



# Science, Ideology and Development

Three Essays on  
Development Theory

*Archie Mafeje*

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# 1. Introduction

I offer these three essays as sketches of insights gained from my experience with one particular African country, Tanzania. "Ideology and Development" was written in 1970, while working in Tanzania as a university teacher. As a result of the Arusha Declaration and the Second Five-Year Plan, in the years 1969–71 "socialist ideology" had reached a crescendo among politicians and students alike in Tanzania. For the greater part, the existence of such an ideology was taken for granted. In the debates that raged at the time no one that I know of suspected that there might be no material basis for such a manifestation in Tanzania and, therefore, feel compelled to explain the anomaly and to contemplate its practical implications for future development. When I sat down to write "Ideology and Development", "where cometh ideology?" was the nagging question. In order not to offend local sensibilities (something I am not noted for), I broached the subject in a general and philosophical way, so much so that one of my Tanzanian friends once accused me of having written the essay while I was under anaesthesia at the hospital after a serious car accident. My reply was simply that he did not understand because he was under political anaesthesia and that he stood to suffer a worse accident than me. It is six years since and I believe I was right.

Anecdota aside, in my paper I tried to raise three basic questions, pertaining to the dialectical relationship between: (a) theory (noumenon) and practice (phenomenon); (b) science and ideology; and (c) subject and object. All three dialectical unities were discussed by way of a contrast between positivist and materialist epistemology (theory of knowledge); and, finally, in the context of revolutionary transformation, as is espoused by socialist idealists, and of "development theory", as is advocated by neo-positivists whose ideas still predominate in academia even in countries such as Tanzania.

In the light of continuing debates in East Africa and non-resolution of some of the pertinent questions in Tanzania – the socialist laboratory, a return to these fundamental issues might not look as in-appropriate as it seemed six years ago. What is and what could be the objective relationship between socialist ideology and practical existence in Tanzania is the immediate question with universal implications. My idea was, and still is, that socialist ideology in countries such as Tanzania is largely an epiphenomenon which will take revolutionary organisations to transform into a material force. In my view, organisational forms in Tanzania have not come anywhere near meeting this requirement and, therefore, the country's socialist ideology remains hollow.

The second essay, "The Fallacy of Dual Economies Revisited" was written in 1973. Once again, it was a culmination of discussions that started in Tanzania in 1971. More specifically, it was a response to an interesting treatise entitled "Dual Economies in East Africa" by a colleague and a friend, Dr. Ann Seidman who was then teaching economics at the University of Dar es Salaam. While I agreed with her description of the East African economies and learnt much from it, I was in fundamental disagreement with her "dualistic" conceptualisation. Profound as my reasons were, my initial statement on the issue, which appeared in the *East African Journal*, was necessarily shallow and unrewarding. The entailed dissatisfaction led to more work on the subject between 1972 and 1973. The scope of the study got extended, empirically, to southern Africa and, theoretically, to "dependency" theorists such as Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and Tamas Szentes who was also a colleague at Dar es Salaam University. The result was more satisfying and appealed to a greater audience, though it remained unpublished due partly to its length and partly to the fact that it encompassed more than one topic.

The basic thesis of the paper was that in a combined and unevenly developed world, there can be no dichotomies but rather dialectical unities – an hypothesis which has already been established for Latin America by Gunder Frank and tested empirically for West Africa by Samir Amin. Having myself done studies which involved migrant workers in South Africa and in Uganda and having kept up with similar studies in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya, I felt that I could make a complementary contribution to the pioneering work of writers such as Frank and Amin. Needless to say, I was also concerned to give vent to my own theoretical predilections.

Among these was the problem of form and essence. As everyone else, I was acutely aware of the persistence of certain tribal *forms* in east and southern Africa in contrast to modernised enclaves in the towns and in export agriculture. However, in my view, the prevalence of labour migrancy over a period of 75–100 years in the area pointed to an *essential*, underlying mechanism which could not be explained by recourse to mere forms. In all the countries investigated labour was found to be moving in relation to CAPITAL, whether in the mines, the plantations, or in the modern industries, and whether freely or coerced. Independently of the will of the natives, this produced a very powerful mechanism for economic integration. Precisely, because it relied on dichotomous forms – the native village and the modern sector, native labour and foreign capital, its social character became highly antagonistic. The process of modern production did not necessarily lead to a progressive division of labour in the form of an expanding, settled, industrial proletariat, on one hand, and an emerging national bourgeoisie, on the other. Instead, in principle all labour remained itinerant, interchangeable and rustic, while in practice capital continued to be foreign and metropolitan (white). In my view this combination constituted the essence of underdevelopment, reducible to a retrogressive division of labour internally and loss of value outwardly. In other words, I attributed the distorted and contradictory nature of productive forces in Third World countries solely to colonial capitalism, mindful of the fact that European transition to capitalism was consistent with itself in that it was unambivalently a negation (not incorporation) of a system that had become unserviceable i.e. over-ripe feudalism.

I insisted that if it were not for the retrogressive and antagonistic social character of colonial economies, metropolitan capital would not have been able to fulfil and sustain over time its objective, namely, extraction of surplus-value across the seas and, thus, divide the world into dominant and subordinate economies. Here, I contended, coincided the essential phenomena of imperialism and "underdevelopment". It is important to note that "underdevelopment" is a counterconcept which is meant to signify the contradiction between the historical role of central capital to raid peripheral economies for value and the objective need of these economies to maximise internal accumulation, if development is to occur. I urged that in the epoch of imperialism the problem cannot be resolved, except through disengagement from the system by underdeveloped countries or by renunciation of the right to exploit by the developed countries. The latter was dismissed as a mere illusion, as it was tantamount to calling upon central capital to liquidate itself by abandoning its historical role. The rationale is that the external expansion of central capital (imperialism) cannot be dispensed with while the mode of accumulation which occasioned it still survives, viz., capitalism. As a corollary to this, it was suggested that underdeveloped countries could not hope to repeat the history of the developed countries. In the capitalist scramble for value they could only serve as milch cows. Insofar as that is true and insofar as central capital is destined to intensify its crave for profits, the general conclusion reached was that, logically and historically, there was little ground for any underdeveloped country to suppose that it could beat the developed countries in their own game in the manner of Japan. Insofar as advanced capitalism cannot resolve on a world-scale the contradictions it has created, insofar it cannot be regarded as a progressive force. Therefore, anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism remain the only hope for underdeveloped countries. How the politics of that will manifest itself is something that will be determined by the objective conditions in the underdeveloped countries themselves and by the international balance of forces.

To some minds, "The Fallacy of Dual Economies" might sound too ideological and polemical. But to some minds, especially young intellectuals in the Third World who happened to have read it in draft, it makes perfect sense, as is shown by their frequent inquiries about the fate of the manuscript. That in itself is not without theoretical and philosophical significance. First, each historical epoch has its own subjects. When one epoch is being overthrown by another, a head-on collision between contending subjects is inevitable. This is the true meaning of "contradiction", as no two historical epochs can be founded on one and the same fundamental truth. Otherwise, "antithesis" as a historical concept would lose its meaning. For example, capital and its continuous realisation (accumulation) are the diagnostic characteristic of the imperialist epoch. Their negation will definitely bring to an end an era. If the logic of the point we are trying to make were in doubt, social theory over the centuries would have been quite incapable of generating historical categories or general concepts. The fact that social development is multi-dimensional and that social reality occurs at different levels need not be taken as evidence to the contrary. Far from it, it points to one of the ironies of science. Science becomes science only when it is able to penetrate appearances and to lay bare underlying general principles. Empiricists claims notwithstanding, all science would be superfluous if the appearance and essence of things immediately

coincided. But then what is "truth", scientific or otherwise, in moments of contradiction?

"Dual Economies" sought to demonstrate that contradictions between developed and underdeveloped countries did not reside in any ontological differences but rather in historical relationships which can be changed by men and women, who in the meantime have become not only an essential part of that historical relationship but also its antithesis. When the question was posed in the paper, "Neo-colonialism or Revolution?", it was with the intention to highlight both the problem of human agency and that of science or historical necessity. We have already stated that the negation of one historical epoch by another is of necessity a revolutionary process. It is a struggle between particular groups or classes. In its intellectual forms the struggle cannot but be critical and polemical. Revolution implies an intensified attack on bad manifestations e.g. exploitation and repression in our time. It then transpires that polemics are an integral part of critique. It is not a matter of style, as is often supposed, but a matter of theory trying to overthrow theory. The incongruity between potentiality and actuality incites critical theory to be part of the practice of transformation, to be a factor in the historical struggles that it aims to comprehend. This does not amount merely to a denial of the positivist epistemology of "neutrality" and its treatment of theory and practice as two modes of existence but, more importantly, to the recognition of the fact that critical theory enters into a practical struggle against conservative theory which by its justification of present existence creates an impediment, a disavowal of the possibility of another reality, radically different and inherently superior. On its part, critical theory by pointing the way from the bad current state of humanity to a mankind that disposes of the goods available to it in such a manner that they are distributed in accordance with the true needs of the people constitutes not only an indictment but also an imperative. In this context the polemical demand for socialist transformation in "Dual Economies" was historically consistent and scientifically founded.

"State Capitalism in Predominantly Agrarian Economies", written in 1975, was in pursuit of this imperative. The polemic was carried into the radical camp. A conference in Madagascar, attended mainly by radical scholars from the Third World, provided an opportunity to scrutinise from close quarters the content of the so-called anti-imperialist struggles and strategies. The basic argument in the paper was that if imperialism is the essential explanation for the postulated historical structure of "development-underdevelopment", could then a socialist revolution in a backward country encircled by triumphant world capitalism be anything but an instance in the process of capitalist accumulation? If the latter was thought to be the case, was state capitalism, as a strategy against imperialism, therefore, a mere appearance? If it is, could it be assumed that in underdeveloped countries, where classes are still inchoate, the state is unambiguously a universal repository of capitalist property? Would not a rigid adherence to classical postulates in fact deprive us of any dynamic explanation for what prompted the adoption of state capitalism in underdeveloped countries? If it is assumed, as it must be, that it was the weakness of the two appropriate classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, then in the absence of state capitalism as a potential line of defence against imperialism, what is likely to stimulate the development of the proletariat in these

countries, as the ultimate antithesis of capitalist accumulation on a world scale? Is it not the historical role of CAPITAL, public or private, to produce its dialectical opposite? What theoretical grounds could there be for denying the same role to state capitalism in backward countries?

At this point answers become mechanistic, derivative, or idealistic and, therefore, unscientific. Yet, there are ways of maintaining the polemic at a scientific level, without destroying its innovativeness or suppleness. It may be pointed out, for example, that by maintaining the tension between essence and appearance and between authentic potentiality and immediate existence, dialectical theory makes it possible to deal with phenomena at both their apparent and real instances. For example, while materialist theory correctly postulates that the problem of capitalism derives from the antagonistic character of social process as the identity of the production process and the realisation of capital, and while it is acknowledged that this antagonism permeates all spheres of life, it has to be borne in mind at the same time that apparent forms such as "nationalisation", "ujamaa villages", "workers' participation", statutory abolition of "landlord-tenant" and "employer-employee" relationships are no less real than anything else. It cannot be denied that they influence the thought and actions of men and women, as true subjects and objects of production processes. The same reified forms may in due course help the subjects to comprehend the antagonistic essence of the production process which hitherto has been hidden from them.

It is well to remember that it is only when possibility overcomes itself that it becomes reality. Likewise, reality is overcome by being comprehended as the mere possibility of another reality. In other words, the relationships between possibility and reality and between form and essence are analogous and both are real in the emphatic sense, though neither is ever transcended except in actual action. There is no way of discounting social experience, no matter how vulgar or mystified. The struggle towards socialism can only take place within the vulgar womb of capitalism. Furthermore, it is only natural that the validity of such struggles does not become self-evident or universal until the moment of complete transcendence. Perhaps, this is what is meant by local history as being an instance of universal history, or by changing parts in order to change the whole. Compromised development in countries such as Egypt, Algeria, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, Tanzania and, more recently, Somalia, Mozambique and Ethiopia, even in its perversity does provide positive lessons for future action and strategies. The same cannot be said of those countries which have contented themselves with decadent orthodoxy. It was apparent at a conference on "The Non-Capitalist Path to Development in Africa" held in Helsinki in 1976 that countries such as mentioned above are the new subjects of development theory. Moreover, lack of theoretical consensus on their exact historical status convinced me that they are a welcome counterweight to dogmatism and status *ante* arguments. As such, they are a fertile ground for new insights. This in itself gives a new significance to controversy and polemics. Consequently, no apology need be offered for presenting these three essays which in some respects are controversial and polemical.



## 2. The Role of State Capitalism in Predominantly Agrarian Economies<sup>1</sup>

A number of roles, both positive and negative, are attributable to state capitalism as a specific socio-economic form. Historical experience from Eastern Europe and, more recently, from the Third World has predicated that. Thus the problem of ascertaining the objective historical role of state capitalism has become intractable. Answers both from supporters of state capitalism or from its detractors remain necessarily incomplete. The classical Marxist supposition that state capitalism was necessarily a universal repository of collective property, or that it was a prelude to socialism has not been confirmed by events. Nor has it been proved that state capitalism necessarily leads to bureaucratic entrenchment and economic stagnation – an antithesis of socialism. This leaves the field open for further enquiry, refinement and, possibly, formulation of entirely new hypotheses. It is in the spirit of the latter that we undertake the present investigation and, as a result, our suggestions cannot be but tentative.

To counteract any socialist idealism which might be an expression of a certain revulsion against the perversions of state capitalism in most socialist countries, it must be stated that we do well by starting from the concrete and avoid extrapolation. The historical development of Eastern Europe, for instance, is not analogous to that of present underdeveloped countries. Secondly, it has to be recognised that the existence of state capitalism in the latter is an objective fact which is not reducible to purely subjective exigencies or attributable to the same predisposing factors as in Europe. Therefore, before we can assess the desirability or not of state capitalism in these countries, we need to know with greater precision what objective determinate conditions made this strategy a historical imperative for them. It would be a strange thing if such a wide-spread phenomenon in the Third World, differences in perspective notwithstanding, were merely an accident.

<sup>1</sup> Originally prepared for a conference on *An appraisal of the Relations between Agricultural Development and Industrialisation in Africa and Asia*, Tananarive, July, 1975. For the sake of presentation, references were kept at the absolute minimum. That has been retained and literature that has been consulted appears in the select bibliography at the end of the essay.

# The struggle against foreign economic domination

When we consider the circumstances underlying the emergence of the Third World countries, a few basic historical facts are observable: (i) their political subordination; (ii) their economic exploitation; and (iii) their dependence on a world market system that is dominated by a few, rich, advanced capitalist countries. Anti-colonial nationalist struggles were essentially a bid for political power and liquidation of colonial domination. It was generally assumed that executive authority would terminate colonial exploitation, as is shown by the assumptions underlying the first development plans of most underdeveloped countries. Experience was to prove that it is a very short step from political independence to economic dependence. In the euphoria of independence leaders in underdeveloped countries had not studied carefully the mechanisms for accumulation in advanced capitalism and had underestimated the substantive power of monopoly capital. It was in response to foreign economic domination that most underdeveloped countries gradually and pragmatically arrived at the idea of 'nationalisation' as a strategy for self-defence. It is important to note that, with a few exceptions such as China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Burma, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, S. Yemen, Algeria, Cuba, Guinea, Mali and, more recently, Tanzania, Somalia, Peru, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola, nationalisation policies in the Third World were not inspired by socialist ideology but simply seized upon by nationalist governments out of sheer expediency. This is in sharp contrast to Eastern Europe where nationalisation was an essential part of the communist ideology and revolutionary strategy. One of the immediate implications of this observation is that attempts at nationalising the 'commanding heights' of the economy in the Third World were not necessarily anti-capitalist, as is often imputed by Eastern European analysts. What then are Third World countries?

Unlike the Western capitalist or the Eastern socialist countries, the Third World countries are not a world system. Neither their political nor their economic forms are characterized by any consistency which gives them a definite coherence. Their political identity derives from a negative condition – underdevelopment and an ex-colonial status. Their successful struggles against colonialism have earned them the historical characterisation of 'national democratic' stage. At the point of emergence when the movement was characterised by popular participation in a united front of all classes in society, this was an unambiguous categorisation because it referred to substance as well as form i.e. anti-imperialist struggles.<sup>1</sup> But subsequent class struggles from within have largely emptied the term of its original

<sup>1</sup> In fact, this is what constituted the kernel of the notion of the "New Democracy" among communist theoreticians in the aftermath of the First World War and the first socialist revolution in Russia in 1917. It referred to the content of the struggle and not to traditional bourgeois freedoms such as freedom of the press, freedom of speech etc. etc. Whether "anti-imperialism" always got identified with socialism, internally and externally, seems to be the issue and no other.

meaning. The preponderance of military oligarchies in Latin America and the consolidation of bureaucratic power by petty-bourgeois elites in Africa and Asia, has meant a gradual exclusion of the popular masses from democratic participation in the affairs of the nation. This calls for a more critical categorisation of state formations in the Third World. Indeed, references have been made to the emergence of a 'corporate state' in Latin America, meaning the alliance between the military establishment and the national bourgeoisie, 'bureaucratic state capitalism' in Africa and, in general, to 'non-capitalist'/'socialist-oriented' states, representing a third and progressive alternative to development.

Underlying all these distinctions is an awareness of differences in class articulations and in strategies for development in Third World countries. We have already noted that at birth underdeveloped countries found themselves encumbered by the hegemony of the developed countries and by an unfavourable international division of labour. They could only hope to improve their position by seizure of discretionary power over the allocation of their resources. In many cases, as has been pointed out, this entailed nationalisation or vesting of some of the available capital in the hands of the government which would then use it selectively to strengthen the national economy against critical external economies and competition. The militancy and the thoroughness with which this was done varies tremendously. There are those countries in which the new power was exercised in alliance with foreign investors and where the state was seen as an intermediary for the nascent national bourgeoisie. On the other extreme, there are those countries quoted earlier where state intervention took an anti-capitalist twist and proclaimed the working people its objects of solicitude. In the former category, well represented by the older underdeveloped countries in Latin America and Asia, state capitalism has succeeded neither in producing a robust, independent, national bourgeoisie nor in promoting real development. Instead, it has produced an economically dependent comprador-class whose first-line of defence has become the well-known military oligarchies of the Latin American type. Where growth had occurred, initially, in such countries as Argentina, Chile, Mexico, the Philippines, and a few others, it seems to have been followed, without exception, by prolonged periods of stagnation and political strife. New candidates such as Brazil and Venezuela in Latin America; the Ivory Coast, Kenya and Nigeria in Africa; and South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore and Pakistan in Asia have come to the fore. The prospects for them have become something of an ideological test ground. Bourgeois scholars are hedging their bets on them as proof of the feasibility of the capitalist route even in present underdeveloped countries. Socialist analysts are anticipating their ultimate collapse as further evidence of the unfeasibility of the capitalist route to development under the modern conditions of monopoly capitalism and the foreclosure of any new frontiers such as were open to Japan and the former British Dominions at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

Prediction in the social sciences is a hazardous occupation. But even so there are

some undeniable truths which can be used as a launching ground. It is true that underdeveloped countries by virtue of their technological backwardness and financial poverty are dependent on a few leading capitalist countries for supply of the requisite capital and technology. It is also true that the objective share of the same capital and technology necessarily means a smaller share for the recipient countries and, therefore, a lower possibility for rapid internal accumulation and a dynamic take-off. It is also true that investment by its very selective nature influences not only imports but also exports insofar as it determines the domestic resource use. It is also true that by the same token the latter determines the whole production structure and the direction of development of the total economy, including price proportions among the different sectors of the economy. Implicit in this dialectic is a number of contradictions which are the objective ground for a variety of subjective choices by national governments in underdeveloped countries.

First, underdeveloped countries, irrespective of ideological orientation, desire maximum retention of domestic incomes. Second, they wish to break out of the technological rut which is a consequence of their being, traditionally, suppliers of raw materials that rely for their production on low-level technology and largely unskilled labour. Third, as evinced by their struggles for independence from the former colonial powers, they wish to be in full control of their national resources and life chances. As has been pointed out in the preceding paragraph, all these aspirations, genuine as they are, are negated by the logic of external dependence for capital and technology and its attendant modes of accumulation. These contradictions have been experienced in actual practice and, as a result, every underdeveloped country has come to know that: (a) partial or complete nationalisation of the 'commanding heights' of the economy is a prerequisite for the protection of its flagging economy; (b) partial or complete control of trade by the government ensures less wanton use of scarce foreign reserves; and (c) land, which still accounts for the bulk of the national income in underdeveloped countries, cannot be left entirely to the vagaries of individual owners and producers.

Seizure of assets and resources is a minimal negative condition which does not tell us how resources so seized will be used. Therefore, while not denying the suggestion that for underdeveloped countries which suffer constant foreign domination development is seizure of power, we should be careful not to reduce the history of underdeveloped countries to imperial history. The history of underdeveloped countries themselves forbids us to treat them as purely victims of imperialism which can only be judged by the most minimal standards – an attitude which is shared by both western European liberals and eastern European communists. In the meantime some of the most interesting political advances in the present epoch seem to be taking place in the Third World. The new socio-political subject there, the state, is producing such contradictions as do not fit easily into classical categories. Therefore, to ask what is the role of state capitalism

in these countries is not an idle pastime but an important historical, political and economic question.

## State capitalism and underdevelopment

In underdeveloped countries state capitalism as a development strategy takes two apparent forms. First, it assumes the role of protecting the national economy and of compensating the economic weakness of the nascent national bourgeoisie, without meaning necessarily to liquidate it as a class. In the second form it adopts the same role, but with the express purpose of liquidating the national bourgeoisie. These orientations have given rise to antithetical characterisations which tend to obscure the real nature of the processes involved. Therefore, a step-by-step analysis rather than taxonomic categorisations based on a few apparent features might be a fruitful way of broaching the subject. For instance, we notice that most underdeveloped countries, irrespective of orientation, went through the *national democratic stage*. Its diagnostic features were: (i) anti-colonialism; (ii) anti-imperialism; (iii) a united front of classes led by petty bourgeois elements; and (iv) a commitment to the re-building of the economy.<sup>1</sup> It is the latter which provided scope for positive action and later brought out significant divergences among different regimes. But in all cases it raised unequivocally the question of economic priorities and input provision. The local bourgeoisie was, initially, too weak to be entrusted with input provision on a large scale. Consequently, provision of capital, technology, infrastructure, training of labour and research, credit and social services became the responsibility of the state. Combined with nationalisations of any sort at all, this assured the dominance of the state and its agents, particularly the bureaucracy. Not unexpectedly, the dominance of the state in underdeveloped social formations has become a source of severe contradictions and acrimonious theoretical exchange. On the practical level this could not have been otherwise because it involves social and economic priorities. At the theoretical level the complexity and novelty of the issue is such that it does not lend itself to analogic presuppositions about China or Russia.

