the absolutist regimes in France and Russia earlier, the imperial regime in Ethiopia collapsed when its shrinking social base could no longer support it. The fall of Haile Salassie amounted to an old fashioned political revolution, with the soldiers simply administering the coup de grace. The political upheaval in 1974, however, set off a social revolution of an unmistakably modern type; in the authors’ estimation, the first major social revolution in post-colonial Africa. The conflation of the two revolutions is attributed to (a) the very backwardness of the social structure of the ancien regime that rules out a bourgeois sequel, (b) the timing of the collapse, which occurred when the socialist alternative was already being practised elsewhere, and (c) the international context, which did not preclude and actually supported the socialist option. There is nothing exceptional in this interpretation, although it does ignore the corrosive effect of the national struggles, particularly in Eritrea, as well as the radical ferment among the Ethiopian intelligentsia that provided the ideological stimulus to the revolution; both being instances of purposive action.

The passage from the feudal to the post-capitalist phase was not a smooth one. Although surprisingly little trouble came from the deposed ruling classes, a violent struggle broke out in the bosom of the revolution and devoured its
children. This is a highly controversial phase because, on the one hand, the victims comprised the core of the radical Left movement in the country, till then the only group with a record of militant opposition to the imperial regime and an avowed commitment to socialism. The victors, on the other hand, represented the reconstructed leadership of the military establishment, till then the imperial regime's main pillar of support. In traversing this difficult phase, Halliday and Molyneux strive to stay on objective ground. They see the struggle as a context for power to determine the post-revolutionary settlement. Purposive action on the part of revolutionary agents is conceded a role at this stage, albeit a restricted one, given the fact that political capacity of the various agents is established, not in praxis, but by the pre-revolutionary structures. The gross disparity in this respect between the military and their civilian adversaries made the context unequal and the outcome inevitable. "It is precisely in the balance of structural causation and purposive action", say the authors, "that the outcome of these revolutions can be discerned." In this case the balance tilted catastrophically against the civilian opposition, which included organised labour, as well as the politically sophisticated section of the intelligentsia and the student body. Halliday and Molyneux are impatient with the claims and actions of these groups, since they appear to fly in the face of reality. They adjudge the opposition guilty of voluntarism, dogmatic leftism, factionalism and, curiously given the context, of using 'militaristic methods'. They seem to believe that the Left got what it deserved, though they do deprecate, rather quixotically, the moral and legal vacuum that attended its extermination.

The putative inductive generalisations than can spring from this structural scheme raise a number of troublesome questions. The first concerns the meaning of 'political' in this context. What is meant by the superior 'political capacity' of the military to acquire (not seize?) and retain (by what means?) state power? Is political capacity reduced to the capacity to use force? Any kind of force? Does this hold true for military interventions in general, and is the military's undeniable record of success in acquiring and retaining state power an indicator of its superior political capacity? Is it futile then to attempt to oppose such interventions? Lastly, as the authors make it clear, the Ethiopian military regime could not have survived without massive, direct intervention on its behalf from abroad. Is the external factor then a structurally determined element intrinsic to the political capacity of this regime?

Purposive action on the part of the victorious military regime launched a process of social transformation with an avowed socialist orientation. This, largely unanticipated, development raises another question, one upon which the Left in Ethiopia literally staked its life. It refers to the motivation that prompted a conventional army to undertake a task so unorthodox and unfamiliar to its calling, and concerns the genuineness of a sudden and unformed conversion to Marxism on the road to power. Halliday and Molyneux find it comprehensible in the context of the crisis which, they believe, can produce just such unexpected shifts of political consciousness. The military coup occurred in the midst of a profound social crisis which, like a powerful wind, drove the ship of state leftwards. Those at the helm had little choice but to adjust their course accordingly. While believing that the ideological shift of the regime was no mere affectation, the authors accept that political convenience and opportunism played a role in producing it. This is a reasonable argument, far more convincing than the Pauline-like explanations offered by Valdes Vivo, Lefort and the Ottaways.
By contrast the account of a process of deepening radicalisation within the regime, a cleansing that is allegedly reflected in the series of bloody purges that decimated the membership of the Dergue, is fanciful, and the explanations offered for it in *The Ethiopian Revolution* are part of the mythology cultivated by the regime itself. The internecine struggle is depicted as an ideological and issue conflict, not a factional context for power, and the implication is that the losers were revolutionary faint-hearts. Inept conspirators would be a more accurate description. One need only recall that all basic socio-economic reforms were enacted during the early days of military rule, when the Dergue's initial membership was intact, and that subsequent measures concerned mainly political consolidation and cosmetic improvements. Halliday and Molyneux abandon their usual caution completely when they adopt the core element of this mythology, which portrays the regime's strongman, Mengistu Haile Mariam, as the ideological mentor and prime mover of this process, 'a man who from the beginning had a clear programme of where Ethiopia should go.' By way of proof we are referred to a journalistic account of *Ethiopie, la revolution heretique* (Maspero, 1981) by Rene Lefort who, in turn, refers us to a pseudonymous A.J. Steiner as his sole source of information on Ethiopia.

