

African Socialism or Socialist Africa?

Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu

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**Dedicated to —
The workers and youth of Africa.**

Contents

	Dedication	v
	Preface	ix
1.	The Road to Economic and Political Bondage	1
	New Class Forces in Africa	1
	Misconceptions of the 'National Interest'	5
	Africa in a New Historical Epoch	11
	Apologists of Neo-Colonialism	15
2.	The Historical Context	18
	From Communalism to Capitalism	18
	The Development of a Proletarian World Outlook	25
	Bourgeois Contradictions and the Rise of the Proletariat	27
	The Growth of Fascism in Europe	30
	Afro-Asian Liberation and the Collapse of Old Colonialism	32
3.	Blind Acceptance of Neo-Colonialism	35
	A Fatal Choice	35
	No Concrete Analysis of the Concrete Situation	38
	No Prospects in Exports	41
	The Myth of 'Aid'	44
	Economic Freedom Subverted	46
	Neo-Colonialism	48
4.	Discard a False Approach! No Alternative to Socialism	52
	Let the Past Teach the Present	52
	The Traditionalist View of Africa's Past	54
	The Socialist View	58
	Could Africa Have Developed Its Own Capitalism?	60
	Is There a Third Way?	65
	The Myth of the 'Third World'	67
	Socialism Is Inevitable	68

5.	Who Is Responsible For Our Underdevelopment?	73
	An Economic Blind Alley	73
	The Myth of Import Substitution and Export Industries	77
	Reproducing the Worker at the Expense of the Peasant	79
	External Connections	83
	The Military-Industrial Complex	85
	The E.E.C. Connection	88
6.	Africa and the World	95
	The Dilemma of African Marxists	95
	Africa Europeanized	100
	The Struggle between the U.S.A. and Europe	104
	The Lessons We Learnt	111
	Southern Africa — The Forces At Work	113
	Destabilizing Africa	119
7.	Path Towards Socialism	125
	The Class Question	125
	Rising Political Consciousness and African Unity	128
	The Bourgeois World View Inherited by African Leaders	131
	The Proletarian World Outlook — The Only Alternative	136
	Socialism in Africa Is On the Agenda	138
8.	Development Strategy — Revolutionary Style	144
	The Modern State in Neo-Colonies	144
	The Bourgeois versus the Proletarian State	147
	Conditions for a Self-Reliant Economy	149
	An Objective and Revolutionary Planning Approach	152
	How To Get the Capital and Expertise Required	153
	The Masses — The Subject and Object of Development	156
	Order of Priorities — Resolving Economic Contradictions	158
9.	Fighting Internal Oppression	165
	Worse Than Tigers	165
	Punitive Detention	167
	Personal Dictatorships	170
	Africa Is Not Yet Free	172

Preface

The bulk of this book was written in prison as a result of discussions among detainees and some prisoners who took an active interest in what was going on in Africa. Most of the discussions took place in the early seventies and before the collapse of the Portuguese empire which led to the independence of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Mozambique. But the main theme of the book, which is the political and economic dilemma of independent African states, is very relevant indeed today, and will remain so for a very long time to come. Our main concern was in finding the answer to the constant question 'Whither Africa?'—especially when evidence was daily accumulating which indicated that leaders in various African countries had not the slightest idea of what they were able to do, and cared even less.

The clouds of a worsening situation were gathering furiously then, and we felt the question was too urgent and important to be ignored by the general public. We therefore decided to try and bring out our summary in a written form. We began our analysis of the situation by contrasting Africa's experience with that of Asia in the immediate aftermath of independence. Asia's experience was very useful because it seemed to us that Africa was adopting all the negative aspects of that experience without paying attention to its positive aspect, which was being put into practice in those Asian countries which had taken a socialist path.

In 1947, India and Pakistan won their independence, and thereafter most of Asia followed suit: Burma, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Indonesia. In Malaysia the British were engaged in a repressive war against patriots and revolutionaries, and so were the French in Indo-China. In 1954 the French were routed at Dien Bien Phu by the Vietnamese people, resulting in the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Chinese people had already won their victory in 1949 after a bitter and protracted revolutionary struggle, and they established the People's Republic of China.

The Chinese and Vietnamese turned down all offers of 'aid' from the Western world and opted, instead, for a fraternal alliance with the socialist camp. When the Americans launched their aggression against

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, under the flag of the United Nations, in 1950, the Chinese people immediately went to war in support of the Korean people—a war which ended in the latter's victory in 1954. Korea too rejected all 'aid' from the West and allied itself with the socialist camp.

In less than two decades, all these three ex-colonial, basically agricultural and semi-feudal countries made unprecedented economic and social progress which fundamentally changed the entire basis of their economies from colonial to nationally integrated, independent economies. This was made possible by enormous industrial and technical assistance from the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. They set up basic industries, e.g. iron and steel mills, metallurgical industries, engineering plants, machine-tool industries, petro-chemical plants, etc. Side by side with these heavy industries they also developed light industries, or consumer goods industries. They transformed their agriculture from a backward, small-scale, individual-peasant-based form to large-scale state farms and collective farms.

These developments not only transformed national economies but, significantly, they transformed the people, both in their outlook and in their mastery of technological skills. The peasants were liberated from backwardness and superstition; they broke loose from the constrictive 'traditional' practices inherited from the medieval and feudal past, which had their basis in peasant agriculture. As a result of this transformation, a new revolutionary class emerged as a powerful and creative force in the social system of these countries. This was the proletariat, the industrial working class, on whose shoulders rested the task of national economic construction. They transformed their backward agriculture through the development of modern industrial techniques. This ensured the abundance of food for the people and cheap raw materials for industry.

Although these countries received enormous development aid from the European socialist countries, they nevertheless developed independent economies, not tied in any way to the rest of the socialist camp. This was because socialist aid was designed to develop, in as short a period as possible, independent national economies on the basis of the socialist principle of 'objective economic complementarity'. This principle is distinct from the strategy of central co-ordination as advocated by the World Bank and other imperialist multilateral organizations whose policies are designed to subordinate the economies of the recipient countries to the world-wide economic and political interests of capitalism.

Objective complementarity means that two or more countries co-ordinate their economies in a planned strategy, so that specific products of one country go to fill in 'gaps' in another. An industrial economy will help to fill the industrial gaps of the non-industrialized partner, not by supplying it with finished manufactured products, but by building the

industrial capacity of the receiving country to enable it to produce those finished products itself. And the non-industrialized country for its part will supply the industrial economy with agricultural products, so that the latter will not be obliged to divert resources to produce them uneconomically, or to spend its foreign exchange reserves on importing them.

With this rational, mutually beneficial arrangement the Asian socialist countries have been able to build very viable, independent and self-sustaining national economies in the shortest span of time ever recorded. For instance, a small, backward country like North Korea has rapidly developed into an independent and self-reliant industrial economy matched by no other country of its size anywhere in the world. And this economic 'miracle' was achieved in less than twenty years, four of which were destructive war years. As a measure of its economic strength, North Korea in 1973 abolished all forms of taxation, direct or indirect. This was at a time when the entire capitalist world and neo-colonies were embroiled in the most serious economic and monetary crises since the depression of the 1930s, resulting in everybody being taxed out of existence. The same success story has been repeated in Vietnam, in spite of U.S. aggression against it ever since independence. China is the only country in modern history which has managed to repay all of its external and internal debts in less than twenty years of independence. It is now the only country free from any financial obligations.

In non-socialist Asia, however, the story is vastly different. Here the situation has in every case been going from bad to worse. Famine, riots, repression, industrial unrest, constant financial crises, political instability—all these are common features, and no one seems to know where these countries are heading to. It is a depressing story.

And yet this is the area about whose development strategy thousands of books have been written by some of the most brilliant minds of the Western world. In fact, ever since Asia became independent, a new branch of studies, economic planning and development, has become an important discipline in economics. Various theories of 'development strategy' have been propounded; the Rostows, the Galbraiths, the Nurske, the Myints, all the 'giants' of development strategy, concentrated their attention on this area. They put forward brilliant theoretical works, but as soon as they were put in practice they came unstuck, and non-socialist Asia remains underdeveloped.

The reason for this sorry state of affairs is quite obvious. Historically, the social and economic systems that have proved the most dynamic are capitalism and scientific socialism. As we shall see, capitalism can no longer work in the developing countries in this epoch of the proletarian socialist revolution. The only alternative is scientific socialism, and this, for reasons which we shall also discuss, has been avoided by the Asian leaders. The result is a mish-mash of unworkable social theories, amateurism and universal incompetence, and above all, mass cynicism and corruption.

As capitalism had not fully penetrated these countries at the time of attaining independence, large areas, especially the rural areas, were left completely untouched by the twentieth century, and the forms of production were basically medieval and feudalistic, with a very backward agriculture. Where capitalism, in its heyday, was allowed to take its historical course unimpeded, as was the case in the West, it succeeded in breaking up all the backward forms of social and economic organization which put man in bondage; it introduced a new world-outlook which was historically more progressive than the pre-capitalist outlooks; it liberated man from superstition and ignorance; it introduced new forms of organization in agriculture, and man for the first time in his history succeeded in raising agricultural productivity to undreamt-of levels, which in turn led to enormous increases in population. It developed means of production which ensured once and for all man's liberation from dependence on natural necessity, the natural environment, and through these means of production it succeeded to a large extent in harnessing the forces of nature—rivers, winds, seas—to put them in the service of man.

This is the positive side of capitalism, and mankind benefited from it a great deal. However, as all these developments were spontaneous, unplanned, they inevitably brought in their train a lot of negative and even harmful side-effects. In essence, what distorted capitalist advance and prevented it from taking a rational course of development was the nature of property relations on which the whole system was founded. Capitalism transformed production from individual activity to social activity—more and more people participated in the production of a single product through the division of labour—but the manner of appropriating the surplus so produced remained private and individual. Whoever owned the means of production appropriated the surplus which was socially produced. Thus, apart from spontaneity in production, the system contained within itself this contradiction—private appropriation of socially produced wealth—which resulted in the development of the harmful social and economic side-effects so common under capitalism.

Scientific socialism, on the other hand, while appreciating the historically progressive nature of capitalism, sought to correct the latter's negative aspects by altering property relations—socially produced surplus must be socially appropriated. But it did not seek to go back to pre-capitalist social formations to find the way for a non-capitalist system. That would have been ahistorical and thoroughly reactionary. Rather, it sought to 'supersede' capitalism, to push it beyond the constraints brought about by the above contradiction. Private appropriation of socially produced wealth effectively blocked man's development to his historically ordained destination—freedom from natural fetters, freedom from humanly imposed restrictions and freedom to exercise his productive capacity to the maximum; that is to say, to a non-exploitative, classless society.

Obviously, with this approach scientific socialism revealed its superiority to capitalism. The short history of the Soviet Union confirmed in concrete terms the superiority of this social system. In less than sixty years the Soviet Union, starting from a most primitive agricultural and industrial base, caught up with and in many respects overtook the highly advanced capitalist countries which enjoyed a background of two centuries of industrial development and advanced technology. In the most advanced modern science, aerospace technology, the Soviet Union has already surpassed the most advanced capitalist country, the United States.

This path of development, the scientific socialist path, was open to Asian countries at the advent of their independence. In many ways India, for instance, started its post-colonial era with a more advanced industrial base than the Soviet Union had in 1917, yet India is more or less stagnant, with intractable social and economic problems, nearly forty years after independence. China, on the other hand, which won its independence two years after India, is rapidly catching up with the most advanced industrial countries.

India and some other Asian countries defined their policies as 'socialistic' but strenuously dissociated themselves from scientific socialism. They claimed that the latter was 'unsuited' to the peculiar conditions of Asia, with its different cultural and traditional background. But this kind of talk was also familiar in pre-revolutionary Russia. There too some powerful forces claimed that scientific socialism was 'alien' to Russia; that it was unsuited to the backward Russian conditions; that scientific socialism was a 'Western' ideology and would be harmful if applied to Russia, and so on. Lenin and his comrades, the Social Democrats, as the Marxists were then called, had to fight tooth and nail against the advocates of this erroneous and backward-looking doctrine, who were known in Russia as the Narodniks. These were romantic and utopian socialists, influenced by the French utopian socialists of the early nineteenth century, who imagined that the path to socialism was through the semi-feudal peasant community. The Narodniks idealized the 'village community' (the *obshchina* or the *mir*,* as they called it), and they longed to take society back to the innocence of early communal life, unspoiled by the penetration of capitalism. Lenin wrote extensively opposing their views and showing how reactionary those views were. He showed that the break-up of the past which the capitalist mode of production was forcing on the rural community, and which was bitterly opposed by the Narodniks, was actually good for society, and recalled the historically progressive nature of capitalism.

The scientific socialist view is that agriculture which is unaffected by

* Incidentally, *mir* in Russian also means 'the world', which shows the limits of peasant world-outlook. The village community for them constitutes the world. It is their world!

capitalism, as was the case in Russia then, tends to perpetuate the old processes of production, repeating them on the previous scale and technical basis. Economic units of the natural economy of peasants exist for centuries without changing in size or character, each isolated from the other. This traditional isolation and seclusion has resulted in the notorious narrowness of the intellectual and political life of peasants. The progressive historical nature of capitalism has been to destroy all these backward forms of organization, and it has set man on the historical path to limitless achievements.

It is true that, under capitalist commodity production, the small-scale producing peasantry rapidly split into two classes, the dispossessed and the new owners of capital. Even so, capitalism freed the economic system from its medieval constrictions and made it easier for the dispossessed workers to fight the system itself. As long as the peasants remain part of the old system, as long as they have a stake in it and in its social relations of production, they will remain incapable of changing that system. Lenin asked: 'How can our labouring peasant change this relation if he himself is half-rooted in what has to be changed? How can he understand that isolation and the commodity economy are no good to him if he himself is isolated and works at his own risk and responsibility for the market?'

In the same vein, Lenin criticized the Narodniks who advocated 'common cultivation', which they called the 'socialization of agriculture'. He remarked: 'This is merely funny, of course, because socialism requires the organization of production on a wider scale than the limits of a single village' He showed that the doctrine of Narodism was based 'on the purely mythical idea of the peasant economy being a special (communal) system: the myth dissolved when it came into contact with reality, and peasant socialism turned into radical-democratic representation of the petty-bourgeois peasantry.'

Thanks to Lenin's and his comrades' efforts, the Narodniks gradually lost their influence on the people and their reactionary doctrine never saw the light of day. Thanks to this effort also, today the Soviet Union has emerged as a mighty global power. The 'Narodniks' of Asia, however, captured the reins of state power soon after colonialism ended, which spelt disaster to the rest of non-socialist Asia. Nehru's 'socialistic' approach was nothing but an Asiatic variety of Narodism. Pakistan, in contrast, opted for capitalism without realizing that it was in the wrong epoch for that. As a result, its economy never got off the ground, which ultimately led to the disintegration of the country as a unified state. Ceylon, Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia—they all face more or less the same problem of economic stagnation.

Even in China attempts were made before the Revolution to proscribe scientific socialism, as represented by the Chinese Communist Party, by declaring it an alien ideology unfitted to the Chinese situation. In January 1939, the Kuomintang Central Executive, at the instigation of

local feudalists and British and American imperialism, adopted secret policies known as 'Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties'. However, the 'alien' ideology was by then too much a part of the Chinese struggle to be affected by such futile and silly measures. No wonder China today is making giant strides towards freedom, while the 'non-alien' or 'authentic' countries of Asia stagnate.

It is thus clear that the tragedy of Asia is primarily due to the adoption of a course of development which is neither indigenous capitalism nor scientific socialism. The chosen doctrine is a hybrid animal, like the mule, a mixture of two social systems conceived by the subjective fantasies of those in power. Like the mule, this Asiatic hybrid has no historical role; it has neither a past nor a future of its own. The poor masses of Asia are paying a heavy toll for maintaining this illegitimate, ahistorical beast.

African leaders, as their Asian counterparts have done before them, are busy experimenting with their own versions of hybrid social systems—also at the expense of the people. What animal will emerge we have no means of guessing, but the distant rumblings sound like the approach of a monster. Here too, there is talk of scientific socialism as being 'unsuited' to African culture and traditions. The more inspired leaders go as far as to say that an African is 'socialist by nature', and cannot therefore be taught a socialism which is influenced by 'alien' ideologies. We will have our own brand of socialism, suitable to our communal life which is now being threatened by the intervention of European values, etc., etc.

This attitude is obviously the result of a profound misunderstanding, to say the least, of what socialism is about. And this misunderstanding is already costing us a lot in terms of the time we are wasting in the pursuit of social will-o'-the-wisps; in terms of hardships inflicted on the people through chronic poverty, mass unemployment, famine and all sorts of cruel affliction. A glaring example is that of Tanzanian President Nyerere's *Ujamaa* experiment. While it is true that his ideas were motivated by the highest moral convictions on his part, theoretically and in practice they have proved to be limited and unworkable. His conception of development is very close to that of the Narodniks, and Lenin's critique of the latter is applicable in this instance. *Ujamaa's* declared target is to improve the material conditions of the peasant, 'at his own risk and responsibility for the market', by methods firmly rooted in the old system, at the same time resuscitating social values corresponding to a pre-feudal mode of production. The policy does not in the least envisage the need to *transform* him into a new person belonging to a new class—a need created by the development of the productive forces and new relations of production—with corresponding new social values.

Another very sad example of this stubborn refusal to accept new realities is the tragic experience of the Sahel. A few years ago in the

Sahel and elsewhere, Africa witnessed the most terrible famine in its recorded history. Millions of poor peasants starved, and hundreds of thousands of them perished, simply because the people in power chose to stick to medieval forms of economic organization long discarded by history. In their refusal to look reality in the face, in their effort to cover up their limited class vision by inventing fantastic and unworkable social doctrines, in their damaging preoccupation with irrelevant issues which have nothing to do with the real needs of the people, in their futile but persistent efforts to reverse the march of history, such leaders, like their counterparts in Asia, are plunging Africa into the deep blue sea of economic and social despair. This is a horrible prospect, considering the cruel past from which Africa emerged only yesterday.

The task of this book will be to focus the reader's attention on some of these problems; to view them from the angle of scientific socialism; to show the futility of most of our social and economic experiments; and to investigate the possibility of applying the development strategy of scientific socialism to concrete African conditions. This is not an attempt at high-level abstract analysis. It is a protagonist's statement and a down-to-earth political manifesto intended to arouse the interest of the emerging workers and youth in the real problems which face them in their daily lives. If it succeeds in provoking discussion among them, and especially among young workers, the effort will be well rewarded.

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1. The Road to Economic and Political Bondage

New Class Forces in Africa

A situation is rapidly developing in Africa which is strongly reminiscent of the pre-independence era, when the masses were demanding change at any price. The masses then were demanding change of government, change of political and social direction, change in their status and self-respect, change in their economic well-being; they demanded change for the better. Now they are doing the same. The difference between then and now, however, is that the African of today is a different person from his counterpart of colonial days. He is somewhat less gullible, less susceptible to vague and vacuous promises of a rosy future. He has his own demands and he wants them fulfilled now. If he is not altogether disillusioned, he is certainly more realistic in judging the integrity and prestige of those who seek to guide his destiny. Two decades of independence, if not of freedom, decades of coups and counter-coups, have awakened him to the realities of present-day Africa, even if he does not yet understand the underlying causes of the mess it is in. Thus, although he is physically the same man, he is mentally a different person, a much soberer person.

His younger compatriot of the generation just emerging is better educated, and thus can articulate many of the vicissitudes of the present era; he is more critical, if less experienced, and has developed a personality of his own. He is as a rule a left-wing patriotic petty bourgeois, the intellectual of the peasantry. His formative period in an independent Africa has been ringing with a different battle cry. While he is wholly committed to the struggle for independence in the still-colonized parts of Africa, he also sees the need for a struggle for freedom in his own 'free' country. His notion of freedom is different from that of his older compatriot. His is not the freedom merely to replace the white ruler, but freedom to ensure that the national wealth is more rationally and productively utilized, not wasted in pompous and thriftless spending by the ruling clique. This is his short-term demand and the condition for his wholehearted support and participation in the creation of new wealth. He is also more politically articulate than the majority who do

not usually stipulate these conditions in so many words. Invariably his actions and attitudes are more eloquent than his words.

The new youth of Africa is not the servile youth of yesterday. In many ways he is more conscious of his political responsibilities towards Africa, which makes his presence on the political scene somewhat restrained in comparison to his counterparts in other developing continents. He is less noisy. He does not look down upon his older and less educated compatriot; instead he is helping him understand the stark realities of post-colonial Africa to the extent that he himself understands them. Together they look squarely at the many disappointments, the shattered hopes and illusions of independence; together they sum up their experiences. A *modus operandi* of sorts has spontaneously emerged between them: what the older generation lacks by way of education, the younger generation supplies with its newly acquired knowledge; and what the younger generation lacks by way of experience, the older generation supplies with its two decades of experience in independent Africa. Since both generations are of peasant origin there is not yet any antagonistic contradiction between them; in fact people of the older generation are proud of their educated younger compatriots. This harmony is more pronounced where the poor peasants have not been made landless by their more educated upstarts, especially in those vast expanses of Africa where land is abundant.

This relationship between the old and the young is the solid foundation of the emerging Africa. Being predominantly a peasant, petty-bourgeois continent it is a uniquely African relationship, and potentially it is a very dynamic force. The present morally and politically bankrupt leadership in Africa, which seems to have temporarily succeeded in hijacking Africa's independence, is aware of this potential force, and it is causing them many a sleepless night. However, while it remains only a potential force, its dynamism cannot yet be felt in the shaping of Africa's history. It exists as a potentiality, as it were, ready to transform itself into a living force when the internal and external conditions are ripe. And external conditions are indeed ripe, which make the necessary objective conditions for a social revolution extremely favourable. What has yet to emerge is the subjective factor, the organization for such a social revolution, which is the source of the sleepless nights for the ruling clique. The weakness of this stratum of the petty bourgeoisie is that, although it can articulate the issues at stake, can see the problems and even point out their solutions, it is hopelessly weak in organization. As intelligentsia its members tend to exhaust their energy in arguments over quite insignificant matters, and as peasants in origin they do not lend themselves well to organization.

Side by side with the fusion of the old and the new which we saw above, foreign agents and some of their local employees are working very hard to create a new social force intended to counter the emergence of the revolutionary force and designed to be amenable to external

pressures and manipulations. This 'new' force is the foreign-orientated petty bourgeoisie, the so-called 'modernizers' or 'elites', whose function is to supervise and prolong our dependency through the extension of metropolitan economic interests in Africa. Itself unable to develop into a full-blooded local or 'national' bourgeoisie, or even into a class of comprador capitalists, this new petty-bourgeois stratum, although numerically small and socially isolated from the main political current, is nevertheless an extremely powerful force, and, consciously or not, it is always at the service of the international bourgeoisie. As managers of the state machine with all the coercive apparatus at its disposal, or as managers of the state-owned or private business enterprises, these petty bourgeois control the commanding heights of the entire political and economic life of Africa. In addition to controlling state and economic power, they also control 'mass' political and trade union organizations; they are strategically placed to control youth movements, the army, and the mass media; they even head the local churches of every denomination. This class is a force which is designed to forestall or frustrate the development of the subjective factor whose existence is an organizational precondition for social revolution. This is a force through which international bourgeois finance capital is slowly but steadily penetrating the 'hinterland' of the African economy.

This new type of African petty bourgeois, who form the Right wing of the petty bourgeoisie as a whole, is also of peasant origin. Because he is new in the field of exploitation (and relies on the aid of international finance capital) he tends to be ruthless, less refined than his metropolitan master; he is crudely ostentatious in his tastes, sometimes wears diamond rings on each finger, big enough to be noticed even by a fast-moving car. His power rests on his ability to mystify the peasants, and on his capacity to convince them that their fate is intertwined with his own and that the stronger he gets, whether as a politician (i.e. in 'political society') or as a businessman (in 'civil society'), the better off the peasantry will become in the long run. To perpetuate this fraud he resorts to all sorts of coercive measures, physical and psychological, including exploitation of the peasants' chronic superstition and their docile submission to what they see as supernatural forces. Subjugating the peasants to the will of the emerging right-wing petty bourgeoisie is not too difficult a task, since the peasantry has not yet developed an autonomous class interest. At the same time the right-wing petty bourgeois, being also of peasant origin, is also incapable of organizing, and what little he learns from his metropolitan masters consists of organization to exploit the masses, advancing interests inimical to those of the peasantry. Because of his inability to organize, he is considered unreliable both by his metropolitan masters and by the masses in his own country, and consequently he does not enjoy the lasting support of either. When his temporary political usefulness is exhausted he is dumped by his metropolitan masters, abandoned by his own local

supporters and replaced by a new 'rising star', mostly in the shape of a military junta. As long as this stratum remains in place to supervise state power or as a business influence, the vital interests of the masses will always remain threatened.

Nevertheless, as the development of this petty-bourgeois stratum goes hand in hand with the setting up of import-substitution industries based on the capitalist mode of production, a new class emerges as its counterpart: the proletariat, the class of the industrial worker who has nothing except his wife and children and who must sell his labour power in order to live. This is the most dynamic class in history, in whose hands lies the future destiny of Africa. While it is still numerically very weak inasmuch as Africa's industrial base is still very small and limited, it is, however, qualitatively and strategically very strong, especially since by the very nature of its position in production it represents the future and so is a revolutionary force. By the nature of its work this class has developed a special aptitude for organization, and it has invariably been instrumental in setting up and consolidating the pre-independence mass movements in various countries. With the emergence of the proletariat the stage is set for a revolutionary alliance between it and the other emerging fusion of the old and the young discussed above; or to put it in another way, this is the class with the potential to provide a revolutionary leadership in alliance with peasants and revolutionary intellectuals.

Such a combination of social classes, in a new setting in which each class is slowly developing its own independent class interests, and forming alliances corresponding to these separate interests, never existed in the pre-independence era, when alliances were of a different kind. In those days the population was dominated directly by an alien power, which suppressed it as a whole without any distinction, and the principal contradiction was therefore a straightforward one between the entire people on the one hand, and the colonial power on the other. Now, after independence, the principal social contradictions must include that between the new privileged stratum serving imperialism, and the underprivileged. For now it is the privileged who exclusively enjoy state power and by their alliance with foreign capital enrich themselves at the expense of the underprivileged.

Leaders in Africa, reluctant for obvious reasons to accept this new development, have plunged the continent into unprecedented social turmoil. No continent in such a short span of time since the attainment of independence has witnessed so many social upheavals with so few, if any, positive social results. In only two decades of independence Africa has suffered horrible and devastating civil wars and secessionist movements—in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad—some of which are quite legitimate and some not. Bloody repressions have claimed literally thousands of innocent lives in Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, Zaire, the Central African Republic. There have been a host of inconsequential

coups and counter-coups. We have witnessed harrowing slave labour camps and even semi-concentration camps filled with thousands of untried prisoners of conscience. In one country, at least, all prisons have been turned into labour camps, depriving free workers of rightful employment, which in turn reduces the workers to petty criminals who later end up in prison and labour camps. All over Africa prisons are 'developing' very fast, both extensively and intensively. Hundreds of people are detained for years without trial through the use of Preventive Detention Acts. We have witnessed gross violations of international law, hideous crimes against humanity perpetrated by privileged ruling cliques haunted daily and hourly by the spectre of the emerging revolutionary classes.