On this score there are a few points which are worth emphasising for they are often lost sight of in the wake of populist disillusionment with petty-bourgeois regimes in underdeveloped countries. While the reflexes of the state in underdeveloped countries are to a great measure attributable to subjective manipulations by the ruling elites, the state itself is a historical product of objective conditions and so is its dominance. It emerged to fill a political vacuum where all classes were still inchoate after the departure of the colonial powers. Likewise it was the only viable force to undertake the enormous task of national and economic

<sup>1</sup> Once again, this is perfectly consistent with the principles of the "New Democracy"

integration. In other words, it was the price paid for political independence. But if political independence is insufficient, as we all agree, then we should not deny the *given fact*, the state, for we will miss out on a very important theoretical point, namely, the historical sequence which in this instance gave rise to priority of politics over economics. This is a more positive way of understanding the state than depicting it purely as a colonial overgrowth. If in its organic form it is still a continuation of colonialism, in its historic form it is a negation of colonialism, insofar as it represents a new division of political power. Indeed, it is my belief that the problem of development in the postindependence period is precisely how that power shall be used. Posing the question this way allows for a dynamic marriage between voluntarism and determinism and avoids the idealistic one-sidedness which has become so rampant in revolutionary rhetoric.

## Neo-colonialist or socialist development?

Formal political independence, by virtue of the discretionary power it confers to the new rulers in underdeveloped countries, creates circumstances where divergent subjective choices can be made in countries which have otherwise similar material conditions. In the circumstances the dogmatic or orthodox materialist can assume complete correspondence between superstructure and infrastructure and vouch for the absolute priority of techno-economic factors only at his own peril. The latter are as much an object of human creativity as they are a condition for human self-creation. Our interest in the political and ideological choices made by governments in underdeveloped countries derives from this essential point. Projectively, it also enables us to distinguish between progressive and retrograde strategies, or between what is generally known as 'neo-colonialist' and 'socialist-oriented' regimes. While admitting that underlying these orientations are certain imperatives which are a reflection of the world situation as a whole, I believe that there is still value in distinguishing between different initiatives at the national level. A single theory of revolution is an absurdity in a world so grossly uneven in its development.

### a. *Neo-colonialist strategies*

Apart from political liberation, the struggle for independence also implies emancipation from economic exploitation and backwardness. In dealing with the latter problem there are those countries in which the leadership has chosen basically to identify with foreign capitalist interests, while reserving the right to use its newly acquired political power to negotiate for better terms of economic interaction and distribution of surplus-value. This is what has come to be recognised as a neo-colonialist strategy for development. It is the norm in Latin America, with the notable exception of Cuba and, possibly, the short-lived regimes

of Allende in Chile and Velasco in Peru. In Africa there is greater differentiation and uncertainty. The same is true of the Middle East. In Asia there is almost complete polarisation between neo-colonialist and socialist states. Mild protectionist measures notwithstanding, neo-colonialist strategy usually means not only a willingness to cooperate with foreign monopolies but also heavy reliance on them for capital, credits, supplies and technology. In return they get opportunities for lucrative investments, managerial contracts and protected markets for their local products. This often produces measurable growth in the favoured sectors of the economy, allowing worthwhile appropriation by the indigenous elites and living wages for a tiny section of the local labour. In such cases the state acts as a broker for foreign firms and the emerging national bourgeoisie. In the process a number of *insoluble* contradictions, both external and internal, are created. These include:

i. increased domination of the economy by foreign monopolies and continued loss of domestic income.

ii. increased discrepancy between resource use and domestic demand, as foreign capital concentrates on extractive industries which produce commodities that are not consumed locally, e.g. mining and export agriculture;

iii. increased technological dependence on foreign suppliers and retardation of domestic capability;

iv. monopolisation of the local market through import substitution industries and further losses of added value due to inducements offered in order to secure licences and capital; and

v. increased imbalances in incomes between those engaged in the modern sector – usually capital-intensive – and those in the neglected sectors always technologically backward and inhabited by the great majority of the population.

The contradictions enumerated above universally have given rise to local antagonisms even within the dominating classes. For instance, those among the petty-bourgeois who have aspired to an independent national economy begin to experience frustration. The original national movement sooner or later gets fragmented into those who are strongly allied with foreign interests – the compradors – and those who oppose them on nationalist grounds – progressive patriots. In addition, the mass of the people who are naturally cut off from any economic benefits and whose material situation might be getting worse than before begin to be restive. In the see-saw struggle that follows the right, with the support of their foreign allies and the army, usually wins out. Thus, the national democratic movement, which started off as a united front of all classes comes to its ultimate contradiction, suffers a complete collapse, and is superseded by bitter class struggles. The state, which by reason of its birth under conditions where *no particular class* enjoyed universal hegemony within society, loses its original role as mediator between contending classes, or its temporary but historically determined partial autonomy. It becomes decidedly an instrument of class oppression and loses entirely its permeability to pressures from below. That more or less forecloses any

serious talk about development, as there cannot be development without the support and effective participation of the vast mass of the people. Latin America and parts of Asia bear witness to the processes sketched out here (in Africa they are just beginning to express themselves openly) and they have produced their dialectical opposite, namely, anti-capitalist feelings among the suppressed classes. It is here that the anti-imperialist feeling of earlier struggles gets decidedly identified with anti-capitalist responses.

b. *Socialist strategies*

At the level of politics and ideology it is easy to confuse anti-capitalist feelings with socialism. But subjective responses, while a product of objective conditions such as are described above, are not in themselves an accurate guide to what might be the dialectic of preferred alternatives. Attempts at socialist transformation in underdeveloped countries have thrown up many and original contradictions, whose twists and turns defy assimilation into classical categories. Consequently, countries which have chosen this path of development have been described inconsistently as 'socialist', 'non-capitalist', 'revolutionary democracies' or 'bureaucratic capitalism'. Broadly interpreted, all these characterisations point to vistas of the same phenomenon. They are certainly an indication that there is more than one side to state capitalism.

As has been mentioned, state capitalism in underdeveloped countries could refer to either of two things. It could simply mean the assumption by the state of the historical role of capital, irrespective of the internal political conditions under which that occurs. In Africa this would presuppose that there was no difference between Tanzania and Kenya, or Algeria and Nigeria. The second referent of state capitalism is that the state, while assuming the major role in the investment of capital and distribution of the product, does not play the historical role of capital but, instead, intervenes against capital. This is what has been referred to by the Chinese theorists as "the regulation of capital by the state so that private capital cannot dominate the livelihood of the people".<sup>1</sup> In Latin America this would imply a real difference between Cuba and Peru<sup>2</sup> (not to say anything about such examples as Brazil); or between Burma and Indonesia in Asia. In Africa the lines of demarcation are as yet blurred, notwithstanding the fact that some African leftists have reached pessimistic conclusions even about such popular cases as Tanzania.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the association of state investment and distributive functions with anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism is very easy to justify under the concept of the

<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-Tung, "The Economy of the New Democracy". Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1967; p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. If we accept as accurate Annibal Quijano's account in *Nationalism and Capitalism in Peru. Monthly Review*, 3, 23, Jul-Aug., 1971.

<sup>3</sup> This is particularly true of the Tanzanian left, as is shown by their recent publications.

"New Democracy", whether one is a Maoist or a Muscovite. The basic argument is, and has been since the end of the First World War and the Russian Revolution, that in ex-colonial or underdeveloped countries it is not national capitalism which is developing capitalism internally. It is rather international capitalism. Likewise, it is maintained that it is not the national but rather the international bourgeoisie which is exercising bourgeois dictatorship in these countries. Under the circumstances, it is concluded, consolidation of the state sector favours a socialist economic and political development. This is especially so, it is added, that international imperialism is averse to the development of any autonomy by underdeveloped nations, which after all are its objects of exploitation.

Moreover, this orthodox communist view, whether Soviet or Maoist-inspired, does not rule out the role of private capital in the evolution of state capitalism as a prelude to a socialist transformation:

"In the new-democratic republic under the leadership of the proletariat, the state enterprises will be of a socialist character and will constitute the leading force in the whole national economy, but the republic neither confiscate capitalist private property nor forbid the development of such capitalist production as does not "dominate the livelihood of the people" (Mao Tse-Tung, op.cit.; p. 353).

The Soviet view, based largely on the Decree on Concessions which was inspired by Lenin himself and approved by the Council of People's Commissars of Soviet Russia in November, 1920, goes even further. In contrast to the Chinese economic strategy which left no room for foreign capital, it maintains that 'a country can develop along a non-capitalist path and, at the same time, offer to foreign capital opportunities to exploit part of its natural resources and the working masses'. The basic rationale for this is the need for underdeveloped countries to develop their productive forces as fast as possible and to liquidate their economic backwardness as soon as possible. This second school of thought even sees multi-national corporations as sources from which underdeveloped countries can obtain "machinery and equipment", "loans", "licences" and "scientific and technological assistance". The more uncompromising and nationalistic point of view of the Chinese has an obvious appeal to Third World revolutionaries, who are basically "anti-dependency" theorists. But Vietnam, a country with which they are strongly identified, has confused the issue by applying for membership in international monetary organisations and by entering into agreements with international corporations. This would seem to confirm the Soviet view-point. However, it is fair to state that both the Chinese and the Soviet Marxists see liquidation of domination by foreign capital as the ultimate objective of socialist-oriented development. Nonetheless, differences on the importance attached to, on one hand, rapid development of material forces and, on the other, to consolidation of political consciousness still remain. They raise at a fundamental level the question of what are the practical limits of either strategy, granted that it is not a matter of either-or.

First of all, it is well to remind ourselves that changing world perspectives also determine in no small manner the choice of strategies. State capitalism as a definite

strategy for development in Third World countries is a post-World War II phenomenon and coincides with the era of anti-colonial revolutions in Asia and in Africa. As shall be remembered, this was also a period of great American and European capitalist expansion. In that context state capitalism in the Third World was undoubtedly a reaction to insecure control over the national economy by independent governments, to continued siphoning off of surplus from their weak economies by aggressive international capital, creating a crisis of accumulation internally while constantly pressing for repayment and servicing of loans, and to unequal exchange in general. As has been warned already, not all nationalisations were accompanied by anti-capitalist feelings or ideologies. Only in a minority of cases was this the fact. In Africa Egypt was the first, followed by Ghana, Mali, Guinea-Conakry and Algeria; then Tanzania and Somalia; and more recently Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Angola. In Asia the only comparable example is Burma. Countries such as China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia managed to combine their attack on foreign capital with a similar attack on its local agents, namely, capitalist compradors and landlords. This was made possible by the fact that in their case the political struggle was led and conducted by communist parties backed by popular classes, the peasants and the workers. This promises to be the main trend in Asia, as is evidenced by the continued communist-led guerilla movements in Laos, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, East Timor and even in Burma. We might well wonder what is so exceptional about Asia, as compared with Latin-America where the tendency for the communist parties has been to 'lead' from behind and with Africa where there is dearth of communist parties.

The question then is whether these distinctions merit new typologies. Would there be any theoretical value, for instance, in restricting the term "state capitalism" to the Latin American and African type of state intervention. If so, how would we characterise the state involvement in the processes of investment, accumulation and distribution in the Asian-type of development? It is perhaps noteworthy that both Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung emphasized the *class character* of the state, while acknowledging that the maintenance of *commodity relations* under regulation of capital by the state was contrary to socialist relations i.e. it perpetuates alienation of labour from its products. This admission has deep implications even for the Asian and East European communist-dominated type of development. This is the more so when we recall that even in these societies market relations, money and prices have *not been eliminated*. Hence Lenin designated state capitalism in a socialist-oriented society as a "form of class struggle", while Mao Tse-Tung maintained throughout his life that there was a "contradiction between the state and the people". It is obvious from these injunctions that there is no "state capitalism" or "regulation of capital by the state" (whatever we wish to call it) that is immune to the alienating logic of capital accumulation and, therefore, to social and economic counter-revolution. The fact that the predisposition is greater in cases where the social character is still largely petty-bourgeois does not seem to

invalidate our basic proposition. Far from that being the case, it emphasizes the fluid and transient nature of socialism. While it is common to talk about "transition to socialism", strictly speaking, that is a contradiction in terms, since in accordance with Marxist historical categories, "socialism" is *not a mode of production* but a transitional stage between capitalism and communism. If it is *sub-stages* that we are concerned with in contemporary history, then only anti-capitalist drifts or impulses, not unrealised complete historical epochs, can be used as a valid guide to action. This would seem to approximate more to the Soviet position than to the Chinese one, and yet Mao Tse-Tung in his 'Refutation of "Left" Phrase-Mongering' chastises all those "metaphysics-mongers plus a few Trotskyites who, brandishing their pens like lances, are tilting in all directions and creating bedlam. Hence the whole bag of tricks for deceiving those who do not know what is going on around them – the *"theory of a single revolution"*" (Mao, op.cit.; p. 359).

Once again, there is another subtle difference here between the Chinese and the Russian communists. Whereas the Chinese "theory of stages" was conceived dynamically and allowed for perpetual motion in the form of periodic "cultural revolutions" *within the same society*, the Russians, who talk about "advanced socialist societies" as reference points for "backward countries", seem to have relativised the theory into stages *between* "socialist" and "socialist-oriented" countries. Unhappily, this seems to exonerate them from saying at what stage their own society is *internally*. Regrettably, this casts a *status quo* perspective on the "advanced" socialist countries. If "state capitalism" or "regulation of capital by the state" is one of the phases in the socialist transition and if it is susceptible to the corrupting logic of capital accumulation, as we have argued, then it needs to be reviewed constantly so as to ascertain its progressiveness or otherwise at different stages. This is the only way unity of theory can be maintained and purely geographical divisions be dispensed with. This is not to say that differences in historical experience are unimportant. What is at issue is the specific meaning of "advanced" and "backward" as opposed categories and in relation to the concept of "permanent revolution". For instance, how "backward" is China compared to most of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union?

At times we may have a similar problem in dealing with underdeveloped countries. While at the level of logic we are able to make easy categorisations between "neo-colonialist" and "socialist-oriented" regimes, in practice *a priori* judgements can be very misleading, as anti-capitalist struggles continue even within avowedly neo-colonialist states or, obversely, pro-capitalist struggles in the so-called "socialist-oriented" countries. Indonesia, Ghana, Egypt and Chile are undeniably examples of the triumph of pro-capitalist forces in what was regarded as "socialist-oriented" countries. To ascertain the exact drifts of the revolutionary movement, it might be useful to investigate whether any of these struggles occur because of state capitalism or that entrenched state capitalism is a response to them. It would seem, for instance, that in Latin America where the bourgeois revolutions occurred one-and-a-half centuries ago and where class contradictions have reached

critical levels, state capitalism is a rear-guard action against revolution. It is the consolidation and the bolstering up of a flabby bourgeoisie against excessive external economic pressures as well as a vitiation of internal pressures for revolution. Therefore, it must be concluded that in the case of Latin America state capitalism has been pre-empted of its progressive potentialities. Even in the case of Peru the exclusion of all progressive forces from key positions and the intensely anti-communist and anti-Marxist ideology of the state confirms this supposition.

In non-socialist Asia, with the exception of Burma, state capitalism, wherever it has appeared, came strictly as an extension of bourgeois and feudal power. Despite that, it has continued to be challenged, politically and militarily, by communist guerillas who, unlike their Latin American counterpart, seem to be on the verge of tilting the scales in their favour throughout the region. Accordingly, the prospects for "regulation of capital" by a communist-led state in the fashion of China or Vietnam are undoubtedly high. The pattern in the Middle East is confused. It ranges from feudal, oil-rich monarchies, through inconsistent cases such as Egypt, Algeria, and Iraq to the Marxist People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen. In Egypt, once upon a time the prime example of the "non-capitalist path" in the Middle East, Nasser carried out what is probably the greatest nationalisation policies anywhere in the Third World. He effectively liquidated the old bourgeoisie of the 1920s plus its Ottoman aristocratic remnants. Simultaneously, he went out of his way to smash the Egyptian communist party and predictably failed to politicise the true subjects of the revolution, the workers and the peasants. Instead, he established a monstrous state bureaucracy, including the military, which eventually expropriated all the other classes, politically and economically. He thus paved the way for a counter-revolutionary take-over by Sadat and his cohorts.

On the other hand, Nasser's anti-imperialism was an objective fact which would not be denied even by his worst enemies. It manifested itself externally by an unflinching support for the Algerian and the Yemeni revolutions, and the liberation movements in southern Africa. In the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) he supported the progressive wing of the African nationalists. Internationally, he cooperated more with the socialist countries (especially the Soviet Union) than Western powers. At home he was rightly criticised for his anti-communist stance and consequent failure to carry the revolution to the next stage. But then are we to conclude that, because of Sadat's *coup de grâce*, Nasser brought about no lasting qualitative changes in the Egyptian society? It seems futile to give an unqualified "yes", as Mahmoud Hussein does in his book, *Class Conflict in Egypt*.<sup>1</sup> It is conceivable that Nasser's scandalous compromise constituted a period of gestation in Egypt, whose outcome might well transcend both Sadat's bourgeois counter-revolution and Nasser's petty-bourgeois reformism. The Egyptian working-class has since 1974 exhibited increasing militancy and has shown itself

1 M. Hussein, *Class Conflict in Egypt 1945-1970*. Monthly Review, N.Y. 1973

open to approaches by student activists and progressive intellectuals. Meantime, despite Sadat's "open-door" policy, Egypt's indebtedness is creeping up towards the 20 billion-dollar mark and promised foreign aid and loans have not been forthcoming in the quantities anticipated. As is usual in this kind of situation, inflation is soaring up, as is shown by the February, 1977 food riots. Whatever the arguments, there is a big difference between Egypt and, on one hand, Indonesia or Chile where whole-scale massacres of the communists and complete disorganisation of the working-class occurred and, on the other hand, Ghana where there was neither a communist party nor a formed proletariat but instead a coterie of largely self-seeking petty-bourgeois bureaucrats and CPP functionaries.

In Algeria development after the revolution was fairly undramatic both politically and economically. Islamic traditionalism and economic petty-reformism prevailed. However, during the time of Ben Bella Algeria, like Egypt, took an active interest in liberation movements in Africa and supported the progressive wing in the OAU. In the meantime and despite increasing political and economic revisionism under Boumediene, there remained a small section of critical Marxist intellectuals whose existence might have been germinal in the recent constitutional changes in Algeria and the attempt to re-direct the economy along socialist lines. While all this is still an open question, it is important to note that neither an outright take-over by the right nor a move towards workers' participation or an emergence of a communist party has occurred in Algeria. An uneasy and dangerous truce prevails. Iraq is perhaps the nearest thing to Algeria in the Middle East. A kind of a Nasserite compromise obtains there. The petty-bourgeois dominates the state organs. However, in Iraq, unlike in Egypt and Algeria in the first phase, a concerted effort is being made to mobilise the masses for *economic* production. This *economic commandism* has produced results. Industrialisation programmes under state capitalism have met with a great measure of success in Iraq; so have the rural development programmes. This has given the regime sufficient self-confidence to challenge the Communist Party to join the "national effort" or to prove if there is any material difference between its programme and that which is being implemented by the regime. In the short-run, this has obviously put the Communist Party at a disadvantage and has given greater creditability to a regime which was once openly hostile to the communists, as all Ba'ath Parties are in the Middle East. Iraq and Algeria are middle-way cases and might sail even-keel yet for a while, if only because oil revenues have spared them an acute crisis of internal accumulation.

In contrast, the South Yemen – another socialist path-finder – small, militantly Marxist but surrounded by reactionary, feudal monarchs (Saudi Arabia and North Yemen) suffers from extreme lack of natural resources. It is, therefore, faced with the more basic problem of sheer survival in a way which is reminiscent of Cuba in the early years and, even more closely, of present-day Guinea-Bissau. The South Yemen presents us with a number of new theoretical problems. It aspires to a socialist transformation and yet it has neither the "necessary" material base nor an

identifiable proletariat. It is Marxist, without being fully reconciled to the idea of communism or a communist party, as that would come into serious conflict with the deep commitment of its leaders to Islamic religion. At the same time, externally, it does not show any strong aversion to communism, as is shown by its strong political and economic association with the Soviet Union. If it were not for the latter, South Yemen might have been smothered by now by Saudi Arabia and North Yemen. Does the existence of the South Yemen prove, therefore, that: (i) the presence of socialist countries makes dependence on foreign capital optional; (ii) the level of development of material forces is not a necessary condition for socialist transformation; and (iii) the existence of a proletariat or communist party *per se* is not a *sine qua non* of a socialist transformation. Or is the point of focus going to be the leading ideology itself, *irrespective* of its actual organic embodiment? This raises more questions than can be answered on the strength of one case.

## The African historical experience

A number of cases parallel to that of the South Yemen occur in Africa. Whether this is due to the historical youth of the African countries or to excessive balkanisation of the continent is something which need not detain us here. It is true that effective incorporation of the African countries into the capitalist system started late relative to other continents i.e. it did not begin until the last quarter of the 19th century. Barely fifty years thereafter struggles for "independence" took place, issuing in a short period of ten years into sovereign states. What these states had in common at Independence was, thanks to colonialism, distorted economic structures, to which they reacted differently. The short time-span of their existence makes any attempt to draw hard distinctions among them hazardous. But through careful analysis we may hope to make some valid distinctions.