Another two concepts are introduced in *The Ethiopian Revolution* to clarify the method and initial results of the post-revolutionary settlement: the revolution from above and the autonomy of the state. The authors do not regard a revolution from above to be incompatible with a radical social transformation of the type that sets the stage for a transition to socialism, and are convinced apparently that this is what took place in Ethiopia. Essential to the success of such an enterprise is a state structure that is largely free of control from below, i.e., relatively autonomous. Halliday and Molyneux use Poulantzas's notions about the conditions that give rise to such a situation and find that they prevail in Ethiopia. They fail to prove their point however, since they neither describe nor analyse the process of class formation under the new regime, so that it is impossible to see what class conflicts are waged within and for control of the state, thereby underpinning its autonomy. The failure to treat class formation is a serious handicap to their analysis, because that process is invoked by the authors as the determining factor in the course of the Ethiopian revolution.

Whatever else these concepts may connote, the political reality they convey is authoritarian, arbitrary and oppressive. Halliday and Molyneux do not shrink from this stark reality in Ethiopia. Neither classes, or nationalities, or individuals, they declare, are permitted to express their views or to organise autonomously in a system where power is tightly concentrated in a small group of military officers, and where recruitment is premised on loyalty to 'the regime in general and to its chairman in particular.' Nevertheless, noting that democratic practices are not conspicuously developed in regimes with *bona fide* socialist credentials, they do not consider their absence in Ethiopia a serious obstacle on the road to socialism. One is struck by such a juxtaposition, which ignores completely the undisguised fact that the regime in Ethiopia is a military dictatorship, a state of affairs hardly concealed by the recent creation of a political facade in the form of a Commission to Organise the Party of the Working Peoples of Ethiopia. A mirror image of the regime, COPWE is seen by Halliday and Molyneux as 'an instrument of the top leadership'.

Nothing demonstrates the nature of the Ethiopian regime better than its
The best chapter of *The Ethiopian Revolution* treats this tortuous subject lucidly and forthrightly. It holds the regime to its own professed creed and finds that it has failed to live up to the Leninist principle of self-determination, even the watered-down version of it practised by the Soviet Union. The authors note that nationalism was one of the initial, though hardly original, props used by the military regime. They conclude that the limits of the revolution from above are most evident in this field. One can reasonably ask why similar criteria, deriving from the regime's avowed commitment to Marxism-Leninism, are not invoked by the authors to assess the regime's performance in other areas as well. Similarly impressive is the chapter on the international dimension. Despite an assertion that much of the criticism directed against Soviet policy in the Horn of Africa is 'unfounded', and a gratuitous criticism of China, which has mixed little in the area, Halliday and Molyneux make it plain that self-interest is the common denominator guiding the policy of all powers, great and small, in this region.

What of the future? The authors of *The Ethiopian Revolution* are too well aware of the many abortive starts on the rocky road to socialism that have been made in the Third World to risk a firm prediction. Their every statement in this regard is heavily qualified, even the title of their concluding chapter, 'A State of Socialist Orientation?' ends with a question mark. Yet, on balance, they are inclined to believe that Ethiopia has a chance, perhaps a good one, of becoming the first American state to reach that elusive goal. They consider the post-revolutionary order to be a stable one. Social reforms have brought the regime significant popular support, the masses have become politicised and mobilised through mass organisations, and the Dergue itself has evolved into a 'structured executive body' with a 'sharpened, albeit formal, advocacy of Marxism'. Some may object to the depiction of any military regime as stable, but Halliday and Molyneux towards the end of their book appear to lose sight of the martial essence of the Ethiopian regime. Many would consider it foolhardy to regard this particular regime as stable, when it continues to require massive, direct external intervention in order to maintain its grip on the state.