These leaders are reluctant to accept the reality of the emergence of social classes and class contradictions within our societies for the simple reason that they are themselves rapidly developing into a comprador class serving the metropolitan bourgeoisie; and as a result developing vested interests in maintaining the bliss of the *status quo* by suppressing the masses overtly or covertly. They refuse to have a close look at the world around them, either at home or beyond, because to do so would mean accepting the reality of present-day Africa, and to them that looming reality is unpleasant indeed. The inevitable consequences of this situation are devastating to them, because when it is resolved the entire structure of their privileges will go, and this they are not prepared to allow to happen if they can help it. To maintain the *status quo* in which their privileges are safeguarded, they adopt internal policies of exploiting tribalism—a divide-and-rule strategy in the best colonial tradition. Externally they adopt the dual policy of outwardly opposing imperialism to hoodwink the people, while actually co-operating with it in exploiting the masses of Africa.

As such policies inevitably lead to the kind of spontaneous social upheavals we are seeing all over Africa today, there is obviously a need to trace the origins of this state of affairs and investigate its development. This will help us understand the real motive force behind this unprecedented social current which is sweeping across Africa like a vicious tornado. We must try to understand thoroughly the root causes of what has been described in some quarters as our 'false start', rather than limit our investigation to the superficial and one-sided subjectivism encouraged by Western bourgeois scholarship. We must, above all, try to understand this social tornado if we are to give it a positive—i.e. revolutionary—direction rather than allow it to become destructive and to degenerate into a lumpen-proletariat and anti-social force.

Misconceptions of the 'National Interest'

While in normal development, i.e. development undistorted by colonial

rule, domestic policies determine foreign policy and the latter is always a reflection of the former, in a distorted development like ours in Africa it is vice versa: foreign considerations determine internal policies, and to attempt to understand our internal policies we must first investigate our foreign relations. This will also help clarify a lot of hitherto misunderstood conceptions the proper understanding of which is indispensable to formulating a correct policy for political and economic struggles.

As soon as independence was achieved, the flags raised and new nations born—as soon, that is, as the leaders of the new states settled in their plush offices (just vacated, incidentally, by the colonial bosses) to begin to govern their new nations—a decisive parting of company took place between them and the people. Beginning immediately with a sharp disparity in incomes, they surrounded themselves with luxurious living-quarters in glaring contrast to the ubiquitous shanties which pass for dwellings for those they claimed to be leading. Glossy official cars, complete with flags, followed—all to distinguish them from the rest of the people. These unheard-of privileges of every kind were all designed to instil subservience among the people. And the new rulers topped it off with enormous state powers easily open to abuse in the hands of political novices. These were the things that contributed to widening the gulf between the leaders and the people. The more the leaders were isolated from the people, the less they understood the real needs of the people, and gradually they evolved policies which had no relevance to the masses.

A strategy of mobilizing foreign aid was designed not by the leaders in power but by the departing colonial powers with the assistance of multilateral organizations like the so-called World Bank. Mobilizing foreign aid became the basis of our policies: externally this humiliated our nations by forcing them into an abject submission to the demands of the aid donors, and internally all those who dared to raise their voices in opposition to these national humiliations were incarcerated or even eliminated on the grounds that such criticism might frighten away potential aid donors. Democracy was thrown overboard, free discussion outlawed, and one-man rule, usually despotic, became the order of the day. All this of course did not happen just by accident, by bad luck or by the evil designs of the rulers. It was the logical outcome of the objective conditions that prevailed, in the immediate aftermath of the declaration of independence. These objective conditions must also be analysed concretely in order to give us some help in formulating genuinely revolutionary policies which will lead to a complete and authentic liberation of Africa.

As observed above, in order to understand the basis of the internal policies of practically any ex-colonial country, it is necessary that we study its foreign relations and the rationale that guides those relations. We should thus begin our study by examining the foundation of Africa's

international relations, or to be more precise, by examining our appendage relationship with the bourgeois world which maintains and sustains us.

When Africa stepped into the world arena, as it were in bits and pieces, irrationally carved up by the notorious Scramble of the last century, it had neither the capacity nor the means, far less the inclination, to make any decisive impact on world events. African states, reduced to the simple expedient of trying to 'exploit' the big powers diplomatically and economically, accepted a position subservient to the bourgeois countries in the hope that by so doing we could take advantage of them more effectively. Usually encouraged by these same powers, we institutionalized international begging into an important pillar of foreign policy. Acting in the 'National interest' was defined by the initiators of these policies as the ability to develop the capacity to extract as much 'aid' as possible from the donor countries, and on better terms than one's next-door neighbour. From the day Africa adopted begging as a fundamental strategy in foreign policy it automatically put a stop to the evolution of any cohesive policy in its foreign relations, either by individual states or collectively. That is why, as we shall see below, few African countries have any real foreign policy at all.

Isolated from their people at home, our petty-bourgeois leaders entered the field of international relations and participated in the councils of the world with the ingratiating attitude of a guest invited to a 'members only' club by courtesy of the senior members, whose favours it was supposedly in our interests to court at all costs. Unable to act jointly, suspicious of each other, with no common political language because we lacked a common African strategy, we were overwhelmed by, and succumbed to, nineteenth-century diplomatic claptrap. Diplomacy was reduced to hypocrisy. We uncritically accepted archaic assumptions governing international relations, and we thought that this childish gullibility would be taken for maturity and would in turn improve our international standing or 'image'. Our shattered and wounded self-confidence, battered by decades of colonial oppression and racial humiliation, and perpetuated by an 'education' designed for subservience, was in need of reassurance that we were equals among the nations of the world, and to that end we were willing at times to sacrifice principles for expediency if this would endear us to the big powers and induce them to accept us as their equals. These powers set standards for us to emulate, by which to prove ourselves to be statesmen with a 'sense of responsibility'; we were to repeat their jaded clichés like parrots and ask no questions. This we duly proceeded to do with enthusiasm and zest; it all became part of our 'diplomatic thought': we judged others and, in turn, submitted to their judgement of us by the same yardstick.

As balkanized mini-states, African countries found themselves hopelessly ineffective at diplomacy in a world dominated by superpowers.

When we made our appearance on the world scene, it was no longer the era of 'great powers' before World War I; but we behaved as if it was, and this was because of our leaders' isolation from the people and from reality. This ostrich-like behaviour was by no means confined to Africa. Most of the non-socialist underdeveloped world behaved in the same way, and the ruling class of the Western bourgeois world encouraged the myth, both in their own countries and abroad, in order to deny the new epoch its reality, hoping thus to ensure their dominance of the world long after their historical epoch had come to an ignominious end.

It was as a result of this diplomatic muddle that the notion of 'national interest' became more pronounced among the underdeveloped countries, without anyone bothering to go to the root of what was meant by 'national interest' when it came from the lips of the Western bourgeois ruling circles. The concept of national interest is of course historically derived, and its origin is to be found in the plunder of the colonies that followed, especially once Europe found itself in a life-and-death struggle over the resources of the world induced by the spread of the Industrial Revolution from Britain. The struggle became more intense among bourgeois European powers after the fall of prices following the notorious 'panic' of 1873. So-called national interest forced European powers to look for wider markets, new colonial sources of raw materials, and of course colonial outlets for investment capital. In order to ensure that these national interests were safeguarded, the European powers embarked on unprecedented military and naval expansion, to supervise trade routes and further extend colonialism by way of new annexations. It was about this time, too, (1870–90) that the Scramble for Africa reached its peak. Seething diplomatic activity brought about a shuffling and re-shuffling of alliances and intensified the struggle for spheres of influence. Most of the current diplomatic conventions were formed at this time, i.e. in a very different historical epoch from today and for different objectives. That we should at this moment still adhere to these outmoded diplomatic forms is rather comical, to say the least, especially if we take into account the different backgrounds from which we and our imperialist mentors hail. What is even more serious is that the bourgeois approach to foreign relations is essentially the defence of bourgeois class interests; by adopting their approach we automatically take their class position, which is fundamentally inimical to our own interests.

And yet this is precisely the attitude on which all African foreign policies are based, with the possible exceptions of Mozambique and Angola, which are giving Africa's foreign policy position a slightly different dimension (though whether this will be a lasting phenomenon with a decisive impact on the rest of Africa remains to be seen).

The bourgeois class position on international relations is based on a philosophy which stipulates that the duty of a state is to safeguard its national interests (i.e. bourgeois class interests) by every means, including

the use of force. This view, rooted in the diplomatic dark ages of the last century, accepts as a *fait accompli* the domination of the world by the then bourgeois 'great powers' and its division into their spheres of influence. It accepts in principle the right of these great powers to safeguard their own self-defined national interests; and of course they include their spheres of influence as part of their national interests. It was accepted that, in the course of safeguarding their spheres of influence, great powers came into conflict with each other and sometimes clashed in armed conflict.

Given such a situation, so the argument goes, there was little that the small nations could do to safeguard *their* national interest except to employ the method of diplomatic skill and dexterity to play off one great power against another. Thus it was considered essential that a small nation formulate a 'realistic' or 'pragmatic' foreign policy free from any ideology, so as to facilitate the maximum capacity for twists and turns, of 'manoeuvrability', to take advantage of any new situation when it arose. Diplomatic success or failure was to be assessed according to whether or not such twists and turns had been effective; whether the results had been positive or negative; whether national interests had been safeguarded or not; and so on. But nobody in the non-socialist developing world cared to question the relevance of such an opportunistic policy in the present epoch when the world has effectively been divided into two camps (or even three, if we are to accept the Chinese interpretation of the world situation with their theory of three worlds).

Perhaps such opportunistic policies had some advantages in the era before the Russian Revolution, when the physical conquest of small nations by large ones was still possible, but in these days of neo-colonialism, when physical domination is no longer possible and even less essential for economic exploitation, such policies have long ceased to be of any use. In Europe the small nations of the pre-1917 era which were not colonized assumed the role of satellites, operating within the orbit of one great power or another. They were obliged to devise their policies from this position, having resigned themselves to the view that as small nations they were not in a position to influence current events in any meaningful way. Consequently, so far as *they* were concerned, the best, indeed the only, realistic course open to them was to safeguard their national interests from this meek satellite position, which required neither ideology nor preconceived, independent views.

As this satellite position, being essentially petty-bourgeois, never attempted to challenge the status quo, it posed no serious threat either to the ruling circles of the great powers or to the small nations. They were satisfied that any clashes among themselves, being non-antagonistic in the dialectical sense (i.e., whose resolution entailed no decisive, revolutionary change), would at worst lead only to the redivision of the colonial spheres of influence and semi-colonies, but would not challenge

colonialism as such. In other words, so long as the basic bourgeois international aspirations, especially those governing property relations and the domination of the world by bourgeois finance capital, were not fundamentally affected or challenged, rulers were not seriously worried by the outcome of petty diplomatic manoeuvres—such manoeuvres were part of the game whose rules they had drawn up themselves. Thus the notion of safeguarding national interests was actually encouraged by the great powers, because it implied acceptance of their domination of the world as their legitimate ‘national interest’. Every nation was honour-bound to safeguard its national interests, and in the course of doing so nothing was too low to stoop to: duplicity, corruption, arm-twisting, all these were accepted as diplomatic adroitness and therefore legitimate.

When we African states appeared on the diplomatic scene, we accepted all these hideous left-overs of the dying past without questioning the assumptions on which they were based. We never questioned their implications for our independence or our economic reconstruction, or whether the adoption of such a diplomatic strategy was conducive or not to our development as viable states. The reason for this obvious folly is that our foreign policy, as well as our economic policy, was the brainchild of our colonial masters on the eve of independence. We lacked, as we shall see below, a revolutionary theory to guide our decisions and actions, and consequently we did not have the analytical capacity to distinguish between correct and incorrect international policies. This blindness can also be traced to the leaders’ isolation from the people they led.

Unfortunately, we have not yet learnt anything from the many rebuffs we have suffered internationally over the past 20 years, and we still continue to pursue more or less the same policies. Of course, we now talk about non-alignment and we want to elevate it or even institutionalize it as a ‘movement’ through which we hope to influence world events. In practice such protestations of non-alignment are meaningless, considering the substance of our foreign policies and the goals they seek to achieve—namely, deeper integration into the imperialist world economy. We shall discuss this below.

In the final analysis, when the bourgeois talked about their ‘national interests’ they were really talking about their class interests, which included their exclusive right to exploit the workers in their own countries ‘without interference in their international affairs’, as well as the right to grab colonial wealth if they were strong enough to do so and defend their ‘possessions’ against the intrusion of other contending powers. Obviously we in Africa could not be talking about the same national interests when we in our turn described our foreign policy objectives in the same terms. The conflict of interest between the world bourgeoisie and ourselves is fundamentally antagonistic, since the satisfaction of their national interests is the denial of ours. Thus, when we formulate our foreign policy to confront these powers, the substance

of such a policy cannot and must not be limited to consideration of the smallness of our nations, as is the case now. Nor must we accept the proposition that as small nations, whatever our internal social relations of production, we must all have an identical foreign policy (preferably non-aligned). And we must not accept as a corollary to that assumption that all big powers have more or less the same policies; rather we must again take into account the varying class aspirations and interests of their different ruling classes. It is counter-productive to assume that as small nations we must all have a non-aligned policy on major issues confronting the world today. It is also counter-productive to assume that superpowers, simply because of their size, all have one identical set of interests in international affairs and small nations have another set of interests, without taking into account the class position of the ruling circles of each country individually. To ignore this fundamental consideration is to degenerate into nineteenth-century reactionary positions. The nineteenth-century bourgeoisie had no antagonistic contradictions among themselves, since they shared a class interest, although their 'national interests' may have temporarily come into conflict on occasion. They all shared the same background. They had the same world outlook (capitalism); the same motivations (private enterprise and profit); the same cultural foundation (Judeo-Christian); the same political ethics (liberty, equality, fraternity—exclusively for themselves); the same politico-economic aspirations (world domination); the same international 'obligation' (the White Man's Burden).

It is thus obvious that, when we adopted a more or less similar attitude to foreign relations, we took a bourgeois class position on international affairs, and consequently we were not representing *our* national interests but bourgeois international interests. We were not safeguarding the interests of *our* people, but those of international capitalism, and were facilitating its exploitation of our people. Having been isolated from the masses of their people, our petty bourgeois leaders lost sight of the true interests of the people.

Africa in a New Historical Epoch

Strictly speaking, even this bourgeois position in international affairs no longer reflects the reality of the present epoch. It is already obsolescent, having been overtaken by the events of October 1917, which shattered the entire bourgeois position in the world. The Russian Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history, and has exerted an influence far beyond the borders of the Soviet Union, extending to most of the bourgeois countries. Inevitably the substance and direction of bourgeois foreign policies also had to undergo changes reflecting the changed situation nationally and internationally. When Africa emerged into the world of diplomacy in the early 1960s, most of the former great powers

were already reduced to the status of medium powers, and the Soviet Union and United States emerged, not as great powers any more, but as 'superpowers', a completely new phenomenon in world history. Their character was quite different from that of the old great powers. Whereas the latter, as we have seen, shared the same background and class interests, the superpowers do not; their objectives are quite different and in permanent conflict. For the first time the dominant world powers did not share the same class origin. Their world outlooks were diametrically opposed. Ideologically they were engaged in antagonistic contradiction. Without taking all these concrete factors into account, African countries, and indeed the rest of the non-socialist developing world, cheerfully went assuming that these superpowers merely replaced the old great powers without any change of substance, and that the old diplomatic game would go on as usual.

Even when China emerged as a potential superpower in its own right, that historical fact caused no shift in the basic assumptions of Africa's foreign policy. In fact many African countries ignored the existence of China and assumed, like the Americans, that if it were ignored long enough China would somehow wither away. It was not until after the U.S.A. was compelled by hard realities to recognize the existence of China in the 1970s that there was an almost indecent rush on our part to recognize it also. It was indeed a regrettable state of affairs, one which spoke volumes about Africa's non-independent attitude to international affairs in this epoch of socialist revolution.

The 'non-aligned' posture which we have adopted and about which we talk so much is in fact more ambiguous and vague than the traditional 'neutrality'. Non-alignment has never been properly defined; it means all things to all men, depending on the convenience of each individual nation. Some African countries even declared themselves non-aligned in the American war of aggression against the Vietnamese people. The stance which is supposed to reflect non-alignment is most interesting and it is worth examining it a little. It can be broadly summarized as follows:

Our position as small countries compelled us to tread carefully in international affairs, not veering too much to the side of either of the two superpowers lest we compromise our 'freedom' and jeopardize our 'independence'. Freedom was defined as the ability to take 'independent action' which would lead to the promotion of our 'national interest'. If for some unavoidable reason we clashed with one of these powers, we should make a positive move towards the other, on the grounds that our national interest dictated that we should not quarrel with both of them at once. Conflicting interpretations were advanced as to what motivated the superpowers, but most of them were based on assumptions dating from the last century. Most inter-African disputes could be traced back to our different interpretations of what motivated the superpowers.

Some African countries, like Senegal and other French-speaking

countries, believe that the existence of the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. as superpowers is a threat to our independence and that we should encourage the emergence of a 'united Europe' as a superpower. The rationale behind this view is that such a development would give us wider room to manoeuvre; it would allow us greater freedom of action in dealing with the other superpowers and thus promote our national interest. A proliferation of superpowers would give small nations a greater say in international affairs, because then they would be courted by other powers as well and our influence would correspondingly increase. Our 'equal status' in relation to the superpowers would be guaranteed, and by relying on our diplomatic skill we should be in a stronger position to influence world events and safeguard our national integrity as well as our inalienable rights as sovereign states. The meaning of all this claptrap has never been clearly defined, nor does anybody bother to tell us why the pursuit of such abstract objectives is so necessary and vital. We simply repeat it all mechanically.

The Chinese are currently working on their theory of 'three worlds', a theory which is being hotly debated among progressive circles all over the world. Whether one agrees with it or not, it has at least the merit of being consistent with the genuine interest China has in surviving as a unified state and nation permanently threatened by Soviet invasion, whether real or imaginary. The Chinese do not encourage the emergence of Europe as a united superpower, limiting their objective in Europe to the strengthening of Europe's defences, which in the Chinese calculation would divert some Soviet regiments from the eastern frontier to the west and thus give the Chinese some breathing space during which to industrialize and modernize before the turn of the century. Africa's petty-bourgeois position, in contrast, is purely abstract with even more unreal objectives verging on a dream world.

Advocates of these abstract foreign policies stress that identification of our interests with those of one or other superpower is dangerous, as it might be interpreted by the other superpower as acting against its interests. Prudence would therefore dictate that it would be in our national interest to be in a perpetual balancing act, shrewdly accommodating the interests of all powers, great or small, without injuring the honour of one power in favour of another. This is considered to be a precaution against exposing ourselves to punitive diplomacy by the supposedly injured party. So it would seem, according to this approach, that we have no choice except one of continual shifts and turns. This unprincipled position, more than anything else, explains why most African countries, as well as all non-socialist developing countries, react desperately in the wake of any unexpected turn of events in the international situation, resorting to precipitate actions prompted by ignorance rather than sound judgement, and always against the real interests of our people.

One danger of blindly defending these abstract rights which serve no

practical purpose of our own is that we are thereby being seen to legitimize what was originally acquired through piracy (e.g. trade routes, colonial boundaries, spheres of investment and trade, sources of raw materials, strategic archipelagos, etc.) This is against our own real interests, to the advantage of our real or potential enemy. One recalls - the pigheadedness with which the imperialists defend their 'right' to arm South Africa with deadly weapons despite our futile protests. They insist that these military wares are necessary to safeguard trade routes essential to their vital (imperialist) national interests. The concept of 'national interest' is a two-edged weapon.

We often waste enormous financial resources, which we can ill afford and have often borrowed, in diplomatic hide-and-seek for ends whose attainment would contribute not one iota to bringing nearer our real national objectives. But when you question the validity of such wastage, you will always be answered that small nations have continuously to appraise the existing balance of power, that we must constantly be on the alert in case the big powers come into conflict, and that when they do we must always be at hand to cash in by taking advantage of such conflicts to further our national interest.

This panicky attitude stems from yet another nineteenth-century relic, a diplomatic phantasmagoria known as the theory of the power vacuum. In the days of physical occupation of colonies and semi-colonies the theory was logically acceptable, for in those days when great power A was absent from area X, great power B would immediately move in to fill the vacuum. This was inevitable since the substance of diplomacy in those dark days was piracy, annexation and plunder. But our policymakers, bent on re-enacting the last century's dramas, continue to plan their diplomatic strategy as if the theory were still valid in a historical period when erstwhile colonial powers were actually withdrawing physically from their former 'possessions'. Of course, the ruling classes of the Western imperialist powers have a vested interest in our misinterpreting the realities of current affairs, since our ignorance can be exploited for their strategy of world domination, and especially their economic exploitation of Africa. Fear born of ignorance has yielded handsome returns to international bandits since time immemorial, ever since piracy was practised in the open without any inhibition. Practical experience, however does not justify that fear now.

When the Soviet Union emerged as a formidable world power which threatened the interests of the imperialist powers, the latter found it necessary to embark on a policy of encircling the Soviet Union. To justify this provocative policy they ushered in the Cold War. For this to succeed it was essential for the imperialist powers to have a pretext for intervention anywhere they liked, blaming it on the 'Soviet threat' to fill the vacuum. The Suez fiasco of 1956, still fresh in our minds, was launched exclusively on the pretext of a power vacuum, and it remains the best modern example of bourgeois duplicity. The 1978 Western

intervention in the Shaba Province of Zaire is a more recent example of this duplicity. The real objective of the operation was to maintain South Africa as the bastion of imperialism in Africa, since a revolutionary Zaire would enormously strengthen revolutionary Angola and inevitably lead to a revolutionary Namibia and even a revolutionary Zambia. Such a situation was not considered to be in the best interests of imperialism, and consequently the revolt in Shaba had to be crushed, whether or not there really had been any Cuban and Soviet intervention. These kinds of imperialist invasions have nothing to do with any alleged 'power vacuum'; they are really concerned with preventing the African masses from asserting their genuine rights in a revolutionary manner, which is of course inimical to international bourgeois interests. Still, we continue to echo the sentiments of this same bourgeois class long after it has been demonstrated that they actually work against our own interests; so overpowering are the dominant dogmas in international politics, even to young and emerging countries like ours.

Apologists of Neo-Colonialism

Indeed, dogmatism seems to be characteristic of foreign ministries throughout Africa, so much so that some voices have already been heard here and there expressing anxiety at the prospect of a thaw in the Cold War. These pundits suggest that the U.S.S.R.–U.S.A. detente augurs new dangers in the form of a Soviet–American condominium of the medieval variety. It should be stressed here that this idea of a condominium should not be confused with the Chinese theory of United States imperialism collaborating with alleged Soviet hegemonism. This we shall discuss later.

Other dogmatists hold a completely opposite view which also has no justification in the present context. They express the anxiety that the Soviet–U.S.A. confrontation is very similar to the confrontation in the 1930s between fascism and the liberal democracies. But they don't bother to make any distinction between the motivations behind that confrontation and the present one. Nor, in formulating our foreign policies, do we bother to study the fundamental characteristics, such as class, which distinguish the one from the other.

As a result of inadequate or downright mistaken appraisal of the true situation in the world, we have taken a non-committal posture on all Soviet–U.S. dealings, whether they be positive or negative. Our policymakers argue, again in the spirit of safeguarding 'national interest', that in international affairs African nations must have no ideology, nothing to induce them to make either permanent friends or permanent enemies; they must be flexible and change from one position to another when and if the need arises. No wonder the two decades of independence have seen imperialist onslaughts on Africa more brutal

than were ever attempted on any other continent in the world, the Indo-China aggression excepted. No wonder the white minority regimes get away with anything in Africa, literally robbing a whole country like Rhodesia, whose African population numbers five million, and herding a whole rural population into reserves in their own country while aliens take control of their wealth, land, precious minerals, and other resources. No wonder Africa has not taken collective action when multinational military invasion has been mounted against our continent, when whole villages have been massacred by foreign mercenaries and all forms of humiliation inflicted on the masses. This, of course, cannot be explained entirely by our military weakness; rather, having taken an unrealistic, outdated attitude to foreign relations we have succeeded in diplomatically disarming ourselves and reducing ourselves to a state of impotence. Our real influence in the world, in consequence, is minimal, if we have any at all. President Carter's hectic African diplomacy in no way signified any increased influence on our part; it was all part of the global manoeuvres of the superpowers, with ourselves as the helpless victims of the game. U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young's unending visits to Africa only signified that American diplomacy feared what appeared to be a Soviet 'success' in Africa, which the United States wanted to counter by all means available, including the device of using Black Americans for the conduct of the United States' relations with Africa. On the other hand, a really revolutionary policy involving all the masses of the people, scientifically co-ordinated in a strategy of objective complementarity with the interests of the people in mind, would have made us more effective in repulsing imperialism in Africa in spite of our military and economic weakness. Unfortunately, a leadership isolated from its people, motivated by objectives the people do not share, is incapable of launching such a diplomatic offensive.

The inventiveness of theoreticians isolated from the practical experience of their own people knows no bounds. Sitting in their musty offices, reeking of colonialism, they indulge in fantastic mental exercises which do not even have the excuse of being logical. The latest of these fantasies, and probably the most puzzling of them all, is the evolution of an entirely ahistorical view: according to it a new epoch is seen to be emerging in which the small and medium capitalist and socialist countries of Europe will unite to safeguard European interests against Soviet and U.S. intervention. This would lead to the development of a gigantic new European superpower which would either counterbalance the Soviet-U.S. bipolarization of the world or frustrate any design of theirs aiming at condominium. Success in forestalling either of these events would allegedly mean a safer world for the poor countries, especially African countries. The advocates of this view see a glowing prospect for us, should Europe develop into a single superpower. Separated from Africa only by the Mediterranean, or the 'European lake', as they call it, a strong and united Europe would have more in

common with Africa than with any other continent. In the course of identifying its true interests, and after rearranging its priorities in a proper order, Europe would inevitably be forced to come to some arrangement with Africa, which arrangement would ultimately work to mutual advantage. In the best nineteenth-century tradition, these people argue that, whatever our ideological or cultural differences, our physical proximity to Europe would inevitably bring us nearer together, the geographical factor being more permanent and more real than any other factors. This is the material, it is argued, upon which a sound and lasting foreign relations policy should be founded.

Once again it is important to distinguish this policy and the one advocated by the Chinese based on their 'three worlds' theory. The Chinese policy seems to have been deliberately devised as a tactical response to the Soviet encirclement of China, bringing together all the nations friendly to China, whatever their ideology, in order to encircle and neutralize, if not isolate, the Soviet Union, which the Chinese consider to be their most immediate danger. This is a legitimate diplomatic move where big powers confront each other in a hostile posture.

To investigate and analyse this new Chinese position would take us too far from our main theme, and would have to include posing the question: Does the 'socialist camp' as we know it really exist? This obviously is not part of our subject, although we shall refer to the question from time to time as we go along. The point to be emphasized is that, whereas the Chinese at the time of writing have not basically changed their internal policy, which is essentially revolutionary and correct and makes their shift in foreign policy a tactical manoeuvre only, in the underdeveloped countries our stand in foreign policy still reflects the distorted development which we have been perpetuating ever since the attainment of independence and which has resulted in our integrating our economies with those of the capitalist world in an appendage relationship. This question is well known and has been widely discussed, and the purpose of the following pages is not to repeat the same arguments but to view the problem from a different position, i.e. from the position of the man in the street in the downtrodden parts of the world, especially Africa. The analysis will avoid going into a high level of abstraction, and will confine itself to day-to-day experiences to which the ordinary African or Asian is continually and harshly exposed.