One of the crucial questions is to what extent the observable differences among African countries are attributable to indigenous or exogenous factors. A great deal of nonsense has been written about the so-called "African mode of production" and about "traditional and feudal elements". The variety of modes of production which were extant in Africa at the time of colonial contact makes it impossible to talk about *the* "African mode of production". At this time in West Africa market (or mercantile) economies jostled with primitive communalism and pastoral aristocracies. In the Sudan and Ethiopia, where feudalism proper existed, it was intermingled with mercantile, primitive communalism and pastoralism. Moving

<sup>1</sup> This over estimates the financial capacity of socialist countries and their impartiality in giving aid. All modern states are still very much guided by strategy and power considerations. In the case of the Soviet Union and China an interesting report has been written by Jens Eric Torp (see Select Bibliography).

eastwards into Somalia pastoralism became more dominant and more egalitarian. The same pastoral pattern continued downwards, through Kenya, into Tanganyika and across westwards into the southern Sudan and into northern Uganda. In south western Uganda, Burundi and Ruanda once again it became more aristocratic as in West Africa. However, for most of East Africa, primitive communalism predominated, barring the emergence of some political (not landed) aristocracies around Lake Victoria. Unlike in West Africa, there was hardly any development of indigenous commerce in East Africa. Central Africa, like East Africa, was characterised by primitive communalism. A certain amount of pastoralism occurred in Angola and parts of the Congo. While a limited amount of trade took place along the Congo river, it was not characteristic of the area. Political centralisation on the pattern of the interlacustrine kingdoms of Uganda was confined only to the Congo and Barotseland in Zambia. The impact of such processes was further reduced by the fact that even in the case of the Congo, since the Kingdom of Kazembe subsequent kingdoms were marked by great instability and fissiparous tendencies. In southern Africa, yet again, primitive communalism and pastoralism, lack of commercial institutions, absence of any significant processes of political centralisation beyond the scale of chiefdoms prevailed.<sup>1</sup>

From this brief survey, it can be argued that "feudalism" or "landlordism" were not the general problem in sub-Saharan Africa. Concerning the question of whether or not differences among the various states in Africa are attributable to pre-existing forms, better approximations can be reached by treating each set of factors relatively rather than absolutely. For instance, what might have happened during the colonial period is that primitive communalism, which was the pervasive mode of production, got seriously disrupted by a demand for labour and less by alienation of land for plantations and thorough-going capitalist agriculture, except in a few cases such as the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Rhodesia and not to mention South Africa. In those areas where highly centralised kingdoms existed, the political elite took advantage of their greater access to resources and engaged in trade and capitalist agriculture. This was particularly true of West Africa and the kingdoms of Uganda. The pastoral economies, whether aristocratic or egalitarian, remained largely unaffected. Even where indigenous capitalism was beginning to emerge, production and trade were not the greatest breeding ground for the petty-bourgeois who inherited state power at Independence. Rather, it was the missionary schools and the colonial civil service which acted as incubators. It is absolutely important to grasp this point as it explains a basic anomaly in the African development. It means that those who came to dominate state power were not recruited because of their excellency in economic production but mainly by virtue of their formal education and bureaucratic skills. Conversely, it means that the economic wing of the petty-bourgeois remained secondary, owing to its

<sup>1</sup> The Ngwato in Botswana might be one of the few exceptions.

usurpation by colonial capital which was able to supplement its role by mobilising the peasantry for primary production. The idea of "progressive" (capitalist) farmers was introduced in Africa only in the mid-fifties whereby the colonial governments were hoping to create a "buffer class" against "hot-headed" nationalists. Consequently, in various surveys carried out by the new governments in the mid-sixties those enumerated as "progressive" or "commercial" farmers fell between 3-5 percent of the farming population. In industry the situation was even worse. Hardly, any Africans participated in industrial production, except as labour. This was a colonial preserve – limited as it was.

It then becomes evident that at Independence African countries lacked a national bourgeoisie of any sort, unless concepts are used in a loose and meaningless way. Under the circumstances state capitalism became but a logical imperative to insure rapid accumulation. It must be remembered that even when production was in African hands during the colonial period, it was usually small-scale, family-based production. This is so much so that it became the standard complaint of bourgeois economists in the fifties, describing the African extended family as an "incubus", "burden" or "drag" on economic effort (meaning capitalist accumulation). Put in a correct perspective, this bourgeois observation is more accurate than the facile assumptions made by some African Marxists who, in their over-anxiety to establish pure class categories, fail to see the *mediating* dialectic of such things as lineages and clans in Africa. In the implementation of the ujamaa policies in Tanzania, it became apparent that it was not only the bureaucracy and "class enemies" who were the problem. It was also the vertical solidarity of such groups at the village level. It cannot be emphasized too often that incorporation into the capitalist system is one thing, and crystallization of the appropriate classes another.

Similarly, while it is fashionable nowadays among the African left to impute original sin to state capitalism in Africa, I see no virtue in doing that analytically and strategically. African state capitalism is neither a colossal class conspiracy in origin nor an outcome of pre-existing African forms. It is a product of as well as a response to colonial underdevelopment. As we have tried to indicate, the modern African state itself was a colonial contrivance and not a natural outcome of the interaction between the various modes of production mentioned earlier. This is in sharp contrast to the older societies of Asia and Latin America. However, contrary to Cabral's belief that imperialism made the Africans "leave for another history", it must be acknowledged that it became part of their history in a very real sense. This is what contemporary struggles are about and this what makes Africa part of the world history. On the positive side, it would be difficult to discuss the emergence of such leaders as Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, Sekou Toure and others, without reference to Pan-Africanist ideas in London or Marxist ideas in Paris.

Of course, over time ideas get assimilated into local thought systems and acquire a special flavour such as did Nkrumah's Pan-Africanism and Modibo Keita's or Sekou Toure's "African socialism". Consequently, for leaders such as Nyerere of Arusha (1967) we do have to look abroad for historical antecedents. Not only had

these ideas become current in Africa but also experience after Independence had brought about valuable insights. For instance, the folly of equating "independence" with economic development had been exposed' and *progressive* nationalists such as Nyerere had learnt from Ghana's experience and in particular from Nkrumah's later warnings against the dangers of "neo-colonialism". This applies with even greater force to the Portuguese ex-colonies – Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, where an armed revolutionary struggle had to be waged with the direct help of such countries as Guinea-Conakry, Tanzania and Zambia. What in effect we are arguing is that there is a recognisable, radical lineage in Africa, starting from Ghana, Guinea, and Mali to Tanzania; and then to Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. This leaves out Somalia and Ethiopia which in many ways are misfits. Their political ties with the afore-mentioned countries had been, if anything, tenuous. Secondly, their revolution came all of a sudden via military coups. Admittedly, in Ethiopia there had been an on-going political struggle spear-headed by, of all things, students and given substance by sporadic peasant rebellions. In contrast in Somalia there was not even semblance of an organised political struggle prior to the military take-over.

The different and problematic routes to the revolution notwithstanding, it is arguable that in the lineage of African countries just traced out the state intervened against capital, if only because foreign capital was causing intolerable contradictions for their leaders. Tanzania, backward, poor, and disadvantaged within the East African Community, is the clearest example of what we are alluding to. Its leadership code, forbidding state officials to engage in private accumulation, its curtailment of the salaries of the higher echelons, the proclamations on workers' rights in 1971 and mass dismissals of redundant bureaucrats in 1976, all were not in favour of capital. Whereas all these interventions occurred on an *ad hoc* basis in Tanzania, in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, state intervention was both the result of a sustained armed struggle and of an explicit anti-imperialist ideology. In Ethiopia and Somalia, although no such struggles took place, the military regimes espouse a Marxist ideology and have pledged themselves to the struggle against capitalism. While nationalisations and expropriations are a common feature of all these regimes, it is worth noting that the regimes themselves are at the same time marked by absence of communist parties and domination of the state apparatus by the workers. Along with that observation, it must be recorded that none of them are anti-Marxist, though in a country such as Tanzania a certain ambivalence towards communism prevails even among the progressive nationalists such as President Nyerere.

There has been a great controversy over the exact meaning of "intervention against capital" in these countries and dismissive conclusions have been reached. There is, however, the problem of time perspective here. For instance, it is obvious that nothing conclusive can be said about the two-year old states of Guinea-Bissau,

1 Nkrumah's naive slogan: "Seek ye first political kingdom and all else will be given unto you"

Mozambique and Angola. The struggle continues there against all sort of odds. It would, for example, be intolerable over-simplification to judge Guinea-Bissau by the extent of its *dependence* on Swedish and Soviet aid. Mozambique is caught on the horns of a dilemma and will have to condescend to foreign aid, whether she likes it or not. In the meantime she is helping in furthering the revolution in Zimbabwe. If a collapse were to occur in Ethiopia, it would be sheer lunacy to attribute it to any grievous character of state capitalism. In the opposite direction, it would be equally foolish to deny that the demise of Nkrumah's Ghana and the paralysis of Mali and Guinea are attributable to the debilitating effects of state capitalism and bureaucracy. Even so, can it be claimed that countries such as Tanzania and Somalia are unqualifiably a repetition of these earlier examples? Or in the contemporary scene do they represent the same thing as Zambia, to quote one instance of frequent comparisons.

The case of Tanzania and Somalia will have to be argued in *extenso*, as both reveal certain underlying ironies of a socialist transformation in situations of backwardness and imperialist domination. As to the second question, we submit that Zambia has been mistakenly included among "socialist-oriented" countries in Africa. Despite the fact that Zambia has one of the biggest state sectors in sub-Saharan Africa, a fairly big and concentrated labour force in the copper mines, at no stage the Zambian state can be said to have shown itself willing to intervene against capital. Instead, it has consistently sought ways of making workable alliances with foreign and domestic private capital. It has, accordingly, given free rein to its petty-bourgeois elites to consume and accumulate, where possible. The salaries and perquisites enjoyed by its bureaucratic elite are among the highest in Africa. At times this amounts to as much as three times the salaries received by their Tanzanian counterpart. Finally, its state ideology, "Humanism", which in some respects is populist, is distinctly anti-communist and anti-Marxist, as was so rudely revealed by the crisis in Angola. Therefore, the inclusion of Zambia among the "socialist-oriented" countries in Africa can only act as a source of confusion and a hindrance to critical analysis.'

## Tanzania and Somalia: two interesting examples

Apart from the fact that Tanzania and Somalia contrast well with countries such as Zambia and Nigeria, as far as predisposing factors towards nation-building are concerned, they have certain important features in common. Both have a national language. While the Somali constitute a single cultural entity, the different cultural groups in Tanzania are bound together by a pervasive Pan-Swahili culture. Materially, both countries are poor and backward even by African standards.

1 I might mention here that in 1976 I had the honour of being one of the consultants to the Zambian Government for FAO.

Tanganyika was the neglected part of the British East Africa colonial empire. Consequently, at Independence Tanzania had hardly 5 percent industrialization or trained manpower, except civil servants who had some experience as junior officers in the colonial administration. Somalia was even worse off than Tanzania for entirely different reasons. It had a very unsettled colonial history, having been tossed about between colonial powers – the French, the Italians and the British. Its administration, as a result, lacked coherence and continuity; and its educational system was simply chaos. Ironically enough, it is instructive to suppose that precisely because of these factors Somalia escaped effective incorporation into the capitalist system. Its nomadic pastoralists had neither structural nor cultural predispositions for incorporation. This is also true of Tanzania's large pastoral communities, as well as the famous Masai herders in Kenya.

Therefore, it would appear *prima facie* that with the turn of the tide imperialist acts of omission and commission can prove advantageous, i.e. when the tables are turned on imperialism, the last will be the first. Indeed, a formal argument has been put forward along these lines.<sup>1</sup> The conception is that on the positive side backwardness and lack of incorporation into the capitalist system means the preservation of the integrity of the indigenous systems. Given a desire to "disengage" from the capitalist camp, the presumed internal capacity becomes an asset in the building of a self-reliant, autonomous economy.

This is an attractive hypothesis and it can be sustained on grounds other than postulating a correlation between "backwardness" and possibilities for a socialist transformation. It can be argued with some force that poor countries such as Tanzania and Somalia, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique are seriously handicapped and cannot hope to compete successfully in the capitalist jungle. "Auto-centredness" on their part might in fact be making virtue of necessity. However, that virtue might turn sour, if the question of economic necessity is not perceived at a deeper ideological and political level. Even national leaders are capable of political naiveté and economic miscalculation. For instance, instead of believing in a deliberate conspiracy by the Tanzanian leadership against the masses, it could be accepted that the Arusha Declaration was a genuine statement of intent, born of necessity. But then, if the Tanzanian Government fully appreciated the economic difficulties to which Arusha was a response, then it horribly underestimated the political effort it would require to push through its announced programme. First of all, it assumed its own ideological unity – an illusion which was shattered when it belatedly discovered in 1970 that not only was its former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Oscar Kambona, a renegade but was also in league with some of the cabinet ministers in a conspiracy to overthrow President Nyerere who was denying them the opportunity to "reap the fruits of Independence". The second crisis came in 1971 after the Uganda coup *d'état*. Some naively believe that the Mwongozo Guidelines

<sup>1</sup> e.g. by Samir Amin – personal communication in Madagascar, July, 1975.

were just a fortuitous document. On the contrary, it was a result of a big struggle in which Nyerere was nearly out-voted in his own executive. The struggle for leadership continued thereafter and the assassination of the Vice President in Zanzibar, Karume, gave the right-wing added ammunition. The 1974 food crisis and the patent collapse of the *Ujamaa* policy spelled doom for Nyerere, unless he was prepared to retreat. His bureaucracy had made sure of that by carrying out systematic sabotage economically, including deliberate failure to distribute limited supplies of food in 1974–75. The opening up of the *Ujamaa* villages to World Bank finance and the invitation of the Harvard Team to advise on the new economic plan were an admission of defeat on Nyerere's part. Whether his current come-back, as reflected by the thorough-going cabinet re-shuffle of 1977, will bear fruit remains to be seen. But in the meantime we note that the country has moved from 20 percent dependence on foreign aid in 1969 to 70 percent in 1975. Secondly, we note that the position of the workers has, if anything, worsened politically. Tanzanian politics is over-dominated by the bureaucratic elite and state functionaries, despite the formation of the integrated "revolutionary" party (*Chama Cha Mapinduzi*). This is partly due to the unevenness in the development between the petty-bourgeois, on one hand, and the workers and the peasants, on the other. The capacity of the latter had been taken for granted in the Arusha Declaration. That was another serious underestimation. "Education for Self-Reliance" was simply an ideal which gave no immediate possibilities for mobilisation of the political energies and productive skills of the labouring classes. This gave the bureaucracy an undue advantage which was certainly not intended at the time of Arusha. Otherwise, we are not able to explain the various interventions which we argued were not in favour of capital.

Tanzanian workers are reported to have "gained tremendously in consciousness" between 1971 and 1974, but no explanation is offered why such a rapid development. Proclamations such as the Arusha Declaration and the Mwongozo Guidelines gave Tanzanian workers more than average leverages for pressing their political claims. Another dimension we are not able to explain is Tanzania's principled support of anti-colonialist struggles in Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. If it were simply a matter of opportunistic self-interest there are other neighbouring countries such as Zambia which did not behave likewise with any consistency. Internally there is no immediate gain for Tanzania to be deeply committed to such struggles.

The third and ultimate factor the Nyerere leadership underestimated is the tremendous advantage imperialism has over any poor underdeveloped country. It is extremely difficult to combine poverty with a strong sense of independence. Poor in natural resources, technology, advanced skills and pecuniary capital, the only wealth Tanzania had was its people. Politically and scientifically nobody knew with any precision in Tanzania (at least when I was there) what the people could or could not do. On the question of "backwardness": while "backwardness" is a relative term, it is definable. Ethiopia, as a feudal social formation, could have been considered

more backward than Tanzania as a flagging capitalist society with a free peasantry. As history would have it, Ethiopian peasants (or serfs) are endowed with greater productive, political and military skills than the Tanzanian peasants. They can fashion a wooden plough, apply it in cultivation, using oxen; they produce highgrade cotton fabrics; can use and maintain guns and o v a the decades have grown accustomed to political and military rebellion against landlords. None of these things have been proven among Tanzanian peasants. In a basic sense the Ethiopian peasantry is an old peasantry comparable to that of Asia and the Middle East. In my opinion village, as against household, economy, maintenance of complicated irrigation schemes and the need to support large concentrations of population gave rise to a wider scale of operation in Asia than is usual among African peasants. Therefore, I see a correlation between the greater success in mobilising the peasantry for collective, socialist transformation in Asia than has been possible thus far in Latin America and in Africa. It would seem, therefore, that the level of the material basis from which one starts is more decisive than the degree of marginality of a given economy to the capitalist system. It is still a question, whether the Somali nomads, who, we admit, stubbornly resisted incorporation into the capitalist system, will be able to provide a viable material base for mounting the double take-off to socialism. Already the severe drought in Somalia has played an usually preponderant role in dismantling the economy of the nomads. The crisis presented the government with a *fait accompli* and precipitated an immediate diversion of resources to the right place, namely, the rural masses. A steady flow of grants from the Soviet Union, Sweden and other agencies should prove compatible in the short run. But still the problem of skill-formation and the development of a national economy even under the tutelage of the Soviet Union which has had experience in dealing with pastoralists in Mongolia should be of particular interest to Africans. Also, what is going to be of great theoretical and practical interest is the way the military regime is proposing to liquidate itself gradually and hand over power to its own creation, the "workers and peasants party". So far it has not happened anywhere in the world. (An army recruited from nomads might not be class-based.) Somalia, if successful, might prove that there are no necessary conditions for a socialist transformation – a big slap in the face for dogmatic materialists!

## Some further reflections

We have argued that "state capitalism" in present-day underdeveloped countries is a historical necessity born of a crisis of accumulation under conditions of imperialist domination. However, that historically determined reflex does not tell us whether or not state intervention will be used progressively. Therefore, while

upholding the inevitability of state intervention in underdeveloped countries we were careful not to overlook the fact that "state capitalism" is a double-edged sword. We get confirmation of this point from Sweezy when he cautions that:

This does not mean that we must reject state ownership and comprehensive planning. Without them, it is obviously impossible to leave capitalism behind and take even the first steps on the long march. But state ownership and planning are not enough to define a viable socialism, one immune to the threat of retrogression and capable of moving forward on the first leg of the journey to communism. Something more, indeed much more, has to be added.'

Herein lies the dialectical contradiction. If that "something" were given, then state capitalism would have been *optional* and the whole argument *idealist*, not materialist. There is no retreating from the supposition that, whether intended for the benefit of the nascent national bourgeoisie or that of the proletariat, state capitalism is brought into being for the specific purpose of creating material conditions which neither of the two contending classes is capable of providing on its own. This throws special significance on our choice of title for the essay. In predominantly agrarian societies (which applies to most underdeveloped countries) even the local bourgeoisie is not capable of playing its historical role – evidence from the older societies of Latin America is irrefutable. Then the full import of Lenin's statement that "state capitalism is a form of class struggle" becomes apparent. One might quote Sweezy again to illustrate the point:

I conclude that 'socialism' defined as a society characterised by state ownership of the means of production and comprehensive planning is not necessarily a way station on the journey from capitalism to communism, and that reliance on the theory that such a society must automatically develop toward communism, can lead to movement in the exact opposite direction i.e. reconstitution of class rule. (Sweezy, op.cit., p. 8.)

Now, it can be asserted more emphatically that state capitalism is a contradictory and unstable social form. It carries within it the fruits of bourgeois rule and the seeds of proletarian insurrection. This basic ambiguity can be summarized as follows for underdeveloped countries, including those cases where a Communist Party is in charge:

- i. A predisposition towards monopolisation of power by the educated petty-bourgeoisie;
- ii. a predisposition to place an over-emphasis on technical skills which, of necessity, are the monopoly of the technical and administrative staff;
- iii. a predisposition to place the discretion to allocate or the appropriate state surpluses in the hands of a politico-bureaucratic elite who might divert to themselves state surpluses and thus depreciate the rate of accumulation by the state;
- iv. a predisposition to create an anomaly by over-ruling politically the market

principle, through central planning, while at the same time maintaining commodity relations, where labour is treated as a commodity, where private appropriation continues in the form of wages, where goods are exchanged for money (prices) and where extraction of surplus-labour persists;'

v. a predisposition to put a bureaucratic economist premium on the problem of primitive accumulation at the expense of political and social solutions;

vi. a predisposition to try to approximate to the standards of the advanced capitalist countries and thus interpret economic development and modernity in the bourgeois sense and forsake the problem of social alienation and the creation of "socialist man".

The effect of these negative manifestations, some subjectively derived and some objectively determined, has been:

i. disappearance of political democracy and consolidation of bureaucratic rule;  
ii. retention of a production structure which is essentially the same as is found in the neo-colonialist states. Among its characteristic features may be mentioned heavy reliance on export agriculture and mining industries, subordination of domestic demand for consumer goods (including food), both of which reflect a continued inability to resolve the usual discrepancy between resource use and domestic demand;

iii. slow technological progress because of three factors: (a) dependence on foreign sources for technical equipment used in the export-oriented modern sectors of the economy; (b) concomitantly, a skewed skill-formation which is incapable of benefitting the more backward sectors of the economy; and (c) over-concentration of domestic capital in sectors which do not determine the fate of the economy, e.g. light industry and services;

iv. low growth rates compared to the neo-colonial type of economy, the reason being compromised state interference, bureaucratic inefficiency and consumptiveness, both of which are a constant drain on limited state resources.

Dynamically, the four points mentioned above inevitably lead to a crisis of foreign reserves, chronic shortages and political malaise. In Africa we have the undeniable case of Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Ghana and now Tanzania (Algeria was saved by the discovery of oil).

## Some critical inferences and conclusions

For their failures and zig-zags, socialist-oriented underdeveloped countries have been severely criticized by Marxist intellectuals in the Third World. Although in

<sup>1</sup> Whether or not the determination of these "values" is as Marx explained in his labour theory of value, historically, they belong to the capitalist system of production and distribution.

some cases this has been tantamount to a complete denunciation, particularly of state capitalism, the grounds for it are at best open to doubt. We have argued that the emergence of state capitalism in underdeveloped countries, irrespective of ideological orientation, was a historical necessity which cannot be reduced to subjective choices. For underdeveloped countries, imperialism meant a maturity of the capitalist contradiction that was matched only by the immaturity of the appropriate classes – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Contrary to this, the predominance of colonial administration, commerce and export agriculture guaranteed a quicker expansion of the petty bourgeois in all walks of life. But, despite this, the emergence of state capitalism is proof of both their inability to play the historical role of either the bourgeoisie or that of the proletariat and simultaneously of their greater social maturity. Socially and politically they were destined to be natural heirs to state power. Initially, the way they used that power was *discretionary* (subjective) as has been pointed out. But the objective limits to that discretionary exercise of power is the relative strength of other contending classes.

If our analysis is correct, then it will not do to reject state capitalism as an interim strategy purely on the grounds of petty-bourgeois lapses and bureaucratic perversions. The failures of state capitalism must ultimately be traced back to the uneven development of classes in underdeveloped countries. The weakness of the working class and the frequent disorganisation of the peasantry in these countries is a great handicap for any socialist transformation. It might be worthwhile for revolutionaries to try and provide practicable strategies for overcoming this fundamental weakness, instead of tilting at the windmills of state capitalism, as if history can be reversed. Give the absolute weakness of all classes at independence and thereafter, without state capitalism, not even a beginning could have been made in most underdeveloped countries. Engels' warning against premature takeovers and that 'whoever puts himself in this awkward position is irrevocably lost' is well-taken. But under modern conditions of complete internationalisation of capital the danger is there either way. Therefore, the most useful way of contending with the problem under the given constraints is not to wish to by-pass state capitalism in underdeveloped countries but *to transcend it*. Even the progressive underdeveloped countries, as pointed out earlier, by wanting to 'by-pass' capitalism, inevitably, get committed to state capitalism. Despite the contention of classical theoreticians such as Bukharin that 'the system of state capitalism is the most complete form of exploitation of the masses by a handful of oligarchs', it does not seem that in the circumstances of the underdeveloped countries both private and public capitalism can be by-passed simultaneously. At the most, it seems that only private capitalism can be by-passed and might have to be by-passed out of necessity.