The authors rightly maintain that the continuing process of class formation remains the crucial catalyst that will determine the shape of the future. However, they have little of substance to say about this process; distance from the subject being an obvious disadvantage here. A closer look might have detected the outline of an emerging trend, easily recognisable because it is familiar in the Third World. This is the massive growth of the state, both civil and military, which provides the base for a rapidly expanding class of non-productive functionaries — 'cadres' they are called in Ethiopia — whose task is to harness the totality of society's productive forces onto the state, which then determines the distribution of the product. It is hardly surprising that the pattern of distribution does not favour the productive classes, which must be cajoled and coerced to accept it. With the discrediting of conventional methods of engineering political legitimacy, save nationalism, rhetorical socialism with its promise of rapid development and equitable distribution has become a favourite ploy of such regimes. The military, on the other hand, are normally the only institution with the required capacity for mass coercion. Hence the increasing popularity of the radical military coup. Flanked by the bureaucracy and the single official party, this is evolving into a distinct genre in the Third World. This reviewer has suggested the label 'Garrison Socialism' for it. (See *ROAPE* 21).
Halliday and Molyneaux are not daunted by the long list they themselves provided of countries that have experienced the brief flicker of hope excited by such regimes, only to be saddled with brutal and incompetent military dictatorships for many years afterwards.

Is Ethiopia going to prove more fortunate? The understated optimism of *The Ethiopian Revolution* must be taken on faith, for it is not supported by the assessment it offers. The analytical concepts from which this assessment derives do not provide a coherent theoretical basis for prediction. Structuralism is at best a perspective, not a theory. In this case it turns into an omen of historical inevitability and a prescription for fatalism; hardly the stuff of socialist revolutionism. The revolution from above is a concept that has been applied to instances of transition form the pre-capitalist to the capitalist phase of development. It has never been, nor could it logically be, associated with a socialist transformation. The same holds true for the associated concept of state autonomy. The invocation of such concepts notwithstanding, the interpretation of *The Ethiopian Revolution* rests essentially on empirical grounds; i.e., the results speak for themselves.

What do they tell us? Halliday and Molyneux declare their aim to defend the Ethiopian revolution against those who allegedly claim that no revolution has taken place in Ethiopia. This seems to have induced them to grant the military regime the benefit of considerable doubt. If there are people who make such a claim, they need not be taken seriously. The issue is not whether a revolution has taken place, but where the revolution is being led under military rule. This is the issue upon which the Left challenged the regime, and the one that must be confronted. It concerns the role of the working masses in shaping the new order, that is, their own future. Given the overpowering presence of the state, the only guarantee that state power will be used in the interests of the masses is their own meaningful participation in the exercise of such power. The authors make it abundantly clear that the masses in Ethiopia have no share in the power of the state. Moreover, they add, that the regime's primary guiding motive and concern is to retain an exclusive monopoly of power, and that in adapting Marxism-Leninism it selected only those themes that served this purpose. The Left fought to gain a share of power for the popular structures that were born of the revolution and grew outside the shadow of the state; the peasant associations, the urban dwellers associations, the revitalised trade union movement, the peasant militia, etc. With the exception of the worker movement, the others were allowed to flourish briefly, but only due to the regime's initial feebleness and the unrelenting pressure of the Left. Consequently, they came to confront the state with an unmistakable challenge. Now that these conditions no longer obtain, the popular structures are being transformed into instruments of state control; a fate that overtook the trade union movement much earlier. How are the masses to defend their interests, when even the newly instituted Commission to Organise the Party of the Working Peoples of Ethiopia does not include a single representative of the peasant associations or the trade union movement in its central committee; a lacuna the authors of *The Ethiopian Revolution* find 'striking'.

*John Markakis*