2. The Historical Context

From Communalism to Capitalism

We have seen in the previous chapter how wrongly held views or assumptions inevitably lead to misleading policies which have no relevance to concrete situations, and how the result for Africa has been to entangle us in the web of imperialism and domination by finance capital. This is only part of the truth. Foreign relations being essentially a reflection of internal policy, the assumptions which influence them must be sought in a country's economic base, which influences its internal policy. Mistaken policies on the foreign affairs front, however, can easily be blamed on one scapegoat or another and therefore take a long time to be detected by the people. It is one area where leaders can get away with almost anything. On the home front, on the other hand, scapegoats are not so easy to find, and even if they are, wrong policies are often accompanied by social instability and eventually unrest. A domestic policy founded on wrong assumptions has a direct impact on the people, and their reaction, in either the long or the short term, is bound to have devastating effects on the entire social fabric. That is why it is almost a truism to say that for a policy to be successful it must be based on the revolutionary practice of the masses of the people. Such a policy cannot go wrong because it is founded on truth, and truth is the revolutionary practice of the people. There is no truth in the abstract.

In order to avoid working under wrong assumptions, it is important for us to understand what is happening in Africa under our very noses, to understand the real forces influencing the events which have led us to our present miserable situation. Some African intellectuals still tend to look at Africa from the standpoint of some biased Western scholars whose historical mission was to justify foreign domination by showing that Africa had 'no past', 'no history'. Hence the imperialist pretext of 'the White Man's Burden'—the mission of civilizing Africa. On the other hand, as a reaction to this negative view, other African intellectuals tend to go to the other extreme, trying to look at Africa as a watertight compartment, as if it had emerged out of the blue and could be studied in isolation. Both these views, needless to say, are erroneous, and if

uncorrected may lead to serious errors in attempting to understand the true situation.

The only way that can lead us to a more or less correct picture of the situation is to view Africa as part of human history, no more and no less. If we study the history of man we see that man has developed his mode of living, his traditions, his outlook, his social organization as a result of a long historical process or practice, and to understand why man behaves in this way or that under certain existing conditions it is necessary first to understand what led to the development of those conditions. As influences can be both external and internal, the correct way is to study both the external influences and the internal ones. Thus it will be instructive for the purpose of this study to have a very brief and general overview of some important historical events in the development of man and society up to the present.

The most important historical force leading to man's development as a social being is his struggle against his natural environment, against 'necessity'. Every step he took was a step away from natural necessity, and up to this day that process continues. A 'developed' society is the one which has moved furthest from natural necessity. As a corollary to this, man's development of the productive forces and the ensuing rise in productivity is the most important index of his progress, and up to this day the most important yardstick of development is the productivity of labour—the most developed society being that with the highest level of labour productivity.

Man began his exciting history when he first freed himself from the fetters of nature by discovering that mechanical motion could be transformed into heat. This discovery, the generation of fire by friction, though it appears to be simple to us today, gave man for the first time control over one of the forces of nature and thereby enabled him to separate himself from the animal kingdom and set in motion the long journey we now know as civilization. That was the beginning of man's liberation movement, the threshold of man's history. The second epoch-making discovery by man in his liberation struggle was the discovery that heat could, in turn, be transformed into mechanical motion. The invention of the steam engine by Thomas Newcomen in England in 1702 was the first step on the way to far-reaching scientific, technical and social discoveries, and set in motion the vast development of productive forces which gave man once and for all the capacity to build for himself a society free from fear of hunger for the individual, free from superstition, and free from all forms of oppression, social or natural.

Throughout this long journey, from the control of fire to the possibility of space travel, man encountered many forms of obstruction: social, religious, political, cultural, economic. All these obstacles were man-made, and their effect was to impede progress either through superstition or through outright class interests of the ruling circles. The

study of his human progress in science and technology against the background of social class struggles is the study of the history of man. The development of the productive forces on the one hand, and of the social relations of production on the other, and the ever-present contradictions between them within the context of the class-ridden society, is the stuff of history.

The Birth of Private Property

Anthropologists and historians have enlightened us on the early social and economic formations of our ancestors, and we have a more or less clear picture of how they organized themselves in production, in administration, in trade, in war, and so on. Throughout these interesting accounts we see various forms of struggle; old forms of social and economic organization are dropped and new forms are adopted. Classes emerge on the historical stage, and after they outlive their historical role they disappear, to be replaced by new classes relevant to the historical needs of the epoch. The replacement of one class by another has never been a peaceful transition. It has almost always been accompanied by violent social upheavals or revolutions.

We know that our ancestors organized themselves on the basis of communal ownership of land; primitive society was genuinely classless, in the sense that everything was held in common and each person worked according to what the community thought socially necessary. We know also that as nobody exploited anybody else's labour, individuals expended their labour only on what was socially necessary. Private ownership of land developed as a result of changed relations of production, brought about by the exchange of goods induced by the early rudimentary trade between tribes. At this stage early communal life began to disintegrate and commodity production, i.e. production not exclusively for the consumption of the producers but for exchange, began to appear.

But what we do not know much about, since it has been obscured by bourgeois historians, is the manner in which private property developed. Bourgeois historians as well as social 'scientists' insist on starting from the premise that private property developed as a result of force. Historical evidence, however, refutes this notion, revealing it as an attempt to distort history in order to make it conform to the Semitic myth of the fall of man from grace. Most Western scholarship is deeply influenced by Judeo-Christian metaphysics, which has always been a useful means of keeping the poor content by fostering the illusion that the ruling class has its power by birthright and by divine will, while the poor (if they are meek) shall be repaid in the world hereafter. This mythology is essential to capitalism, as it was to other oppressive systems before it. The apologists of class oppression favour its perpetuation so as to disarm the oppressed classes of the more revolutionary theory which explains that the causes of their poverty and

oppression are in the last analysis economic; and that the solution to the problem of poverty and oppression can be found only in economic relations of a new type, i.e. socialism. Even liberal 'socialists', who are genuinely appalled by the excesses and the dehumanizing influences of capitalism, cannot do more than prescribe reformist solutions, not revolutionary ones; for the class interests of liberals prevent them from going beyond reforms and palliatives.

In the real world, however, the development of private property can be traced to economic causes. As soon as society gradually ceased to live under the system of communal ownership, or natural economy, in other words, as soon as man ceased to produce only what he needed and began to produce a surplus product for exchange, his social history took a decisive turn, a revolutionary turn, for it transformed production from being exclusively for the use-values it created, i.e. consumption, into commodity production, i.e. production of goods for the purposes of exchange. Commodity production brought in its wake the struggle between classes: between those who produced and those who lived off the labour of others. Primitive man, by contrast, had struggled mostly against nature, first singly, later in a family, and much later in kinship groups, eventually forming communities. And as soon as the two antagonistic classes emerged, there also grew up a rudimentary form of government or authority in order to enforce the will of the exploiters over the exploited. Force came with authority, which in turn presupposes a prior development of exploitation since it is only exploitation that makes the use of force necessary.

From Slavery to Feudalism

Slavery itself came about as a result of the development of the productive forces and exchange. Prior to commodity production, captives from tribal wars were just killed, but when commodity production needed extra free labour to expand production beyond what the community consumed, victors now put their captives to productive work, and from then onwards labour acquired *value*. The slave was made to produce more than was necessary to keep him alive, and the surplus he produced was naturally appropriated by the slave-master.

Slavery as an economic system appeared very early in Egypt and Asia Minor, and was common in ancient societies. In Greece, for example, the growth of a non-productive aristocratic class whose only business was warfare called for increased surplus product, which depended on the exploitation of slaves—usually war captives from surrounding states. In spite of its barbarities, the advent of slavery was in fact an advance in the history of man, for, as we have seen, in the period before they were put to productive labour as slaves, captives from wars were simply killed or even eaten.

Slavery also introduced a most important economic factor for the first time: it introduced *division of labour*. This allowed a section of the

community free time to pursue non-productive activities, e.g. trade, public affairs, the arts and the sciences. Greece, the cradle of Western civilization and democracy, attained its glory in art, politics and philosophy as a result of slavery which allowed the free citizens to engage in the pursuit of these subjects. Slavery became so much a part of the system that even Aristotle justified it with the concept of 'natural' freedom or 'natural' slavehood, a concept developed two thousand years later by the German and South African fascists into a philosophical doctrine.

Slavery very soon became the predominant form of production, but in the end it was also one of the chief causes of the decay of the system itself. This is a natural trend in any society steeped in contradictions and it is known in dialectics as 'negation of the negation', where, as in mathematics, two negatives make a positive. Slavery grew as a result of the dissolution of the natural economy, the communal economy. With the transformation of small-scale into large-scale production and the development of the commodity economy, where the organization of work became more and more complex, slavery as a system became uneconomical, especially following large and disruptive slave revolts, and eventually became untenable as a universal economic system. Feudalism was a logical consequence. Slavery was of course revived later after the discovery of the 'new world', when African slave labour was considered essential for the development of the Americas and the West Indies.

The epoch in which slavery was the predominant form of production lasted for several thousand years. Feudalism in its turn witnessed immense development in all walks of life: in production, trade, the sciences, arts, sophisticated armaments, aristocratic and monarchic rule, better administration, (supported by more sophisticated use of force for political coercion), and so on. It is not the purpose of this discussion to dwell much on the feudal period. Our interest in it is merely that it ushered in a more dynamic epoch, presided over by a new ruling class, the bourgeoisie, and based on a new system, the capitalist mode of production. The French Revolution of 1789 is generally regarded as the historical landmark which ended feudalism as a universal system and ushered in the emergence of capitalism.

Feudalism had lasted for only a few hundred years. It was distinguished by unprecedented extravagance and wasteful consumption by the ruling class and government functionaries. Unproductive monuments and palaces, ornate churches, luxurious cities (which did not develop as a result of productive activity) were built; gold and precious stones were hoarded; and investments generally took a variety of non-productive forms. In short, it was like the wasteful consumption which we are witnessing in Africa and Asia today, although much of our wastefulness comes from borrowed money. Kings and queens surrounded themselves with literally thousands of hangers-on (in our case today, secret police and agents, all consuming but not producing), from lords to page-boys.

However, feudalism too, like the slave system before it, contained the seeds of its own destruction. Once again we observe the dialectical process of the negation of the negation. Wasteful consumption hampered development, for the economies became stuck in simple reproduction, i.e. production for consumption and not for reinvestment to expand the forces of production. This stagnation created obstacles in the way of the dynamic new class that was emerging, the bourgeoisie—the traders, budding industrialists, successful craftsmen and so on—who, although gradually strengthening their hold on the economy, had no direct or effective say—let alone control—in the running of the state. It is an inevitable historical process that when political authority, however strong its repressive powers, becomes a hindrance to the normal course of economic development, it is brushed aside and the new forces representing progress take over. This was true of the transition from slavery to feudalism, true of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and true also, as in our time, of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Capitalism and the Bourgeoisie

The growth of the bourgeoisie, which eventually overthrew feudalism as a universal social and economic system and introduced its own system consistent with its own mode of production, capitalism, is a most important process which we must study and understand thoroughly, for several reasons. First, the bourgeoisie is the class which is still today at the helm in the capitalist world and which has taken capitalism to its highest peak, that of imperialism, so familiar to us in Africa even in these days of the post-colonial era. Second, the bourgeoisie is the twin brother of the proletariat, in the dialectical sense of the unity of opposites. And it is this other new class, itself brought into being by the capitalist mode of production, which is historically destined as the harbinger of the new social order of the future. By the same token it is the most formidable opponent of the bourgeoisie and has already smashed capitalism as a totally universal socio-economic system, and it is leading the struggle towards a classless society of the future. Finally, the political leadership in Africa is without exception the product of the bourgeoisie; it has assimilated its culture through education, and its values and outlook have become our own. This explains the many otherwise inexplicable actions taken by our leaders which reflect bourgeois interests, although they themselves as a class often lack a bourgeois economic base. We shall come back to this later.

Historically, and in comparison with the aristocratic class which preceded it, the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class. In its struggle against the feudalists it gave the world bourgeois laws and morality, laying stress on such concepts as 'liberty', 'fraternity' and 'equality'. Rousseau, the celebrated intellectual of the bourgeoisie, sanctioned the use of force in overthrowing an oppressive regime; Voltaire was ready to

sacrifice his life in defence of free speech. Although these bourgeois thinkers were expressing the sentiments of their class, such sentiments also happened to reflect the feeling of the other oppressed classes, including the proletariat. But as soon as the bourgeoisie came to power, many of these thinkers and philosophers became disillusioned by the excesses of their own class in power. The bourgeois–democratic slogan of ‘liberty, fraternity, equality’ now became a mask for the social inequality on which the smooth running of the capitalist mode of production depended. While the economy pushed ahead by leaps and bounds, thanks largely to the Industrial Revolution in England and a flourishing external colonial trade and plunder, other classes fell to crushing ruin. Independent craftsmen were destroyed and were consequently forced to sell their labour, as one sold a community, to the new owners of the means of production. Cities became bigger and uglier as peasants flocked from the countryside to seek employment after having had their land expropriated by the new capitalist farmers who were replacing the feudal lords. The migration from the countryside to the cities created what Engels called ‘the industrial reserve army’, that great pool of unemployed workers who ensured cheap labour for the industrial bourgeoisie. They lived in utter poverty and semi-starvation, victims of ruthless exploitation.

Under such horrid circumstances it was natural that serious social maladjustments would result in the epoch of capitalism. Corruption, banditry, prostitution, alcoholism, and all forms of hideous crimes became the lot of the unemployed. Side by side with these negative developments, however, there were some positive ones too, with far-reaching historical consequences. These were the developments in the sciences and technology, which facilitated large-scale production both in industry and agriculture. But most terrible of all, with industry, consumption, labour, all revolving around commodity production, man himself became a commodity; in order to live he had to sell his labour.

The liberal bourgeois, those who thought that the end of feudalism would bring about a just and free society, became disillusioned and were reduced to crying in the wilderness. They indulged in visionary social theories of a utopian just society which would deliver man from the terror of his own economic chaos. ‘Socialist’ creeds of every kind were propounded which, it was hoped, would save society from the social confusions which they could not understand, far less control.

Why is it that capitalism, which had ushered in such a dynamic epoch, with so much industrial development and vast accumulation of wealth—why did it also bring with it so much human suffering and degradation? The answer is to be found in the economic foundation of capitalism and the philosophy that emerged to justify it. According to capitalist economists, production depends on mystical ‘market forces’ whose basis is the equally mystical ‘law of supply and demand’. But these forces, like cosmic forces, are uncontrollable by man and their

impact on the economy is felt only after the damage is done. That is why, after so many years of capitalist production, capitalists are still unable to explain convincingly the reasons why 'business cycles' are always accompanied by crises of overproduction, why the chain reaction of recession–boom–recession is inevitable and is sometimes followed by slumps and even economic collapse.

Capitalist production is itself the source of all its problems. Propelled by the permanent quest for profit (as a result of the tendency for the rate of profit to fall), it forces capitalists to want to turn everything they can lay their hands on into profit. For instance, the three 'factors of production'—land, capital and labour—are said to be creators of new value. At the end of the production process the surplus so realized is split up into rent, profit and wages. That is to say, the landlord gets his rent for his land, the capitalist his profit for his capital, and the worker his wages for his labour in proportions determined by the capitalist himself. To this day the arrangement is accepted even by workers' official representatives, the trade union leaders and others, whose 'radicalism' does not consist in questioning the validity of this three-sided distribution but only in demanding a 'fair return' to the worker, as well as to the landlord and to the capitalist.

The Development of a Proletarian World Outlook

It was only with the arrival of Karl Marx on the scene of working-class agitation that a systematic investigation into the essence of the capitalist mode of production was introduced. Marx showed in his writings, especially his best-known work, *Capital*, that neither land nor capital produces any new value. The only factor in the above trio (land, capital and labour) that really produces new value is labour. Land, according to Marx, does not in itself possess any intrinsic value that can be transformed into any new value. Bushland is valueless; it acquires value only when human labour has been expended on it. Land in the city centre is more valuable than land in the suburbs, and the latter more valuable than land further away from the city. Proximity to the city, with its greater potential for human use, determines the value of the land, whether that use is for buildings or for agricultural output to meet the city population's needs. Rent, therefore, has not only no moral justification, but no economic validity either.

When it comes to capital, the question is somewhat complicated because capital is associated with money; with means of production, with raw materials, all of which appear to be contributing in the production of new value. Marx, however, devised a formula to show that this was not the case. He abstracted the functions of all these so-called 'factors of production' from the process of production and proved that only labour produced new value. In bourgeois economics capital is

divided into 'fixed' and 'working' capital, the first referring to the means of production—buildings, machinery etc.—and the second to wages, costs of raw materials, transport and other running costs. At the end of the production process, all these are accounted for and what is left is said to be the profit and capital. This confusing role of capital in the production process was designed to hide the true contribution of capital and fortify its claim to be the creator of new value.

Marx's formula was an innovative departure from this confusing formulation and simplified it to reveal the true function of capital. It was designed, as he put it, to lay bare the true nature of the capitalist mode of production. Marx divided capital into 'constant' and 'variable' capital. Constant capital includes everything in the production process except wages, which he categorized as variable capital. Constant and variable capital are designated respectively as C and V for short. As machines and raw materials do not introduce any new value (they only change their form), any new value in the final product must therefore come from variable capital. To show how this happened, he divided labour into two parts, 'necessary' labour and 'surplus' labour. Necessary labour is the time it takes a worker to earn what is necessary for his subsistence. If this takes six hours per day, and if the worker stops working after six hours, the final product contains only constant capital and the necessary labour, in which case the final product contains no new value, as the value thus far transmitted to the new product contains only constant capital and necessary labour. If this were to happen, no capitalist would find the game worth the candle, and there would be no capitalist production. For the final product to contain new value, the worker must be made to put in extra labour, more than the necessary labour; in other words, to put in 'surplus' labour. This is what Marx called 'surplus value', and it is designated by S. Thus the value of any commodity under capitalist production is represented by the formula: $C + V + S = \text{Total Value}$.

Marx's theory of value and his discovery of where new value comes from was the most important event in economic theory, for it showed the basis of the capitalist economy and whence came the capitalist's profits. It showed also that the surplus value derived from the labour power of the worker is shared by all the capitalists of a given capitalist society through profits, interest, rent, and the like. The above formula is applicable not only to an analysis of the value of a single production process, but can be applied to an analysis of all enterprises, taken singly or collectively, including the entire economy of a country for a given period—say, one year.

However, it is not our purpose to go into all the complexities of Marxian economic theory, which is a vast subject beyond the scope of this work. The purpose was only to show up the fallacious claim of bourgeois capitalist economists that such factors as land and capital contribute to the creation of new value, and the falseness of the implied

‘right’ of capitalist owners of land and capital to appropriate the wealth of the community which produces it; a fallacy which, as we shall attempt to show later, is causing havoc in Africa’s economic and social development. But, more significantly, Marx’s analysis also helps to reveal the source of the miseries of the people, particularly in the early period of capitalist development, for which the topsy-turvy property relations of capitalism are entirely responsible. These ‘relations of production’, in which those who produce wealth remain poor and those who do not produce anything get rich, are relations which genuine socialists want to change. They represent a major contradiction in capitalist production.

Bourgeois Contradictions and the Rise of the Proletariat

Although capitalism brought about enormous development of the productive forces, particularly in those parts of the world where it first emerged as a system (i.e. Europe), this development was in contradiction with the *social* relations of production. Working-class movements struggled for the right to organize themselves in order to strengthen their bargaining position, and the bourgeois grudgingly conceded to them here and there, but not without making certain that the concessions were confined to industrial demands (e.g. wages) and insisting that they be separated from any political activity. That is to say, the workers must never resort to industrial action for political ends. The working class was to seek solutions to their problems on the economic front only (‘economism’), and was not to be allowed to stray on to the political front where it might challenge the monopoly of the bourgeoisie as a ruling class, and its system—capitalism. Political organizations did evolve, but they were mostly under the leadership of the bourgeois intelligentsia. These were divided into right and left wings. The Left initially represented mainly those bourgeois who were disillusioned with their own system and who sought a solution from within it through a humanitarian programme of reform; but they could not begin to think in terms of changing the system itself, of changing the social relations of production which produced all the ills of capitalism. Such parties were known as ‘social-democratic’ throughout Europe, and they had a formidable control on the trade union movement. The workers in these countries therefore came under the direct control of the bourgeoisie. Thanks to the wealth gained from the colonies, it was possible to appease European workers by granting some concessions, albeit not without a struggle, in order to forestall a revolutionary trend in Europe, which was seen to be otherwise inevitable, given the deplorable condition of the workers and other oppressed classes.

In order to make life a bit tolerable for their workers at home, the bourgeois intensified their plunder in the colonies, thereby shifting their

problems at home on to the colonies. We were forced, as a result, to produce for the metropolitan economies and were subjected to all sorts of taxes in order to pay for administering this oppression. We were deliberately prevented from developing indigenous industries, and instead made to specialize in the production of what are called 'cash crops'—industrial and consumer crops needed by our masters. And our mineral wealth was exported at give-away prices to consolidate and strengthen bourgeois hegemony over us.

However, while these developments lasted, they created the conditions for deeper contradictions among the bourgeois of different countries. The logic was simple. If colonial possessions could alleviate social problems at home, the answer was to have more colonies. This, in addition to the advantage of warding off potential competitors from colonial markets, made the struggle for colonial possessions a bitter one. In order to resolve this contradiction, the bourgeois went to war against one another, which had the unintended consequence of weakening their stranglehold on the world.

The First World War (1914–18) was the most important and epoch-making of a series of wars. It was fought at a time when the bourgeoisie was at the zenith of its unchallenged power and confident that it could settle the contradictions inherent in its mode of production by resorting to war. But this war in fact meant the beginning of the end of the bourgeois epoch, for, just before it came to a close, the Russian Bolsheviks led a successful working-class revolution which not only overthrew the Tsarist regime in Russia but considerably weakened the bourgeoisie all over the world. Despite bourgeois obstructions, proletarian parties were mushrooming throughout Europe. In the countries where the bourgeois felt strong and confident, communist organizations were legal and open, although there were many obstacles imposed by the ruling class against effective organization. Such parties were openly organized in Britain, France, etc. In countries where the bourgeois were still weak, or where a feudal aristocracy and monarchy still held power, as in Tsarist Russia, these vanguard organizations were illegal and the workers were forced to organize underground.

At about this period, a debate (to put it no higher than that) had arisen among Marxist organizations about what would be the right moment for a socialist revolution. Some Marxists held the view that no genuine socialist revolution could take place before a country's capitalism had developed to its highest peak. This group ignored the fact that at the time of their debate capitalism had already developed into an international system of exploitation and that the struggle against it would also have to assume international magnitude. Lenin and the Bolsheviks took this latter view. It was Lenin who first described the new bourgeois domination of the world as imperialism, and who devised a strategy and tactics which hastened the historical process of socialist revolution under these new conditions. Basing his views on the

dialectical principle of 'uneven development' (as Mao says: 'Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly'), Lenin put forward a proposition which was to become famous in socialist thinking: that there were weak links in the chain of imperialist domination. Imperialism, like everything else, developed unevenly. In some parts of the world it was strong, in others it was weak. The task of socialists was to discover the weak areas of imperialism, where objective conditions for social revolution were ripe. Once the people were subjectively prepared, as a result of the organizing activities of a strong socialist and workers' party, once the workers were able to identify their class allies, the poor peasants, revolutionary petty-bourgeois intellectuals and so on, then the way to a socialist revolution would be clear. The task was specially urgent when the bourgeois world system was engaged in a self-destructive conflagration, as was the case in the 1914–18 war.

Accordingly, in October 1917 the Russian proletariat organized itself to stage a revolutionary uprising at the weakest link in the imperialist chain, Tsarist Russia. The easy initial success of the revolution dramatically confirmed Lenin's thesis, to the extent that Gramsci, a prominent Italian Marxist of the time, declared it a 'revolution against *Capital*'; that is to say, a revolution against all the predictions of Marxists who viewed Marxism as a theory only and not as a guide to action. It shook the bourgeoisie even more dramatically. It was the first social revolution in history organized, led, and carried out by the working class and for the working class. The bourgeois, for the first time in their short history, lost confidence in their own capability when confronted by organized workers. The Russian Revolution brought about a general despondency among the ruling classes throughout Europe and elsewhere, as profound doubt began to spread as to the ability of the bourgeois and their capitalist system to solve the problems which had brought about the catastrophe of the First World War. On the other hand, the Russian workers' victory heightened the morale of the working class in Europe and elsewhere and put world-wide revolution on the agenda.

The Russian Revolution marked a turning point in the history of the world. A new polarization of forces, with the bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the proletariat on the other, emerged. The threat to their world-wide interests which the Revolution implied forced the bourgeois to come together in a bid to reassert themselves as the unchallenged leaders of the world. As soon as the War was over in 1918, they regrouped and launched a counter-revolutionary war against the young proletarian state in Russia, with the support of internal reactionaries known as 'White Russians'. The bourgeois invaders were crushed, but not before causing untold suffering and economic dislocation which resulted in a serious famine. However, the revolution endured. Never again were the bourgeois to dominate the world completely and, what is more, they were now confronted by a most formidable enemy, a revolutionary working class.

The Growth of Fascism in Europe

The end of the War also brought other contradictions among the bourgeoisie. At the notorious Versailles Conference, which was dominated by the British and French bourgeois, the victors wanted to take advantage of the new world situation at the expense of their vanquished class brothers, the German bourgeois. Germany was stripped of its colonies in Africa—Tanganyika, Namibia, Cameroon, Rwanda/Burundi. Interests in important raw material-producing areas were transferred from Germany to Poland; and finally the Germans, as a last humiliation, were cut off from world trade.

The European economy as a whole was shattered by the ravages of the War, and the mounting social and economic problems proved to be beyond the capacity of capitalism to solve. The whole of capitalist Europe and all that part of the world that came under it plunged into one economic crisis after another, culminating in the stock exchange crash of 1929, which brought economic ruin not only to Europe but also to its colonial appendages, whose economies were geared to save the bourgeoisie from imminent collapse.

In Italy and Germany, meanwhile, the frustrated petty bourgeois, the unemployed, and the humiliated ex-soldiers, having lost faith in the bourgeois leadership but at the same time scared to form a united front with the local proletariat and join hands with the Soviet Union (the only country untouched by the economic crisis), sought refuge instead in fascism. This was a misguided doctrine which sought to redivide the world in a manner favourable to German imperialism. The German and Italian bourgeois supported these moves (later the Jewish bourgeois, and with them the Jewish petty bourgeois and working class, paid for this support literally with their blood), seeing in them an opportunity to regain their old economic domination and at the same time suppress the working-class movements.

Thousands of working-class leaders were massacred in cold blood or thrown into prisons to rot and die. All sorts of organizations were suppressed. For the first time the petty-bourgeois conceived system of a one-party dictatorship was introduced (emulating the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, which was a dictatorship of *class* and not of political party); they even referred to fascism as 'national socialism'. The state completely controlled the press and radio. No opposition to the state was tolerated. Elaborate torture chambers were constructed and systematic torture techniques developed, together with highly refined instruments of torture. Organized bands of youth, the so-called Hitler Youth, were mobilized in order to terrorize the people into accepting government policies; hooliganism was given government protection and approval. Gas chambers were erected and millions of innocent Jews perished in these monstrosities.