In its essence the problem of underdevelopment is a problem of accumulation, socially and materially. Some commentators make it appear as if this could be achieved by walking on one particular leg called 'socialism' versus 'state capitalism'. Yet in practice one has to walk on both legs. Indeed, it is my conviction that, encircled by imperialism, in underdeveloped countries even a 'socialist' revolution

cannot be but a point in the development of capitalism, not understood in terms of its human agents but mainly in terms of its basic mechanisms for accumulation. As is presumed in our basic postulate, state capitalism in underdeveloped countries is meant to be an agency for rapid accumulation, necessitated by the backwardness of the economy and the pressure of world capitalism. But insofar as the workers are required to produce increased surplus-value for accelerated accumulation by the state and insofar as wage rises and consumption are subordinated to the requirements of accumulation, state capitalism perpetuates exploitation of the workers or alienation of labour from its product. Insofar as the state in agrarian economies relies for its 'socialist primitive accumulation' on appropriating surplus chiefly from sources lying outside the state economic sector which is urban, it exploits the countryside. Insofar as, initially, it depends on bureaucrats and technicians for its activities, it commits political expropriation of the producers. Insofar as it allows significant and usually arbitrary allocations for its own bureaucracy it condones parasitism and creates grounds for divergent material interests between workers and the bureaucracy. Insofar as it grants the principle of 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his contribution', it upholds a bourgeois right by recognising productive capacity as a natural privilege of the individual and, *ipso facto*, the right to individual appropriation.

But there is another side to state capitalism in those countries which have chosen to intervene against capital that is often played down by populist idealists. We have already mentioned the function of state capitalism as defence against external predation. Positively and dynamically, it may be mentioned that the regulation of major economic activities by the state in these countries is a partial negation of the law of private property, i.e. instead of the usual anarchistic competition, the state determines allocation of capital and labour and fixes commodity prices, which otherwise might be subject to manipulation by monopolies. Secondly, nationalising of banks by the state is a partial negation of the laws of finance-capital and their determinations; it also creates a public form of book-keeping and possibilities for distribution of the means of production on a social basis. Thirdly, by establishing economies of scale, the state encourages rapid and concentrated growth of the working class, which is not matched by that of the suppressed bourgeoisie. The elimination of the separation between employer and government might also help to demystify the workers. But of greater theoretical importance is that it represents a partial negation of labour-power as a commodity. Fourthly, transfer of landownership to the state does not only mean partial negation of market value in land but also means prevention of expropriation of smaller producers. Over time it raises the possibility of collective production.

The contrasting perspectives on state capitalism that have been presented in this essay constitute a series of contradictions which vary in intensity. The problem of the revolution is to distinguish between primary and secondary contradictions and to find the best balance in the given objective circumstances. In doing so it is important to recognise that even reverses in the revolution occur in spirals, i.e. the

system never returns to the original point having been stretched out once. But that is not to be assumed but checked by studying the qualitative implications of each contradiction. For instance, instead of affirming tautologically that 'the bureaucracy is a class by virtue of being an effective class', or that 'it is part of the ruling class not by virtue of its organic or historic ties to private owners of the means of production, but by virtue of the vital function which it exercises', we could ask a number of strategic questions such as:

– Can the endeavour by the bureaucracy in the determinate conditions of underdevelopment to fulfil the historic mission of the bourgeoisie as rapidly as possible be accomplished, without the separation of society into managers of the general business of society and the managed, the directors of labour and the suppliers of labour power? Could such a separation be dispensed with before those who direct production have directed production in their own interest. Conversely, it could be asked at what point can the exercise of supreme power by the workers and allied classes, without which a socialist transformation is impossible, become an objective reality? In other words, the point here is not to focus on the excesses of the bureaucracy but more on the objective weakness of its antithesis, the working class.

– Before the maturity of the working class in predominantly agrarian societies, can the petty-bourgeoisie be written off in  *toto* , without running the risk of throwing out the baby with the bathwater? Recent experience in the Third World has shown that some elements among the petty-bourgeois are quite capable of playing a revolutionary role, not to say they commit class suicide, as Cabral presumes. As a class, the petty-bourgeois aspire to a bourgeois status. However, their trouble is that they are a vacillating class and cannot organise themselves into an independent political party. But that is not to say a fraction of it cannot take the initiative to organise a party on the left. As is shown by all revolutions to date, this is the historical role of the progressive elements among them. The fact that the most vociferous critics of bureaucratic capitalism in underdeveloped countries are themselves petty-bourgeois by class affiliation is further proof of the germinal character of the petty-bourgeois. But balanced against that must be Lenin's warning that 'the workers brought prematurely to power, the technicians would be their chief enemies, would deceive and betray them whenever possible'.

– Irrespective of the reflexes of the different agents of the revolutionary process, can it be said that the state bureaucracy under conditions of underdevelopment, objectively, represents capital in relation to direct producers, as Bettelheim claims? If under these conditions the bureaucracy is the personification of capital in essence, can it be concluded in the absence of a formed bourgeoisie that the state is under the circumstances a collective organisation of the bureaucracy? Would this imply non-existence of a qualitative difference between appropriation of surplus-value by

1 See review article by Paul M. Sweezy, 'The Nature of Soviet Society', in *Monthly Review*, 6, 26, November, 1974.

the state and the wages paid to the bureaucracy by the virtue of their skills? In the event would the quantitative share between the two be the main dividing line between the potential class the state represents and the agency which serves it, viz., the bureaucracy?

After pondering these questions, I come to the inevitable conclusion that, state capitalism cannot be but a negation of capitalism on the basis of capitalism and capitalist inequality and that *the lower the base from which it starts, the more the features it will have in common with the society from whose womb it is emerging*. As such, it is a contradictory, unstable and transient social formation. It is an advanced battlefield for class struggle, insofar as it enhances the consciousness of the producers by exposing the absolute limits of its intermediate solutions. According to report, the workers in Tanzania have come to realise this – thanks to Nyerere's bleeding "socialism".

## The way ahead

To prevent serious reverses in the transitional period, certain minimal conditions have to be met even under the constraints of underdevelopment. The greatest single incapacity of underdeveloped countries is *lack of self-reliance*. Not only does this imply inability to process local raw materials and, therefore elimination of the contradiction between resource use and domestic demand but, more seriously, a basic incapacity to produce capital goods to supply potential consumer goods, manufacture, agriculture and, ultimately, heavy industry. This is the Achilles' heel of underdevelopment for from it derives external dependence which might defy even progressive ideologies. At its most fundamental level it is a reflection of the infinitesimally small share of underdeveloped countries in the generation of requisite technologies for modern development. Control over technological goods also means control over what they produce. The solution to that problem is more scientific than simply ideological. The supposition that the Somali nomads can dominate a modern state and inaugurate "scientific socialism" is a delightful idea which should appeal to every revolutionary but which is extremely difficult to sustain in real life. In an age of unparalleled technological revolutions since World War II and a combined but unevenly developed international system, *backwardness* is a dubious gift of the gods. "In the morrow of the revolution the workers will be deprived scientifically and educationally" is a sobering thought.

This statement needs to be qualified for technology and science cannot be contemplated independently of actual human beings. One of the necessary concomitants of technological backwardness is lack of skills on a significant scale among the producers in the backward, agrarian societies. As we have seen, lack of skills means not only economic expropriation but also political expropriation by those who have them. This is the nasty link between technology and politics. Therefore, in advocating technological self-sufficiency as the only guarantee for

economic and political self-reliance, we must be understood to mean that, just as self-reliance requires control over technological processes, likewise development requires that production be directed towards satisfying popular political and social needs. This is what Bettelheim calls 'domination by the immediate producers over their conditions of existence'. The only rub, however, is that fundamental rights are never given but won. For whom a country produces will also determine the kind of technologies it opts for. Ideologies of 'transfer of technology' notwithstanding, the viability of the strategy we are proposing depends entirely on the discovery or rediscovery of existing indigenous technologies that are consistent with the *objective material base*. Otherwise, we are forced to resort to the language of 'intermediate technologies', lower derivatives of imported technology – a dialectical contradiction and logical nonsense. The implicit scientific labour initially will fall on the shoulders of the progressive intelligentsia who have come to identify with the workers and the peasants. But as Lenin warned, "if the workers be weak, the petty-bourgeois will betray". The reverses we see in countries such as Indonesia, Egypt, Ghana, Chile and partially Algeria and Tanzania are unmistakable signs.

In support of our strategy and as a logical consequence thereof, we should like to urge that in the specific conditions of predominantly agrarian societies one of the greatest prospects for a broadly-based technological start comes from agriculture. Proper agrarian reform in these countries offers a considerable scope for a progressive development of the labour force and holds tremendous promise for the strengthening of the political factor as the 'non-investment factor' of economic development. Dynamically, it provides a dependable material base for whatever efforts the governments might be making to invest in new technologies for the advanced sectors of the economy. This is what the Chinese have done with great success under the slogan "Industry is the leading sector and agriculture is the base". By opting for technologies that can be produced locally at relatively low costs such as are found in production of cereals and dairy products, if successful, this strategy can also help to relieve pressure on foreign reserves which will undoubtedly be needed for certain critical technological inputs. By raising prospects for internal accumulation, it would avert the danger of the government having to compete for foreign capital on terms that are subversive of its development policies, as has happened in the case of Tanzania and will probably happen in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau; Angola will have the advantage of revenue from oil and minerals. However the question is approached, it is inevitable that in agrarian societies which opt for a socialist strategy, agriculture will finance technological and industrial development and will also supply the necessary raw manpower. In the short-run this is more a political than a technical question and predicates the primacy of politics in underdeveloped countries. However, it is a question which cannot be settled without facing the perennial problem of the alliance between peasants and workers – the ultimate antithesis to petty-bourgeois hegemony and the contradictions of state capitalism.

## On the alliance of peasants and workers

While in theory the alliance between peasants and workers may be seen as "natural", in practice the uneven development and the social differentiation between the two classes may prove extremely refractory. In underdeveloped countries industrial workers constitute an insignificant proportion of the population and are, not too infrequently, inclined to be supportive of the urban social classes and their values. In contrast peasants, who comprise the vast majority of the people and who invariably feel excluded from the benefits of modern life, are predictably deprived of education and scientific knowledge and often lack organisational and political skills on a national scale. While they seldom lend support to their urban class enemies and the state, in their context they are more liable to rustic ideologies and hierarchies than the industrial workers are to conservative urban ideologies and hierarchies. These discrepancies and disabilities often give rise to urban-centred political movements and an underestimation of the revolutionary potential of the peasants.

Whereas it is a common feature of left infantilism to attribute entrenchment of state bureaucracy to bad faith by particular leaders or to class conspiracy, it is apparent that the relative weakness of the industrial proletariat in most underdeveloped countries, which is not compensated for by a strong alliance with the peasantry is one of the most important, predisposing factors. Even where alliance have occurred, the social character of the peasantry itself has not been unproblematic. The divergent results in peasant-based revolutions in China, Mexico, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba and Algeria bear witness to this. Peasants at different historical stages do not represent the same quality, as they are not necessarily products of the same contradiction. Their quality has to be ascertained before any presuppositions can be made about their potential role in the revolution.

Earlier, we contended that the processes of international surplus extraction were such that producers in underdeveloped countries, whether urban workers, plantation hands, or part-time rural producers, were subject to absolute rates of exploitation by metropolitan capital. Their active participation in nationalist struggle can be taken as evidence of their awareness of the contradiction between imperialist exploitation and local needs. Secondly, in the essay on "Dual Economies" we argued that the kinds of labour mobilisation the would-be peasants have been subjected to through the system of migrant labour has brought them into direct confrontation with capital. Strikes by urban workers are readily acknowledged as being symptomatic, and not so much wide-spread revolts by peasants in the Third World. Prejudices from classical theory not to the contrary, a variety of field studies show that peasants have gone beyond the purely colonial identification of exploitation and have come to recognise the fact that their own governments indulge in exploitation through the marketing boards and the usual hierarchy of

cooperatives and middle-men. They are also fully conscious of the exploitation they suffer as cheap, unskilled, migrant labour on the plantations and in the towns, as is shown by their various songs and utterances. Contrariwise, their willingness to migrate on a massive scale for labour employment is further evidence that they are not as land-rooted as the classical peasantry. In the light of these objective manifestations and the undeniable revolutionary role played by the peasantry in countries such as China, Korea, Vietnam, Mexico, Cuba, Algeria and, more recently, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola, and their participation in general socialist struggles in Asia and Latin-America, it is hard not to ascribe a certain proletariat quality to modern peasantries in the Third World.

Consequently, it is one of our main theses in this essay that the so-called peasants in underdeveloped countries are, historically, not only contemporaries of the workers in the developed countries but are also their identical-objects i.e. they are objects of exploitation by the same international finance-capital. Theoretically, this is an exceedingly important point to grasp. Peasants in underdeveloped countries are not only subject to exploitation in the market as petty-producers but are also objects of direct exploitation by capital as migrant workers or intermittently sellers of labour-power. Objectively, this gives them the quality of semi-proletarians. Insofar as they would prefer to remain in the countryside but cannot afford it and insofar as they dream of high wages when they migrate to the cities but are unable to realise them because of lack of skills, subjectively, they regard themselves as the least favoured category in society and say as much when interviewed. Above all, when we consider them as unskilled labourers in town we are struck by two things, at least, in East, Central and Southern Africa. They are the majority and the worst paid labour and yet they do the hardest jobs. In other words, they are the human industrial machines. Here comes the contradiction: they are the broad base of the industrial labour force, without they themselves being fully industrialised or urbanised, thanks to their itinerancy. Are they an industrial proletariat domiciled in the countryside or are they proletarianised peasants? However we look at it, the proletarian part-quality remains and to me that is what seems to be of fundamental importance.

Among urban workers in developing countries there can be identified other categories of workers besides uneducated and unskilled migrants. These are the so-called white and blue-collar workers. They vary in their occupations but have relatively high salaries as a common feature. They have been referred to by various names, "labour aristocracy", "salariat", "sub-elites", or "petit-bourgeois". These appellations are as nice as they are confusing. The simple fact is that all workers who receive high salaries do not represent the same phenomenon any more than all people who enjoy the same standard of living constitute a class. What is diagnostic is the way the income is derived. All *industrial* workers, irrespective of the level of their incomes, form a specific category by virtue of exchanging their labour power with capital i.e. they produce surplus-value and are, therefore, exploited. As long as they produce added value, in no way can they be said to be

benefiting by the exploitation of the peasants. What cannot be determined with any objectivity, except in extreme cases such as South Africa, is the exploitative implication of the differential between the best and the worst paid among them, e.g. managers/technicians and the migrant workers.

An interesting and contrasting group which is more difficult to categorize is those workers who derive their livelihood from exchanging their labour-power, not with capital, but with *revenue*. It is a well-known fact that bureaucracy is one of the greatest sources of employment in underdeveloped countries and that the service sector is the most expansive part of the economy. Whatever the qualifying arguments, it cannot be denied that labour exchanged with revenue cannot but detract from the revenue it is incapable of reproducing i.e. it does not produce any added value. Similarly, services, with notable exceptions such as education, medical facilities and public transport which produce value *indirectly*, promote more consumption than production. Insofar, as this kind of labour depreciates existing stocks (in this case revenue), it has to be underwritten by a more productive type of labour such as the one mentioned earlier. In underdeveloped countries where up to 85 percent of the national revenue comes from agriculture, it is obvious that bureaucratic and menial workers benefit by the exploitation of the peasants and the industrial workers. Therefore, the level of wages of the former category of workers can have extremely negative implications for the other workers. In *sensu stricto* it is this kind of workers which should be referred to as petit-bourgeois, remembering that the petit-bourgeois is an intermediate and dependent class. *Ipsa facto* salary differentials among them matter very much as they are more arbitrarily determined and, most of all, predicate the individual's political allegiance. In Africa two factors are observable in this respect. Promotion in the bureaucracy is fastest and is accompanied by a disproportional amount of political power. Secondly, the antagonism of the bureaucracy towards the peasants and the industrial workers (trade unions) is noticeable. More than the distinctions made here, particularly in regard to the lower end of the hierarchy, the theoretical point I wish to underscore is that the behaviour of the bureaucracy cannot be *objectified* except by relating it to the impulses of both the producing and the appropriating classes. In my view this puts class-theory into perspective and dispenses with the muddles of stratification theory.

In our quest for taxonomic categories we often dichotomise and impute differences in quality even in highly mediated situations. For instance, in most of Africa the difference in quality between the average industrial worker and the migrant worker is not half as stark as conventional theory obliges us to believe. The main reason is that half the time we are dealing with identical agents.' Even in those cases where workers can be described unambiguously as rural or urban, it is well

1 In South Africa after 11/2-2 years I was able to interview in the Transkei - a rural area, the same men as I had interviewed in Cape Town. In Uganda before I had finished my 15-month survey some of the poorer farmers had disappeared to the city for employment or were commuting by bicycle.

to remember that, ontologically, contrasts are not necessarily contradictions. Therefore, in reply to the usual Trotskyite heresy about peasants and the revolution in underdeveloped countries, I would suggest that the rural and the industrial producers be treated as a continuum which is constantly re-inforced by the intermittence of a high proportion of their number. I would also insist that when we refer to them as allies, it should be out of recognition of this objective fact and not out of ideological expediency.

On the other hand, family-continuity theories such as is advanced in the preceding paragraph should not, by the mere fact that they admit of a mean, be interpreted as a denial of the existence of contraries. While fully industrialised, highly skilled workers and partially industrialised itinerant workers in the countryside can be thought of as polar opposites whose mean is the field of gradation in which each subcategory is continuously interrelated with the other. Dialectically, it is as important to set up a further proposition which specifies the direction of the gravitation of such moments. As in any movement, members of a class are at different stages of becoming: there are advanced workers and there are less advanced workers. The fully industrialised workers represent the former but, without the less advanced rural workers, they are like a head without a body. In terms of strategy and perspective, the mandatory replacement of peasant ideologies with proletarian ideologies should be matched by a complete realisation of the revolutionary potential of the so-called peasants. An absolute identification of taxonomic categories with actual human agents at different junctions in history must be abandoned once and for all. Similarly, the incautious reduction of strata e.g. bureaucrats, technicians and kulaks into an identical class mainly on the grounds of their standard of living must be avoided as it obscures the major organisational issue, viz., the uneven development of the proletariat in underdeveloped countries. If conservative in their praxis, can the advanced industrial workers be written off as sub-elites and, obversely, should similar behaviour by part-rural workers warrant their dismissal as petty-bourgeois? In its generic sense the problem is one of determining which classes are dispensable and which are not. In our view, while bureaucrats and kulaks are dispensable, the same cannot be said of technicians and other highly skilled industrial manpower. Likewise, the vast supporting army of semi-skilled and unskilled migrants cannot be spared, if the great transformation is to take place. Therefore, when confronted with the problem of a divided working-class in underdeveloped countries, we should not relapse into the easy language of metaphors. Objectively speaking, there are neither "aristocrats" nor "petit-bourgeois" among those who suffer systematic extraction of surplus-value in society. Vulgar praxis and income differentials are as old as the history of the working-class itself, but they need to be acknowledged in order to be defeated. In Africa it is the more deprived, semi-proletarianised migrant workers who are a potential counter-weight to those elements among the industrial workers who are swayed by their immediate gains. Only when that balance is achieved can the antithesis to state capitalism and bureaucratic

entrenchment become a reality. I have deliberately concluded this essay by discussing practical questions precisely because in the fury of intellectual debates, questions of strategy often get overlooked and everybody talks as if we live in a cuckoo-land where everything has to be perfect before a beginning could be made. Did not Marx chastise the philosophers for understanding the world, but failing to pronounce on how to change it. The question is, in our circumstances how do we transcend state capitalism so as to prosecute more effectively the revolution?

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Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, **1974**. Of particular interest are the following articles:

1. Dimbu, E., "Present Trends in the Economic Development of Some African Countries".
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1. Beckman, B., "Ghana under Nkrumah: problems of socialist-oriented development".
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### 3. Beyond "Dual Theories" of Economic Growth

Societies in transition are often a source of controversy, as they characteristically abound in ambiguities of both form and content. Historically, they represent a dramatic juxtaposition of continuity and change. At best this admits of contradictory emphases such as an emphasis on continuity, on one hand, and on change, on the other. Epistemologically, this might be seen as a problem of history and its determinate manifestations. Nevertheless, specific manifestations are not only conditioned but are also conditioning, if it is acknowledged that the whole has no existence outside its parts. In dialectics there is necessarily an underlying tension between determinism and voluntarism. While it is normal in transformational theory to assert that emergency cannot be treated *de novo*, that does not say what are the safety margins of past dogmas and formulae. This is one of the methodological problems of dialectical materialism. And yet determinism is by no means peculiar to Marxist theory. Ideological revulsion not to the contrary, I see in development theory in Africa and elsewhere a definite liberal determinism whose peculiarity is not only to assume that underdeveloped countries will necessarily follow the capitalist route to development but also to treat Western bourgeois society as the alpha and omega of development. It is an ahistorical determinism whose terms of analysis are tautological as is exemplified by "dual theories".

Consequently, the purpose of this essay is to expose the inherently conservative and biased nature of this determinism by contrasting it with the Marxist determinism. From there onward an attempt will be made to evaluate the efficacy of the peculiarly European presuppositions of the latter as applied to underdeveloped countries. This will be done by confronting theory with historical experience from East, Central and Southern Africa. More specific regional studies are needed as an antidote to over-generalisation and facile assumptions derived from classical theory. The underdeveloped countries are in a position to make a contribution by reflecting more closely on their own experience which is already raising some important question marks about the logic of history.

Dual theories of economic growth are well-known and have held sway in underdeveloped countries for two decades. As a specific component of modern liberal economic theory, they owe their origin to the work of Arthur Lewis, John Fei and Gustav Ranis. It is not necessary for us to recapitulate the entire "dualist" position, except select a few germane assumptions which underlie it. Descriptively,

they posit an existence of two sectors in underdeveloped countries which are governed by different economic laws. These are the so-called "traditional"/"subsistence" and "modern"/"capitalist" sectors. The former is supposed to be characterised by surplus labour, unchanging production techniques and zero net savings. In contrast, efficient labour utilization and high savings rates are believed to be the diagnostic features of the modern sector. Within this basic schema growth is construed as a gradual shift from the "traditional subsistence" sector to the "modern capitalist" sector. In the transitional period it is ascribed to the "subsistence" sector the role of labour supplier and to the "capitalist" sector the role of creator of employment opportunities through progressive capital investments, accumulation and introduction of advanced technologies.

All these suppositions make sense *if* the initial premise is accepted and if the processes of structural transformation are put in a lineal, timeless sequence. But if viewed more dynamically, certain questions arise immediately. For instance, what is the time sequence between industrial expansion and the drawing away of "surplus labour" from the "traditional" sector? In land-surplus economies such as the African ones what is to be understood by the term "surplus labour"? In distorted underdeveloped economies what constitutes "efficient" utilization of labour? Secondly, what is the objective function of the hypothetical two sectors? For example, with the restricted expansion of the modern sector in underdeveloped countries in relation to labour-supply, what are the processes of social reproduction of labour? What is the relationship between technological growth and labour? Finally, what is the function of unindustrialised economies in the global system or, alternatively, what are the limits of the theory of comparative advantages?

These questions have been raised by both radical liberals and Marxists. But it is only in the latter group that they have led to a complete rejection of the Lewis thesis and of the development strategy which derives from it, as is shown by the work of writers such as Gunder Frank, Laclau, Mandel, Dos Santos, Anibal Quijano, Samir Amin, Clive Thomas, Bagchi, Banaji – to mention just a few examples from underdeveloped countries. This latter flash of critical scholarship from the underdeveloped countries, as shall be shown later, is heir to general debates that had been raging among Marxist scholars since the end of the Second World War. Naturally, the empirical grounds for refutation vary according to the historical specificity of different regions. Therefore, before we press any theoretical preferences, we propose to establish our field of reference unambiguously.

## The East, Central and Southern African historical experience

While cognisant of the fact that the issue we are raising is not at the observational or descriptive level but rather at the level of establishing valid connections between

observed phenomena, I still find value in asking myself the question: what are the economic realities of those African regions with which I am most familiar? As was stated earlier, the area we are specifically concerned with is East, Central and Southern Africa. Samir Amin has identified this part of the continent as the "Africa of labour reserves".

## South Africa

For South Africa, the most industrialised country in Africa, the wealth of evidence makes Amin's statement incontrovertible. Labour studies,<sup>1</sup> at least one Government Report<sup>2</sup> and population census show that economic integration in South Africa is an accomplished fact<sup>3</sup> and has been so for the greater part of this century. As a consequence of that, there has been complete obliteration of the indigenous African systems. This is despite the fact that the South African Government has, for its own reasons,<sup>4</sup> artificially maintained what it variously calls "tribal homelands", "Bantu areas", or "Bantustans". The mechanisms for incorporation have, naturally, changed over time. The first phase completed by 1894 was by military conquest<sup>5</sup> and annexation. Thereafter the popular mechanism for forcing Africans out of their tribal areas to white employment centres was by taxation and land legislation.

<sup>1</sup> Out of several scores of possible references, I only select a few strategic studies: S.T. van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa*, London, 1942; D.H. Houghton and E.M. Walton, *The Economy of a Native Reserve*, Pieter Maritzburg, 1952; H.D. Houghton, *Economic Development in a Plural Society* and "Economic Development", 1865–1965 in *The Oxford History of South Africa*, Vol. II, (eds) M. Wilson and L. Thompson, Oxford, 1971; R. Horwitz, *The Political Economy of South Africa*, London, 1967; I. Schapera, *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life*, London, 1947; M. Wilson "The Growth of Peasant Communities" in Wilson and Thompson, op.cit.; F. Wilson "Farming", 1866–1966 in Wilson and Thompson, and *Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911–1969*, London, 1972. In addition the reader is referred to *South African Labour Statistics*, Special Reports, Pretoria, since World War II (They cover all the main branches of industry, but exclude agriculture.) Also, of special interest are the *Annual Reports* of the Native Recruiting Corporation, Johannesburg.

<sup>2</sup> Summary of the Report of the commission for Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa (Tomlinson) – UG. 16, Pretoria, 1955 (Cf. H.D. Houghton, *Life in the Ciskei*; A Summary of the Findings of the Kieskammahoek Rural Survey, 1947–51, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg and Christopher Hill, *Bantustans*. Institute of Race Relations, London, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> This is a point of view which South African social scientists share, irrespective of persuasion. See, for instance, Peter Carstens, *The Social Structure of a Cape Coloured Reserve*, Cape Town, 1966; Leo Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie*, New Haven, Conn., 1965; M. Wilson, "The Growth of Peasant Communities" and D. Welsh "The Growth of Towns" both in Wilson and Thompson, op.cit.

<sup>4</sup> See G.M. Carter, *Separate Development: The Challenge of the Transkei*, Johannesburg, 1966 and my Transkei Study, *Leadership and Change*, unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1963.

<sup>5</sup> See L. Thompson, "The Subjection of the African Chiefdoms, 1870–1989" in Wilson and Thompson, op.cit.

Africans were required to pay the so-called poll-tax and hut tax. Between 1894 and 1936-7 through a series of Acts,' they were deprived of control over 87 percent of the land in South Africa i.e. they were confined to about 13 percent of the land notwithstanding the fact that they constituted about 85 percent of the population. In this way the South African Government created a reservoir of cheap labour for the mines and the growing manufacturing industries. The demand for unskilled black labour goes as far back as 1867 when the first diamonds were discovered and when barely after seven years the labour force had increased from zero to about 10,000 blacks (Cf. Wilson, F., 1972, p. 1). The discovery of gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886 intensified the demand for labour enormously and by 1900 the gold mines alone were employing about 100,000 black labourers (Cf. Wilson, F., 1972, pp. 1-2). In the meantime, agriculture was clamouring for its fair share of labour. Afterwards manufacturing industries began to absorb an equal proportion of black labour.' By the mid-fifties when the Tomlinson Report (op.cit.) was published the process had not only reached completion but had produced its dialectical contradiction. While every able-bodied black South African male was obliged to make at least one tour (most of them spend two-thirds of their active lives away in the cities) to centres of wage-employment, African rural areas had deteriorated into what may be called rural slums. Over-population of up to 66 percent and landlessness of anything between 25-44 percent had been reported.) The black rural population earned more than two-thirds of their income by migrating to the cities, which tolerate them merely as cogs in the industrial machine. African workers are permitted neither permanent settlement in the towns,' collective bargaining, nor *free* sale of their labour-power. Through the system of migrant labour and Pass Laws, they are allowed to come into the city, do their job and then return to the "Reserves" as soon as it is done. Insofar as the process continues for two-thirds of their lives, the African villages in which they are forced to reside have been effectively turned into what Monica Wilson' imaginatively calls "dormitory suburbs" – an industrial proletariat – domiciled in the countryside. The implication, which invariably escapes South African analysts, is that the urban-industrial areas,

1 Starting with the Glen Gray Act, 1894, the Land Act of 1913 and the Native Land Trust Acts 1936-37.

2 In South Africa black labour is shared equally between the mines, industries and agriculture. The Government has an elaborate system of regimenting labour, the Pass Laws, which to a great extent nullifies the effect of a wage differential of 1:4:10 between agriculture, the mines and industry respectively.

3 M.E. Elton-Mills and M. Wilson, *Land Tenure, The Kieskammahoek Rural Survey*, Petermaritzburg, 1952, the Tomlinson Report, op.cit. and my own work in the Transkei.

4 Cf. D. Welsh, op.cit.; P. Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, Cape Town 1961; Wilson and Mafeje, *Langa*, Cape Town, 1963. B.A. Pauw, *The Second Generation*, Cape Town, 1963; D.H. Reader, *The Black Man's Portion*, Cape Town, 1963; D.H. Reader, *The Black Man's Portion*, Cape Town, 1961 etc. etc.

5 M. Wilson, "The Growth of peasant Communities" op.cit. pp. 67-68.

far from supplementing rural incomes through remittances, are holding the rural areas to ransom. The South African employers for years have refused to pay to their black industrial labour *subsistence wages* on the assumption that they are supplementing a subsistence income from elsewhere. In the event they have obliged the already poverty-stricken rural areas *to contribute one-third of their industrial wage fund*. It must be recognized that contrary to popular opinion, in South Africa it is the countryside, through labour migration and *measurable* financial exploitation, that supports the cities and not the other way round.' Samir Amin cannot be far off the mark when he states:

In order to obtain this proletariat quickly, the colonisers dispossessed the African rural communities – sometimes by violence – drove them deliberately back into small, poor regions, with no means of modernisation and intensifying their farming. They forced the traditional societies to be suppliers of temporary or permanent migrants on a vast scale, thus providing a cheap proletariat for the European mines and farms, and later for the manufacturing industries of South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya.

Henceforth we can no longer speak of a traditional society in this part of the continent, since the labour reserves had the function of supplying a migrant proletariat, a function which had nothing to do with "tradition". The African social systems of this region, distorted and impoverished, lost even the semblance of autonomy: the unhappy Africa of *apartheid* and Bantustans was born, and was to supply the greatest return to central capital. The economists' ideological mythology of "laws of the labour market" under the circumstances, formulated by Arthur Lewis has been subjected to merciless criticism. . . (Amin, 1972, op.cit.; p. 519), he concludes.

To varying degrees, what is true of South Africa is true of her "colony" South West Africa and her satellites, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. Namibia (South West Africa) is subject to the same legal and economic pressures' as the other subjugated areas in the Republic of South Africa. The only difference is that, parallel to that, it is developing its own internal structure which is a mirror image of the South African one, i.e. it is rich in mineral resources and has growing agriculture and industries – all controlled by whites who depend on black migrant labour. In this respect it is different in its socio-economic formations from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland which have a black-controlled superstructure but a *dependent* economy. The latter is less true of Swaziland which has good agricultural lands and a more or less self-sufficient African agriculture. But even in Swaziland most of the agricultural, commercial, and the little industrial capital that exists is *owned* mainly by white South African investors, including Harry Oppenheimer of the giant Anglo-American Corporation. In contrast, for Lesotho, an extremely poor enclave within South Africa's physical boundaries, the dependence is almost complete. Up to 80 percent of the working population in Lesotho migrate to South Africa for employment and whatever capital will be invested in the country in the future will

<sup>1</sup> Leo Marquard, *South Africa's Colonial Policy*, Johannesburg, 1957, regards the phenomenon as "internal colonisation".

<sup>2</sup> See Ruth First, *South West Africa*, London, 1963, and C. and M. Legum, *South Africa: Crisis for the West*, London. 1964.

doubtless come from South Africa. The same used to be true of Botswana until very recently. Semi-arid and poor, Botswana used to depend on South Africa for labour employment almost to the same extent as Lesotho. But the discovery of diamonds, copper and other minerals in the country and a conscious preference for multi-lateral aid has helped Botswana to reduce her absolute dependence on South Africa and to cut down the rate of migration of her labour to South Africa to about 45 percent' – a gap which is being filled up by Malawi.' However, she still depends on South Africa for marketing her main export product, beef, and for outlets to the sea. In the Portuguese colonies,' apart from the internal labour demand for the mines and agriculture, there was a standing agreement between the Portuguese and the South African Governments to an annual consignment of 100,000 workers from Angola and Mozambique to the South African mines. At this point it is well to remind the reader that until after independence South African mines depend for up to 70 percent' of their labour supply on the northern territories (including Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Tanganyika).

## Central Africa

Turning to Central Africa, at one time Rhodesia and Zambia had economic features that were comparable to the South African ones, though less pronounced. For instance, although there was never any wholesale dispossession of Africans in Rhodesia, the demand for agricultural land by white farmers and the demand for labour by the British South Africa Company for mining operations led to the same pressures on the African population as in South Africa. The Land Apportionment Act (1931),<sup>3</sup> which created a reservation system, and the Native Husbandry Act, which aimed at greater control of African agricultural enterprise, are but two examples whose implications have been analysed by Arrighi and Yudelman.<sup>6</sup>

1 Derek Hudson, Director of the Department of Statistics, Botswana – personal communication, 1972.

2 Workers were airlifted from Malawi to Botswana and then shipped to South Africa by special trains – personal observation, Francistown, Botswana, 1972. This continues at reduced rate since 1974.

3 James Duffy, *Portuguese Africa*, Cambridge, Mass. 1959, and M. Harris, "Portugal's African Ward. a first-hand Report on Labour and Education", *American Committee on Africa*, New York 1958, E. Mondlane, *The Struggle for Mozambique*, Penguin Books, 1964.

4 In 1975, recruitment figures for the South African mines showed that far from declining the share of black labour from the neighbouring African countries (including Namibia) has increased to 74.8 %

5 The Land Apportionment Act reserved 52 % of the land in Rhodesia for white settlers, 18 % for the British Crown and the remaining 30 % for Africans. Although an attempt at re-distribution was carried out through the Land Tenure Act in 1969, it did not bring about any significant changes. One-quarter of a million whites still held 50 % of the land (45,000,000 acres) and 5 1/4 million blacks have "reserved" for them the other 50 %, of which a high proportion has not yet been allocated. (Cf. T.H. Mudzingwa, *The African Clarion*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Jan.–Feb., 1973, Hisings Backa, Sweden).

6 Amghi, op.cit., and M. Yudelman, *Africans on the Land*, London, 1964.

Putting aside the lesser intensity of the system relative to South Africa, it can be safely stated that the combined effect of labour demand and control and the gradual erosion of the traditional African economy in Rhodesia has been the establishment of labour migration' as a necessary feature of the Rhodesian economy and as serious in its implications as the South African one. Stressing the same point in relation to Rhodesia, Garbett in a more recent report states:

Typically, circulatory migration has been a prominent feature of colonial societies in Africa and elsewhere, though not confined to them. It has been most persistent in those societies, such as Rhodesia, where the degree of structural pluralism is high and where it is in the political and economic interest of dominant sections of the population to maintain a high degree of residential and social segregation, to control the allocation of political rights, and hence to influence wage rates and the flow of migration.

In Rhodesia, in the 1890's, a hut tax was imposed to stimulate labour for the mines and to cover the administrative costs of the B.S.A. Company. This was raised several times. . . . because at first, Africans were unwilling to enter wage employment. However, once labour migration had begun, it increased rapidly as new wants arose. In addition, as the African population began to expand, the effects of the alienation of large tracts of land to the white population began to be felt. The pressure of population on the available resources led to a rapid decrease in soil fertility and to declining yields (Garbett, op.cit.; pp. 1-2).

The dialectical effect of both the causes of labour migration and the underdevelopment of the African "reserves" got accentuated after the Second World War. The flow of international capital into Rhodesia, the consequent expansion of industry, commerce as well as agriculture intensified the demand for African labour. Echoing mainly the two studies by Yudelman and Arrighi, Garbett comments:

After the Second World War, increased international investment in S. Rhodesia, together with a large influx of white settlers, led to a rapid expansion in industry and commerce as well as in agriculture (Yudelman, 1964: 44; Arrighi, 1967: 41).<sup>1</sup> This greatly increased the demand for labour. In addition, the stricter enforcement of the Land Apportionment Act led to the displacement of large numbers of African families from what was designated as European land creating still further pressure on the Tribal Trust Lands (Reserves). By 1961, Johnson (1963) has estimated that of African men aged 15-50, some 53 % were in wage employment. In 1962, of Rhodesian-born African men, 48 % were resident in the Tribal Trust Lands, 22 % of White farms and 30 % in the towns. . . .<sup>2</sup> It is clear that by this time a high proportion of the able-bodied men in the African population had been drawn into wage employment. . . . (op.cit.; p.3).

1 Which has been a subject of several studies, of which the most representative and up to date are J.C. Mitchell, "Structural Plurality, Urbanization and Labour Circulation in Southern Rhodesia" in J.A. Jackson (ed), *Migration Sociological Studies* 2, Cambridge, 1969; and G.K. Garbett, "Circulatory Labour Migration in Rhodesia: Towards a Decision Model", a paper presented at the African Seminar, Lusaka, September, 1972.

2 On the role of monopoly capital and its effects on internal production and class relations in Rhodesia Arrighi is particularly illuminating. See, for instance, his Chapter V, op.cit.

3 Most of these figures have been corroborated in a parallel study by J.C. Mitchell, "Factors in Rural Male Absenteeism in Rhodesia". International African Seminar, Lusaka, September, 1972.

The case for the Southern African pigmentocracies is clear and does not seem to warrant any further elaboration.

In contrast to her southern neighbour, Zambia has never experienced any large-scale alienation of land to white settlers. The only white farmers who settled in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) established themselves mainly along the railway line. For the rest of the country, Africans were in effective occupation in rather low densities even at that. But more than the Rhodesian economy, the Zambian economy has always been dominated by a huge copper-mining industry, whose demand for labour seemed practically insatiable. Taxation, accompanied by a largely unproductive subsistence agriculture on relatively soils' made migration for wage employment by Africans almost inevitable. The growth of towns and the expansion of the tertiary sector, meant mainly for a white expatriate community, had an added impetus on the demand for labour. The general direction of the development of the economy was such that by the time of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Rhodesia in 1966, Zambia had hardly a sector of its economy that was not foreign-owned and controlled.

Studies on the problem of migration in Zambia are far in-between, compared to Southern Africa. But earlier trends detected by writers such as the Wilsons, Epstein and Watson<sup>1</sup> have been confirmed by more recent reports such as van Velsen's and Ohadike's two surveys.<sup>2</sup> As an illustration we here present a short extract from the report by van Velsen:

... the published results of the 1963 and the 1969 censuses can give us at least some idea of the trend in the growth of Zambia's ten major towns. ... In 1963 the ten urban areas. ... had a total population of approximately 649,000 out of a total population of 3,405,788, or about one fifth of the total population. According to the preliminary report of the 1969 census. ... it had grown in six years to approximately 1,146,000 or about 28 % of a total population of 4,055,995. Thus the urban population had by 1969 increased by about three-quarters since 1963. Whilst these calculations are rather rough and ready more refined calculations regarding the growth of Lusaka can be found in a recent town-planning report on Lusaka. According to this report the annual rate of growth of Lusaka was 5.3 % in the period 1953-58, 10.9 % for 1958-63 and 11.8 % (or an absolute increase of 94,000) for the years 1963-68' (van Velsen, op.cit.; p. 9).

It is apparent, therefore, that Zambia is no exception to the general phenomenon of labour migration, which is a reflection of both sustained demand for wage

<sup>1</sup> For reference, see W. Allen, *The African Husbandman*, London, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> G. Wilson, *An Essay on the Economics of Detribalisation in Northern Rhodesia*, Parts I & II, Livingstone, 1942; G. and M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, Cambridge, 1945; A.L. Epstein, *Politics in an African Community*, Manchester, 1958; W. Watson, *Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy*, Manchester, 1958.

<sup>3</sup> J. van Velsen, "Urban Squatters: Problem or Solution", International African Seminar, Lusaka, September, 1972 and P.O. Ohadike, "Urbanization, Migration and Migrants in Zambia: a Survey of Patterns, Variations and Change in Lusaka", also International African Seminar, Lusaka, September, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> In the Copperbelt the mines alone employ a black labour force of about 400,000.

labour in the urban areas and increasing underdevelopment of the rural economy.' In Zambia, like in the settler territories further south, the development of the rural sector has long been subjugated to the interests of foreign capital in the towns and the mines in particular. Such domination and monopoly is not hard to demonstrate. One liberal observer' struck by it could not help remarking:

The extent to which this principle operates can be readily observed from the lists of directors of nine companies chosen as key companies. . . . because they, with their subsidiaries and associated forms, can be seen as dominating the exploitation of all the mineral resources of southern Africa These 'key' companies are: Union Minière du Haut Katanga, Tanganyika Concessions, British South Africa Company, Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, De Beers Consolidated Investment Company, Rhokana Corporation, Mufulira Copper Mines, and Rhodesia Selection Trust. Eighty-eight men occupy the 130 directorships; still closer to the hub, six men occupy twenty-two seats. Analysis of the relationships of these. . . . suggest that the interlocking may follow a regular pattern: roughly, the units which are most similar in function and therefore most prone to compete have the highest degree of interlocking. . . . similar companies must create the conditions for cooperations on the basis of reciprocity. Thus, Rhokana and Rhodesia Selection Trust are alike in their emphasis on mining copper in the Copperbelt, but they avoid the temptation to compete by interlocking through a third company, Mufulira Copper Mines, whose sixteen-man board is nearly filled by nine directors of Rhodesian Selection Trust and six directors of Rhokana. On the other hand, the British South Africa Company, whose place in the system is functionally unique in that it does not operate mines but 'owns' the mineral resources over vast parts of the territory including the Copperbelt, needs only three joint directors with Anglo American Corporation of South Africa. . . . (Wolfe, 1963; p. 154).

Wolfe's claims on the interlocking of Directorships in the Copperbelt have been strongly challenged by M.L.O. Faber (one time economic adviser to the Zambian Government) in his joint publication with J.G. Potter – *Towards Economic Independence* (1971). But C. Harvey and M. Bostock, two economists who also worked in Zambia, in their publication – *Independence and Zambia Copper* (1972) – do not share Faber's scepticism about the existence of corporation monopoly in the Central African mines. Faber, himself, concludes his disclaimer by the following concession: "Nevertheless, the general location of control of the five major units we have identified is fairly clear.

a. The R.S.T. Group of companies is effectively controlled by American Metal Climax, whose share-holders are predominantly American.

1 This is notwithstanding the fact that in 1972 Zambians for the first time in the development of their country produced enough grain for domestic use – personal communication with Professor Ann Seidman of the Department of Economics, University of Zambia, September, 1972. But in the previous year net imports of agricultural produce in Zambia comprised 8 % of all imports and had tripled between 1967 and 1969. (*African Social Research*, University of Zambia, No. 12, Dec. 1971.)

2 A.W. Wolfe, "The African Mineral Industry: Evolution of a Supranational Level of Integration", *Social Problems*, Fall 1963, Vol. II, No. 2. For the distribution of the actual owners in the area under discussion, see chart on P. 56. I am mindful of the fact that in 1969 President Kaunda announced a partial take-over of the copper mines in Zambia. But nationalisation of resources does not necessarily imply socialisation of the instruments of production, which is the ultimate test.