It is idle to speculate whether fascism was the brainchild of Hitler or

of Mussolini, or whether, if these two individuals had never existed, the world would have taken a different course. It is more scientific to look at these developments objectively in the context of bourgeois economic failures. It is urgent for the African masses to understand the true characteristics of fascism, not only the phenomenon but its causes. For, as the economic situation in Africa deteriorates, more and more of our countries led by the petty bourgeois are resorting to fascism, a poor man's fascism it is true, but fascism all the same. But the Western democracies and the fascists were motivated by the same objective—suppression of any working-class uprising that might lead to revolution. Both camps were motivated by the quest for world domination. Hitler and Mussolini (with their Japanese counterparts) wanted to redivide the world at the wrong historical epoch; this was already the epoch of liberation, not of colonization, thanks to the Russian Revolution. They were thus twenty-two years too late in their ambition. Although up to the time when Hitler fired his first shot the bourgeois were in full control of the now shrunken capitalist world, there were obvious signs that this world was slipping from their grasp. In Asia liberation struggles were reaching their peak, especially in China, and sapping the energies of the British, French and Dutch bourgeois. Added to this was the Soviet challenge, which was threatening these powers ideologically at home. The workers were disillusioned with a bourgeois leadership which was taking them out of one crisis only to thrust them into another. In a way the Second World War was a blessing in disguise for the bourgeois, as they could now appeal to the patriotic sentiments of the workers, appeal to them to keep the country together in the face of an external adversary, the classic and most reliable ploy of a bankrupt ruling class when things at home begin to fall apart.

Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 proved to be a fatal miscalculation. Soon the Soviet proletariat turned the tide of the war, which ensured final victory for the Allied Powers in 1945 when the Red Army marched into Berlin. The Soviet victory not only turned the tide against the fascists, it also meant a rapid decline of bourgeois world hegemony. Soon after the war, the socialist camp was considerably expanded at the expense of the capitalist world: Yugoslavia, Albania, Rumania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia were all liberated. A few years later, in 1949, the emergence of the People's Republic of China enormously expanded the socialist camp which now comprised one-third of the human race.

One-third of the human race moving out of the orbit of bourgeois hegemony, no longer to be economically or politically exploited, and the massive destruction of the means of production throughout Europe's industrial base because of the War, all added up to a potential economic disaster, and made the world situation very bleak for the bourgeoisie. Very soon another blow for them fell when the Soviet Union exploded its first nuclear device, ending once and for all the armed superiority

on which the bourgeoisie had traditionally based their aggressive and annexationist policies.

Afro-Asian Liberation and the Collapse of Old Colonialism

Meanwhile, in order to restore Europe's economy firmly in the hands of the bourgeois, the Americans launched their famous Marshall Plan, which transferred from America to a devastated Europe massive capital and modern technology on an unprecedented scale. The U.S.A., which came out of the War as the strongest bourgeois nation, with its economy completely unscathed (if anything, strengthened by the War), took over the leadership of the bourgeois world from Britain and France. These two countries had already suffered additional severe blows from the liberation struggles in their colonies, especially in Asia. When the colonies achieved their independence, the old imperialist 'great powers' lost both power and glory and slipped to the rank of third-rate or medium powers.

The weakening of our imperialist masters created a completely new situation in Africa. The demand for independence gained momentum as soon as Ghana attained her independence in 1957. By this time many liberation movements were already active, especially in British colonies. In Kenya, armed struggle for land continued to sap the energy of a war-weary and exhausted Britain, and helped to expose its incapacity to keep its colonies by force. Africa's independence was being anticipated with great enthusiasm by the masses, who saw in independence an end to their misery, humiliation, injustice; they saw it as an era which would usher in great historical changes for the benefit of the masses.

The beginning of the 1960s saw the emergence of several independent African states; it was a great moment for Africa after several decades of colonial subjugation and humiliation. But in the outside world events were rapidly taking a new turn. The bourgeois were forming new alliances to prepare themselves for the new struggles which were already unfolding. The Marshall Plan was accompanied by the so-called Truman Doctrine, a declaration of the Cold War. This war was to have two objectives: to weaken the socialist camp, which was threatening the survival of the bourgeoisie as a class, and to distance the newly independent countries as far as possible from 'communist contamination'. The world was to be divided into a 'free world', i.e. that part of the world which was still under the bourgeois sphere of influence; and the 'iron curtain' world, i.e. the socialist world. An uncompromising crusade against the latter and against any country which flirted with, or gave comfort to, the socialist camp was to be launched relentlessly. The bourgeoisie saw 'communism' everywhere.

This anti-communist crusade had the appearance of an ideological struggle, but in fact it was basically economic. The objective was to

preserve the capitalist system from complete disintegration. The workers' rejection of capitalism in many of the advanced capitalist countries and its possible rejection in the developing countries which had recently attained their juridical independence or were on their way to independence, confronted the bourgeoisie with the prospect of another and even more terrible crisis in the post-war years, the possible complete rejection of capitalism on a world-wide scale. It was essential for the bourgeoisie's own survival as a class to devise techniques which would enable them to forestall this impending disaster. Thus a combined ideological campaign (the Truman Doctrine) and economic assistance programme (the Marshall Plan) were launched, to be supplemented by a world-wide monetary reform which would facilitate a viable credit system. All of this was designed to make the capitalist system work on a world-wide scale. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (I.B.R.D. or World Bank, for short) and the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) were established for this purpose and were designed to attract all the newly independent countries in order to keep them within the bourgeois orbit.

Joseph Jones, reported to have drafted the Truman Doctrine, writing to the U.S. Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs only two weeks before the promulgation of the Doctrine in 1947, had this to say: 'There are many signs that the world is approaching this year the greatest crisis since the turn in the tide of the war in 1942. It is primarily an economic crisis centred in Britain and Europe, France, Greece, China If these areas are allowed to spiral downwards into economic anarchy, then at best they will drop out of the United States orbit and try an independent nationalist policy; at worst they will swing into the Russian orbit.' This is the authentic voice expressing the class interests of the ruling circles, then as now, in their campaign to defend America's 'vital interests'. The objective of the World Bank and the I.M.F. was to ensure that no one strayed out of the sphere of interest of the new leader of the bourgeois powers.

The British financial 'wizard', John Maynard Keynes, at last had his monetary and financial techniques taken seriously by the desperate Western ruling circles. They were now ready to listen to any solution to the economic impasse which followed the Second World War. If the so-called Keynesian Revolution could not save capitalism from its ultimate doom, it certainly provided it with a temporary respite. Keynes played a prominent role at the Bretton Wood Conference of July 1944, heading the British delegation, when the new monetary reforms were considered which resulted in the institutionalization of the World Bank and I.M.F. His techniques were basically designed to save capitalism from the periodic crises arising out of the trade cycles which were the scourge of the capitalist mode of production. The international monetary reforms did indeed work for just over two decades, on a sort of hit-or-miss basis, until the current monetary crisis of the 1970s, which seems to be no longer responsive to a Keynesian solution.

But another most important historical effect of these reforms was that the whole developing world was completely integrated into the bourgeois international economic system. In this process, these two famous multilateral institutions—the World Bank and the I.M.F.—played a leading part. In spite of our loud protestations to the contrary, this act of integration into these institutions has put us in Africa firmly into an alliance with the world-wide counter-revolutionary forces against the socialist camp.

If, as was noted in the previous chapter, the makers of our foreign policy find it almost impossible to extricate us from a pro-Western posture in international affairs, the reason must be found in this alliance, inspired by what we think are our essential economic interests. As Lenin put it, 'Economics is the base, and politics the concentrated expression of economics.'

There are, of course, some African countries that are subjectively genuine in their anti-imperialism in foreign policy, and they do make some attempts at restructuring relations of production at home, but blindly, without the aid of a revolutionary theory which would show them that, as long as we tie our economies in with world monopoly capital through multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, our efforts at restructuring our economies and developing a genuine revolutionary foreign policy will always be frustrated. In other words, such blind policies are anti-imperialist only in form; in essence they still serve imperialism.

It seems clear, therefore, that Africa is not only part of world history and consequently cannot be studied in isolation, but also that its ruling circles are firmly aligned to the world capitalist system and as such are objectively opposed to the revolutionary movement of the world. We shall try in the next chapter to examine how our economies are more and more being made part of the global strategy of the world bourgeoisie. All 'aid' received, every loan contracted helps to integrate us deeper into their international web. We shall try to see how this is damaging us in terms of social and economic costs, to say nothing of the threat to our very sovereignty.

3. Blind Acceptance of Neo-Colonialism

A Fatal Choice

The generation which is leading Africa today, at any rate that part of Africa which is not yet under military dictatorship, reached its maturity on the eve of the decline of bourgeois world hegemony and the accompanying decline of colonialism. These people took up the struggle against colonialism at a time when the world was in its most serious turmoil, in which the bourgeois were being challenged on their home ground as well as internationally by the socialist upsurge. Our leaders were serious and single-minded on the question of independence ('We prefer poverty in freedom to prosperity in subjugation', said Sekou Toure) and they were not prepared to be diverted from this objective. The world in which they reached their maturity was also ringing with anti-communist propaganda. These leaders innocently accepted the extraordinary Western-inspired proposition that to be pro-communist was to be against independence. It was difficult for them to take a different position, given the circumstances of the time. Books, magazines, scientific journals, newspapers—all were turned into vehicles of the anti-communist crusade, very much in the way the *Reader's Digest* continues the crusade to this day. The churches of every denomination also played their part; indeed, the influence of the church on educated Africans cannot be over-emphasized.

In some countries, notably in British, and later Portuguese, colonies, liberation movements with extensive mass support helped to accelerate the march towards independence. But unlike the Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese or Cuban liberation struggles, most liberation struggles in Africa were limited to 'nationalism': they aimed to get rid of the colonial powers' direct rule but at the same time expressed the desire to continue economic links with these same colonial powers.

In the Portuguese colonies, however, liberation movement leaders, especially Neto, Cabral, and dos Santos of Mozambique, who were internationally respected Marxists, tried to combine national liberation with social revolution.

In the French colonies, with the exception of Guinea and the

Cameroons, there were hardly any liberation movements to speak of. Senghor of Senegal concentrated on cultural emancipation with his dubious notion of *négritude*, and his party, the B.D.S. (Bloc Démocratique Sénégalais), was known to be a reactionary movement which later in 1958 influenced the Senegalese people to vote 'Yes' to remaining within the French Community. Senghor had rejected independence from France and sought reforms instead. In a speech at Strasbourg in 1950, he dramatically announced in poetic vein:

In this world besieged with [nuclear] anxiety ... men if not peoples prefer liberties to Liberty; to the independence of each country the material and moral independence of each of their citizens ... To speak of independence is to reason with the head on the ground and the feet in the air; it is not to reason at all. It is to advance a false problem. (Quoted by Chinweizu in *The West and the Rest of Us*, Vintage Books, New York, p. 97.)

In the Ivory Coast Félix Houphouët-Boigny and his party, the P.D.C.I. (Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire) devoted most of their energies to fighting for better commodity prices and privileges for the French-educated elites, and they also voted 'Yes' to remaining under French economic and diplomatic dominance in 1958. In other words, independence was imposed upon them in spite of their voting to oppose it. This was true of the rest of the French colonies in Africa.

The overall picture, however, was one of indifference to Marxism at best, downright hostility against it at worst. As a result the leaders were put on the defensive by the imperialists on the question of socialism. They would vehemently reject any suggestion of associating with the international working-class movement. This was not simply a tactical move on their part. Most of them actually believed Marxism was evil. They refused to read, far less seriously study, any Marxist literature; they read *about* it only through the media of the anti-communist crusaders. Some even went as far as to claim that there was no room for Marxism in Africa; Africa needed independence, not Marxism.

It was in this atmosphere that independence was fought for and eventually won. Little did most of our leaders ever suspect that it was only possible to win our independence thanks to the existence of a strong and expanding socialist camp which created an international climate conducive to the liberation struggle. Nor did they realize that the gentlemen in Washington, who had now taken over the leadership of the world bourgeoisie and were desperately struggling to maintain bourgeois world hegemony in the face of the socialist challenge, were busy, albeit quietly, organizing to constitute and consolidate the structure of our economies in a manner that would serve their world strategy, and not for our genuine development. The World Bank, which was assigned this task, was intentionally under the direct control of Washington, with an American nominated by the United States

President as its president. It assigned experts, economic study teams of one kind or another, and advisers to Africa, to ensure that the overall objectives of the world bourgeoisie were put into effect in concrete terms. Their efforts later matured in the form of the many 'development plans' which were to be so common throughout Africa in the immediate aftermath of our independence.

When independence was achieved, it was a ritual for every leader of a newly independent country to pay a visit to Washington to prove their country's political health, free from any communist contamination. Honorary doctorates from Western universities were lavishly conferred on all and sundry as symbolic certificates of good health, labelling them as 'responsible leaders'. Even our trade union leaders were thoroughly Americanized and unlimited funds for 'regional organization' were put at their disposal. George Meany, the wealthy American trade union leader of the AFL-CIO, and his American friends became the heroes of African trade unionism. Peace Corps and other 'experts' from the U.S.A. were all over the place, from remote villages to the highest levels of government authority. They devised our policies and supervised their implementation. They had the ear of our leaders and they never failed to advise them as to who was good and who was not so good among the leaders' own colleagues; who was to be watched by the police and who was to be groomed for future leadership; who was a true patriot and who was a communist 'puppet'.

Loans were granted only on condition that the projects for which they were intended were scrutinized and found to be in conformity with the overall strategy of the world bourgeoisie. In fact nearly all such projects were initiated by the World Bank experts. A good project was described as a 'bankable project', that is to say, one which could be approved by international finance capital. Meanwhile the I.M.F. took care of our financial and monetary policies, advising us on taxation, on setting the exchange value of our currencies, etc. Our currencies were designed to have international respectability, and thus the shilling earned by our peasant was equal in value to the shilling earned by the industrial worker in London or elsewhere in the advanced capitalist world. Loans were offered and accepted to develop African entrepreneurs who, it was hoped, would develop into 'agents of change', 'modernizers', and 'elites' of the future. The Ford and Rockefeller Foundations became our important patrons as well as our 'partners in development': they offered financial help and sent in experts in practically every field, especially the financial. We became members of GATT (the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) and took active part in what was then the Kennedy Round of Negotiations—despite the fact that both were instruments designed to stabilize and sustain world-wide exploitation, in line with bourgeois strategy.

It was in this atmosphere, too, that important policy decisions with far-reaching consequences were taken, whose effects were to be felt

nearly twenty years after the attainment of independence. Development strategies were conceived on the basis of premises completely alien and unrelated to our concrete historical conditions.

No Concrete Analysis of the Concrete Situation

Accordingly, against this background, we modelled our institutions on patterns prescribed by the above motley of Western 'experts'. But to be workable, institutions must be in harmony with the concrete situation to which they are designed to apply, otherwise there will be chaos. It is a principle of dialectical materialism that appraisal of a situation must have its foundation on facts and be guided by practice. You can make a correct appraisal of a given situation only if you have grasped thoroughly all the facts surrounding it. We did not do this and we landed ourselves in chaos. What were the facts of our situation?

At independence we had inherited a monstrously oppressive state machine designed to serve our colonial oppressors' interests; a state which was not geared to the development of the people, but one which coerced them into accepting colonial subjugation so as to produce, through forced labour, for the metropolitan economies. It was a state designed to instil subservience and diffidence in the people by destroying their self-respect through degrading treatment. It was a bourgeois state, yet its subject peoples lacked even the limited bourgeois civil rights.

Our first task should have been to transform this state machine into a people's state, one which would have ensured control by the people, especially the working class. While it would have been too early to institute a dictatorship of the proletariat, since the proletarian class did not constitute the main thrust of the liberation movement's onslaught, as was the case in China, Vietnam, Albania and Korea, yet a broadly based people's power designed to lead to a national democratic revolution, with people's councils spread throughout the countryside to draw the peasantry into decision-making and control over the political leadership, would have been possible, given a correct political orientation of the leadership. This was not done, and African states became notorious for their concentration of more and more power in the hands of the leading clique, and eventually of a single leader, who would justify his one-man dictatorship by creating a one-party state on the obnoxious grounds that the African masses were not yet ready for democracy. This in turn created favourable conditions for the many military take-overs that have become the main feature of Africa's current political scene.

On the economic front, we had inherited extremely backward economies based on subsistence agriculture. Small-scale commodity production dominated inevitably by a backward-looking, superstitious peasantry which had only just emerged from several decades of colonial

oppression and humiliation; this was the predominant characteristic of our countryside. The vast majority of the people were hopelessly backward economically, their agriculture fragmented into tiny little plots, each hardly sufficient to support one household. For any development to take place, it was essential to tackle this problem as a matter of top priority. The masses, being the most important 'agents of change', had to see in their own concrete experience that freedom meant an improvement in their lot before their enthusiasm for production could be aroused. Old institutions should have been dismantled, to be replaced by revolutionary ones which would have served to achieve this end.

However, having relied on Western experts, whose experience was wholly metropolitan and whose background was entrepreneurial, we sought solutions to these urgent problems not from the reality of the situation but from business manuals. We deepened, instead of limiting, the involvement of the masses in the world market, where they were most vulnerable. In other words, we integrated them deeper into a system which had made them backward in the first place. We organized them not to improve themselves, but to improve business, a business over which they had no control, on the argument that what was good for business was good for the country. We measured progress not on the basis of how much better the people ate, dressed and lived, but in terms of export performances and the balance of payments. We told the people that *they* needed imports, so they must produce more, export more, earn more foreign exchange in order to import more. Foreign exchange was always described as 'badly needed foreign currency'.

Before too long, the masses saw no real improvement in their living conditions. They still had to walk the same fifteen miles to fetch water fifteen years after independence. Famine loomed as ever just round the corner; only a little extra rain or a little extra sun and they were in serious trouble. The masses would be puzzled to hear the leaders proudly announcing a successful year in textile exports, while their families and themselves were only half-clad. They didn't see the relevance of announcing impressive foreign exchange reserves when they had to make do with the barest minimum of everything that made life worth living and very often with less than the minimum. They saw no sense in their leaders announcing progress because a post office was inaugurated in the next village. When the masses eventually lost confidence in themselves and their leaders, they also lost the enthusiasm to respond to exhortations to work harder. They submitted passively, without any enthusiasm or commitment, to the government-appointed village authority; a better fed, better clad and infinitely better housed authority at that; an elite amongst them who treated them at best paternalistically and at worst dictatorially. While the leaders in the capital continued to live in an ostentatious, affluent style, absorbed in their delusions of grandeur, provoked and sustained by the flatteries of

resident diplomats with an obvious axe to grind, and constantly engaged in petty political in-fighting, the masses were gradually having second thoughts about the true meaning of independence. Independence was not for them, but for the ever multiplying bureaucrats, the army, the secret police and their ubiquitous informers. When the leaders paid their usual visits to the countryside and made their dull demagogic speeches, the masses applauded out of fear and not out of respect for the leaders. Experience had taught them to develop a sharp instinct for staying this side of prison. As soon as the leaders left, the masses returned to their normal tempo. They produced only what was necessary to subsist on, but no surplus: Surplus for whom? they would ask.

The young and enterprising left the villages and flocked into the towns to create a massive unemployment problem, with all its attendant scourges: prostitution, thuggery, crimes of violence, and so on. Nationally, production declined, both from the effect of the withdrawal of the able-bodied young people from productive activity in the rural areas, and because those that remained would no longer respond to the call to produce more. The country was obliged to import what it could produce locally. In the end we were even borrowing from abroad in order to feed ourselves.

As our economies stagnated and we were forced to borrow more and more from abroad, we became ever more dependent on exports, and we were eventually trapped in a vicious circle: export more, greater exploitation, less earnings, borrow more, export more to service foreign debt, and so on. This is clearly an economic blind alley leading to eventual economic chaos, but it's a path we are firmly on.

Crippling financial commitments to foreign creditors had limited our options. True, some liberal and patriotic leaders realized that living off borrowed money was not only morally disgusting, but politically dangerous, threatening our very sovereignty. But they still saw it as a lesser evil than to be tied to the dreaded socialist camp. They preferred the devil they knew. A colonial economic structure bred a colonial mentality and a colonial outlook. However, in one important respect their fear was genuine: a colonially structured economy could not but develop colonial-type relations with a more powerful trading partner, whatever the social and economic system of the latter. A change of trading partners from capitalists to socialists, without changing the internal basis of the economy, would mean only shifting our dependency from one camp to another; only a change of masters.

And this *is* the point. Failure to restructure our economies led to their becoming nothing but appendages, some more prosperous than others, to the developed countries, and our foreign relations remained colonial in nature. When our leaders saw the alternatives in terms of being devoured either by capitalists or socialists, they were unconsciously reflecting a true picture of the situation; but they were also revealing

their own attitude to development, one which does not conceive of structural change. Their view does not take into account the fact that external causes (i.e. external relations) are only the condition of change, while internal causes are the basis of change. Without structural changes internally, there is no hope of changing our appendage status, and no hope of independent development. Thus, as we circled in this hopeless mess, calls by the leaders to increase exports became less and less convincing to the masses because the leaders failed to show how ever-increasing exports could help to solve the problem of economic stagnation and get us out of the vicious circle. Rather than answer this critical question the leaders resorted to slogans, the most resounding of which was: 'Export or die!'

No Prospects in Exports

At this point it is worth while digressing to analyse briefly the exploitative nature of trade and other economic relations between colonies and their metropolises, relations which we have cemented in the post-colonial period through the uncritical pursuit of economic policies advocated by the institutions of international monopoly capital. The application of Marx's labour theory of value in this case can offer useful insights into the problem of underdevelopment.

Trade relations between (for example) Africa and Europe are not normal in the sense that trade relations between Europe and North America are normal. Ours are appendage economies, tied since colonial days to the metropolitan countries as closely as the economy of Southern Italy, say, is appended to its northern industrial 'metropole'. We are part and parcel of the metropolitan economies and we produce exclusively for them, not for ourselves. For instance, apart from a very tiny proportion for local consumption, we produce cotton exclusively for export. In a properly integrated economy the opposite is true: the product is predominantly for internal consumption and only the surplus is for export. For instance, less than 6% of the national product of the United States is produced for export, so that the value of locally produced products is determined on the basis of internal costs. In contrast, the cotton we produce is destined exclusively for use by metropolitan industries, and thus our cotton production contributes organically to metropolitan wealth.

If value, as we saw above (p. 26), is determined by the amount of time expended in production, the true value of our cotton can be arrived at only by calculating the amount of time that went into its production. If, further, our cotton is part and parcel of metropolitan wealth, in the absence of any measure for internal costs, our calculation must be based on *metropolitan* costs, in much the same way as Southern Italy must base its production costs on those of Northern Italy. In other

words, for trade to be fair (and fair trade is the liberal tradition of the bourgeois) it will be necessary to assume that more or less equal values are exchanged. Since there is no means of calculating the cost of time spent in producing cotton by subsistence farming methods, as it is produced in Africa, our calculations must be based on the cost per hour for a metropolitan worker—which is fair, since the product is destined entirely for metropolitan consumption.

Let us assume, then, that the average weekly earnings for a metropolitan worker are £40 for a forty-hour week, or 20/- per hour. We would assume, therefore, that 20/- per hour would be a fair return for our cotton-producing peasant. Let us further assume that, as our peasant works only seasonally, he works for only six months in the year, on average eight hours a day. This will give us a year-round average of four hours a day. We should divide this time equally between the time it takes our peasant to produce for his subsistence and the time he works on his cotton field. Translated into money terms, this gives 40/- a day for his subsistence, and 40/- for his cotton production. Since our peasant usually uses a hoe as his means of production, we will assume zero constant capital. Seed is also assumed to be free, because it has been obtained from the previous harvest. Again, as his whole earnings go into subsistence, i.e. shelter, fuel, food and clothing, and no surplus is left for saving, we will assume that everything he earns goes into reproducing himself, i.e. keeping himself and his family alive.

Thus $C + V + S = 0 + 40 + 40 = 80/-$.

But in real life our peasant's average subsistence earnings, based, say, on a Tanzanian rural minimum wage, are only 10/- per day. Consequently, in a trade relation between the peasant and the metropolitan buyer of his commodity, there is a net transfer of value from the peasant to his trading partner of 70/- per day. For a whole year, including Sundays, the figure is 70/- x 365, or 25,550/- or £1,277.5 per peasant. If the total number of peasants involved in cotton production is 100,000, we get an interesting figure of £127,750,000 for the total surplus value appropriated by the metropolitan countries. Of course, there are many, many more peasants than this involved in cotton production in Africa, so the quantity of surplus value transferred is correspondingly much higher.

The same formula can be applied to other primary commodities; and it shows that, contrary to the opinions of exponents of the New International Economic Order, exploitation of the developing countries by the developed does not take place at the point of exchange—at which point the process could be regulated by some rational arrangement—but at the point of production. Under these conditions no amount of negotiation can control the inequalities inherent in the system. It would have saved the developing world a lot of time and energy if our leaders had realized this and had set themselves to think of other means of resolving our development problems.

The above figures are of course only very approximate, and assume everything else to be equal. An interesting feature is that our metropolitan friend enjoys colossal profits without even investing in constant capital. There are similarities, even, with the feudal relationship between landlord and serf, in which the former gets all, or nearly all, the products of the latter's labour in return for the use of the lord's land for his subsistence. This abstraction can also be used to determine the magnitude of exploitation in the 'trade' relations between all the developing countries, on the one hand, and the developed capitalist countries on the other. In the final analysis, in spite of our formal independence, our relationship with the developed countries is essentially colonial.

It is clear that, because of our dependency, we are unable to change the course of our development even when it is clear that the path we are on is leading us nowhere. The World Bank itself once estimated that to achieve the 5% growth of national product recommended by the United Nations as the minimum essential for the developing countries, the latter must aim at expansion of exports at an annual rate of 7%. Anything less would amount to stagnation, taking into account the rapid population growth in these countries. Some African economists, though, have convincingly shown that to achieve a growth rate of 5%, export growth must rise by at least 18% annually. However, even if we take the World Bank figure of 7% export growth as our target, it would appear that for primary commodities that target is impossible to achieve. This is because there is a limited scope for expansion of demand (or as the economists would prefer to say, limited demand elasticity) for our tea, coffee, cashews, and other products, in that the population which consumes these primary commodities in the Western world grows at less than 2% annually. How many more cups of tea can a British worker consume beyond what he is already consuming, however prosperous Britain becomes? He has already reached saturation point in the consumption of tea and there is just no room for more. No British importer would import an additional 7% of our tea when the demand at home was rising by less than 2%. The World Bank knows about these hard facts of business life. Why then does it recommend us to borrow more in order to increase the production of crops whose development potential is so limited? An interesting question indeed.

It is true that when the capitalist world is plunged into one of its periodic crises, especially when there is war or a threat of war, or a monetary crisis, there is a tendency for the prices of primary commodities to rise as long as the crisis lasts. This is because such crises are generally accompanied by a world-wide stampede to buy tangible commodities such as gold, silver, copper, cotton, sugar and so on. Merchants prefer to stockpile those commodities rather than hold liquid cash, whatever the currency, since cash at such times always faces a threat of instant devaluation, in spite of the I.M.F. When these

developments occur, there is invariably a superficial appearance of boom in the developing countries which supply primary commodities. But such 'booms' are as deceptive as they are short-lived. They are deceptive because what we gain by the increased export price we lose through the increased import prices of industrial goods. The most serious consequence of this situation is that in the process we import world capitalism's inflation into our economies, with devastating consequences. If the price of the cotton we produce suddenly jumps, the cost of production in our textile industry will also rise. To maintain his profits the textile industrialist will push the burden on to the consumer and our *kitenge* and *khanga* will cost more. This blow will hit workers and others with fixed incomes the hardest. The 'boom' becomes one big hell.

When, however, the crisis in the capitalist world is temporarily abated and primary commodity prices return to their old levels, the damage to our economies gets worse because even the cotton-producing peasant, who at least enjoyed a spate of higher income earlier, will now have to pay extra for his necessities, while his income has actually declined. The capitalist world will not lower the prices of their exports to us even if the inflation which sparked the increased prices in the first place has now abated. Once the prices of industrial goods have attained a certain level it is difficult for them to be lowered, especially when much of their production is monopolized by one or two multinational corporations and therefore not responsive to the supply-and-demand mechanism. So in the end it is the developing countries that bear the brunt of capitalism's world-wide inflations.

This seemingly insoluble problem is the result of our dependence on production of primary commodities principally for export, and yet the World Bank insists on our ever deeper involvement in their production. It vehemently opposes any suggestion that the developing countries should encourage industries which would make them genuinely self-reliant and free from the manipulation of international finance capital. It even threatens to cut off its aid and credit programme if a country dares to challenge it and goes ahead with industrialization, especially heavy industry. Again we can see that the World Bank's insistence that we continue to produce more and more of what we do not consume is nothing but part of the capitalist world's strategy to make us its permanent appendage by sabotaging our efforts at structural change, efforts which would inevitably lead us on to the road of independent development. It cannot be explained by any other economic rationale.

The Myth of 'Aid'

Another myth which has not been given proper attention, and which is connected with the myth of earning foreign exchange as a precondition of our development, is the question of 'aid'. Before aid became the most

substantial part of our development strategy, it was originally and theoretically designed merely to cover any shortfall in the event of our exports failing to yield the necessary 'badly needed' foreign exchange. Our experts have stressed this point so strongly that we tremble in horror if we are ever threatened with withdrawal of aid. In fact this threat has often been used as a weapon with which to dragoon us into accepting unpalatable policies which are sometimes against even the apologetic 'principles' we stand by. Many African leaders openly declare that they cannot challenge imperialism because, as 'realists' and 'pragmatists', they must safeguard their 'national interests', of which continued access to foreign aid is one. No aid, no development. It was as a result of this attitude that developing countries took as their platform the demand that developed countries must contribute 1% of their national product towards helping the developing world. They now demanded aid as a right, no longer simply as a supplement for our misfortunes in foreign trade.

Some experts went so far as to suggest that we should as a matter of policy concentrate all our efforts on winning foreign aid. Since trade in primary commodities faced an uncertain future, we could not justify our dependence on them for future development. According to this view, developing countries should go all out to create an attractive environment for capitalism, so that developed countries would be encouraged to put their money into developing countries in the form of aid or private investment. Alternatively, we should make the developed countries so ashamed of themselves for exploiting us that they would ultimately feel morally obliged to help us, in much the same way as America helped Western Europe with the Marshall Plan. Our leaders have indeed shown a willingness to go along with these strategies. The campaign for the so-called New International Economic Order, a futile campaign if ever there was one, is a reflection of this misguided approach.

A moralistic approach, however, betrays a profound misunderstanding of the nature of aid. Many of Africa's leaders tend to view aid as something akin to alms: a good man gives alms and a bad one does not. But can aid, even if lavishly and selflessly offered without any strings, really help us? Certainly not. On the contrary, aid in fact worsens our situation. First we must dispel the illusion that disinterested aid is possible. There is no such thing. All aid is designed to serve specific objectives, directly or indirectly beneficial to the donor country. Aid may also coincide with the specific interests of the ruling clique. But above all, aid is a special kind of umbilical cord which ties us to the metropolitan economies, distorts our economies, and integrates us externally. A very high price for all these distortions is paid by our workers and peasants. Having tied our economies thus to the capitalist world, we have lost sight of the most urgent question: What are the aims of economic activity?

If we had raised that question at the start of our journey, many of the unpleasant results of underdevelopment described above would have been avoided, for the answer to it would have forced us to confront the facts of our real situation. Whatever our social and economic philosophies, to the developing countries the question of the aim of economic activity is the most vital. To our foreign bourgeois experts, as we have seen, the answer is: commercial viability. I have tried to show how this has led us astray. Commerce, being only the lubricant of economic activity, cannot offer any solution to our economic backwardness. As will be discussed below, economic solutions stem from the very crucial question of liberation; liberation from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom. Consequently, the question at once transforms itself into a political question. Freedom from natural fetters; freedom from entanglement with imperialism and its interference; freedom to exercise our productive power to build an independent and self-sustaining economy—these are not contractual freedoms bestowed upon colonial subjects at the moment of formal independence, and expressed in the empty rhetoric of flags and anthems, but inherent freedoms, basic freedoms. Thus the answer to the question about the aim of economic activity is fundamentally a political answer: *freedom*.

Economic Freedom Subverted

As we saw in Chapter 2, man's progress is dependent on his ability to control and harness natural forces. This is the first and most basic preoccupation of any development strategy. The productive forces at our disposal determine the extent of our freedom from natural fetters, from natural necessity. A cigarette manufacturing industry or a brewery does not remove us as far from our dependence on natural necessity as, say, a steel mill, because the latter will enable us to embark on the road to industrial development which alone will ensure economic independence. That is why socialist economists have split the productive industrial capacity of an economy into two sections: Department I, consisting roughly of the heavy industry sector, and Department II, the light industry sector, or producer and consumer industries respectively. It is impossible to develop the latter without developing the former if we are to build an internally integrated and self-sustaining economy.

But our economists always insist on reversing the two sectors, always insisting that we are too backward to bother about heavy industry, thus confusing cause and effect. It is precisely because we have *not* developed Department I (heavy industry) in the first place that we are backward economically, culturally and politically. By advising us not to make Department I a top priority, our economic advisers are in effect condemning us to be permanently dependent, permanently underdeveloped and permanently victims of external pressures and

influences. It is absurd to argue that we do not have the capital and expertise essential for industrial development; the amount of capital resources we have already wasted and continue to waste is more than enough to build the basic industries. As for the question of expertise, it is rather like the question of the chicken and the egg. How can we have technical skills and expertise without an industrial base? Britain learnt technology *through* industrialization. And in these days of technical co-operation the question is, in any case, really irrelevant. The same is true with respect to capital resources. Whoever imagined only a few years ago that Tanzania would ever build a whole new railway with a capital investment of more than 400 million U.S. dollars? (For further discussion on the problem of lack of capital and technology, see Chapter 8.)

The resources we waste in unproductive or purely prestigious investments are so enormous that it is ridiculous to talk about lack of capital resources as being the main constraint to industrial development. A properly industrialized country can be liberated from the vagaries of the world market, from natural hazards such as floods, and droughts, and from foreign creditors. These are the scourges of backward economies. They are the cause and the effect of our underdevelopment. The obstacle in the way of industrial development is not a shortage of resources but a lack of insight into the right priorities for developing economies.

But a decision on priorities is, once again, essentially a political question, as is disengagement from the international capitalist system. The fuss made about the New International Economic Order is not only irritating but misleading, because it seeks the solution to our economic backwardness in economics only and not in political choice. The manner in which we currently operate within the world capitalist system, following a policy which disregards the essential prerequisite for development, i.e. serious and rational industrialization, works towards further integration into world capitalism, and not disengagement from it. Every additional aid package, every additional loan is a step further into deeper integration and at the same time a step away from independent development. And so is dependence on the export of primary commodities, as we have seen above, whatever the temporary commercial advantage of such a policy. The vast waste of resources both human and material, in this area, ultimately makes our economies weaker and more precarious. This is neo-colonialism.

True, if we want to maintain our status as a neo-colony and we are confronted with a choice between aid and trade, it is a lesser evil to maintain it through trade. But the real choice is between remaining a neo-colony and freedom, and neither aid nor trade will lead us to freedom. On the contrary, both lead us to dependency and neo-colonialism. This has been proved by over a century of Latin American experience, and further substantiated by the experiences of non-socialist

Asia. Neo-colonialism is, therefore, another fact which must be studied if we are to understand our situation correctly. What, then, is neo-colonialism?

Neo-Colonialism

We have seen above how the imperialists reorganized themselves after the Second World War, and consolidated their position first by sending massive aid to Europe through the Marshall Plan, secondly by stabilizing the international credit system through the I.M.F., and thirdly by establishing an elaborate system of moneylending, especially to the developing countries, through the World Bank and its subsidiaries. All these had the objective of safeguarding imperialism against both the emerging countries and the socialist camp. The objective conditions existing in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War forced the imperialist powers to resort to these measures, not only in response to those two immediate challenges but, more significantly, because the inherent logic of capitalist development required a new strategy in a new historical epoch.

The *raison d'être* of capitalism is profit; anything which tends to obstruct profit must be brushed aside either by force or by ingenuity. The more realistic of the imperialist powers saw that the epoch of force and gunboat diplomacy was definitely over, and that capitalism must be made to work on a world-wide scale through setting up institutions which would facilitate profit. Institutions like GATT, and the many rounds of tariff negotiations, were immediately established and all the developing countries were drawn into them, our role being that of suppliers of raw materials and cheap labour in the service of world capitalist profits. We shall not attempt here to go into abstract analysis of the phenomenon of neo-colonialism in order to establish a theory of neo-colonialism, because for one thing our task is the political one of appreciating the problems created by neo-colonialism, and secondly, the subject is so vast that its full treatment would take up another book. But in the following chapters we shall be touching on some theoretical aspects of neo-colonialism where this is necessary to the main themes of the book.

Neo-colonialism accepts the fact of our contractual or juridical independence; in fact it supports it to the hilt. Direct colonialism is not suited to the post-war economic needs of imperialism. Colonies could not have supported the enormous debts which are currently being contracted by the neo-colonies, because ultimately the responsibility for such heavy financial burdens would have fallen on the colonial power itself. It is far better to grant such loans to an 'independent' country whose leaders can be trusted to ensure that the working people in a neo-colony will be made to labour to pay off the debts with their sweat.

Furthermore, such leaders are capable of containing any internal upheavals which may arise as a result of the social contradictions which inevitably intensify as exploitation itself intensifies. Repression carried out by indigenous leaders is better tolerated internationally than that carried out by a colonial power, although the effect on the worker is the same. And the policy is in line with the principle of non-interference in a neo-colony's internal affairs, a most cherished bourgeois principle.

However, neo-colonialism does not recognize our economic independence; as far as imperialist powers are concerned such a thing does not exist. The lavish loans which they grant to the neo-colonies ensure that such an independence in fact does not, and cannot, exist. When we compete for foreign investors we compete for our own subjugation. When our local entrepreneurs contract loans from international moneylenders, it is our governments which are ultimately responsible for such loans and the labour of our working people which repays them. Contractual independence has actually facilitated our dependency. It is much better for the international bourgeoisie to have the locals supervise our own dependency; it lessens tensions, and the real master is invisible. We are busy chopping off each other's heads through military coups and the struggle for power in order simply to prove ourselves better supervisors on behalf of international capital, and to enjoy the rewards in wealth or absolute political power.

Neo-colonialism is worse than formal colonialism, in that in the latter case we were confronted with only one vulture. Now the vultures are many, foreign as well as local, old and new. With the current political trend in the neo-colonies nobody seems able to see the way out. We seem to have accepted our dependency as a normal post-independence way of life, while thoroughly enjoying the illusion of independence. We live in a convenient make-believe world of our own, aided and abetted in our blissful ignorance by the neo-colonialists themselves. The price we pay for this bliss is eternal poverty. No amount of crocodile tears will absolve the leaders from the verdict of history, for here, more so than in law, ignorance is no defence.

Without a fundamental and far-reaching political decision there is no way out of the predicament. To seek the way out of neo-colonialism through economic gimmicks is tantamount to seeking the way out of economic subjugation through even more subjugation. It only worsens the situation. Our neo-colonial ties are political in the final analysis, and only through political action can we extricate ourselves from the entanglement. The transition from colonialism to neo-colonialism has not changed the essence, the basis, of the colonial economy. And as long as this is so, there is no way out to an independent national economy.

During the colonial era our ties with the 'mother' country were politically integrated, in the sense that political and economic decisions were taken on our behalf in London, Paris, etc., for the benefit of the metropolis. Decisions were taken *unilaterally* by colonial powers in their

own interest. Credits, aid and investments were all designed to strengthen dependency, as did foreign trade. After independence, however, we never ceased to be dependent, because we were still tied by that umbilical cord, the purse string, to the imperialist powers. True, we had the illusion of independence, as decisions were now taken *bilaterally* between ourselves and the ex-colonial masters, although they were clearly still in the interest of the latter and within the same political axis as before. With the onset of the Cold War, the imperialist powers ganged up to safeguard their interests against the 'communist menace'; we entered a period of *multilateral* decision-making between ourselves and the collective organs of imperialism—the World Bank, the I.M.F., GATT, and so on—but still in the same imperialistic axis, and with the imperialist powers as the only beneficiaries.

While the political bonds which tie us to the imperialists remain intact, our dependency cannot be broken by economic action alone. From the time of unilateral decisions to that of multilateral decisions, there has been no qualitative change; the gains continue to be one-sided, favouring the imperialist side. There has been only a quantitative change; more people are now involved in taking the same one-sided decisions. In other words, there has been a change only of form, not of essence. Although there is an appearance of separation, or split, between us and the colonial powers, it remains a separation within the same political axis. The most radical governments in Africa are not less tied to imperialism than the most conservative, although the latter are more obviously responsive to imperialist influences; but they all operate within the same political axis.

The enormous exploitation of our resources by the imperialists is facilitated by this neo-colonial relationship, and the alarming poverty of the masses is its direct result. Only colonialists say that our poverty is due to our alleged laziness. In the real world of neo-colonialism, the more we produce the more is taken out of the country to benefit our neo-colonial masters, and this is manifested in the growing gap between the metropolitan countries and the neo-colonies; as the former get richer and the latter get poorer.

Thus we are nicely trapped in the imperialist net which has slowly evolved since World War II. Post-war world capitalism has taken a new form which ties us closer and closer to its interests and keeps bourgeois hegemony operational long after it has exhausted its usefulness. The price we are paying for this generous contribution of ours is obviously very high. Sooner or later Africa is bound to crumble under the weight. The only redeeming prospect is the emergence of the working class and of patriotic petty-bourgeois intellectuals who are beginning to see the real underlying causes of their misery. Sooner or later these emerging forces will be obliged to take the helm and steer the boat away from the perilous course on which Africa's 'founding fathers' have set her. In the meantime, the issues that seem to occupy the minds of our policy-

makers reveal that most of them are sublimely indifferent to the need for a decisive change of policy—indeed, not even aware that it exists. Divorced from the people and the reality which surrounds them, they are oblivious to the real world. Let us proceed to examine the issues which do occupy the minds of our leaders and their henchmen, before we attempt to summarize an alternative system which would lead our people on to independent development and genuine self-reliance.

4. Discard a False Approach! No Alternative to Socialism

Let the Past Teach the Present

In trying to discover why it is that our leaders continue to pursue policies so obviously inimical to our interests, it may be instructive to have a brief look at the forces which influence our thinking, especially that of our leaders who, as we have seen, have been put on the defensive by imperialist propaganda on the important question of socialism. Colonialists had to justify colonialism by propagating the concept of racial superiority and, in consequence, inventing the obligation of the civilized white man to civilize us, the savages. As a reaction to this obnoxious propaganda, petty-bourgeois intellectuals in both Africa and Asia countered by idealizing our past. Some of these intellectuals worked very hard to produce evidence to prove that we do in fact have a past and that this past was just as glorious as anybody else's, if not more so. As soon as they succumbed to this kind of polemics, they placed themselves in precisely the position in which the colonialists wanted them to be—a position of having to argue their case permanently from this side of apartheid.

Like any dying phenomenon, capitalism has only the past to look back to; it has no future. Its terms of reference, to be meaningful, must relate to the past, so uncertain are they about the future. Socialism, on the other hand, being the system of the future, has no time to idealize the past indiscriminately. It views the past only as a way of investigating historical development through the conflicts of opposing forces, especially historical conflicts which are rooted in the mode of production. It looks into history as it reveals itself in class conflicts, class contradictions. It looks at the present as the continuation of these class contradictions in a different setting. And it organizes and prepares for a future in which class conflicts will disappear, not spontaneously, but as a result of the conscious activity of the proletariat to free itself from class estrangements.

With this socialist outlook there is no room for arguing defensively around the ridiculous question of whether we have a past or not; or whether our past was more or less glorious than anybody else's. While

perhaps these questions may have relevance for 'national' self-confidence in the conventional sense, the true glory of the people lies in their struggle against tyranny and oppression, whether by local rulers or by foreign powers. Trapped within the imperialist frame of reference, our petty-bourgeois intellectuals strain their imagination, with the help of Western 'Africanists', in an attempt to produce our own Napoleons, sometimes going so far as to idealize local tyrants and despots as heroes. For socialists the people are the makers of history and their struggle against tyranny is the expression of that history. Our task as socialists is to carry on the struggle from where our oppressed ancestors left off and carry it through to the end. The ideological and social systems which oppressed them, whether communal or feudal, have their place only in the museum of history. To idealize the 'equality' or 'right', 'freedom' or 'democracy' of that past is to play right into the hands of our imperialist oppressors; it is to idealize tyranny and oppression. Most of what took place in the past, apart from the people's struggles, is now obsolete and cannot be applied in the world revolutionary struggle in which Africa is a part. That struggle has not ceased with the attainment of independence, nor will it cease even when eventually the whole of Africa is freed. The revolutionary struggle will continue as long as the world is still divided into classes.

Some of our intellectuals want us to look backward, not forward, just as their bourgeois mentors prefer to do. But the bourgeois have strong reasons for preferring to look backward; they have no future to look forward to. Only socialism has introduced to the world new vistas for the people, a new and dynamic future. By looking backward, our petty-bourgeois intellectuals idealize our backwardness, for example communal life. They recommend it as a desirable way of life, needing only minor adjustments. Yet when our bourgeois mentors talked about their 'traditions', they were talking about a past which was almost drowned in the blood of the oppressed people; and their past 'glory' was the glory of the powerful destroying the weak. When our petty-bourgeois intellectuals in their turn seek to establish our glorious past to counterpose it to that of our bourgeois mentors; when they dig out our cultural past to confront our mentors with the evidence of our past existence as a people complete with its own way of life; when they exhibit our past artistic, technological and other achievements, what they are doing in fact is to grant our mentors, the imperialists, the initial justification to challenge our right to exist as nations. What they are saying to the imperialists in effect is this: 'You accuse us of being backward, of having no past. We are going to show you that we do have a past, just as glorious as yours, if not better. We have a way of life with the same values of freedom, duty, right, equality, and the same ethics as yours, though ours is somewhat different because our respective backgrounds are different; but qualitatively they are identical. We therefore qualify for the status of nation-states with traditions to look

back to with the same pride as you look back to your own traditions. You see, we are equal to you!’

This is the argument of the child who wishes to assert his right to adulthood, as if that right were questioned. If his guardian is a bandit by whose standards the child wishes to assert his adulthood, he will use the arguments of a bandit to assert his adulthood. Our petty-bourgeois intellectuals’ efforts to resuscitate our own Napoleons, our own repressive institutions as evidence of our past culture is no different. For the glories of our bourgeois mentors, the imperialists, are the glories of bandits, pirates, slave raiders; and their culture, their art, is the idealization of those ‘adventures’. If *our* history is free of these disruptive, degrading and plundering activities, then it is a history of which we must be proud; if *our* history is a series of struggles against these activities then it is a glorious history. Our petty-bourgeois intellectuals do not bother to show us in this light. What a pity! They write from a different outlook. The history of man anywhere, in Africa no less than in Europe, Asia and elsewhere, is the history of struggle against obstacles to human freedom whether these obstacles are natural or instituted by man; whether by local or by foreign tyrants.

To safeguard ourselves against being carried away by bourgeois sentiments, we must be selective when our petty-bourgeois intellectuals recommend to us the values of the past; we must be selective on the principle that what was right in one historical epoch may be wrong in a different one. When our petty-bourgeois intellectuals talk about the collective landownership system of the past and proceed to use this as evidence of equality resulting from the type of social ownership, it is clear that they are not giving a complete picture of the situation. They are only describing one aspect of social development, an early stage of development, and want us to generalize from there to a whole series of conclusions about the entire culture of the whole race, past and present. This is not only unscientific and superficial, it also encourages illusions which may endanger the progress of the people.

The Traditionalist View of Africa’s Past

Let us try and summarize what the traditionalists recommend as values to be emulated by modern Africa. On the cultural front the traditionalists say that African culture differs from European culture in that, whereas European peoples organized their societies on the basis of safeguarding ‘rights’, our African ancestors organized their society on the basis of invoking ‘duties’. Our culture, unlike that of the West, had the strength to restrain the community from succumbing to disruptive forces by suppressing their free and unbridled sway. Our culture like any other, was founded on three basic elements: (a) the material element, which includes property relations and technology; (b) the

institutional element, which includes customs, rituals, political as well as social institutions; and (c) the element of social values, which includes ethics, religion, literature and art, the latter two reflecting social aspirations and judgements. The intervention of Western culture subverted the traditional aspects of our culture; for example, by introducing new relations such as those between town and country.

As the material culture of the West directly disrupted our material culture, it in turn disrupted the other two aspects of our culture, namely, the institutional aspect and the aspect of values. As a result of this, our social institutions underwent considerable changes; class differentiations appeared, social mobility was encouraged. Old ranks and positions of prestige were replaced by new ones based on the criteria of new skills. Education was now designed so as to encourage the pursuit of material ends and to create individuals suitable for colonial administration. These new relations have created the new elites of administrators and businessmen, far removed from the masses, and even more isolated because of the absence of a middle class able to bridge the gap between the upper and the lower strata. The old ruling class has become irrelevant or redundant, although more than 90% of the population still carry on the traditional African way of life, untouched by foreign influence. The introduction of industries has favoured the towns in infrastructure and other developments and created inequalities between urban and rural life.

To avoid future class conflicts of the kind experienced by the West, the new African governments are urged to make a choice: either they must remain as elites and become alien to their own people, just as the colonialists were, and complete the deculturalization of Africa started by colonialism and substitute cultures which have no roots in Africa; or they must ally themselves with the 90% of Africa's population whose roots are securely planted in the traditions of African culture. African politicians and statesmen are urged to avoid the development of class antagonisms by judiciously grafting new aspirations on to old traditions in an attempt at striking a harmonious social equilibrium. Class struggle as such is said to have no meaning in terms of African culture, and the conditions for its presence allegedly do not exist.

In early African societies, according to President Nyerere of Tanzania, there was an innate feeling of brotherhood within the community, sustained by the principle of love among men (and women), and the right to work and to share equally the fruits of labour. These were the principles which kept the community (indeed the whole society) together and they must be safeguarded if the community is not to destroy itself.

People appointed leaders to power democratically on the principle that all were equal and that there were built-in ways within the community for restraining these leaders from abusing their powers. There was a moral distaste for private ownership of property, and although such private ownership did exist in a minor way, the

dispossessed had expectations of sharing it on the principle of brotherhood. With the advent of foreign intervention, however, and alien concepts of individual ownership and the monetary economy, communal traditions were gradually subverted. Individualism encouraged the acquisitive instinct, which had hitherto remained dormant. This resulted in economic inequalities, which reduced people to master and servant relationships and thereby robbed them of their attribute of equality. This whole process poses a threat to the survival of society since it encourages the splitting up of family units and may well lead to social clashes and upheavals, and even wars.

Since these traditional principles (the argument goes), which kept the family and the community together, are thus demonstrably desirable for the maintenance of social order and the well-being of the community, they must be made part of the educational system of the present just as they were part of the educational system of the past. In consequence, as these values have thus become desirable in themselves, they must be presented as general aspirations as a matter of policy, and *any expression of opposite views to these principles must be suppressed*. For such opposition would be tantamount to approval of economic inequality, which destroys the sacredness of man. The danger to society if it abandons these principles is that it will degenerate into the pursuit of ends which undermine man himself. So we must seek our salvation in these principles, of course somewhat modified to suit the current situation.

At the height of the struggle in Kenya in the 1950s, Elspeth Huxley, the one-time arch-enemy of Africa's independence, used almost exactly the same kind of argument in order to woo the so-called 'loyal Kikuyu' away from supporting Kenyatta. She accused Kenyatta of introducing 'alien', 'communist' methods in Kenya by forcing the Kikuyu into a war with the white man. In her campaign against Nkrumah, she wrote: 'African tribes had evolved, before the European advent, an elaborate and most effective system of curbing the abuse of power by the rulers through councils, elders and priests,' and so on, and so forth. Strange that this same argument should now be used by our own people in an attempt to curb the rise of the new generation by forcing them to abide by archaic customs totally unsuited to the present day.

The basic error in this approach lies in the one-sided petty-bourgeois world outlook. Deeply influenced by Judeo-Christian metaphysics, Western scholarship's view of the world is dualistic. Dualism is the philosophical concept which defines human nature by two opposing sets of qualities—good versus evil, egoism versus altruism, vice versus virtue. According to the Christian view man is inherently sinful, and only through religious salvation can he be saved from his sinfulness. Thus such attributes as egoism, evil, vice are always present in man and the slightest encouragement or temptation by evil forces is enough to bring them into free play. From this standpoint, our petty-bourgeois intellectuals view past African societies as having been innocent and

virtuous, and foreign intervention as an evil influence which undermined their innocence and distorted their virtues. The task before each of us, according to this view, is therefore to struggle against these evil influences in order to return to our innocent and virtuous life. This is obviously an idealistic view of the world and has little relevance to the real world today as it exists outside our consciousness. It is a subjective outlook, not objective; and if it is not checked it may lead to serious social malpractices, not excluding tyrannical practices.

On the other hand, the objective world outlook takes as its starting point the real, factual external world, not the world of our consciousness. For 'it is not the consciousness of men that determine their being but, on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness' as Marx says. Man has both natural needs and natural powers for their gratification. As he is a social being, he produces conditions essential for his individual existence as well as for the existence of the society of which he is a part. To this end he evolves codes of conduct which will ensure his survival as a social being under conditions which make for an environment conducive to his producing for his needs and also for developing new powers to this end; and as a social being these are expressed socially. He transforms the world around him and establishes natural bases for his own conditions of life. He develops socio-economic institutions and organizes production within the framework of these institutions. For him the social activity of production is a precondition for his existence and 'sociality' becomes his natural attribute. (For a further discussion see below, Chapter 7.)

The qualities which our petty-bourgeois intellectuals describe as essentially African are really *human* qualities which find expression when a community is at a certain level of productive capacity. When a community does not have the capacity to produce *social surplus*, there is simply no means of becoming unequal. The sense of *brotherhood* which is common under such conditions is essential for the survival of a community which is permanently being threatened either by natural forces, which they cannot explain, or by hostile invasion. A similar feeling of brotherhood may be manifested in times of war or natural calamity even today.