British South Africa Company Oppenheimer H.	Anglo American Corp. of S.A Oppenheimer H.	De Beers Cons. Mines  Oppenheimer H.	Johannesburg Cons. Invest.	Rhokana Corp.  Oppenheimer H.	Mufulira Copper Mines  Oppenheimer H.	Rhodesian Selection  Hochschild W.	American Metal Climax, Inc.  Hochschild W.
Wilson, A. Acutt Annan Emrys-Evans d'Erlanger Berry	Wilson, A. Acutt Clark Emrys-Evans Hagart Wilson, W. Oppenheimer P.	Wilson, A. Watson Clark Joel Hagart  Oppenheimer P.	Blair Watson  Joel Hagart  Findlay Richardson Frost	Rowlandson Seys Clark Newson Taylor Wilson, W.  Richardson  Beckingham Brownrigg	Hochschild, H. Bradford Clark Newson Taylor Goudie  Lascelles Richardson Prain Beckingham Peterson	Hochschild, H. Bradford Moore Coolbaugh Finn Goudie  Laselles Irwin Prain Kirkpatrick Thomson Murphy MacLaren Buch Tucker	Hochschild, H. Bradford Dean Coolbaugh Childs Goudie  Bunker Irwin Burden Mudd Reed de Neufville Loeb MacGregor Searls Szold Thompson Vuillequez Bratty
Grenfell Malvern Hambro Robson Crawford	Albu Coulter Beckingham Brownrigg Smith Koch Harrison Baring Rush Brown Egelhard	Compton Rudd  Forsyth McHardy Leeper de Villiers Crokaert Rothschild	Harrison Kissane Thomas Christie Harris Egeland				

Adapted from A.W. Wolfe, 1963

b. The British South Africa Company is effectively controlled by British, South African, and Rhodesian shareholders, probably in that order of importance.

c. The Anglo-American Corporation is effectively controlled by South African shareholders, with British and other continental shareholders also being important.

d. Tanganyika Concessions. The exact location of the control of Tanganyika Concessions is difficult to trace, since British, South African, Rhodesian, French and Belgian companies and nationals all retain substantial holdings. . . .

e. The Union Minière complex of companies is firmly controlled from Belgium, despite the substantial interests owned by foreigners and foreign companies". (op. cit., p. 27)

Unless we are to concern ourselves with juridical niceties, the substance of foreign monopoly capital in Central African mining industry is hard to deny.

It is against such powerful interests that local agriculture has to compete. As it happens, it had been reported in Zambia that "the terms of trade which the farmer faced in 1968 were less favourable by about 30 % than they were in 1964; and production did not rise enough to prevent a decline in the income terms on trade as well". The exploitation of the countryside by the urban sector is implicit and the overall exploitation of the local man-power and resources is the inevitable objective of international capital.

## East Africa

East Africa, unlike Southern and Central Africa, has no big mining industries (constituting a mere 10 % of Tanzania's, under 10 % of Uganda's and barely 1 % of Kenya's exports) and, with the exception of Kenya, never had any serious white settler problem. Furthermore, it is more backward industrially than Southern Africa – the industrial sector contributing hardly 20 % of the GDP in all three countries. All this would suggest a difference in basic structures and processes, and yet not. In the absence of any large-scale mining industry, East Africa developed a *plantation-like economy* which in Kenya was solidly in the hands of white settlers. In 1902 the British government in its efforts to encourage white settlement in Kenya, had allocated to a handful of whites 13,355 square miles of the best agricultural lands on the now famous Kenya Highlands, reserving only 52,146 square miles of arable land<sup>2</sup> for the native population. Allocations to Europeans included special grants to private firms such as the East Africa Syndicate (320,000 acres), the uplands of East Africa Syndicate (350,000 acres), and Grogan Forest Concessions (200,000 acres). According to Ann Seidman,<sup>3</sup> by 1960 there were about

1 "The Terms of Trade between the Rural and Urban Sectors", a paper circulated at the International African Seminar, Lusaka, September, 1972 and a version of which had been published in *African Social Research*, No. 12, Dec., 1971, Lusaka.

2 Up to three-fifths of the land area in Kenya (mainly the Northern part) is arid and not particularly suitable for agriculture.

3 Ann Seidman, "The Dual Economies of East Africa", *East Africa Journal*, May, 1970; p. 7.

3,400 white farmers in Kenya with an average holding 2,400 acres each and, collectively, employing about 250,000 African labourers. What emerges from this account is another Rhodesia.

The parallel between Kenya and Rhodesia during the colonial period is even more striking when we turn to the question of labour. The exact methods used by the settlers in Rhodesia to deal with the African population were repeated in Kenya. Curtailment of access to land by Africans, as we have seen, was the first measure. It is estimated that in 1956 while each settler owned on the average about 4 square miles, the average African over 16 years of age had about 0.03 square miles reserved (not allocated) for him in the less fertile areas (the "reserves"). Right from the onset, at least, two ordinances<sup>1</sup> were passed, providing for the registration of all able-bodied men of over 15 and enforcing labour contracts for private employers and establishing compulsory labour for public works. Other economic measures were also enacted by the government so as to restrict efforts by Africans to enter cash production or trade in competition with white settlers. The measures assumed such forms as a differential price system in favour of the whites and a discriminatory system of loans for commercial expansion.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the labour requirement of the settler agricultural economy just mentioned, Kenya, as a favourite country of the British in East Africa, had an added need for services in Nairobi – the effective capital city of East Africa. Over time this need was to be augmented by the growth of commerce in the city of Nairobi and increased demand for supporting services from agriculture – a demand which only ended at the port of Mombasa. Otherwise in-between the various points of production, services and exchange, it was in the nature of things for African labour to move to and fro like a shuttle-cock. It is important to note that most of this migration occurred within the rural areas,<sup>3</sup> with a significant over-flow into Uganda (about 20,000) and Tanzania (39,000).

Tanzania: Although in terms of aggregate figures Tanzania is separated from Kenya and Uganda, historically its earlier development is akin to that of Kenya. At the beginning of the century when Tanganyika was under German rule, estate farming, run by foreigners, was the general policy. At that time Tanganyika produced about 20 percent of the goods imported by Germany from all her colonies. Exertions on the African labour to increase production were great. Not only were Africans required to pay taxes but were also compelled to grow cotton. In the southern part of the country the pressure became so unbearable that rebellion was seen as the only way out by the local population. The result was the

<sup>1</sup> The Natives Registration Ordinance, 1915 and the Resident Natives Ordinance, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ann Seidman, *op.cit.*; pp. 13–14.

<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that by 1960 as many as 250,000 African wage-earners in Kenya were employed in *estate agriculture*.

so-called Maji-Maji Rebellion' of **1905**. However, after the defeat of the Germans during the First World War, Britain saw it fit to maintain the agricultural estates started by her former enemy and only contrived a transfer of ownership to British, Greek and Asian buyers. The cool foothills of Mounts Meru and Kilimanjaro attracted new coffee planters. In the period of economic reconstruction after the Second World War a white settlement policy along the lines of Kenya and Southern Rhodesia was projected in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika, culminating in the ill-fated **£ 35 million** ground nut scheme, which had to be abandoned in **1947** as a dismal failure. After that it does not seem that any strenuous efforts to settle whites in Tanganyika were made. All the same, by **1962** some **2.6 million** acres in the territory were foreign-owned estates, employing nearly **193,000** African wage-earners (cf. Kenya).

In order not to create any unnecessary misconceptions, it is only reasonable to point out that in Tanganyika, unlike in Kenya, the estate system did not lead to large-scale alienation of land to foreigners even in those areas such as Kilimanjaro, Bukoba and the Rungwe valley where rich agricultural soils were known to exist. For instance, the **2 million plus** acres referred to above amounted to only **1.2 percent** of the total land area in Tanganyika. On the whole the Africans were left in occupation and during the later phase of British rule were even encouraged to engage in commercial agriculture on their own count. Consequently, by the time Tanganyika attained independence in **1961**, it is estimated that there were about **400,000** coffee farmers, primarily in the Kilimanjaro and Bukoba areas; **250–300,000** cotton farmers mainly in Sukumaland; and about **60–80,000** pyrethrum farms.

That would seem to augur very well for the Africans, but, unfortunately, it did not solve the problem of labour migration and increasing underdevelopment in the less favoured source areas. Inter-regional patterns of migration in Tanzania are very complex.' But without going into the demographic complications, a few bold lines can be sketched out. It is a well-known fact in Tanzania that there is a net migration from the poorer regions of the south to the richer northern regions. Most of the labour, like in Kenya, is absorbed on the farms in the more prosperous areas.' Nor is that all, Tanzania has an immigrant population of about **400,000** of whom **250,000** are said to be looking for "better economic prospects". Most of them come from the bordering states of Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Burundi and Ruanda.' But then according to Egero, well over **100,000** Tanzanians live outside

1 See John Iliffe, *Tanganyika under German Rule*. Cambridge, 1969 and also John Iliffe and H. Gwassa, *Records of the Maji-Maji Rising* Dar es Salaam, 1967.

2 As shown by an unpublished demographic survey by B. Egero, "Internal Migration and Interregional Differences in Mainland Tanzania", Dar es Salaam, 1971–72.

3 Dar es Salaam, the capital city, absorbs only 8 percent of all the migrant labour in the country.

4 The 1969 census shows the following distribution for some of the countries mentioned: Kenya 39,000, Uganda 51,000, Zambia 22,700 and Malawi 11,200 for 1966.

their own Country. An earlier study by Prothero in 1965 (as quoted by Egero) estimated that during the fifties over 20,000 workers from Tanganyika left annually for the mines in Northern Rhodesia and South Africa. The evidence is overwhelming and the following general statement by Egero hits the nail on the head:

Apart from producing a rather substantial continuous traffic of labour seekers all over the country – Hurst (1959) cites the official estimate that the total African labour force (450,000 people) changed completely in three to four years – this pressure led to a gradual redistribution of the population and the establishment of pockets of alien settlers among the local population. The effects of the colonial labour policies gradually came to dominate over the earlier patterns of movements to the extent that a recent study on migration concludes that 'Since the turn of the century the question of the relations between the tribes or the whole between all parts of Tanzania's population has had virtually no hindering or directing impact on the migration'.

This is the crux of the problem we are trying to unravel and it goes beyond the usual interpretation of labour migration as simply a search for better economic opportunities by *individuals*. Studies such as Gulliver's in Tanzania,' useful though they are in some respects, are basically inadequate and belong to the second category. Discussion on these points will be reserved for a later stage. In the meantime we continue with our survey into Uganda.

Uganda: Like Tanzania, Uganda<sup>3</sup> did not suffer any extensive land alienation to foreigners. In Buganda, by far the most attractive region in the country, the powerful traditional chiefs were able to hold their own against the British. Consequently, in 1900 Britain signed an agreement with them by which over 8,000 square miles of the best land in Buganda was allocated in perpetuity to the then ruling chiefs as personal estates measuring anything between 2–45 square miles.' The remaining 6,800 square miles of, admittedly, more marginal land was reserved for the crown.' From the time of the introduction of cotton in 1904 estate farming was the main objective of the British administration in Uganda. But future events were to prove otherwise. By 1911 it was apparent that cotton cultivation was

1 Sources quoted are: R.G. Hurst, "A Survey of the Development of Facilities for Migrant Labour in Tanganyika During the Period 1926–59," *Bulletin, Inter-Africa Labour Institute*, 6, 52, 1959 and H.W. Juergens, "*Untersuchungen zur Binnenwanderung in Tanzania*", IFO-Institute, München, 1968.

2 P.H. Gulliver, "Labour Migration in a Rural Economy", *East African Studies*, No. 6, Kampala, 1955; "Nyakyusa Labour Migration", *Rhodes-Lmingsone Journal*, 21, 22, 1957; "Incentives in Labour Migration", *Human Organization* 19, 1960; "Land shortage, social change, and social conflict in East Africa", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 5.1, March, 1961.

3 For a very long time "Uganda" meant "Buganda" the centre of the British administrative and economic activities.

4 Giving rise to the so-called Mailo system, whose controversial nature and complexity has greatly exercised the minds of both administrators and researchers: See: L.P. Mair, "Buganda Land Tenure", *Africa*, 4,2, 1933; A.B. Mukwaya, "Land Tenure in Buganda", *East Africa Studies*, No. 1, 1953; H.W. West, *The Mailo System in Buganda*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972; A. Mafeje, "Agrarian Revolution and the Land Question in Buganda" Occasional Papers, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1973.

5 The churches in Buganda were granted 104 square miles in the agreement.

slipping out of the hands of the estate owners into those of peasant producers. By 1916 official policy had swung in favour of the latter and against the landlords.

In the meantime competing demands for labour had developed between, on the one hand, the white estate owners' and Baganda farmers and, on the other, between agriculture and government enterprise and commerce. Increasing involvement of peasant tenants in cotton production in Buganda implied their unavailability for wage employment or their unwillingness to sell their labour power in exchange for money. Like elsewhere, the peasants were required to pay taxes (including tribute and dues to the chiefs in the case of Buganda) but, unlike in the other regions discussed so far, that does not seem to have had the required effect. They were not coming out in sufficient numbers as labour. Instead, they were meeting their various obligations from the cotton proceeds. Whatever hired labour there had been in Buganda, it was drawn almost exclusively from outside, namely from the Western, Eastern and Northern provinces of Uganda. These areas, backward and neglected, were being gradually converted into reservoirs of cheap labour for Buganda.<sup>2</sup> But in the circumstances of the insufficiency of labour supply, the colonial government turned to the Baganda peasants. In 1918 it introduced a compulsory system of labour for two months<sup>3</sup> in a year for all those who were registered as unemployed. The iniquities of the system, locally known as *Kasanvu*, not unexpectedly, led to sustained political agitation even by the chiefs. It had to be abandoned in 1921. In 1924 a happy coincidence for the Uganda Protectorate was to occur. The Belgians, overzealous to extract the maximum from the native population, in that year had introduced heavy taxes and compulsory cultivation of food and cash crops among the people and thereby causing accelerated migration into Buganda. In the same year recruitment figures showed that out of 4,834 immigrants, 1,394 (28.8%) were from the Belgian colony of Ruanda-Burundi.

By 1951 the ratio of immigrants from South West of Uganda to those from Northern Uganda had increased to 3:1. Of the 62,086 immigrants from the South the Banyaruanda and Barundi constituted 52 percent. Between 1948 and 1959 total migration into Uganda increased by 64.9 percent from 413,553 to 681,914.<sup>4</sup> Buganda alone attracted about 50 percent of these. One of the consequences of this was that most of the wage-labour in Buganda was drawn from the less fortunate

1 By 1920 there were only about 220 of these, covering a total area of 197 square miles, most of which had to be abandoned after the rubber and coffee slump of 1920–21.

2 In 1923 a reported influx of 4,500 migrants from these areas went to satisfy the labour demand among the Baganda "growers" (Powersland in A.I. Richards (ed.), 1954, p. 27.

3 In effect this amounted to three months a year, as the peasants in Buganda were liable to one month's work (*luwalo*) for the local authority.

4 The Baganda are an aristocratic people who do not suffer easily the indignities of manual labour, let alone forced labour.

5 Figures from the Uganda Census, 1959.

surrounding regions. Buganda had become the centre of imperial interests and was inadvertently creating underdevelopment all around her.'

Once again, we see multitudes of men being driven like helots to labour centres and we want to know specifically for what purpose. From the early years of the century cotton production for export had become the predominating economic activity in Buganda. In **1911** scarcely after seven years of cultivation of the crop production stood at **13,378** bales and a money value of **ff 165,412**, and accounted for more than half of the total exports of the Uganda Protectorate. In **1915** it had risen to **32,000** bales worth **£ 351,000** and amounted to about **70** percent of the Protectorate's exports. Progress continued to be favourable and prospects for the exploitation of the producers equally good, as is shown by the following observation from Wrigley:

The increment of wealth that accrued to the people through production for export was hardly spectacular. A rough calculation shows that in **1928–29**, a season of high yields and good prices, the cotton crop yielded approximately **£ 7** to every **tax-payer**. . . in Busoga, and approximately **£ 6** to every **tax-payer** in other parts of the Eastern Province and in Buganda.

. . . . Taxation, too, was heavy. In **1929** the Uganda Government's revenue, at **£ 1,682,990**, amounted almost to **40** percent of the national export income. The cultivator of the Eastern Province was mulcted of **Shs. 21** in direct taxation alone; and his counterpart in Buganda paid **Shs. 15** to the central Government and, unless he chose to do one month's labour on the roads, a further **Shs. 10** to the native authority. It is clear that the sums which could be spent on imported goods by the average peasant were not large.

A few wealthy chiefs and landowners could now live in brick houses, wear smart European suits and ride in motor-cars, but as far as the mass of the people were concerned the improvement in the standards of living had not been particularly impressive (Wrigley, 1959; p. 57).

During the late twenties yet another important addition to the Uganda export industry had been made. This was coffee. Although at first progress was tardy, during the late thirties and forties coffee production, particularly in Buganda, gained momentum. In the beginning of the fifties there was even a greater upsurge which was dramatically revealed in **1955** when the value of coffee grown by Africans in Buganda exceeded the value of the entire cotton crop in the Protectorate. In that year the two crops together represented **89** percent of the country's agricultural exports and **77** percent of all exports.

Earlier, we referred to the East African economies as *plantation-like* economies, an unusual characterization, given the fact that the bulk of cash-crop production there (with the possible exception of Kenya<sup>1</sup>) had been carried out by African peasants on small holdings. Conventionally small-holdings are a characteristic feature of a peasant economy. But, historically, the basic function of a peasant

<sup>1</sup> In some areas such as West Nile development was actually deferred to ensure the necessary labour supply in Buganda. After a few years, however, other regions such as the Eastern Province, Busoga and Bugisu managed to break into Buganda's monopoly.

<sup>2</sup> See E.S. Clayton, *Agrarian Development in Peasant Economies*, London 1964.

economy is production for *subsistence* and not for a market in any major sense. As is well-known, the reverse is true of plantation economies. Differences in the scale of the unit of production notwithstanding, it is our submission here that the East African economies have functioned, and have been made to function, like plantation economies. In them the whole process of agricultural production has been geared to *cash-crop production for an external market*. Unlike in any known peasant economy, from its very inception agriculture in East Africa had been constrained to provide a major share of the GDP and export earnings. Ann Seidman<sup>1</sup> has shown that in the mid-sixties, confirming the earlier trends sketched out in this paper, two major crops, coffee and cotton, contributed over 80 percent of Uganda's total export earnings; coffee, cotton and sisal provided over half of Tanzania's; and coffee, tea and sisal provided over half of Kenya's.

Secondly, the kinds of labour mobilisation we have witnessed in East Africa over wide areas, including international boundaries, are alien to a peasant economy; so are the attendant production relations. In fact, in East Africa there can be no doubt that what is conventionally known as peasant subsistence requirements have been subordinated to the interests of the foreign inspired plantation economies. For instance, over the last seventy years food production has suffered complete neglect. Nor could this be attributed to the peasants' indolence, who before 1900 were producing enough food for themselves in a supposedly backward traditional horticulture.

There is little point in denying the ubiquitous foreign interest in modern East African economies and its predications. Seemingly backward and agrarian as these economies are, monopoly capital has not been averse to bringing them under its iron-grip. For instance, in all three East African countries exports and imports have long been controlled by a few oligopolies such as Brookebond-Leibig, Ralli Brothers, Baumann, Mitchell Cotts, British American Tobacco Company, and Mackenzie and Dalgety, all of which have Nairobi as their *entrepôt* in East Africa. As in Rhodesia, some of them have made common cause with domestic settler capital and have gone into light industry. A good example is East African Breweries which has branches in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and capital investments amounting to nearly £ 10 million. In addition, there is the usual link with banking and financial institutions. Prior to Independence private banks such as Barclays, DCO, Standard Bank, and National and Grindlays had a near monopoly in East Africa.<sup>2</sup> These interlocking interests are reminiscent of the Southern African mining interests, nor do they seem to be really distinguishable from the latter in their *modus operandi*.

It would seem then that, despite assertions about "tribesmen" and "the traditional sector", in "the Africa of labour reserves", as Samir Amin so

<sup>1</sup> Ann Seidman, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Ann Seidman puts their assets at over 80 percent of all banking assets in the region at that time (*op.cit.*; p. 15).

appropriately calls it, Africans, whether peasant cultivators, wage-earners, petty-traders, feckless layabouts, or intermittently all of these things, are subject to a pervading dialectic whose historical origins can scarcely be traced to anything called their traditional past. It might be an illusion to distinguish between appearances and substance but, certainly, in specific historical contexts a distinction is possible between determinant and contingent processes. In the next section that is the task we set ourselves.

## Some reflections

Proverbially-speaking, it will come as no great surprise to anybody to hear me proclaim that in my life time I have encountered the natives in South, Central and East Africa in their "natural habitat", the rural hinterland. Superficially, life continues as it was during the time of their fore-fathers – the same clans, lineages, customs and traditions; and even the same hoe-technology. Yet there is a difference. The village is visibly different and removed from the city or the plantation but *its members* are not. They are agents of processes they neither willed nor have come to comprehend fully.

Recalling the need for labour in the diamond and gold fields in South Africa and the copper mines in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia); the white settler agriculture in South Africa, South West Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and Kenya; the demand for cash-crop production in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and Tanganyika and finally, more demand for labour in manufacturing industries and services in Southern Africa and to a lesser extent in Central and East Africa, we cannot but concur with Samir Amin when he states:

"Under these circumstances, the traditional society was distorted to the point of being unrecognisable; it lost its autonomy, and its main function was to produce for the world market under conditions which, because they impoverished it, deprived the members of any prospects of radical modernisation. This traditional society was not, therefore, in transition to 'modernity'; as a dependent society it was complete, peripheral, and hence at a dead end. It consequently retained certain 'traditional' appearances which constituted its only means of survival. The Africa of colonial trade economy included all the subordination/domination relationships between this pseudo-traditional society, integrated into the world system, and the central capitalist economy which shaped and dominated it. (Amin, 1972, op.cit.; pp. 520–21).

The classical economists (Adam Smith, Ricardo and Karl Marx), quoted by Arthur Lewis in his famous article, used the concept of "dualism" to describe a society in which, *owing to internally generated revolutionary changes*, an antiquated mode of production and social organisation was being superseded by a new and superior one. A difference in the "laws" or logic of social production and reproduction set the two systems in an irreconcilable contradiction. This notion is of such critical importance that it calls for some elaboration. Working within an evolutionist theoretical frame, the classical economists were concerned to comprehend the

origin and use of economic surplus, to distinguish between productive and unproductive labour and to analyse relations of social production (i.e. social classes). Their points of reference were the feudal society and emerging capitalism. On the basis of the factors just mentioned they were able to make sharp distinctions between the two systems and to postulate an inevitable expansion of capitalism at the expense of feudalism. In fact, they saw disappearance of feudalism as the natural outcome of the genesis of capitalism, which they believed was an *objectively* superior mode of production. The greater rationality of capitalism in the use of labour and surplus, or its greater efficiency in the process of capital accumulation and social division of labour had been proven. Hear one of the classical writers speak:

There is one sort of labour which adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed: there is another which has no such effect. The former, as it produces a value, may be called productive; the latter, unproductive labour. Thus the labour of a manufacturer adds, generally, to the value of the materials which he works upon, that of his own maintenance, and of his master's profit. The labour of a menial servant, on the contrary, adds to the value nothing. . . . A man grows rich by maintaining a multitude of manufacturers: he grows poor, by maintaining a multitude of menial servants.