The development of towns and social classes is not simply an invention of the West imposed on Africa. Historically, the development of agriculture and increased productivity, either through increased fertility of the land (after man discovered the technique of allowing land to remain fallow for certain periods) or development of irrigation and other techniques, allowed for the creation of social surplus. This surplus was everywhere the basis for the social division of labour, for the separation of crafts from agriculture, of towns from country, and finally the division of society into classes. As long as there was no permanent social surplus the community remained basically rural, basically insecure, basically equal. So when our petty-bourgeois intellectuals talk

about equality in times gone past, they are merely describing the level of development of the particular community about which they are talking, and no more. There is nothing uniquely 'African' about this.

Collective ownership of land in the past was not necessarily progressive or socialist any more than Hitler's nationalizations were socialist. At the time it was more progressive than earlier forms of subsistence. But to go back to that form of organization at this historical juncture would be to put the clock back. The politics and ideology of the past were the concentrated expression of their economics, the economics of the past, and have no relevance to the economics of the present or the economics of the future. The requirements of modern agriculture have no room for such backward forms of organization; they are a hindrance to progress and perpetuate poverty. These backward forms of agricultural organization have no national, continental, or racial—i.e. African—significance; *all* human beings wherever they hailed from passed through such tribal phases, and only the development of the productive forces helped them to move to higher levels of production, simultaneously evolving new social codes, political aspirations and moral ethics.

If those early forms of social organization also contained elements of democracy, it was the democracy of that particular time, totally unfitted to the democratic practice of man in the present epoch. To say that an African can learn democracy simply by looking backward to see how our great-grandparents behaved is not only meaningless but downright reactionary.

As an economy develops, new socio-economic institutions also develop with it and the people's outlook and aspirations also undergo changes. Extensive preceded intensive agriculture and the latter represented an advance in man's development. From then on there was no going back. Nor could there be an interchange of one form of social organization for another. Extensive agriculture ensured subsistence; intensive agriculture ensured permanent social surplus, which in turn made non-agricultural activity possible; the division of labour then resulted in the development of towns which set in motion the whole process which we now know as civilization.

The growth in population which followed this evolution was not due to people's wickedness or shortsightedness, but was a necessary condition as the well-being of man improved. Our great-grandparents did not have large families not because they were superior in the wisdom of family planning, as the enthusiasts of family planning today seem to imply, but because the mode of production and the level of well-being were simply not conducive to the development of large families. There were more women than men, and the men were usually engaged either in distant travels or wars; or else the community was nomadic and their constant shifting would not allow extensive procreation.

The Socialist View

When our petty-bourgeois intellectuals talk of the old 'equality', they are

idealizing equality in the abstract, because in real life that equality was quite different. Here is Engels' interesting description: 'Under tribal conditions the people chose their chief to safeguard their liberty, but before long the chief became a despot and an instrument of destroying that liberty in order to maintain himself in power. As a despot all were equal before him, simply because they were all ciphers. As Rousseau says, "Here we have the most extreme degree of inequality, the final point which completes the circle and meets the point from which we set out: Here all private individuals are equal, just because they are ciphers; and the subjects have no other law but the will of their master."'

Whereas traditionalists talk of equality in poverty, socialists prefer to talk of equality in plenty. Whenever a surplus product occurred, the seed of inequality was sown. It is this type of inequality that socialists want to abolish by abolishing class; we have no desire to go back to equality in poverty. As long as there are classes, as long as there are differentiations between skilled and unskilled labour, there can be no equality. The fact that slavery was not extensively practised in Africa does not mean that our ancestors were a special type of people; it simply means, again, that the level of production did not entail the use of slave labour as the basis of the economy. Only when production expanded and there was enough surplus to feed war captives; only when large construction works like irrigation systems or the pyramids of Egypt, involving an accumulation of non-productive labour, were carried out, was slavery resorted to.

The ruling classes of ancient times appropriated all the social surplus produced by the labour of the peasants and the slaves, and the struggle waged by these classes continues to this day. Wherever there are exploiting classes there is struggle. The survival of the human species as we know it today implies the production of social surplus (and with it exploitation) because the tribes which failed to produce permanent surplus invariably perished, through famine and other natural hazards, or through wars. When control of the means of subsistence passed from nature to man the production of a permanent surplus and the survival of man were ensured. In Africa, as everywhere else, survival entailed exploitation and class struggle; the greater the development of productive forces, the sharper the struggle. This is the natural trend of history irrespective of what the traditionalists say to the contrary.

As what follows has an important bearing on what we have just discussed and as this is rather important to the whole substance of these pages, let us briefly highlight some of the salient points before we proceed any further. While a glorious history of the past may be important for national self-confidence (the basis for nationalism), as socialists we must discriminate between the glorification of tyranny just for the sake of establishing a past, on the one hand, and the—in reality—much more glorious struggle waged by the people against natural hazards and man-made tyrannies on the other. The latter struggle is of relevance to us as socialists because it enables us to understand the level

of development a certain society has achieved and from there make a correct analysis of the contradictory forces at work, in order to arrive at conclusions which will help us push the struggle forward. We need not be sentimental about the past.

Since Africa, like the rest of the world, is subject to uneven development, it is not difficult to find, from its very rich past, evidence of various levels of social development. Indeed Africa has many 'firsts' to its credit: the first man as we know him came from Africa; the first means of producing fire invented by man was in Africa; the first irrigation system was developed in Africa; the first separation between town and country (petty-bourgeois intellectuals please note!) was in Africa (to be followed later in Mesopotamia); the first university was in Africa; indeed, the first 'marxian' thinker before Karl Marx (Ibn-Khaldun) was an African, and so on. To pick one aspect of African life and generalize it to represent the entire race is not only unscientific but it is to succumb to racism, to use the arguments of apartheid and of *Mein Kampf*. That is where imperialism wants us to be! All African institutions and codes of conduct of the past which our petty-bourgeois intellectuals present to us as constituting intrinsic qualities of African-ness are really *human* qualities and can be shown to be present in other communities at comparable levels of social development.

If certain institutions or codes of conduct are attributed to a certain area or tribe or community, the significance of that attribution to us is that it is a good indicator of the level of social development of that particular community at a given time. That is to say, it will indicate to us whether the community concerned was communal, or feudal, or some other type. Using that knowledge we can make the necessary analysis in an attempt to get a correct scientific picture of the present, which will help us organize our political or state institutions, in accordance with the historically concrete situation, and so accelerate our march forward towards socialism in a scientific way. Beyond that, the relics of the past have their place only in the museum of history for the more inquisitive amongst us to satisfy their curiosity. This is not to degrade history; rather it is to give it its proper role. Mao said: 'Study the old culture, reject its feudal dross, and assimilate its democratic essence, which is necessary for increasing national self-confidence. We must respect our own history and we must not lop it off; but respect for history means giving it its proper place as a science, respecting its dialectical development, and not eulogizing the past at the expense of the present or praising every drop of feudal poison.'

Could Africa Have Developed Its Own Capitalism?

Some petty-bourgeois African scholars speculate whether, left to our own devices, without European intervention, Africa would have

developed its own feudalism and later its own capitalism. If by 'European intervention' they refer to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries' contact before formal colonial domination in the late nineteenth century, it would have been unhistorical for Africa to develop its own feudalism. By that time the feudal epoch was already relegated to the museum of history and the epoch of capitalism was in its ascendancy. It was impossible for feudalism to strike new roots anywhere; its epoch was over. It is interesting to note here that the United States moved directly from its feudal-slavery mode of production to capitalism without passing via formal feudalism as such. This was because the American Civil War was won when the epoch of capitalism was already beginning to flourish in the world and there was no room for a new feudalism, even if the leaders tended to have strong feudalistic aspirations. The British and other European bourgeois investors made sure that it was their mode of production, i.e. capitalism, that would establish its roots in North America. As far as we ourselves in Africa were concerned, our contact was with the already bourgeoisified Europe, although our relationship with it was feudalistic. Whether Africa could develop its own capitalism is the subject of discussion in the rest of the chapter.

The conditions for feudal development were not present in most parts of Africa since the accumulation of social surplus was not large enough to spark off such a development. When contact with Europe was established and our gold and ivory acquired exchange value, all the surplus that accrued from the exchange of these commodities was appropriated by the European bourgeois, who paid low prices for what we sold and charged high prices for the otherwise cheap manufactured goods they sold us. Thus a long period of simple reproduction set in, which did not leave us with enough surplus to develop any new forms of social relations, feudalist or capitalist, even if we assume that the historical epoch was ripe for the development of either. But the epoch during which our contact with Europe was established was no longer a feudal one, it was the capitalist epoch. Consequently, the relevant theoretical question is whether our contact with Europe hampered the development of African capitalism? And of course the answer is definitely *yes*.

For several hundred years Africa had contact with, and was influenced by, Europe through trade; and for more than 70 years it (except for the Portuguese colonies, which were more than 400 years old) came under the complete domination of Europe. Production in Africa was arranged to suit the production and consumption needs of capitalist Europe. But during this period, when our economies were so completely integrated with those of capitalist Europe, the latter prevented independent development of African capitalism, turning the continent instead into a supplier of raw materials and a market for their commodities. Our relation with Europe can be likened to that of a

feudal lord with his serfs, in which the latter were completely integrated politically and economically with the interests of the lord. Whatever happened among the serfs by way of economic conflicts did not represent the main class conflict between the serfs as a whole, on the one hand, and the feudal landlords on the other. In Africa we had chiefs, traditional chiefs as well as those imposed by the colonial powers in the pursuit of their policy of 'indirect rule'. Their relationship with the people was like that of a favoured serf employed to supervise the rest of the serfs of the manor. If the people were in conflict with their chiefs, it did not constitute a class conflict, it was just a conflict with a tyrannical despot. Only in those parts of Africa where the mode of production was based on slavery did the conflicts assume class contradictions. The main antagonism, however, the antagonistic contradiction, was between the people and imperialism; not simply because the imperialists had robbed us of our freedom, but fundamentally because of the exploitative relationship of a capitalist economy with feudal links with its appendage; so this contradiction was a contradiction of a feudal type.

As a result of this feudal relationship of complete political and economic integration which survives up to this day, in spite of our formal freedom or 'independence', we are still attached to the European economy by an umbilical cord, a purse string, as we noted in the previous chapter. If the contractual or legal break with imperialism had taken place in the pre-socialist epoch, that is before the Russian Revolution of 1917, it would have been natural for our countries to develop their own African capitalism as was the case with the U.S.A. after its war of independence, and also with Japan. With the emergence of the epoch of socialist revolution, however, it is now impossible to develop national capitalism on the pattern of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

Capitalism developed and flourished from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a natural historical development after feudalism. The bourgeoisie who ushered in the epoch of capitalism dominated the world without any challenge and put the entire world's resources under its control. World history became bourgeois history as capitalist relations of production were in the ascendant. The emerging Japanese bourgeoisie captured this moment to develop parallel with the Western bourgeoisie while the latter was still weak and had not yet developed their world-pervading monopoly capitalism, i.e. imperialism. Once imperialism was dominant under Western/Japanese bourgeois hegemony, no other 'national bourgeoisie' would be allowed to develop independently; they had either to come under the economic and political dominance of the international bourgeoisie, or be crushed.

Imperialism, however, was the last stage of capitalism and October 1917 in Russia ushered in a new epoch, the epoch of proletarian revolution. With socialist uprisings and anti-imperialistic struggles

becoming the dominant force in world history after 1917, the opportunity for the development of any independent national bourgeoisie in Africa and Asia vanished. Our nascent national bourgeoisies had the choice of either developing into comprador capitalists, i.e. serving the metropolitan bourgeoisie, or facing extinction as a class. What we see emerging in some parts of Africa, e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, the Ivory Coast, Egypt, is a mish-mash collection of comprador capitalist states—the weak appendages of a dying imperialism. Supported by their foreign masters only to the extent of their being compliant and useful to them, and despised and hated by the broad masses of the people whom they help to suppress, these capitalists are only a transient phenomenon and have no long-term historical significance or function. Their class will either die with imperialism or slowly atrophy with the coming of new, socialist relations of production in the various countries. With the emergence of the epoch of socialist revolution it is impossible, as historical evidence abundantly proves, to develop in Africa national capitalism on the pattern which followed the bourgeois revolutions in Europe, North America and Japan. D. C. Osadebay, in the following poem, sums up the pathetic plight of an African entrepreneur in the era of monopoly capitalism:

I tried my hand at imports
But monopolies frowned;
I then exported produce,
Once more they played me down.
Big Business never loves
. . . .
The bold determined investor;
You must become their clerk
Or buy your goods from them;
This is the burden I bear.*

The main thrust of our struggle is necessarily against imperialism, as this remains the principal antagonistic contradiction between us and the metropolitan bourgeoisie. This struggle against bourgeois imperialism includes the struggle against its local agents in our respective countries.

The capitalist mode of production as manifested in Africa is European or American or Japanese, capitalism extended to Africa; it is not African capitalism, even if its supervisors are African. The basic contradiction still remains that between us and Western capitalism, i.e. imperialism. This is

* From 'The African Trader's Complaint', in *Poems From Black Africa*, ed. Langston Hughes (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1963), p.100.

the principal contradiction, and other contradictions, which can be identified and analysed within our societies, such as those between forces of production and social relations of production, small-scale production and large-scale production, production for export and production for local consumption, the emergence of African compradors and the nascent proletariat, will remain merely as 'aspects of contradictions'. Without successfully resolving the principal contradiction, our feudal relationship with imperialism, there is no chance of our resolving aspects of the contradiction; and without their successful resolution, there is no hope for us to move forward rapidly in the historical direction which the epoch of socialist revolution entails.

Since we have not developed a capitalism of our own, we suffer from all the ills of world capitalism, from the receiving end. Any crisis in capitalist Europe is immediately exported to Africa as a result of our appendage relationship and also because our capitalism is American/European capitalism, not African capitalism. The struggle among the multinational corporations is now being waged in Africa as well. As this relationship skims off most of the cream derived from our economic activity, and as what is left goes into the high-consumption spending so typical of all developing countries, African economies do not retain enough of the social surplus necessary for accumulation and productive investment, which is so essential for expanded reproduction. As a result, most African countries can be described as being in a state of 'simple reproduction'—the kind of production which was common before capitalism became a predominant mode of production. Simple reproduction is so called because the European feudal lords consumed all the surplus that the economy produced in enormous extravagances of consumption, such as building of castles and luxurious cities. There was no surplus left for accumulation and productive investment to take the economy forward to a stage of 'expanded reproduction'. Although superficially there was an appearance of economic hustle and bustle, and society reached its peak in the arts, culture and glorious warlike exploits, actually the economies remained stagnant, and were mostly supplemented by foreign loot, either directly through out-and-out piratical adventures, or indirectly through foreign trade.

For hundreds of years these economies remained stagnant and it was not until the advent of the age of bourgeois revolution after 1789 that Europe got out of the rut and moved towards booming capitalist development. Those countries which were late in their bourgeois revolutions, such as Turkey, Spain, Portugal, and Greece, although they enjoyed the unprecedented feudal glory of the pre-capitalist epoch in much the same way as any other feudalist European power, nevertheless stagnated and before long were overtaken by capitalist Europe. They have remained to this day, especially Turkey, the sick men of Europe. When the Turkish petty bourgeois came on to the scene, after the Kemalist Revolution in 1923, they found the road blocked for

indigenous capitalist development. Thus although the Turkish economic system is capitalist, it is a capitalism of underdevelopment; it is not Turkish capitalism, but British, German or American capitalism in Turkey. In other words, the Turkish bourgeois democratic revolution took place at the wrong historical moment. Had the Turkish workers at the time transformed the bourgeois revolution into a socialist revolution, Turkey would today have been one of the world's important industrial nations. However, having chosen bourgeois capitalist development, it is still an underdeveloped country, in spite of her imperialist past. Exactly the same thing is happening in Africa where foreign capitalism is booming at the expense of the African masses. There is no road to African capitalism.

Is There a Third Way?

If historical evidence continues to show conclusively that emerging countries can no longer develop a viable indigenous capitalism of the kind which grew up in Europe in the nineteenth century and later in America and Japan, is there an independent way of development—a third way—which is neither capitalist nor socialist? There is growing up a spate of new ideologies designed to justify a middle-of-the-road position known as 'non-aligned'. All of them have proved to be theoretically unfounded and practically unworkable. For example, Nkrumah's Consciencism and Kaunda's Humanism are both versions of metaphysical idealism which have no relevance to the real world. In philosophical terms, Consciencism is a subjectivist theory which elevates the 'idea' or consciousness to a primary position over matter or reality. Once you begin from this level of speculation, there is no hope of understanding the *real* world. Consciousness or the 'idea' is the product of matter, the material brain, which must exist prior to the idea. You must have brain before you can be conscious. In other words, it is the material world which determines our consciousness and not vice versa. We first observe the world of reality and then form ideas or opinions about it, and not the other way round; to postulate ideas and opinions as forming the world is clearly ridiculous. The material world was here before we evolved into the conscious human beings that we are.

Kaunda's Humanism stems from the Christian concept of the brotherhood of mankind. As long as there are exploiter and exploited classes there can be no brotherhood of man, no 'humanity' or humanism. If you are in doubt, ask the South African Boer for his opinion on this matter.

Both Nkrumah's and Kaunda's ideologies inevitably lead to the rejection or bypassing of the class struggle, which in turn leads to a misunderstanding of the motive force of history and its development. Ultimately the practical result is a compromise with exploitation, or state

capitalism, i.e. exploitation of the masses in joint enterprises and partnership with the multinational corporations which have led to our chronic underdevelopment.

The concept of non-alignment is designed to show that there is a third way, a middle path, between capitalism and socialism. But in fact there is no third way. Soon after the Asian countries gained their independence after the Second World War and under the cloud of the atomic bomb, there was a movement among them not to identify themselves with any of the two global power blocs, both for ideological reasons and for fear of being dragged into a nuclear war. In Asia the big landowners and petty-bourgeois intellectuals who led the anti-colonial struggle were not prepared to accept socialism, since it implied confiscation of private lands and private industries. On the other hand, they could not openly identify their interests with those of imperialism, having just led the people to struggle against it. So a middle way was needed in order to lull the people into believing that their independence really did mean a break with imperialism. About the same time Tito of Yugoslavia broke away from the socialist camp after his clash with Stalin. The enormous prestige of Tito, who had led his country's anti-fascist struggle under heavy odds and with little support from Russia's Red Army, was a boon to the Asian leaders who immediately joined him in developing the theory of non-alignment. In the fifties Nehru, Tito, Nasser and Sukarno were the 'big four' of the non-aligned movement, and at one point they even tried to elevate it into an ideology. When African countries began to gain their independence, they immediately joined the non-aligned group, which later became a gigantic bloc of underdeveloped countries. Essentially, as its name implies, the non-aligned movement was a collection of countries outside the Cold War confrontation. In the course of time, however, it became a useful consultation group in which economic questions began to gain prominence. When UNCTAD became a permanent United Nations agency, the non-aligned countries became even more united within this organ, since through it they could put pressure on advanced countries to give economic concessions to the developing countries. It became a powerful pressure group within UNCTAD and forced the adoption of many resolutions at the U.N. in favour of the developing countries. It was through their pressure that the U.N. declared 1960–70 as the first Development Decade and urged the developed countries to commit themselves to giving 1% of their national product as aid to the developing countries. From these activities the concept of the 'Third World' was born. At first simply a rhetorical slogan, the concept of the Third World was later seen to have some validity as representing a real economic and political entity.

The non-aligned conferences increasingly became forums at which leaders of the developing countries could air their appeals to the developed world to be generous and donate more to the developing

countries. On the political front they became a centre for moral pressure on the superpowers and on the second rank Powers of Europe. Because of its dual economic and political role, some leaders began to suggest that perhaps this new world grouping could lead to the establishment of a third force which would not only counter the ever-growing might of the superpowers, but would also embody a philosophy of the 'happy medium' which would be a guideline for the developing countries, independent equally of both capitalism and socialism. For socialists this is just a dream. There is no third way between capitalism and socialism; there is only a historical period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The Myth of the 'Third World'

As we saw in Chapter 1, as a result of our failure to make a realistic assessment of the world around us, we in Africa evolved a distorted view of what is actually taking place, which resulted in our formulating diplomatic and economic policies which have no relevance to our own real interests, and hamper our ability to influence events favourably for ourselves. Consequently, the 'middle road' became an objective to be pursued for its own sake, even if it could be shown that it was leading nowhere. The concept of the Third World is yet another manifestation of this short-sightedness. It has no historical justification. Historically there can be no third alternative to the choice between capitalism and socialism; and since the way to indigenous capitalism in Africa is already blocked, the only way open is the road to socialism. The period of transition to socialism should be seen as part of the epoch of socialism. Mao very aptly described it as the era of democracy of a new type, the era of the new democratic revolution which is part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution.

If the concept of the Third World is indeed designed to consolidate and unite us as a pressure group in international relations, it is difficult to see its relevance. It assumes the permanent presence of the superpowers, either in confrontation or acting jointly. This now, too, is historically without justification; in fact it is a reactionary concept since its aim is to consolidate capitalism in the epoch of socialist revolution. There is an element of wishful thinking in trying to use words like 'Third World' to transform our qualitative weakness into a quantitative force; a lobby of this kind will hardly be able to exert much pressure to preserve peace or safeguard the interests of the individual small powers confronted with a bullying superpower. If superpowers are constrained not to go to war, it will not be because of our collective ability to defuse mounting tensions, because the superpowers of today, unlike the big powers of yesterday, are no longer motivated by the single ambition for physical conquest of backward territories. The U.S.A. has established its dominance of the capitalist world without physical conquest. Moreover,

the confrontation between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. is one of opposing social systems, not of conquest. It takes two to make war and it is not in the interest of the socialist countries to provoke a war when time is on the side of socialism. Why tease the dragon? Since revolution is 'not for export', the Soviet Union will not make revolutions in capitalist countries. Only the proletariat and other oppressed classes in these countries can make revolutions. The existence of the Soviet Union and China as superpowers, in spite of their transitional contradictions, helps to prevent the U.S.A. from unleashing a world war in order to solve its sharpening internal contradictions. There could be no easy victory for the U.S.A. over the socialist countries; and the cost of a war could be the devastation of at least two-thirds of the Western world, including this time the U.S.A. itself. Further, a third world war would mean the end of capitalism as a world system, just as the previous two world wars weakened it; U.S. policy-makers are well aware of this. Finally, the American public would never allow such a holocaust to happen even if their leaders were mad enough to want to resort to it. For all these reasons, it will not be the non-aligned nations who prevent a war between the superpowers, but the fact that the concrete historical conditions make such a war impossible.

Non-aligned nations can do absolutely nothing to prevent a superpower from bullying a small country. Ten years of war in Indo-China is proof of this. America's withdrawal from Indochina was not due to our pressure, but due to the fact that the United States can no longer fight a protracted conventional war, having geared her defence preparations to a nuclear war. Confronted with a determined adversary, the Vietnamese, who were firmly committed ideologically, the United States was also demoralized by the protest on the home front caused by the high casualty toll of young Americans, and its war machine was eventually exhausted. Pressure from the non-aligned bloc had little, if any, effect. Of course, we play our noisy part, but it is mostly for home consumption, in the absence of any positive foreign policy of our own.

Thus, in the final analysis, there is no choice for the developing countries except a genuinely socialist road. The institutionalization of the concept of the Third World, and the posture of non-alignment, far from being instrumental in exercising pressure on the superpowers, serve as vehicles through which those powers transmit their wishes and weaken the revolutionary trend which is daily maturing within the developing countries. Through them revolutionary development is being defused.

Socialism Is Inevitable

Those African countries that continue in the capitalist mode of production are deceiving themselves in the short term (and their leaders

are getting disgustingly wealthy meanwhile) and cannot succeed in developing a genuinely African capitalism. The price paid for enriching the leaders is too high, in terms both of the suffering of the people and of the blood shed as a result of the ever-present power struggle among leaders jostling for riches. But the supreme casualty, of course, is the working people. As a result of the universal economic stagnation in Africa, political instability and military coups have become a regular feature of our political life, following in the footsteps of our sister continent, Latin America.

As for those countries which have adopted the so-called non-capitalist road, the choice is between genuine socialism and sham socialism. It is not enough to peddle socialist rhetoric or simply nationalize the means of production and then sit back, in the belief that we have set in motion a socialist trend. That is extremely irresponsible both to the people and to socialism. The first task of socialism is to rescue the economy from the stagnation of simple reproduction and launch it on a programme of expanded reproduction. Capitalists and proletarians, being twin brothers, but hostile (reflecting the dialectical unity and struggle of opposites), have one thing in common: they cannot tolerate economic stagnation. The advantage of the proletariat over the capitalist class is that they know where they are going. Socialism is a road with a definite destination—the withering away of the capitalist state; this certainty enjoins a purposeful resolve on those who are in positions of leadership never to waver, and never to compromise principles for temporary expediency. Sham socialism, like capitalism, has no goal; it has only abstract platitudes—‘a higher standard of living’, ‘increased national income’, etc.—platitudes designed only to bamboozle the people, meaning little in concrete terms. In fact increases in the national income are inevitable; as long as people are alive, and not dead, there is bound to be growth of some sort, but it is not the kind of growth of which we can be proud. The price we pay for it is too high. Socialism is not about that kind of improvement: it is too expensive in terms of human sacrifice; too burdensome on posterity. It is criminally reckless.

Ultimately it is the people who suffer, the hundreds of millions of them, the wretched of the earth, in Fanon’s phrase. Every diversionary course, be it a retreat to the past and to tradition, or the illusory pursuit of third-worldism, is a departure from the course towards true emancipation.

Attempts either to recreate an idealized past culture or to appeal to ‘Third World’ cultural uniqueness are misdirected in the face of international monopoly capital. Moreover, they depend on a very limited, ultimately bourgeois definition of culture. Culture is not an abstract phenomenon independent of the people’s revolutionary practice—you cannot create ‘culture’ first and make people toe the line. Culture is the reflection of people’s social activities in their struggle against natural and man-made fetters. The culture of the people, which reflects this struggle, historically opposes the culture of the oppressors,

the culture of counter-revolution. The people's culture has neither race nor continent; it is universal in that it expresses the struggle of man in general. The bourgeoisie and the feudalists have their culture, the culture of oppression, whether active or passive, practical or reflective. To them culture is represented by Wagner praising the super-race, Nietzsche praising the superman; they look down on the culture of the working, struggling people with haughty disdain. To the bourgeoisie only their own is rich culture. For us to try and dig out of the past our own black Wagners and Nietzsches is not only stupid, but degrading to the memory of the millions of workers and peasants—African as well as others—who have sacrificed their lives in order to crush the emergence of these concepts of the superiority of a particular class or race, a sacrifice which today enables us to breathe clean air – perhaps chemically polluted – but at least free from fascist and racist cultural poison.

A retreat to 'cultural activities' is escapism pure and simple. It is an attempt to avoid the real problems of the people in the real world of today. It is an admission of failure. A people's culture, on the other hand, must teach us how and why our ancestors struggled in production, and we must learn to be proud of it. But if, for example, it teaches us how they oppressed their womenfolk, we must learn to scorn and reject that aspect of the past. We must not uncritically justify every element of the people's culture; such acceptance will poison our outlook and interfere with our current and future struggles. We must learn to expose the culture of tyrants, whether past or present, local or foreign; we must not defend our tyrants and despots simply because they are 'ours', and condemn foreign ones simply because they are 'theirs'. This, too, will poison our outlook and divert us from the real struggle. It is chauvinism, not patriotism. Our heroes must be the people who led the struggle *against* tyranny and despotism, and not those who perpetuate it, even if they were once our chiefs, sheikhs, or headmen. If our culture reflects all these struggles in full, not in part, it will truly be a people's culture and will help us in the ongoing struggle.

Socialist culture is about this people's culture, for socialism is about struggle. It has no time for chauvinism and jingoism. Imitating the cultural outlook of the bourgeoisie will only make us poor carbon copies of our masters and no more. It will not enhance our prestige or dignity, it will only make us look silly in the eyes of posterity; rather as though we were putting on our master's worn-out clothes, a size too small, complete with a topper! Socialism is too big for such pettiness. That is why, if we depart from the genuine road to development, we encounter all the negative characteristics discussed in the previous chapter. We sacrifice the genuine interests of the people in our blind loyalty to the vacuous, selfish values of our bourgeois mentors. This is one of the main obstacles to development.

Socialism has its own culture—the culture of the people, not of the despots and tyrants. Socialism has its own theory—dialectical and

historical materialism. It has its own *raison d'être*. It is not Russian; it is not Chinese. It is not African, or Asian or European—it is proletarian. It is the only weapon in the hands of the workers and other oppressed classes. It is the only theory which they can use. They do not expect the bourgeois or their class allies to approve of or support socialism, because it is directed against the bourgeoisie as a class and against its exploitative system.

We need not be discouraged by whatever misgivings we may have over events and trends in the Soviet Union, China, Albania, Yugoslavia, etc. Class struggles and contradictions will continue for a long time in these countries during the period of transition. Any manifestations of chauvinism, revisionism and so on which may appear from time to time from these quarters are really reflections of these inevitable struggles and contradictions—contradictions which will necessarily be overcome through the resolution of the struggles.

Socialism is a threat to the bourgeois, and they have declared war on it. Their attack is two-pronged—direct confrontation and attack from behind the lines, from within. First, they seek to discredit socialism and to put it on the defensive; and second, they raise the banner of socialism in order to destroy socialism—they seek to lead it in order to divert its course. That is why it cannot be left to individuals to interpret socialism. The surest safeguard against these manoeuvres is for the people to study socialism and dialectical materialism more seriously, to understand it more thoroughly, and constantly to apply it in practice in their day-to-day experience in the cause of liberation.

The Russians, the Chinese and other socialist countries have no monopoly of socialism. They have only applied the theory and principles of socialism successfully in organizing their respective revolutions and in their socialist construction. As a result they have enormously enriched socialist theory with practice, with their concrete experience. Socialism does not belong to Karl Marx, any more than the theory of gravity belongs to Newton, or that of relativity to Einstein. Socialists criticize Marx from Marxist positions, because the theory is independent of Marx the man. Socialists criticize socialist countries, they criticize each other, they criticize themselves from a Marxist position, because socialism is independent of country or individual. It is the general weapon of all the oppressed—in no matter what continent they are struggling.

It is naive to say that socialism can ever be dated; that the issues Marx dealt with in the last century are no longer relevant. Socialism can never be dated as long as the social relations of production and distribution remain capitalistic. Marx's theory of surplus value, which is the basis of socialist economic theory, will remain valid as long as capital and labour remain in antagonistic confrontation, one exploiting the other. Just as bodies in motion have not ceased to respond to gravitational pull since the seventeenth century, when Newton developed his theory (in spite of the inventions of aeroplanes and rocket

propulsion), so will the theory of surplus value remain valid in spite of the existence in some countries of welfare states.

It is thus useless for African leaders to skirt the real issue of the day by inventing various excuses—cultural, traditional, religious—to side-track socialism. Nor can they take refuge in a pusillanimous neutrality. The momentous question of the people's livelihood is becoming increasingly urgent; the crisis of underdevelopment is beginning to manifest itself in mounting social tensions and strife all over Africa; and the confrontation between the leaders and the people is steadily assuming a hostile character, as the latter are gradually developing their independent class interests. In such a context, petty-bourgeois intellectuals are obviously becoming irrelevant. We must face the issue squarely and make a choice: Is it to be socialism, which will ensure a quick and certain liberation and development of the masses; or is it to be dependency and exploitation by the world capitalist system, ensuring our slow decline and eventual doom? There is no third way, no neutral choice. The oppressed African masses, like their counterparts elsewhere, have already declared that there are no choices, that socialism is inevitable and that it is the only answer to their misery.

Let us turn next to how our petty-bourgeois leaders attempt in practice to tackle the economic problems discussed in the previous chapter, now that we have seen the intellectual influences, or rather the confusions which influence their approach.

5. Who Is Responsible for Our Underdevelopment?

An Economic Blind Alley

The trouble with Africa, as with the rest of the developing world, is that every leader knows that we are tied to the West in an exploitative relationship, as appendages; that this relationship siphons off nearly all our social surplus; and that it leaves us the poorer for that. Yet nobody is prepared to do anything about it. Of course, they complain very loudly, but complaint alone solves no problems. Since practically all leaders in these countries are developing class interests in line with those of the exploiters, they are hesitant to come to grips with the crux of the problem. We all know that it takes two to make a business deal and that both partners are responsible for its consequences. While there may have been an excuse for a naive but enthusiastic involvement with world capitalism immediately after independence, practical experience of two decades of post-colonial exploitation should no longer give any person the excuse for continuing a relationship of this kind without bearing full responsibility for its consequences.

As soon as the question of moral responsibility on the part of the leaders is raised, however, many leaders seek refuge in fatalism by saying that there is really nothing *we* can do about the situation. Some argue that no one country can solve the problem and that unless there is unity in Africa or among the developing countries, poor countries are really helpless in the face of such heavy odds. This is a circular argument: we are backward because we are not rich, and we are not rich because we are backward. Or again, we are not united because we compete, and we compete because we are not united. Put this way, nobody will find any solution to the riddle. Reducing the problem to a conundrum is a way of avoiding coming to grips with it. But the real question is not about unity; the real question is: Do we have to compete with the other developing countries in order to survive? And if so, why?

The answers to both questions can be found in the structure of our economies. If we decide for ourselves to remain mere plantations of the metropolitan countries, then there is no way out of competing with other plantations. But then we should not complain if the consequence

of this decision is to keep our countries backward and stagnant, to perpetuate these plantation economies which benefit only a handful at the top and leave the local masses in abject poverty. This is a choice made by petty-bourgeois leaders in their own interests and against the interests of the working people. If the basis of *all* our economies is peanuts and cashew-nuts, how can we avoid competing among ourselves? As we have noted above, there is limited capacity for the expansion of demand for primary commodities on the world market; our unity can be guaranteed, we are told, only if we agree to *reduce* their production! While commercially this may be sound tactics, economically it is disastrous. What will the rest of the economy do?

We have noted above that our economies are colonial, sometimes known as peripheral, economies serving the mature (i.e. capitalist) economies from the sidelines without themselves having a place at the centre of the world economy. In order to serve this international capitalist system, our own economies have evolved a dependent structure in much the same way as rural areas are structured to serve the cities. As a result of this externally oriented structure, our economies manifest a characteristic known by economists as 'dualism'. This means that there are actually two economies operating side by side in a single country. One of these is the 'cash' sector and the other the 'subsistence' sector, the latter comprising the overwhelming majority of the population. The cash sector is largely dominated by foreign multinational companies which supply the country with its imported goods and at the same time purchase from it primary commodities for export. These foreign-owned economic entities are sometimes described as 'enclaves', which means, as the word implies, a cash sector of the economy completely surrounded by a vast non-monetarized sector. They provide some employment to the urban population, while the rural sector remains largely stagnant. A little cash filters through from the enclave as a result of small-scale commodity production in which some peasants engage to supplement their agricultural subsistence production.

The peasants have infinitesimally small plots of land of one or two acres each, not large enough for commercial agriculture; the large plantations historically belonged to foreign farmers under colonialism, and, after independence, to some enterprising urban Africans. In some countries foreign-owned farms have been nationalized and taken over by the state or by the marketing co-operatives, but they still maintain capitalist relations. In most cases only a change of ownership has taken place, without any attempt being made to use the plantations as instruments for revolutionizing the rural economy. Thus, long after colonialism, most African economies remain largely dual and colonial in nature. It is true that more peasants have been drawn into the cash sector through commodity production, which has now been diversified into several commercial crops; but basically the economies remain the same, with the rural area making as little progress as before.

Apart from the former Portuguese colonies, African countries may broadly be divided into two ideological categories: the conservative and the radical. Both the conservatives and the radicals have basically the same approach politically and economically, except that the radical countries have nationalized some foreign institutions such as the banks, and some business establishments, or else their governments have taken controlling shares in such establishments. Their economic system is basically capitalist; profit is the objective and the measure of success or failure. Economic projects are evaluated in commercial terms and their justification and level of priority are arrived at in terms of viability in the market. Both the conservatives and the radicals welcome foreign investment and have passed Acts of Parliament guaranteeing repatriation of profits and capital, prohibiting industrial strikes, and instituting wage control mechanisms which limit wage demands to a specified ceiling (with minimum wages kept as low as possible to guarantee maximum industrial profits)—all this to create a climate conducive to further foreign investment. However, unlike the conservatives, governments of the radical countries in Africa often insist on taking shares in private enterprises in their countries which entitles them to receive dividends from those companies' profits. The conservatives, on the other hand, do not as a rule acquire shares in private enterprises and are quite satisfied even if all the profits realized are repatriated to the metropolitan countries. In fact this is deliberately encouraged as an incentive to foreign investors. In these countries the budding African middle classes, in collaboration with imperialist multinational corporations, have developed a vested interest in the exploitation of the labour of the workers and peasants of their own countries and neighbouring countries where these enterprises operate. The conservatives argue that, although the foreign investors are allowed to repatriate profits, the African countries concerned actually benefit economically inasmuch as these investments (a) create employment, (b) save foreign exchange through import substitution industries, and (c) develop local skills. All this, it is argued, benefits the rest of the economy. Conservative leaders behave as if they are not aware that the same hoary rationale has been used to justify this sort of exploitation in Latin America for the last hundred years with the result that today it is for the most part severely underdeveloped. In fact the experience of Latin America should have been a warning signal to advocates of this system—if, that is, they were serious about developing African economies. Why should we succeed with dependent capitalism where Latin America failed?

The advocates of this policy argue further that Africa can develop on the pattern followed by earlier capitalist countries; they often quote Japan as an example. This naive view stems from the rigid, ahistorical view of the world around us as noted earlier. There is absolutely no historical evidence to support the contention that the Japanese model

can ever be emulated by any developing country. This is not because we are innately less capable than the Japanese, but because the historical conditions for that type of development no longer exist. During the last century, when Japan embarked on its capitalist development, monopoly capitalism in America and Europe had not yet developed internationally to the extent that it has developed today. As a result, the Japanese bourgeoisie managed to progress independently to a strong position from which it could challenge the Western bourgeoisie on its own ground. That situation no longer exists today, and in any case the African bourgeoisie is too weak (in some countries non-existent) to be able to challenge the bourgeoisie of the advanced capitalist countries. At best our petty bourgeoisie can act only as local representatives of the foreign big bourgeoisie. The moment it shows any sign of independent growth which might threaten the bourgeoisie of the advanced capitalist countries, it will be crushed. In that direction the road is blocked. Secondly, Japan was never colonized, and its economy, as a result, escaped from the distortions of colonialism and managed to develop as an independent, internally integrated national economy. Right from the start Japan was free of penetration by the advanced capitalist countries and consequently free from the pernicious subordination to metropolitan markets which in our case siphons off the economic surplus essential for local economic expansion and self-sustaining growth. Thirdly, since the Russian Revolution, the growing consciousness of the oppressed masses, especially of the working classes, in the developing countries makes it impossible to subjugate the workers to the appalling conditions which were characteristic of the Japanese periods of 'primitive accumulation' and early capitalism. In our epoch the philosophy of prosperity *before* social justice has been replaced by a new philosophy which demands prosperity *with* social justice. Current African experience is ample proof of this fact.

In other words, as was noted previously, the historical epoch which began with the October Socialist Revolution is no longer an epoch in which the old bourgeois revolution can ever take place. That type of revolution is now obsolete. Thus the road charted for us by the conservative African leaders on the Japanese model is no longer open to us, or to any developing country. Once we understand this important fact, a major obstacle to our development will have been removed.

Another important point is that if we examine the arguments put forward by our conservative leaders for welcoming foreign investments, we will see that that policy leads to an economic blind alley. Most of the industries suitable for advanced capitalist economies are not specifically designed for developing economies. They are simply lifted from the advanced economies and transplanted into our economies without any natural (or, as the economists would say, without 'backward and forward') linkages with the rest of the economy. Very often the economic 'body' rejects the transplanted 'organ' and this results in

economic dislocations or lopsided development. For example, the industries favoured by foreign investors are capital-intensive (because of being developed in and for the advanced economies where the organic composition of capital—i.e. the ratio between capital and labour—is very high) and so the number of jobs created by such industries in a developing country is very limited indeed, especially taking into account the limited market these transplanted industries are now supposed to supply. Again, as these transplanted industries are mostly consumer industries, mostly involving assembly, with the major components having been manufactured elsewhere, the skills that they are supposed to develop are very superficial and cannot be said to be of the kind that can lead to technological revolution. Further, the new jobs created are parasitic and unproductive; their negative social consequences are well known. Even McNamara, President of the World Bank, paradoxically felt so strongly about the negative consequences of this kind of development, and so embarrassed to be seen to be supporting a policy which encourages it, that he warned in his annual report to the Bank's Governors (Washington, 1971) that developing countries must avoid this parasitic development.

The Myth of Import Substitution and Export Industries

As for the argument that this sort of investment saves foreign exchange, practical experience has consistently shown otherwise. It would often appear advantageous to the foreign entrepreneur to produce his commodities in Africa rather than have them imported from his European or American, or Japanese base, for several reasons. First, he would be assured of an ideal monopolistic control of the market and could thus maximize his profits, which would far outweigh the advantages derived from economies of scale which he would have enjoyed had he produced these commodities from his home base. Second, thanks to the practice of protecting infant industries which eliminates all existing and potential foreign competition, he would be in a position to (and often does) raise his prices at will, as well as lower the quality of his goods. Third, as a result of government-inspired campaigns to 'buy local', artificial appetites for his products would be whetted, ensuring a much higher turnover and consequently even more profits. Finally, not being obliged to reinvest locally, and invariably enjoying a 'tax holiday', he would be in a position to repatriate his now considerably enhanced profits—all, of course, in foreign exchange. Should there be no tax concessions, the foreign entrepreneur can make sure, through appropriate price manipulation, of maintaining his desired profits by pushing the burden of taxation on to the local consumer. The end result would be no different, with or without tax concessions. On balance, therefore, the advantages to the country of saving foreign

exchange, would be outweighed by the disadvantages, not only in terms of the now enhanced net outflows but also in terms of the resultant distortion of the economy.

On the whole, therefore, the advantages do not seem to be attractive enough nationally (I am not talking here of personal advantages to 'local participants') to compel African governments to subordinate our national interests to those of foreign investors. The disadvantages, on the other hand, are so damaging that it is almost criminal to advocate such policies. First and foremost, foreign investments distort the balanced development of a national economy in that they entail a diversion of the limited national resources from the crucial areas essential for the development of a nationally-integrated economy. This is another way of saying that foreign investments have the effect of perpetuating our underdevelopment. Moreover, by allowing multinationals not only to rob us of the economic surplus created by the labour of our workers (that is the surplus essential for expanded reproduction and development), we are also actively collaborating in undermining the interests of our working people and encouraging a widening of the gap between developed and developing countries. The fuss we make at UNCTAD and in other international forums about the growing gap between us and the developed world is really ridiculous, considering that the responsibility for this disparity ultimately is really ours.

It is thus clear that the two paths advocated by our conservative leaders, namely independent national capitalism in the Japanese style and encouragement of foreign investments, cannot either of them help us to develop our economies. Following the Japanese model is thoroughly ahistorical and simply not an option that exists in practice, and, as for the second case, it merely leads to a grossly distorted development that cannot meet the needs of our workers and peasants.

Radical African leaders are no more correct in their analysis than the conservatives. As a result they also fail to arrive at the correct conclusions necessary for the formulation of appropriate economic and diplomatic strategies in keeping with the current situation. This is more serious, since, because of their vocal anti-colonialism, one always expects some enlightenment from these quarters. These radicals, of course, do not advocate the adoption of out-and-out capitalism as the predominant form of property relations internally. But they are not averse to sharing in the exploitation of the local labour through 'joint ventures' with foreign investors on the basis of the famous 51%/49% formula. Their only difference from the conservative governments is that the 51% dividend is appropriated by the bourgeois state which is now dominated by a bureaucratic stratum, instead of by individual members of the budding bourgeoisie, as is the case under the conservative regimes. However, the danger of distortion of the economy is just as serious, in that the decisions for establishing projects in our countries, their

location, timing, etc., are taken by the foreign partner, seldom by ourselves, because the initiative comes from him. And, of course, the exploitation of the working people goes on as usual.

Let us take one example which is quite common in Africa today in the wake of the gimmick of developing processing industries which is becoming popular among our economic strategists. A foreign spinning entrepreneur may wish to come into, say, a sisal-processing joint venture with a sisal-producing country. Several reasons may have influenced his decision: (a) he may wish to control the raw material at the source of production so as to strengthen his monopolistic control of the market (this is especially true of West Germany where the 'cartel' system is still in full operation); (b) he may wish to dispose of obsolete machinery, which may have given several years of staunch service in Europe, but is now quite unfitted for the cut-throat competition at home, aggravated by mounting labour costs; (c) he may wish to take advantage of the brutal exploitation of labour in Africa which is our outstanding commercial attraction (all African governments vigorously compete for foreign investment on the argument that our labour is the cheapest in the world!).

This type of investment has four serious negative effects for our economy: (1) it perpetuates our dependency on one commodity, sisal (whose existence has already distorted our economy in the first place) without any substantial economic benefits to the country; (2) it strengthens the hold of the monopolists on our economy on both the supply and the demand sides, thereby depriving us of the ability to influence commercial trends affecting the raw material concerned; (3) it deprives our economy of the use of more modern technology by allowing it to become a graveyard for obsolete equipment; (4) it actually contributes to widening, instead of narrowing, the already wide gap between the developed and developing countries. All these negative factors conspire to damage the country's economy, not because they do not activate 'development' but because that development is a distorted development, a development of underdevelopment. This kind of investment further diverts our limited resources from the development through heavy industry of a locally-based means of production (Department I). Far from helping us to liberate ourselves from natural necessity, this path in fact leads us nowhere.

Reproducing the Worker at the Expense of the Peasant

Apologists of the *status quo* defend this blind-alley economic approach by arguing that it at least extends economic activity to sectors currently dormant. They argue that because the subsistence sector is so large (often as much as 90% of the population) most of the people in it are under-employed, since a small proportion of them are producing for the

subsistence of the rest. This extra, 'parasitic' population is said to constitute the problem of 'disguised unemployment'. Any addition to economic activity in the modern (i.e. enclave) sector will draw more peasants from the traditional (i.e. subsistence) sector, and this will inevitably—so it is argued—be to the benefit of the rest of the economy since it will now provide some additional employment to alleviate the disguised unemployment. This in turn will supposedly promote a higher agricultural output, as the remaining peasants will now be obliged to provide for themselves as well as for those engaged elsewhere in the economy. Consequently, an environment of rising incomes all round will ensue, and this, it is argued, is what development is all about. According to this essentially bourgeois commercial approach, any new product which has an 'effective demand' in the market is a gain to the economy and causes the G.N.P. to grow correspondingly, no matter what impact, negative or positive, the production of such goods or services has on the society as a whole.

This approach makes no distinction between productive and unproductive labour, so that a domestic servant is considered to be 'gainfully' employed if he is working twelve hours a day looking after the house of an auctioneer, rather than producing his own food on the land or fetching water for his uncle, who would thereby be free to concentrate on productive work or take a little extra leisure time. Such 'gainful' employment for the people will also have the support of the tax collector, who would argue that the more people there are in the spending sector, even if they are spending their money in brothels or casinos, the better for the country, because he would then be able to tax more people and realize funds to pay for schools, hospitals, and other social services. To the tax collector, the nature of employment is immaterial as long as he can tax one additional victim, directly or indirectly. This approach, however, is too short-sighted to be taken seriously, and yet it is common to all developing countries. Our permanent fiscal and financial crises can be attributed partly to economic policies which lead to unnecessary increases in the supply of money (to the consternation of our ministers of finance and their bank governors). It ultimately forces underdeveloped countries into joining the queue, cap in hand, for donations from the rich countries. In short, it destroys the soul of the nation.

Such a diversion of socially necessary labour from agriculture to the so-called 'modern' sector can be justified only if it can be shown to benefit the economy by increasing the economic surplus that can be invested in domestic industries which are vital for economic advance. But the modern sector as it is currently structured in the developing countries actually has the effect of *blocking* this economic advance — again, look at Latin America! The argument for activating the traditional rural sector then becomes nothing but an alibi for justifying the appallingly low wages of the African worker ('He is better off here

than up-country, isn't he?") in the modern sector. It is an apologia for facilitating the foreign investor to reap as much profit as possible and take the loot out of the country. In this respect our solution to the problem of disguised unemployment has a negative effect in terms of social cost; the peasant left behind in the rural sector must increase his output in order to feed cheaply the worker in the modern sector, helping him reproduce himself while the surplus value of his labour goes into the pockets of the foreign investor. This is true of both conservative and radical regimes in spite of the latter's 51%/49% formula. The other negative effect of the above approach is that it institutionalizes the presence of what Engels called the industrial reserve army of labour, effectively blocking any improvement in the standard of living of the existing urban workers. As urban centres are flooded with the rural unemployed, the workers are constantly being threatened with dismissals or lock-outs, should they dare to down tools in support of a demand for a decent wage (assuming that strikes have not already been proscribed by an Act of Parliament!).

Clearly, then, the solution envisaged by the 'experts' to alleviate disguised unemployment actually works against the interests of the economy—the peasant does not benefit, the worker does not benefit and the economy remains stagnant at best. The only beneficiary is, of course, the foreign investor. We distort our economy and subordinate it to the metropolitan economy in order to enable him to make his profits.

Of course I am not arguing that it is never beneficial to the economy to raise rural output. Far from it. I am only arguing against exploiting the peasant via the urban worker in the name of solving the problem of rural underemployment in our type of economy. The misuse of socially necessary labour, though it is to the advantage of foreign investors, is to the disadvantage of the economy as a whole. The fact that the peasant produces only enough for his subsistence is not necessarily harmful to the economy. It is certainly better than having his surplus labour go towards feeding cheaply the urban worker, thus facilitating his exploitation as cheap labour by foreign investors. As a rule peasants produce only what is socially necessary; when they are induced to produce more without any reward to themselves in goods and services, trouble ensues, sooner or later. Any extravagance or misuse of socially necessary labour carries its own penalty. In the advanced capitalist economies the penalty is paid in terms of the never-ending series of crises and super-crisis. In the developing economies we pay the penalty in terms of economic stagnation, financial instability, social unrest and political tensions which culminate, more and more frequently, in coups and counter-coups.

Agricultural output can and must be increased in order to enable the peasant to lead a better life. This can only happen if the social surplus he produces is invested, in a planned way, in developing the productive forces essential for moving the economy forward. Failure to reinvest

social surplus only plunges it into the economic merry-go-round in which we find ourselves at present. As we have seen, agricultural expansion in its present form only helps to expand the hinterland for the penetration of the foreign entrepreneur's consumer goods, either locally produced or foreign. The artificially induced need for such goods so created (artificial because they often duplicate, in plastic, what the peasant already produces with local material—mats, baskets, pots, etc.—without changing the quality of his life) forces the peasant to enter the cash sector via cash crops. He produces for the cash sector to gratify an appetite artificially created by the entrepreneur; but as soon as he enters this sector he finds the same entrepreneur, now in the guise of a primary commodity dealer, waiting to exploit him once again through the purchase of his agricultural commodities.

This dual exploitation of the peasant at the levels of both demand and supply is a major obstacle to development, since it stifles his enthusiasm for production. The harder he works the poorer he gets, relatively speaking. The quality of his life does not improve substantially, the nation continues to remain too poor to provide him with enough services to make his life worth living (or to make him feel the regime worth defending in times of crises!). To him there is no incentive to improve output; all his surplus goes into enriching somebody else, not himself.

In short, experience has shown us that both the conservatives and radicals have failed us in Africa. To regain the confidence of the masses, especially of the workers and peasants, to arouse their frustrated and diminished enthusiasm, our economies must be so arranged as to serve their interests, and they must be given concrete evidence that their social surplus is being invested in the development of the productive forces and the production of material goods for the benefit of the masses.

These are things only we, the people, can do for ourselves. Our trading partners cannot and will not do them for us. These are *internal* economic strategies to develop *internal* material and technical bases essential for expanded reproduction. No international conferences or institutions can do it for us; not UNCTAD, nor the World Bank, nor the E.E.C. International agencies can be used only to lubricate internal development, nothing more. As noted earlier, external factors are only conditions of change, but the basis of change must be founded on internal structure. However, our two decades of experience in foreign relations have taught us that even these institutions, being capitalist in essence, do not provide suitable conditions for change.

Having examined the internal structure, we shall now devote much of the rest of the chapter to examining some of these external factors, which in their own way also obstruct our development.

External Connections

The beginning of the second 'Development Decade', i.e. the 1970s, coincided with a devastating international situation. The world capitalist system was once again embroiled in a very serious economic and monetary crisis; and we in the developing countries, being an appendage of world capitalism, found ourselves trailing behind them, screaming and kicking, but inexorably entangling ourselves deeper in chaos. Several 'solutions' have been tried, all of them to no effect. Probably the capitalist world needs a new Keynes to bail it out; the old Keynesian technique has run out of steam, and is no longer applicable. But while it is waiting for the new wizard, the capitalist world is threatened with the most serious political and diplomatic contradictions since the death of Hitler. An acute contradiction is fast developing between America and her European allies, the European Economic Community. There are also contradictions developing within the E.E.C. countries; France, for instance, is flexing its muscles, and devising an independent diplomatic and defence strategy. More important still is the emergence of West Germany as the dominant power in Europe. There are disquieting contradictions within all the capitalist industrial countries which manifest themselves in the current political stalemate known as the 'crisis of leadership'. Really the crisis is a lack of leadership.

Are all these disruptive developments accidental and spontaneous? Far from it. They are all interlinked, and were in fact predicted by socialists some thirty years ago. As we saw in Chapter 2, when Europe emerged devastated by the ravages of the war against fascism, and capitalism faced imminent collapse, the United States hastened to the rescue with its Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine and the establishment of NATO. In order to bolster up the weak and discredited bourgeois regimes in Europe and to provide them with means for suppressing the masses who were thoroughly disillusioned with bourgeois leadership, the United States embarked on the development of a large scale military-industrial complex, as Eisenhower called it—a complete new departure in the history of armaments. It affected the American economy profoundly. Production of the means of destruction created massive employment opportunities without providing corresponding counter-value in the market. The resulting inflationary pressure was shifted on to Europe, which produced the series of 'economic miracles' of the 1960s. But the long-term effect of this policy is the current problem of the 600 billion unwanted Eurodollars, with its progeny, the international monetary crisis.