Furthermore,

Capitals are increased by parsimony, and diminished by prodigality and misconduct. Whatever a person saves from his revenue he adds to his capital, and either employs it himself in maintaining an additional number of productive hands or, enables some other person to do so, by lending it to him for an interest, that is for a share of the profits.

Finally,

The annual produce of the land and labour of any nation can be increased in its value by no other mean, but by increasing either the number of its productive labourers, or the productive powers of those labourers who had before been employed. The number of its productive labourers, it is evident, can never be much increased, but in consequence of an increase of capital, or of the funds destined for, maintaining them. The productive powers of the same number of labourers cannot be increased, but in consequence either of some addition and improvement to those machines and instruments which facilitate and abridge labour; or of more proper division and distribution of employment. In either case an additional capital is almost always required – Adam Smith.

Here we are listening not only to a description of the mechanisms of capitalism and their necessary conditions, but also to an implicit advocacy of the system by one of its champions. There was no doubt in the minds of the classical writers that the bourgeois revolution implied the *dissolution* of the feudal society. The two systems were not seen as *sectors* in the sense of "interlocking segments" but rather as *antithetical*. The "laws" of capitalism made for the destruction of the feudal society with all that went with it in the form of modes of production and social division of labour or classes. The belief in the absolute rationality or superiority of the capitalist mode of production provided classical theorists such as Adam Smith with a ready explanation why capitalism was destined to impose itself and become exclusive. In other words, the success of capitalism was not contingent upon accommodative behaviour on the part of feudalism. This had become so apparent that the question of exactly how the transition occurred was largely overlooked. Insofar as these observations are true, the classical theories are basically not

transition theories but naturalistic and synchronic theories. Although also couched in terms of stages, it was left to Marx to develop a transformational theory of surplus value and primitive accumulation.

As was already anticipated in our introductory passages, a number of questions come to the surface:

a. Is the logic of *internal* capitalist transformation in Western Europe applicable to present-day underdeveloped countries?

b. Is Adam Smith's "natural movement" from feudalism to capitalism or Stuart Mill's "historic evolution" *repeatable* in these countries?

c. Has the "absolute rationality" of modern capitalism been demonstrated in the manner of the classical theories?

d. Can it still be supposed that development ("progress") is transition to capitalism?

e. In modern times has capitalism, apart from being dominant, been *exclusive* in the classical sense? Can it be in its social formations in the peripheral countries?

f. Is its locus of *value* in the peripheral countries the same as in the central countries?

These questions have very serious implications for those who start with the "basic assumptions" of the classical economists, only to pervert them through reactionary revisionism. Certain distinctions have to be made in dealing with present-day underdeveloped countries. As is illustrated by our empirical survey, processes there have taken a different turn. Not only was the level of development of material forces at the time of contact with Europe out of step with capitalist development, but also the historical sequence was reversed.

*Introduced* capitalist production preceded the specific socio-economic formations with which it is now supposed to be in competition or conflict. It was a social emergence produced by *external forces*. Apart from the economic imposition, the special requirements for control and regimentation of the indigenous population under colonialism gave rise to special social formations which are not attributable to tradition. South Africa might be an extreme living example but it is certainly not unique, as is shown in our survey. Under the circumstances "dual theories" become a mere apology and not an explanation. In underdeveloped countries the question of the exclusiveness of the capitalist mode of production over time is not a foregone conclusion nor its blockage a problem of traditionalism. The fact that capitalism in its external expansion, unlike in its internal development, has not been able to sweep aside certain traditional institutions and modes of production points to a serious historical contradiction and not a transient natural phenomenon.

Insofar as that is true, "dual theories" are a mirror-image of a reality that is misconceived. They see the contradictions between moments of a colonial social formation as a contradiction between *two* social systems, "capitalism" and "traditionalism". The terminology varies between "traditional society", "traditional sector", "subsistence sector" and "modern sector" whose social identity is often left

unspecified. But it is obvious from the basic supposition that it is the "modern sector" which represents development that this sector is treated as synonymous with capitalism.

The modality, "traditional" – "modern" provides the grounds for the basic postulate of modern theories of "dualism". Development is the gradual absorption of the "traditional" into the "modern" sector. Apart from the implicit European analogy, there does not seem to be any local historical grounds for this supposition, as it has not happened in any colonial country since the end of the 19th century. It is precisely here that an epistemological break with classical dual theorists occurs. Unlike the latter who had argued that it was the "inner laws" of capitalism which provided the antidote to feudalism, the modern bourgeois dual theorists, quite unabashedly, blame the failures of capitalism on "traditional society". For theories which purport to deal with *transition*, this is surprising. A "blockage" or backward movement can hardly be portrayed as transitional. If capitalism in colonial countries has failed to be exclusive on account of inferior and backward systems, then how is its *progressiveness* to be proved? Is development, unambiguously, a transition to capitalism? In modern times is capitalism, *objectively*, a progressive force? Answers to these questions cannot be found in theories which substitute analogies for strict historical analysis, or which seek to maintain the status quo by advocating change by *assimilation* instead of transformation. This is again a far-away cry from classical theories which were inspired by a desire to inaugurate a new kingdom.

The veracity of modern theories of dualism has yet to be proved. As far as one is aware, they have been able to demonstrate neither the applicability of the "inner logic" of capitalism in underdeveloped countries, its "absolute rationality" or progressiveness in our time, nor the practical and theoretical validity of the supposition that development is transition to capitalism. If the latter were true, why have many years of capitalist domination in underdeveloped countries not had the postulated effect? At one remove, if it is true indeed that traditional structures are the barrier to capitalist transition, then why has colonial capitalism, in sharp contrast to classical capitalism, failed to dissolve traditional structures and become exclusive? I believe that it is a diversion for anybody to look for an explanation in the so-called traditional structures. The explanation is to be sought in the structure and the mechanisms of modern capitalism itself. This is a logical starting-point since, historically, the so-called phenomenon of "dualism" did not occur until the *external expansion* of Western European capitalism. In its imperialist form the objective of West European capitalism was *not* the transformation of traditional societies, wherever it found them, but rather their *incorporation* so as to secure markets and supplies of raw materials, as it has been shown in our earlier discussion. It did this by undermining or reconstructing traditional society in such a manner that it could satisfy its needs, without necessarily reproducing itself as a genuine mode of production.

The primitive accumulation it engendered via the world market did not lead to

a new and expanding *social* division of labour as in Europe. Instead, it contrived to maintain some semblance of traditional society on non-traditional terms. "Bantustans" and their earlier version in South Africa, the system of "Reserves" in Rhodesia and Kenya; and the system of taxation, forced labour and, ultimately, migrant labour in the whole area are twentieth century inventions. They are both a product and a necessary premise of modern capitalism or imperialism. It is like an international "putting-out system". Once this is appreciated, it then becomes possible to state, without wishing away the persistence of certain traditional modes of behaviour, that the effect of the external expansion of capitalism in underdeveloped countries has been the *reconstruction* of the traditional societies to produce something other than the capitalist mode of production.

The point has already been made by Laclau that the existence of a world capitalist system should not be confused with the realisation of a capitalist mode of production the world over.

However, it is equally important to note that, from the point of view of underdevelopment, the primary contradiction is not between "traditional" society or sector and "modern" or "capitalist" sector but between capitalism as a mode of production and its social formations in peripheral countries. This is the crux of the matter and by it stand or fall all arguments (left or right) about development. In times of controversy extravagance is all too easy and, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that one moves with precision. As an illustration of our case, we take two dimensions of the problem, namely, the question of social division of labour which, to my mind, is the basic explanation for any manifest social formations in a society; and, second, the principle of value as the fundamental motive force in capitalist production.

On the question of division of labour, it can simply be stated that the hegemony of the capitalist system in underdeveloped countries has not been dependent on the creation of a proletariat, as properly understood in Europe or as is defined by Dobb and Laclau. Nor has it meant the complete obliteration or exclusion of traditional forms in one version or another. As has been shown in our earlier discussion and contrary to the suggestion by Arrighi and Saul, even in South Africa, the most highly industrialised African country, the development of the proletariat has been arrested by all sorts of mediation e.g. the "reservation" system, allowing tenuous ties to the land, a permanent system of migrant labour and anti-black urban and industrial policies, creating a sense of insecurity and dependence on kin in the countryside. The same is true of Rhodesia. The progressive underdevelopment of the rural economy under the stifling effect of the plantation economy in East Africa and the mines in Zambia also led to a structurally provoked migrancy. Under these conditions we witness an emergence of a category of producers who take on social characteristics which, historically, belong to two entirely different classes, the peasantry and the proletariat. Similarly, what would have been a local bourgeoisie has been equally ham-strung by subordination to and heavy dependence on international finance-capital. In Kenya and Rhodesia the emergence of a

comprador class is clearer than in Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia, whose economies are still relatively backward. Even in their case the struggles between the right and the left wing of the nationalist movement can be treated as symptomatic. Zambia, with a large foreign sector in the form of the mines, is a particularly good breeding ground for compradors – the indications are very strong already. South Africa is not a clearcut case. It has an important element of dependence but, like the other former white Dominions, it enjoys the status of a junior partner. Its economic development, historical origins and strategic value allows that. But once again, a racially recruited national bourgeoisie points to an important vertical and colonially-determined mediation. In fact, the latter has made possible the development of a wider ruling white elite in South Africa whose emergence is not at all related to the logic of capitalist production. Although derived differently, the ruling black elites elsewhere in Africa are a counterpart of the same social formation. We, thus, see that in these countries the logic of predatory capitalism has not been a replacement of the old social formations by new ones but rather an establishment of a hybrid social formation.

This social formation is a handicap to underdeveloped countries but an advantage to imperialist countries. It provides an institutional frame that guarantees a ready supply of cheap unskilled labour for foreign capital. It is generally known that the price of labour in underdeveloped countries is much lower than in developed countries. This implies that within the capitalist system itself there is an uneven rate of exploitation of labour by capital. But since the price of capital throughout the system cannot be allowed to vary, it becomes an absolute necessity that local value is converted into international prices via the international market which, naturally, undervalues products from the underdeveloped countries relative to products from the metropolitan countries. This tends to nullify the effect of Ricardo's famous notion of "comparative advantages" and, instead, promotes a systematic transfer of value from the underdeveloped to the developed countries. This general process has been observed in a number of studies on imperialism, but its precise mechanism has been a source of controversy among Marxist writers.

## Towards a theory of underdeveloped capitalism

Recognition of the dialectical unity of development and underdevelopment since Gunder Frank's *tour de force* has not led to any general theory of underdevelopment among Marxist scholars. Instead, it has given rise to a greater awareness that the problem is a great deal more complex than it first appeared – a sobering warning against dogmatism and slogan-mongering. Underdeveloped countries embody a complex of phenomena which are equally unfamiliar to both Old-World sages and Third-World neophytes. That notwithstanding, a division is discernible between

those who presume that the same basic laws which accounted for the transition to capitalism in Europe are applicable to underdeveloped countries and those who are sceptical and are inclined to think that, perhaps, it is time to develop specific thought-categories which reflect the *sui generis* character of social formations in underdeveloped countries. These contrary tendencies are implicit, for instance, in the debate of the late sixties and early seventies between, on the one hand, Sweezy and Bettelheim,<sup>1</sup> and Bettelheim and Emmanuel,<sup>2</sup> on the other. In their turn, writers such as Mandle, – "The Plantation Economy: An Essay in Definition" (1972)– and Banaji – "For a Theory of Colonial Modes of Production" (1972)– are explicit in their advocacy of new definitions and concepts for the analysis of ex-colonial countries. However, what remains unclear from their texts is whether or not they are proposing a new neo-Marxist theory.

Ideological predispositions are an important ground for making initial choices but they are never a sufficient premise for checking the validity of such choices: history is. Whatever our individual sensibilities, there is both a contradiction and a unity between the Old and the Third World. While it may be asserted that colonialism is an articulation of antithetical social formations, contrariwise, it cannot be denied that historically, colonialism is a *derived* social formation, i.e. a product of Western European capitalism at a *particular stage*. Both observations imply that the phenomenon of underdevelopment cannot be identified with a specific phase called "colonialism", nor could it be comprehended independently of world capitalism of which it is an extension. Capitalist accumulation and dependency relations, globally, are capable of variation, without changing their substance. Therefore, while acknowledging the importance of changing social formations, let us recognise the limited nature of such shifts as long as they continue to be pervaded by the capitalist mode of production. "Underdeveloped capitalism", as a preferred categorisation has the advantage of identifying the immanent force with its peculiar manifestations in underdeveloped countries. Secondly, instead of denying totally any capitalist growth in underdeveloped countries such as has been attested to by Bill Warren<sup>3</sup> recently, it points to the regressive nature of its processes of social production and reproduction – which is what "underdevelopment" is, dialectically understood.

Whereas there is a general concensus on the question of unequal exchange and the inapplicability of Ricardo's law to the modern world system of division of labour, there has been some doubt about the power of the thesis of unequal exchange to explain why development has not occurred in underdeveloped

1 *Monthly Review*, 7, 22, Dec., 1970, pp. 1–21.

2 Arghiri Emmanuel, *Unequal Exchange* Monthly Review Press, N.Y., 1972, pp. 271–431.

3 See Bill Warren, "Imperialism and Capitalist Industrialization", *New Left Review*, 81, Sept./Oct., 1973, pp 3–44.

countries. Probably, Emmanuel has gone furthest in attempting an answer within that thesis. Emmanuel maintains that, apart from the question of pure prices, there is a systematic transfer of value from the underdeveloped to the developed countries. He attributes this to a basic uneven rate of exploitation of labour by capital in the international system, resulting in a more intensive exploitation of the workers in the underdeveloped countries than in the metropolitan countries through the international system of exchange. Goods embodying considerably different labour-time are exchanged as equivalents to the detriment of the underdeveloped countries. All this has been dismissed by Bettelheim as a substitution of appearances for substance. He contends that the failure of the underdeveloped countries is attributable to the underdevelopment of their productive forces. He goes even further and states that labour is paid according to its productivity and that, for what they are capable of producing, **workers** in underdeveloped countries, relative to the workers in developed countries, do not suffer any greater exploitation. On the contrary, owing to the organic composition of capital, it is workers in the developed countries who are more intensively exploited, i.e. in their case there is even a greater differential between necessary labour-value and surplus labour value.

Bettelheim is right but carries his point too far. In South Africa productive forces are relatively well-developed and yet black and white labour with comparable productivity rates is differentially rewarded precisely because industry transfers some of the costs of social reproduction of black labour to rural producers. That is not dissimilar to the transfer of value from the rural producers in East Africa to the industrialised countries under the pressure of the greater market power of the latter. Moreover, he does not elaborate on the problem of *migrant* labour and the organic composition of foreign capital in the so-called enclave economies such as the African ones. In the *Guardian* exposures of 1973 and a subsequent investigation by a Swedish team, it was found that British and Swedish firms in South Africa paid to their black labour not according to their productivity but according to the *socially* determined local rates. In their polemic Sweezy had asked Bettelheim, among other things, about the status of the "proletariat" in the new countries. Bettelheim's answer had failed to take into consideration some of these mediations and had tended to rely on pure theory. Another related question which might be put to Bettelheim is: what is the theoretical significance of "less exploited *workers* (not necessarily proletariat) in some underdeveloped countries carrying out revolutions and not the more intensively exploited proletariat in the developed countries? It is useful to distinguish between "relations of exploitation" and "relations of production", as has been suggested by Banaji. But for a revolutionary strategy the question is: under what conditions can relations of exploitation have the same subjective effect as relations of production?

It is all very well for Bettelheim to state, albeit correctly, that: "It is thus not a simple exchange relationship, which might be altered, but a definite combination of productive forces and social relations that creates the objective conditions for

the maintenance in dominated countries of a wretched wage level....” (in Emmanuel, 1972; p. 291). Given the fact that productive forces and production relations do not transform themselves *automatically* in all conditions and that the notion of "blockage" in underdeveloped countries derives from this awareness, programatically, what are the intermediate stages for breaking the said "blockage"? In our review it is here that voluntarism asserts itself over determinism. First of all, if exchange relations and distribution have any bearing on processes of accumulation, a reversion of the out-flowing surplus to the local social formation has positive implications. And any nationalist government *can* effect it, i.e. it is largely a political question. Second of all, a discussion of productive forces, without relating it concretely to the question of labour, is meaningless. What capacities would labour in underdeveloped countries have to acquire before it could have an impact on existing production relations and, thus, express itself as a dynamic productive force? It seems to me that this would have to be preceded by a relatively progressive social division of labour, which cannot be achieved without a corresponding shift in the wage-structure of an underdeveloped country. Better skills among the workers cost money and fetch a greater value in the labour market. In turn, increased purchasing power among the majority of the workers means effective extension of the local market and possible expansion of the local economy, if the workers are willing to use their newly acquired socio-economic power to bring about a structural transformation. This is a more practicable way of arriving at the problem of development of productive forces and the revision of production relations. Both cannot be developed *deus ex machina*. It is the former kind of leverage that the would-be revolutionaries in the underdeveloped countries need to be aware of rather than being convinced of the primacy of the contradictions within the developed countries. The last world might be the first, if only because it is the weakest link in the chain.

The thrust of our argument at this juncture is that the separation of surplus-value or profits from wages is both a product and a necessary condition for imperialism. It forestalls the kind of transformational social reproduction that accompanied the emergence of capitalism in Europe, while the continued haemorrhage of local resources and man-power which it facilitates leaves the local economy in a state of suspended animation – a prolonged crisis. Think of the Latin-American countries which in one hundred and fifty years have come nowhere near resolving the problem. It is obvious that if profits and wages were to recover their objective relation and play a dynamic role internally the physiognomy of the local economy would be transformed in such a way that imperialism would lose most of its advantages. (We have the example of Japan in the capitalist world). It is clear then that, for its dominance, imperialism needs market power but for market power to realize itself fully, it needs a certain kind of economy, viz. a dynamically stagnant economy, i.e. an economy in which everything is moving but in such a way that it never acquires a coherence which could bring about its antithesis. It is, therefore, erroneous to underestimate, as analysts such as Bettelheim and Warren do, the

practical significance of the distorted social formations of underdeveloped capitalism by treating them as coterminus with mere production of commodities and industrialism. This represents another assimilationist determinism, as impractical in the intermediate run as the liberal dualist determinism.



# 4. Ideology and Development

'There are two cardinal sins from which all other sins derive: impatience and indolence. Because of impatience they were expelled from Paradise; because of indolence they do not return. In fact, perhaps, there is only one cardinal sin: impatience. Because of impatience they were expelled; because of impatience they do not return.'

Franz Kafka, *Considerations on Sin, Suffering, Hope, and the True Path*

The urgency of the problem of underdevelopment breeds impatience everywhere and effectively blurs distinctions between bourgeois nationalists and revolutionary socialists. In Africa the nationalists see lack of scientific knowledge and adherence to outmoded traditional values as the major barrier to their attempts to bring about development. On the other hand, the revolutionaries see lack of ideology (socialist) in the continent as the major reason for the delayed African revolution. Besides the frequent feeling of desparation, the protagonists from both sides have much more in common than first meets the eye. Each in turn treats existence or absence of certain ideologies as an independent variable or a necessary condition for development. The starting point in historical time is immaterial, if we remember that a superstitious belief in science is as ideological as belief or disbelief in traditional values and practices.'

If 'development' or 'revolution' are critical processes which involve the collective emergence of mankind in Africa and elsewhere, then we can barely afford to bemuse ourselves with empty slogans or be satisfied with mere appearances. The rash and monistic approaches mentioned in the introductory paragraph do not bring us anywhere near the understanding of the *relationship* between ideology and development. The current belief among the new generation of leftists in Europe and in Africa that possession of revolutionary ideology is the passport to the new Jerusalem is as naive as it is anti-Marxist. Western Europe, the home of Bauer, Ruge, Feuerbach, Hess, Marx and Engels and the cradle of modern revolutionary theories, can hardly be accused of lack of ideology, and yet it is still awaiting its long-promised revolution. In the case of Germany the implied discrepancy was observed by Marx himself in 1844 when he remarked that 'they, Germans, were the philosophical contemporaries of the European revolution (France and England in particular) without being its *historical* (italics added) contemporaries' (Bottomore,

1 Later we will have occasion to discuss the question of whether 'science', as a system of beliefs and practices, is any different from other systems of explanation.

1963; p. 49). In the opposite direction we have cases such as Cuba, where revolution occurred without a clear socialist ideology, even among the leaders. We still need to be told precisely what is the relationship between ideology and revolution or development. Before we can talk about the primacy of ideology in the process of development we need to know whence cometh ideology. Or are we to behave like political adolescents who eschew nasty questions in order not to spoil the radiance of their revolutionary zeal?

Likewise the sanguine view held by bourgeois liberals, which tends to equate development with rejection of traditional, superstitious beliefs and adoption of modern science is equally unacceptable. First, the equation fails to explain contrasting cases such as India and China, where science and technology do not seem to be the main differentiating factor. Second, and more serious, it abandons the fundamental question of the anthropology of man and his circumstances in the world in favour of a narrow technocratic positivism, which is best described by Marx's notion of the 'fetishism of commodities' in the first volume of *Das Capital*. Third, it treats science as extra-societal, generative, without being corruptible and, therefore, partially destructible as all knowledge. It is not enough to relate the means to ends, without probing the normative assumptions underlying them and the probable role of such assumptions in the selection of means and the definition of ends.

Our intention here is not so much to provide technical definitions or to conduct a discourse on the relationship between certain concepts than to try and understand the problem of emergence in human societies. Therefore, concepts such as 'ideology' and 'development' will be used in a broad and general way until redefinition suggests itself as a result of a deeper understanding of the processes they connote. For example, 'ideology' will be taken to mean: a set of beliefs about man's nature and the world in which he lives; about the proper conduct of life; the organisation of a humane society and the ultimate destination of human history. 'Development', though also broadly defined, will be construed in a less conventional way. It will certainly not be left to the tyranny of 'fetishism' of such measurable things as GNP, income per capita, the number of motor vehicles per passenger-mile or the number of fridges per unit population. It will attempt to reach out and include such intangible things as the 'human condition' and the 'quality of life'. These are vague and evaluative expressions, but I think they can be given empirical relevance by looking at development as: the expanding and adaptive capacity of society to satisfy the changing and increasing needs of its members, be they material or cultural. I believe, these can be investigated through the use of both quantitative and qualitative indices.

In Western social science, which is largely positivist, ideology is regarded as the antithesis of 'science' and is consequently abjured. In development studies only its nuisance and antiscientific value is ever mentioned. When the question, "Does ideology determine development?" is raised, it is with the hope (albeit unadmitted) that the reply will be 'No'. Search for causal relations is at the very hub of

empiricism but, as will be shown later, at times this amounts to no more than simple-minded scientism and self-delusion. The answer to any question need not be 'yes' or 'no' and need not be discoverable only through sensory observations i.e. empiricism need not be regarded as the ultimate pillar of all epistemology.

If development studies is still like a toddling child trying to find its feet, theories on the relationship between theory and practice go as far back as the time of the Greek philosophers. It was they who introduced the dissociation between 'practical life' (phenomenon) and 'contemplation of eternal truths' (noumenon) and, after them, the Romans who maintained the distinction in the form of *practica cognitio* and *intellectus theoreticus*. Later this became the mainstay of liberal philosophy. Kant's 'Pure Reason' and Hegel's 'Absolute Knowledge' (although one finite and the other infinite) had one important thing in common, namely, the belief that thought is autonomous and self-determining. So the question of 'whence cometh ideology' would have been meaningless to them. But the same is not true of contemporary liberal scholars who are also proud beneficiaries of early British and French empiricism. Their principle of 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' or *operabilia modo speculativo considerare*,<sup>1</sup> to use its grander Latin version, is a demonstrable fraud and historically is meaningless, as the intellectual discovery does not occur in a vacuum but in a society of men who are capable of responding to new circumstances. Promoters of 'development' would probably join in the protest and conceivably argue that theory leads to practice; and might even conclude that science is practice. That would be commendable but it would not exonerate them from our main charge that they, together with those who do not believe in planned development, still see science as being fundamentally different from other forms of knowledge and practice. Science is self-conscious, objective and theoretical whereas ordinary practice is subjective, basically untheoretical and finite. Despite possible protestations, according to this view, science is the new 'Pure Reason', a *causa materialis* in the hands not of a philosopher, but of a scientist who is the modern knower of 'absolute knowledge'.

It was not until Marx that the union of 'subjective' practice with 'true-presence and objective value' was achieved. He rejected the Hegelian notion of 'qua theoretical wisdom' or the belief that cognition gives access to universal truths not present in the immediate experience and predicated subjective human practice or praxis as "the only source of meaning in the universe". This signalled the introduction of the principle of *homo faber creans seipsum*, and inaugurated the birth of dialectical materialism – man creates himself: by transforming his material world, man transforms himself too. Fully stated, Marx's thesis was that man's ideas or systems of ideas are not the prime-movers of historical process but rather a super-structure based on more fundamental material factors such as man's mode

<sup>1</sup> The notion of considering things not with the intention to recommend or engage in activity, but to understand their properties.

of existence or struggle against nature. He, therefore, asserted that man's ideas, insofar as they contain propositions about facts and inferences from facts, are a reflection of prevailing socio-economic conditions. In fact, they are a glorification of class interests and a vindication of the *status quo*, which could be described in other terms. Whether or not one agrees with 'the true digging mole' of German revolutionary theory, the message is clear: if living and doing are the only source of meaning, then all hope to discover truth which is independent of historically and socially determined sets of meanings has to be abandoned.

But how does praxis gel into consciousness and ultimately into cognition or theory? Does this common origin give all consciousness and theory the same general validity? Marx's pronouncements on the subject are not unambiguous. First of all, he distinguishes between 'revolutionary praxis' and practice that is 'petty and vulgar'. But how are we to know which is which before the revolutionary act or its antithesis has been consummated? The problem is further compounded by his firm belief that 'human practice by its very nature is revolutionary', a suggestion which is consistent with his other inference that it is the 'unreasonableness of existence' (no doubt, caused by vulgar practice) which gives rise to unrest, dissatisfaction and the 'nasty ought of praxis', with its inevitable imperative: 'Now something has to be done'.

Leaving for a while the apparent ambiguity, the imperative, "Now something has to be done", seems to be suggestive enough for our present purposes. It implies an awareness, a consciousness which points to new paths of action and to an implicit belief that these new ways will bring about the ultimate liquidation of 'unreasonableness of existence', unrest and dissatisfaction. By this simple act of logic we have arrived at *consciousness* and a *theory* about the desired state of affairs by the actors. Nor are we mistaken. According to Marx's postulates, (i) praxis is the deed of an extraphilosophical humanity which creates consciousness, theory and philosophy i.e. social categories cannot be transcended in thought until they have been questioned in practice; (ii) irrationality can exist only insofar as it remains unconscious of itself.

This would appear to provide us with a transformational theory of cognition. But we complained earlier that 'praxis' was ambiguously defined by the old master. What about "consciousness" and "cognition"? It transpires that, while all praxis, revolutionary or vulgar, is true, all consciousness is not. There is "false consciousness" (*falsches Bewusstsein*) which is a result of self-delusion<sup>1</sup> and leads to resignation rather than 'the nasty ought of praxis' mentioned earlier. In a bourgeois society it is an illusion for workers to think that they can be fulfilled without doing something drastic. True consciousness would be recognition of their common

<sup>1</sup> In an earlier work, 'The Ideology of Tribalism', I gave the impression that the masses got 'false-consciousness' as a result of manipulation by their class enemies. I wish to state now that they are also active agents in their self-delusion insofar as they fail to use present practice to transcend images carried over from the past.

disabilities (class-consciousness and the need to rise against the bourgeoisie (class struggle)).

The story does not end there. At a higher level of cognition 'false consciousness' has its counterpart, ideology, which is peculiar to bourgeois philosophers or the defenders of the status *quo*. As Marx saw it, ideology is a picture or reflection of a 'wrong' world which, though adequately depicting reality, does not reveal its wrongness and, insofar as that is true, it serves to conceal the actual meaning of social conduct rather than reveal it. It is the historic mission of the proletariat to unmask such ideologies and to overthrow bourgeois society. But the proletariat is denied access to the means of mental production by bourgeois society. This is where the positive role of science, whose function it is to depict reality as it is in such a way as to make its ontological "wrongness" apparent, comes in. "Critique" emerges as the revolutionary praxis of the intellectual or philosopher. The critique of bourgeois ideologies should unveil both their truth and their falsity in terms of a radical reduction which destroys while it explains: "The actual pressure must be made still more pressing by adding to it a consciousness of the pressure; the shame must be made still more shameful by making it public", declares the father of revolution (Bottomore, 1963; p. 47). The revolutionary proletariat have found an intellectual counterpart!

There are still a few problems which remain unresolved. First, how does 'true theory' and 'revolutionary praxis' among the workers achieve unity that is generative (developmental)? Put differently, is the logic of history to be deciphered through an understanding of the "material conditions of life" (production relations), or is it decipherable through the mental reflexes of 'historiographers' or philosophers of which matter is only a manifest embodiment, not an ultimate determinant? As is well-known, Marx took exception to Hegel's treatment of existence as object to abstract thought and not the other way round. For him, thought in every age is an 'ideological reflex' of determinate socio-economic conditions. But Marx's 'critique' or 'true theory' claims to transcend existing reality and in fact, points to a future 'realm of freedom' that has not yet been realised. Is that not reminiscent of Hegel's lofty knower of 'Absolute knowledge'? No, it is not because Marx maintained that 'the subjective genesis of an idea does not by itself throw light upon its own truth value'. Above all, he maintained that: 'If the material elements of a total revolution are not given, it is absolutely irrelevant to the practical development whether the idea of this revolution has been expressed a hundred times already – as the history of communism proves' (Lobkowitz, 1976; p. 426). The actualisation of theory depends upon whether reality presses for it or not. As warned earlier, this contradicts the frequent declarations by African revolutionary enthusiasts and their sympathisers that what Africa lacks is ideology. The probability is that she lacks a great deal more. As that perceptive 'bourgeois Marx', Max Weber, once remarked, "the materialistic conception of history is not

1 This is an appellation the left Hegelians used of themselves at times.

to be compared to a cab that one can enter or alight from at will, for once they enter it, even the revolutionaries themselves are not free to leave it".

Does this mean that theory can play only a secondary role in the process of development? The issue is not whether theory plays a primary or secondary role. Rather it is the conception of the dynamic link between theory and practice that is at issue. Within his materialist conception of history, Marx does not seem to have ever minimised the importance of 'true theory', the 'critique' could be turned into an efficacious 'material force', for he was convinced that 'mere words' could never change the world and that 'material forces could only be over-thrown by material forces'. In his opinion the 'critique could become a material force by 'gripping the masses' and by becoming 'the guiding consciousness of a social group which was a material force even before it embraced *the theory*' (italics added). It is a mobilised or conscious mass that can meet theory half-way: "It is not enough that thought urges for actualisation. Reality itself has to force its way toward thought" (Bottomore, op.cit.; p. 54). It is this explosive mixture which bursts into revolutionary flames.

It will be noticed that there is a parallel between the dialectic of 'human practice', as described by Marx and that of its theoretical counterpart, the 'critique' is true reality but at the same time it is a perversion of that same self reality as well as a dialectical phase of its development. Similarly, the 'critique' reveals the truth of ideology by unveiling its falsity; it destroys while it explains i.e. a true philosophy brings about its own negation. For some reason or the other, the dialectic between theory and practice does not receive the same kind of emphasis. Even where the two start from a common premise, the 'material conditions of life', it is theory that has to adjust to practice and never the other way round. Is practice then never erroneous? Marx would have dismissed such a question as irrelevant. What mattered to him is the fact that practice or doing *is*, and that, whether mistaken or not in its detail, it is the ineluctable expression of human history. That may be so but some would agree with Hegel that at another level the 'ought' is equally real. Nor is this a purely metaphysical question. In working our way back to the more concrete aspects of the questions we seek to answer, we will use this as a jump-off point and as an opportunity for suggesting how a less reductionist-sounding dialectic could be developed in dealing with the problem of theory and practice. Here we are referring specifically to the elusive relationship between the objective effects of subjective commitment and the susceptibility of the 'objective' world to subjective acts of volition or, put in bourgeois sociological language, the relationship between the manipulability of normative systems and their prescriptive value.

At the beginning of this essay we referred to two standpoints as regards "development". There are those who believe in science as the only effective way of bringing about development and, therefore, have put a permanent ban on ideology as being irrelevant and discreditable. There are those who, while not rejecting science, see ideology as a necessary condition for development in society. Soviet Russia, China and, more recently, Cuba are usually cited as example of societies

which are growing fast primarily because they have the right ideology. The other side is sceptical of this explanation because it says nothing about the Japanese, South African and the West Germany economies which are developing very fast, despite their conservative or reactionary ideologies. Furthermore, there is still the problem of Eastern Europe, where, despite the socialist ideology, development has been less than spectacular. After that accusations of subjectivity and a call for objectivity give greater creditability to the 'scientists' and 'scientific socialism' sounds more ideological than the 'subjectivity' it is meant to dispel.

Since Napoleon accused his intellectual opponents in France of 'ideology', it has become standard practice to discredit one's intellectual adversaries by simply accusing them of ideology. It will be remembered that this was one of the weapons Marx recommended to the proletariat in their struggle against 'bourgeois ideologists'. In fact, Marx in his own theoretical scheme drew a sharp distinction between ideology and objective "scientific reflection" as has already been shown. Unlike his modern followers, he used "ideology" in a derogatory sense. But how clear is distinction between "science" and "ideology" and between "objectivity" and "subjectivity".

At this point I cannot but perpetrate a minor heresy, given my own empiricism and positivist intellectual heritage. I want to assert that, if there is any difference between science and ideology, it is only a relative one. (i) Insofar as both are logical schemes for looking at the universe, they are the same; (ii) insofar as each is not exhaustive of the same universe it seeks to depict they both distort; (iii) insofar as both occur in human society and are socially and historically determined, they are both manipulable and corruptible; (iv) insofar as an ideologist (e.g. Chairman Mao) has to devise programmes that are workable to achieve his goals, he is a scientist and insofar as scientists' choices and uses (e.g. the American professors at MIT who are knowingly furthering the aims of the militarists in the American Navy and the State Department) are influenced by nonscientific and evaluative considerations, he is an ideologist. Arguments that science is not only generative but also self-correcting will not suffice because the same is generally true of social practice. Otherwise it would be impossible to talk of 'social change'.

Experience affects human behaviour in very definite ways. So it can be seen that the two systems are not only similar at the logical level but are also *often constitutive of each other* at the practical level. If this is true, then the worst ideologists are those who, instead of confessing their ideology, hide their ideological presumptions and motivations behind the facade of 'pure science' or 'knowledge for knowledge's sake'. Whether we like it or not, all human knowledge has a determinate social context.

It may be argued that the scientists deliberately set up objective standards for

<sup>1</sup> In a fascinating and very well-documented article entitled "Malthus and the Evolutionists; The Common Context of Biological and Social Theory" (see bibliography for details), Robert Young shows how the scientific interpretations of the 19th century British evolutionists were afflicted by social and ideological considerations.

testing the validity of their results or propositions. This brings us to our next question, the problem of objectivity—subjectivity. If there are bad scientists who start from the objective standard to arrive at subjective conclusions, there are also activists who are persistent and imaginative enough to make what started off as a subjective wish an objective reality. People can be taught to internalise certain subjectively derived propositions to the point of treating them as self-imposing imperatives in their lives. At that point the actualisation of such propositions becomes more than a likelihood. We may think that this is the work of priests, political agitators and demagogues. The truth is that in the social sciences the situation is not much different. The social scientists' pronouncements, no matter how erroneous and subjectively derived, can (and do) get internalised by the lay-members of society who then express them in their actual behaviour. When that happens, we have no way of checking the predictive value and validity of the original normative propositions of the scientist since they have become their own testers. Sceptics might feel that this is a vindication of their suspicion that social sciences are not really 'sciences'. Perhaps, that would be too rash. Therapeutic 'dummy pills and distilled water injections in the medical sciences point in the same direction, and yet that does not diminish the value of medical science. Similar illusions are known to have occurred in the harder sciences, where something was observed to work perfectly, only to find that the 'explanation' that led to its discovery was nothing more than a subjective piece of folklore. 'Objectivity' and 'subjectivity' are not things apart. They are not a dichotomy, nor do they form a continuum – which is usually the easy way out. They are rather contraries which can exist within the same system without necessarily negating each other or limiting themselves, as individual members, to any particular single contraries i.e. individual human beings do not have to be (and usually are not) consistently objective and subjective about the same things in all situations.

Relating these observations to our original question, it may be stated that, insofar as there is no pure science (i.e. practice and reflection that is free of all ideological presuppositions) or pure ideology (a system of beliefs which in its concrete expression fails totally to distinguish between the properties of different objects at the disposal of its adherents) neither science nor ideology *determines* development – qua technocracy is as futile as waiting for the millenium with folded arms. However, between them, ideology and science are capable of promoting development. Subjective commitment is the *sine qua non* of successful enterprise and ideology seems to provide that on a mass-scale. While subjective or ideological commitment provides the will, it does not provide the means; science does. Mobilisation of the masses through the medium of ideology and arming them with the necessary skills and tools through the agency of science commend themselves as a potent combination. But would the combination bring about development? In our opinion, "No". Existence of ideology and science does not necessarily mean that things will be done on the necessary scale and in the best possible way. It takes *organization* to bring together mass subjective commitment and scientific

knowledge in such a way that their full potential is realised. Strong organisation seems to have been the distinctive feature of the Russian, Chinese and Cuban revolutions. Also it has been a dominant feature in the development of Japan, South Africa and West Germany. On the other hand, most of Eastern Europe seem to have suffered in earlier years from lack of it. Some would like to add lack of ideological commitment as well. That would not affect the logical schema we are trying to evolve. Ideological commitment, scientific knowledge and organisational ability emerge as the three critical variables in the process of development. From our discussion it does not appear that any one of them can promote development, without the others. It may be added that, dialectically-speaking, though dependent on the other two, organisation seems to be the ultimate variable. Strangely enough, this coincides with Marx's first principle of all human history - 'the physical organisation of individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature'.

The argument advanced in the preceding paragraph is rather limited in that it does not come to grips with the real ultimate problem, the anthropology of man, as raised in our definition of development. Second, it is still within the realm of means, where we said organization was ultimate. When we enter the realm of ends and the purpose of life, ideology becomes the ultimate. Technically we are still on safe ground, though we appear to be chopping and changing. Reversibility of variables according to context is an acceptable logical trick in the sciences. However much more is at stake. I do not think that anybody would contest the general observation that some ideologies are more restrictive than others and some are more expansive than others. For example, the South African ideology is more restrictive than the Tanzanian one and the Haitian one more restrictive than the Cuban one. Restrictive ideologies affecting human beings unfavourably, therefore, can be said to define the human condition negatively. This is neatly covered by the Marxian concept of 'alienation'.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, we should be careful not to deal only at the ideal level. The expansive potential of an ideology should not be equated with fulfilment of actual men, as tends to be done with socialism. Even the best ideologies are susceptible to perversion at the organizational level,<sup>2</sup> which again emphasizes the importance and the quality of organization in human societies. How are we to know whether a system is generating 'alienation' or not? I believe that alienation can be studied through its manifest forms and through direct interviews, and the degree of deprivation can only be measured by what is already available - 'the negated ought is revealed by present existence itself.

In effect what we have been arguing in the last few paragraphs is that the prescriptive value of ideational systems (e.g. ideology, social structure and other normative systems) should not be thought of as standing in a one-to-one relation

<sup>1</sup> Marx described alienation as 'something like a negated ought, a kind of existence which reveals an ideal to be pursued and which, precisely in the light of this ideal, appears as denying man of his ultimate completion'.

<sup>2</sup> We are not short of examples, particularly from the socialist world.

to actual practice; practice has its own dialectic or generative value. But to understand the dialectic between ideology and practice and within each, we should focus on organization as both the most concrete and dynamic link. We further suggested that, while ideology defines the ends, it is organizational forms which guarantee their realization. These are perfectly sociological observations and are translatable into the structuralist language of "social structure", 'norms', 'social values' and 'social behaviour', though they deny him the right to posit 'social structure' as prior to behaviour and determinant of it.

In conclusion it might be worthwhile to find out if our theoretical observations can tell us anything about prospects for development and revolution in Africa. Is lack of 'ideology' or 'science', as claimed by the various protagonists, the reason for Africa's revolutionary backwardness? It is true that the level of technology in Africa is generally low and that African ideologies are notorious for their vagueness. Supposing these two conditions had been fulfilled, would there have been any remarkable progress? We are biased observers and we are predisposed to say "No" because we want to offer our own candidate, 'organization', as the key to the problem. To dispel any such suspicions, we shall recapitulate some of the points raised earlier. "Critique" or 'the right ideology' in the modern sense, according to Marx is a product of intellectual praxis. For its transformation into a 'material force', it needs a "conscious" proletariat who, therefore, meet it half way. But the proletariat acquire consciousness through their own praxis. He stressed the point that, whatever happens, it is only the proletariat who could be the source of a '*praxis a la hauteur des principes*'; they are the class which is destined to bring about the necessary transformation of society.

Now, two fundamental questions arise: (i) Is there a proletariat in Africa; (ii) If so, how conscious is it; and (iii) is its living conditions and praxis conducive to development of class-consciousness? An interesting definition of *classe de proletaires* was once given by Sismondi in 1819 when he described them as those 'whose idea of wealth simply is to exist and whose idea of poverty is to die of hunger'. That would fit the great majority of African peasants perfectly, but one group it would not necessarily fit is the urbanised African workers, who have a certain monopoly of critical skills and a few of whom stand a good chance of getting attractive jobs in the nationalist party and in government.' (Unfortunately for the African peasants by the time of Marx, the definition had been restricted only to the poor who are 'conscious of themselves as an estate or a class'.) Secondly, there is nothing in the practice of urbanised African workers which indicates that they are not susceptible to mere economism and are on a revolutionary path. Furthermore, their forms of organisation are not inconsistent with the overall nationalist political structure. From this it is not difficult to see that, as far as industrial worker in independent

<sup>1</sup> The number of former trade union leaders who got ministerial posts after independence is striking, not to say anything about the patronage that leading trade unionists continue to receive from African nationalist governments.

Africa are concerned, 'the objective conditions' do not seem as yet to favour a socialist revolution, i.e. a petit bourgeois compromise is still possible.

Fortunately, there are other categories in society which, even though not preordained for a revolutionary role by Marx, can be a source of revolutionary impetus e.g. the peasant the wretchedness of whose situation is well-known. The same wretchedness made them available to the Chinese, Korean, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutionaries. But absence of any organisation among them in Africa makes it unlikely for their praxis to acquire the necessary cohesiveness and consciousness. By the same token, transfer of scientific knowledge among them is not going to be easy. In that case, ideology, which we said was necessary for mass mobilisation and a sense of commitment, will continue to dangle in the air for want of somebody to 'meet it half-way'. Given a number of possible perspectives, some restrictive and, therefore, worthy of destruction and some expansive and, therefore, worthy of nurturing, organisation still stands out as one of the continent's most important requirements. If this condition is fulfilled, may we not overcome our idealistic impatience and return from economic, political and scientific wilderness?

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In these essays the author starts from two basic assumptions. First, he believes that science is as social and as subject to perversion as all other forms of knowledge in society. This being the case, there is no absolute way of separating science from the pervading ideologies of the day. In development theory it is only logical that the socially desirable goals should be stated before the instruments for realising them can be forged. But in the process of forging instruments for solving current problems new truths are often revealed which become subversive of the prevailing set-up. Nor should this be surprising in Professor Mafeje's view, for it is implicit in the concept of "critique" in Marxian dialectics. According to the latter, there is no affirmation without a negation. "Development" as an evocative and affirmative concept can scarcely avoid the connotation of "destruction" of existing structures and theories.

In this way development theory becomes synonymous with controversy, polemics, and denunciation of the status quo. Rejection of "Dual Theories of Development", utilitarian "scientism" and facile, orthodox theories of "State Capitalism" are a concomitant of this awareness by Professor Mafeje. He seeks answers to current social problems through negation. This is a practice which to him is part of general everyday social struggles and is, indeed, informed by them. If in their everyday struggles underdeveloped countries perceive themselves as in contradiction with the developed countries, then in theoretical work it should be expected that the same confrontation will manifest itself. This can occur without dividing the world into antinomies. Not only are dialectical opposites moments of a unity but they also mutually create each other. As such, it is impossible for them to change their individual identities, without changing the whole. Underdeveloped countries can barely hope to change the present international order, without transforming themselves. This is the recurrent theme in Professor Mafeje's three essays. For those who are dissatisfied with orthodox theory, there is a great deal to recommend in these essays.

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