Thirty years ago socialist economists in the West had warned that sooner or later somebody would have to pay dearly for the inflation that America was exporting to Europe and that its consequences would assume international proportions, hitting the least developed parts of the world the hardest. As usual these predictions were dismissed as

communist propaganda; now we are all paying for it. What was the basis of their predictions, which have now proved so accurate?

Socialists hold the view that for a crisis-free economy to materialize a balance must always be carefully maintained, through central planning, between production and consumption; that this balance cannot be achieved through market mechanisms, motivated as they are by a free play of the market forces. Periodic economic crises (i.e. booms followed by recessions), according to socialists, are inherent in the chaotic system of capitalist production. The inhuman law of supply and demand which underlies all capitalist production dictates that production must be stepped up to meet any demand for goods in the market until a point is reached when the market is saturated with commodities. However, when this point is reached, a large quantity of such commodities will have already been produced in the factories and will be, as it were, in the pipeline between the producers and the consumers. In other words, more commodities will always have been produced than there is effective demand for. This means a loss of social labour time. That is to say, labour time has been wasted on producing commodities for which there is no corresponding demand. (In fact real demand is always present in capitalist societies, since hundreds of thousands of people go without the basic necessities. But this is not 'effective' demand, for they lack the money with which to buy the goods they need!) When this point is reached, the effect on the economy is devastating. Factories shut down, large numbers of workers lose their jobs, there is enormous wastage of raw materials, and so on. This is recession. The situation continues until the recession reaches rock bottom, and millions more workers lose their jobs (and subsist on unemployment benefit), with a concomitant lowering of purchasing power. When the surplus commodities are finally unloaded from the market, through rotting or selling at give-away prices, the demand for commodities picks up again and a new boom is under way. This journey from boom to recession and back again is known as the 'business cycle'. Although its mechanism is quite clear, capitalist economists are reluctant to explain it except in metaphysical terms, as though it were an act of God.

The main casualties of this economic switchback are the workers of the industrial capitalist countries and the workers and peasants—especially mine-workers—of the developing countries. Our raw materials, which feed the industries of the capitalist world, are recklessly wasted in order to keep the chaotic system going. And the prices of these raw materials must be kept as low as possible (and the wages for extracting them much lower) so that we bear most of the burden. But while we in the developing countries bear the brunt of capitalist recession, we enjoy none of the benefits of their booms, not even to the extent that workers in the capitalist countries do. This partly explains why capitalism does not hasten to its final doom: through our entanglement with the system, the developing countries actually sustain it at the expense of our workers and peasants.

It was in order to save capitalism from these crises which could well lead to social revolutions that the famous Keynesian technique was resorted to by the advanced capitalist countries. Briefly, the 'Keynesian revolution' urges the capitalist governments to embark on programmes of public spending in order to maintain the purchasing power of their communities during periods of recession. That is to say, they must release money for the construction of roads, hospitals, and yes, armaments, and so on, so that the unemployed workers from the closed factories may be employed in public works and thereby maintain the community's purchasing power which will in turn revive effective demand for commodities, restore the balance between production and consumption, and ultimately reactivate idle industrial capacity.

Socialist economists at once saw the flaw in this argument and predicted that Keynesian solutions would prove invalid in the not-too-distant future. In fact it has taken less than thirty years to prove them right. However, capitalists at that time were so desperate to make the system work that they were willing to listen to anybody who came forward with any plausible solution. Indeed, Keynes himself, before publishing his *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* in 1936, had written to U.S. President Roosevelt in December 1933, at the height of the capitalist crisis, an open letter in which he said: 'You have made yourself the trustee for those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system. If you fail, rational change will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out.' Faced with the real prospect of a series of socialist revolutions in Europe after 1945, bourgeois capitalists immediately embraced Keynesianism with an almost indecent enthusiasm. It suited perfectly the American dual strategy of combatting communist influence in Europe and creating a boom economy at home.

The Military-Industrial Complex

Following on the Keynesian initiative, the Americans developed an enormous military-industrial complex which absorbed literally millions of workers. This was Keynesianism *par excellence*! To socialists, however, it was in reality contracted, not expanded reproduction. It was almost equivalent to a war economy in which enormous human and material resources are utilized in the production of the means of destruction. The capitalists in the military-industrial complex produced large quantities of aeroplanes, tanks, guns, warships, etc. for the U.S. government and in return pocketed large sums of money—billions of dollars. But since the production of armaments is not, strictly speaking, productive, since it produces income without counterpart value in the market either in the form of means of production or consumer goods,

the economy was saddled with more money than goods. This was a classic inflationary situation. Thanks to their external investment strategy, the American capitalists were able to transfer their inflation to Europe. The Europe of today, however, is different from the devastated Europe of the immediate post-war era, which could absorb any influx of capital from abroad. European economies have by now built up machinery and consumer goods commensurate with their level of development and any extra capital is surplus capital. Herein lies the source of the current universal monetary crisis in the capitalist world—the unwanted 600 billion Eurodollars.

This large unsupported bulk of money is creating havoc throughout the capitalist world. It is responsible for the instability of all currencies in the capitalist world; it is responsible for the inflationary rise in the prices of petroleum, gold and silver, and of the primary commodities; it is responsible for the current contradictions between Europe and North America; it is responsible for the current economic crisis in Europe, North America, Japan and in all developing countries. The forecast is that all these pernicious crises will continue to plague the capitalist world until the United States finds a way to absorb back its 'unwanted' dollars. This it cannot do without plunging its economy into an even more serious crisis and eventually risking political upheavals. In the meantime, we will have to suffer the consequences of the American war economy.

This is the capitalist world with which we are engaged in seeking solutions to the many problems that confront us—problems of monetary instability (through the I.M.F.); problems of development (through the World Bank); problems of trade and aid (through the E.E.C. and GATT) and so on. These are our partners in the Second Development Decade. These are our 'external conditions of change', from which we hope to develop our economies. Several emergency conferences have been convened by the developing countries in an attempt to find solutions that would make the world capitalist system work. But, of course, nothing significantly new came out of such conferences. In 1973 alone there were several such meetings, three of which were held in Africa—the Non-aligned Conference in Algeria; the World Bank/I.M.F. Conference at Nairobi; and the African Trade Ministers' Conference at Dar-es-Salaam. Ironically enough, these conferences, more than anything else, showed our alignment with the West as eloquently as it needed to be shown. How many non-aligned countries will ever notice if there is an economic crisis in the socialist camp?

And this is the source of our troubles. We are beyond doubt aligned to the capitalist world system, and our underdevelopment is the necessary condition for the development of capitalism. The one cannot exist without the other. The production strategies of both radical and conservative African governments assume the permanence of this relationship; they assume continuity with the world capitalist system,

expressed in the commitments we have made under the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), the many rounds of negotiations on tariffs and the recent agreement which Africa has entered into with the European Economic Community (E.E.C.). These are agreements which ensure our continuing integration with the world capitalist system, and yet in one of their most ingenious examples of double-talk, our petty-bourgeois leaders say that these agreements in fact ensure our independence! Of course, once we adopt wrong economic policies at home we are bound to tumble into worse economic commitments abroad, and end up having to live with the moral embarrassment of saying one thing when we mean another.

We have seen above how capitalism—and its variant, the so-called mixed economies—cannot solve the problem of underdevelopment even with the best will in the world. We have seen that through capitalism we will only succeed in developing foreign capitalism in Africa; and that through mixed economies we are only leading our countries into an economic blind alley. Our own experience and that of other developing countries strongly substantiates socialist theoretical contentions made long before we became independent. And yet, apart from the ex-Portuguese colonies, no African country has taken any other road but those which have both in theory and practice proved to be non-starters. Consequently, our commitments overseas take the form of essentially safeguarding the economic strategy we have adopted at home and making it our ‘national interest’. Safeguarding this ‘national interest’ in turn forces us into becoming defenders of the world capitalist system to which we are attached. The world capitalist system is thus *our* system. The 1973 Middle East crisis and its subsequent petroleum price explosion, which was designed to hit the capitalist West for its support to Israel, has also been hitting the developing countries, and we react to it in much the same way as our capitalist mentors did. The oil crisis has become *our* crisis. It will therefore be instructive to examine how we are trying to ensure our survival, from a ‘non-aligned’ stance, within the system.

Mercantilism, the link which ties us to the world capitalist system, is not a philanthropic concept; it is a concept based on the sanctity of competition, and operates according to its own rules. One of these is: when the strong compete against the weak, the latter must succumb; and no hard feelings. The law of supply and demand, the capitalist world division of labour, and the rest cannot be changed through mutual consent in the hostile and competitive world of capitalism. No country with normal capitalist aspirations will ever jettison its principles in order to help develop a new competitor. To do that would be outright insanity in capitalist terms—indeed it would be quite uncapitalistic. And as capitalism is not practised by governments but by private individuals and firms, no capitalist government has control over its businessmen. (On the contrary, it is the businessmen who control the government.)

Such control, by capitalist standards, would interfere with the sacred freedom of the individual. Businessmen are not always responsive to their government's wishes; they are responsive only to profit. If that were not so, there would have been no monetary crises; there would have been no 'gnomes of Zurich'. And profit requires only one condition: exploitation of one party by another; without this condition there can be no profit, and without profit there can be no capitalism.

The E.E.C. Connection

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that the developing countries' successive conferences almost always come to nothing, consist of only words without substance. We talk at cross-purposes, both among ourselves and with our counterparts. We approach the problems with different yardsticks. Still, even if we approached them with the same standards, the problems would be very difficult to resolve without 'sacrifices' on our part.

Let us for instance, examine the achievements that the African trade ministers managed to win in their confrontation with the E.E.C. countries. This was a confrontation, strictly speaking, between us and our ex-colonial masters, in which the latter held the trump cards. Overwhelmingly, the industries that operate in most parts of Africa, and which we call our 'home industry', come from and are owned by entrepreneurs hailing from the E.E.C. countries. Each one of our countries is deeply indebted, financially and morally, to one, or two, or several, or even to all the leading E.E.C. countries; several 'aid' projects were under way even before the negotiations started. Several of our countries are literally being run by experts and maintained by finance from the E.E.C. countries and face imminent collapse if this assistance were to be withdrawn. Most of the plantations on which our primary commodity exports depend are also owned and run by citizens or ex-citizens of the E.E.C. countries, and a lot of the firms, whether agricultural, industrial or commercial, are actually extensions of import/export firms in Europe. Most countries in Africa depend for their future industrial expansion on the good will of the European entrepreneurs whose condition for their investment is the assurance of the local market, which in turn depends on the stability of our exports to the E.E.C. This, then, was the Africa which negotiated with Europe in the hope of extracting concessions to relieve our economic backwardness. All the odds were against us.

The main trade questions which usually confront such meetings are: (a) reciprocity; (b) entry of our manufactured goods into the E.E.C. countries; (c) export of agricultural products, including sugar; and (d) aid and credits to Africa. (The question of fair prices for our exports is a rhetorical one and we need not raise it here.)

On the question of reciprocity, African countries always demand that they should not be asked to discriminate against third parties (i.e. countries outside the E.E.C.) as a condition for their 'associate' relationship with the E.E.C. The latter always insist that, in return for allowing Africa's commodities to enter their countries without tariff restrictions, we should, on the principle of reciprocity, allow manufactured goods from the E.E.C. countries to enter our markets with only token tariff restrictions. Whatever customs duty we may wish to impose on their goods must be shown to be absolutely essential for our 'development' revenue (presumably as opposed to recurrent revenue—as if these can be distinguished in developing countries), and in our trade relations with third countries we must never under any circumstances give preferential treatment which would have the effect of discriminating against the E.E.C. On some items, admittedly mainly token, to be agreed upon by both sides, we are even supposed to give the E.E.C. preferential treatment over and against third parties. This is largely symbolic, but definitely irritating to third parties, and African countries always resist making this concession on the grounds of our sovereign rights. In any case, the E.E.C. countries already enjoy great advantages over their third party competitors who export to Africa, since most of the goods we import from Europe and Britain have a long-established tradition of consumption in our countries and importers are generally reluctant to change to new suppliers. If the E.E.C. conceded this point, it was simply because they were certain of their advantage over their competitors.

On the second point, i.e. entry into Europe of our manufactured goods on preferential terms, the developing countries have always argued that in order to develop their industry, it is necessary to be assured of a market as rich and expanding as the E.E.C. By the E.E.C.'s definition, any processed commodity is described as 'manufactured', so even our canned pineapples or pickled mangoes come under this category. Apart from these fancy 'manufactures' and a few selected textile products peculiar to the underdeveloped countries, such as *kitenge*, there is really not much in the category of manufactures that can be exported to Europe with any chance of successfully competing with industries there. And such items as pickled mangoes or canned pineapples cannot be said to constitute 'national' industrial interest, since their production involves only a handful of people in a very narrow sector of the economy and their potential market is very limited indeed. The E.E.C., therefore, had no difficulty in conceding this point of preferential access for our manufactured goods; but it would be an irresponsible exaggeration to claim that such a concession can help to revolutionize our industrial capacity. Yet, in return for this 'concession', the E.E.C. got reciprocal treatment which would allow them to export the full range of their manufactures to us under arrangements which favoured them against third parties.

[This section originally was written in 1974, that is to say, before the signing of the Lome Convention in 1975 between the E.E.C. and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (A.C.P.) countries. Apart from some minor points of detail there were no significant changes of principle. I have, therefore, decided to leave my observations above without any alteration or updating. Lome I had absolutely no positive effect on Africa's plight. The gap between the A.C.P. and E.E.C. countries continued to widen and Africa's debt position worsened. The balance of payments crisis reached embarrassing proportions and all African countries have been literally reduced to begging the E.E.C. countries to write off their debts by turning them into grants. Lome II was signed in 1979 in a very gloomy mood on the part of the African negotiators. The hopes raised with such fanfare at the signing of Lome I have been dashed in the course of its four-year operation. The envisaged 'trade co-operation', 'industrial co-operation' and 'financial/technical co-operation', which were intended to be the key instruments to redress the economic imbalance between Europe and Africa, turned out to be fetters on our development, and have become instead key instruments in our underdevelopment and dependency. In other words, the depressing story of the seventies continues into the eighties.]

The third point, that of the importing into Europe of our agricultural products, was rather difficult to resolve, especially with respect to sugar. For one thing, no French government would last for three days if it agreed to an arrangement allowing free entry of sugar into the E.E.C. countries. The inefficiently produced beet sugar which is the basis of the French sugar industry cannot compete with Caribbean or African sugar, in spite of the heavy subsidy that the French sugar industry enjoys. No compromise solution to this intricate problem can be satisfactory to both parties. The blow will be heavier on the Caribbean countries, whose sugar enjoyed Commonwealth preferential treatment in Britain before Britain joined the E.E.C. Artificially high sugar prices, increased thanks to the pressure of the British owners of this industry, will now have to be lowered in order to compete with other sugar-producing countries, and there is no guarantee of increased sales which might compensate for the lowered prices. Then there is the factor of the big British sugar monopolies which, the French fear, may flood the E.E.C. market with cheap sugar. This, of course, further complicates the problem. Whoever gains in this area, we can be sure it will not be the peasants of the Caribbean or other developing countries. Given the prevailing attitude of mind of our decision-makers, if the E.E.C. agrees to allow entry of sugar in large quantities into Europe the gains will go to the manufacturers, while the countries whose plantations produce the sugar will only perpetuate their dependency on it and thus continue to remain underdeveloped. Alternatively, if the E.E.C. refuses easy entry, then the sugar-producing countries will suffer, because in that case they would have only a very limited outlet for the commodity, which is the basis of

their mono-economy. In either case, the workers and peasants will suffer, as usual.

To the last point, that of credit facilities and aid, the European powers have never found it difficult to agree; the problem was on the African side. Until the Agreement, the E.E.C. connection with Africa in relation to aid and credits was confined to the Yaounde countries, comprising mainly the French-speaking African states and Somalia. The Yaounde countries thought it was against their interest to have to share the dole with additional new countries, which might mean less for themselves. The E.E.C. inevitably used this point in order to divide African opinion to their own advantage. But, as we have seen above, aid of this kind, however generous, would never really help us develop independent economies; if anything, its aim is the exact opposite.

So Africa came out not a whit better from the Afro-European Agreement than it had been before the Agreement. Our negotiators, for obvious reasons, claimed to have achieved a victory of sorts, but what they achieved in reality was simply the preservation of the *status quo*. This is, after all, really what these agreements are about. They are not aimed at improving our economic relations with the E.E.C.; they are merely designed to perpetuate our colonial status now that the metropolitan countries want to evolve a new collective policy which will have exclusively European interest as its core. In this context, maintenance of the *status quo* is our victory! Can the E.E.C. offer any better concessions than the maintenance of the *status quo*? No, they cannot. As we are a necessary part of capitalism's uneven development, the E.E.C. cannot offer any concessions which will have the effect of changing the situation without provoking serious economic and political troubles in their own countries. That is why it was essential for the post-war capitalist strategy to save us from the 'communist menace', as the Truman Doctrine so clearly declared. Although, as we shall see in the following chapter, in the course of the industrial reconstruction of Europe new forms of contradictions are developing between Europe and North America, the overall class interests of the world bourgeoisie converge when its dominant position in the system is challenged, especially if it is at the same time confronted with the world-wide socialist challenge. To maintain us as the underdeveloped sector of the world capitalist system is a major class interest of the world bourgeoisie.

Looking at the problem from a socialist position, we see that since the inherent contradiction in the capitalist mode of production, namely the tendency to unlimited expansion of productive forces and the simultaneously limited growth of effective demand, has not been solved by the so-called Keynesian revolution, the crises of capitalism, though temporarily abated in the early post-war period of reconstruction, are now back with us in full force. Which means that our appendage status must be maintained at all costs, otherwise the current and future

capitalist crises will be made much worse and may even get out of hand. As production in the advanced capitalist countries increasingly continues to have a higher composition of capital (i.e. to be more and more capital-intensive), and as raw materials from the developing countries continue to fetch ridiculously low prices, which helps to keep the average rate of profit in the advanced capitalist countries from falling, the net transfer of value from the developing to the developed countries has become essential for the maintenance of industrial peace in Europe, where an increased standard of living for workers is now made possible by the relative decrease in the standard of living of our peasants and mineworkers. Again, as this relationship siphons off most of our economic surplus, our countries are obliged to seek aid and credits from our exploiters, thus perpetuating our dependency: we need more exports to service our debts, but as more value is transferred through this kind of export policy, less economic surplus remains, and there is consequently a greater need for loans and aid; and so on *ad infinitum*. We find ourselves locked in a spiralling pull towards more and more exploitation and relative deterioration in our living standards. This is a necessary condition for the prosperity of the world capitalist system, and our integration in the world market is the instrument through which such prosperity is rendered possible.

This is another way of saying that by definition capitalism cannot exist without this international relationship, and that no amount of pleading at UNCTAD and other international forums can fundamentally change this situation. Our absurd position can be illustrated by the following propositions. For the conditions of 'fair' economic arrangement between us and the developed countries to materialize in the context of capitalism, several fundamental adjustments would have to be made: (1) The economies of the developed and developing countries would have to be completely integrated so that there would be a free flow of labour from the latter to the former (thereby solving unemployment problems in the developing countries), and economic advantages and disadvantages equally shared between the two. (2) The advanced capitalist countries would have to make sure that the resultant reduction in the transfer of value from the developing to the developed countries was made good by new gains from some other source (from where?) if the implied reduction in the standard of living of *their* industrial workers was not to reach such proportions as to lead to industrial and social unrest and eventual collapse. In addition, (3) capitalists from the E.E.C. countries would have to voluntarily stop expanding their productive forces as a result of depriving themselves of the economic surplus from the developing countries now enjoyed through constantly raising the rate of profit, and would have to calmly face that inherent tendency of capitalist production, namely for the rate of profit at home to fall. (4) By giving concessions to Africa such as would weaken their competitiveness, it would be necessary for all

capitalists in the world, without exception, to agree to an arrangement that would make it impossible for a capitalist in one part of the world to take advantage of capitalists in other parts. This would mean (5) that the capitalists of the world would have to allow their economies to stagnate as a result of the non-expansion of their productive forces. In consequence of this universal disincentive, (6) the stock exchange markets the world over would have to be wound up. In compensation for this sacrifice, (7) the capitalists of the world would have to be allowed to have a decisive say in the conduct of our economic (and ultimately political) affairs. Finally, (8) all the developing countries would have to agree to an international primary commodities production plan and agree to fixed prices, with the result that the more efficient producers or those with a better natural endowment would have to subsidize the less efficient and less fortunate; and so on. In short, the capitalists would have to cease to be capitalists and we would cease to be sovereign!

Just as it is absurd to entertain any of the above propositions, so is it absurd ever to imagine that we can solve the problem of our economic backwardness within the context of the capitalist world system.

Mercantilism cannot solve this problem, ever. Our survival cannot come from further entanglement with the developed capitalist world from a position of weakness. The current energy crisis in the capitalist world has shown how much the prosperity of capitalist Europe and North America depends on the exploitation of *our* natural resources and labour. As soon as the Arab sheikhs stumbled into the twentieth century from their medieval somnolence, as soon as they understood the true meaning of the lopsided economic relationship between the developed and the developing countries, a dramatic object-lesson in political economy was driven home, not only to OPEC countries but to the rest of the developing world. For the real crisis is about the ability of the non-industrialized countries to equal the advantageous prices which the Arabs are unilaterally imposing, thanks to the initiatives of Algeria and Libya. It was this kind of unilateral decision by the developing countries that the Truman Doctrine sought to prevent when its initiators worried about our 'dropping out of the U.S. orbit or — even worse — swinging into the Russian orbit'. Both prospects are equally ominous to the imperialists, and against the vital interests of the world capitalist system.

By adopting the kind of economic strategies advocated by both the conservatives and the radicals, African leaders have, in effect, faithfully responded to the call to remain within the bourgeois orbit, and thereby make the world capitalist system our system. As the 'other half' of capitalism's uneven development, we, or rather our workers and peasants, bear the worst burdens of this relationship. When capitalists from the advanced sector shift the burden of their crises on to Africa, we at once pass that burden on to our own workers and unpoliticized peasants. So we are back where we started: internally we are heading up

a blind alley—non-expansion of production; externally we are still being kicked around by the advanced capitalist powers. And we make our workers and peasants pay for our lack of any meaningful economic policy. Like their capitalists mentors few of our petty-bourgeois leaders know or bother to think about where we are going. Collectively they have put Africa in the same economic and diplomatic impasse in which the world capitalist system finds itself, notwithstanding our brave talk about non-alignment.

If we are to attempt to find any solution to these problems, we will need to understand correctly the world situation within which these economic subversions in Africa are being practised. We will have to know the whole problem before we can attempt to solve its parts; and Africa is only a part of the whole capitalist world problem. Thus, the task of the next chapter will be to review briefly the world situation in the context of confrontation between the bourgeois hegemony of which we are a part, on the one hand, and the socialist camp, on the other.

6. Africa and the World

The Dilemma of African Marxists

We must go back to the mid-1950s and early 1960s, when Africa was engaged in her struggle against colonialism, to see the changes that were taking place in the world whose effects are being felt now. Some of these changes were quite uncomplicated, but others which are perhaps more important were rather subtle. The most important change was the emergence of the United States and Russia as enormously strong superpowers, a phenomenon never before experienced in human history. The end of the Second World War also meant the end of the old 'great powers', whose greatness had depended exclusively on the almost unlimited plunder of the natural and human resources of the colonial world, especially Africa and Asia. Devastated by war and deprived of their colonies, the erstwhile great powers were reduced to dependence on U.S. aid, both economic and military.

In the Soviet Union, after the death of Stalin in 1953, many changes were introduced. The brief and uneventful leadership of Malenkov ended suddenly and mysteriously with his replacement by a collective leadership headed by Nikita Khrushchev and Marshal Bulganin. The latter was subsequently dropped and Khrushchev took over the reins of power. The most outstanding event under the Khrushchev leadership was, of course, the historic 20th Congress in February 1956, which for the first time denounced Stalin as a despot, a tyrant, a bungling dictator who had usurped the Party's leadership and ushered in the reign of the 'cult of personality'. Stalinism was thereafter renounced throughout the socialist camp, except in China and Albania.

This de-Stalinization campaign was accompanied by dramatic changes in economic strategy in most of the socialist countries of Europe, and caused a lot of heart-searching among Marxist politicians and economists throughout the world, especially outside the socialist camp. Many of them thought the East European socialist countries had been influenced by Tito's Yugoslavia, where a radical departure from orthodox socialist economic planning was under way. This was the concept of self-management, which entails roughly a cross between a

centrally planned economy and a market economy. The question which disturbed many Marxist economists was whether market mechanisms and central planning were compatible or mutually exclusive, since the one appeared by definition to be a negation of the other. Some of them argued that the very concept of central planning was intended to rid socialist economies of dependence on the vagaries of market forces; it was to them inconceivable for socialist countries to resort to experimenting with market mechanisms and still claim to be socialist.

The other side argued that central planning and a market-oriented economy were not mutually exclusive. They contended that as a check on the human fallibility of bureaucratic planners it was necessary to resort to market methods as a sort of 'opinion poll' through which the consumer could exert pressure on the planners by indicating in practice what the people wanted and what they rejected.

We now know, however, that the European socialist countries did not go to extremes in their reliance on market forces as a safeguard against the excesses or shortsightedness of the planners, although the capitalist countries seized on this controversy to try and prove their point that the market economy was the only rational economic system ever devised by man. Indeed, they succeeded in confusing many African leaders who genuinely wanted to experiment with socialism, seeing it as a rational choice, and one which offered the only hope of solving the problems of economic backwardness and injustice in their own countries. As we shall see later, this confusion still persists.

While Khrushchev was driving the Soviet Union and the socialist camp towards detente, the policy of easing tension with the U.S.A., many respectable African leaders, including Tanzania's, viewed the move with grave suspicion. They saw it as a move towards a Soviet-American condominium which would remove for ever the possibility of true independence for developing countries.

Meanwhile, China had just emerged from a long and protracted revolutionary war as a very powerful, though underdeveloped, non-European country. China's struggle, which combined the struggle for independence and the struggle for a socialist revolution, was both suspected and idolized among African countries. Having helped to defeat the Americans in the Korean War, and having initiated the famous Bandung Conference of 1955, at which Chou en-Lai had played a prominent role, China, more than any other socialist country, was seen to offer the most relevant example to the African revolution. In addition, China understood the problems of nationalism—in relation to socialism—much more realistically than the European socialist countries (apart from Albania), since China's social revolution was not far removed from her national liberation struggle. The forced isolation of China by the U.S.A., and her military encirclement, aroused much sympathy among African leaders, especially the radicals. This warm response to China in turn aroused an almost pathological fear among American policy-

makers, which led them to intensify their anti-China propaganda in Africa in a way that made John Foster Dulles' earlier Cold War outbursts sound like polite after-dinner speeches. This was dramatically manifested by the jittery reaction of American leaders to Chou en-Lai's statement at Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1964, that 'Africa was ripe for revolution'. Even the most reactionary African leaders were shaken by this statement, for in one sentence it summarized correctly the true situation in Africa.

The Chinese understood how the very sensitive question of nationalism totally absorbed the thinking of African leaders who were at the time immersed in their own struggle against colonialism. Unfortunately, some of the socialist countries did not show the same appreciation of the Chinese position, and accused China of resorting to 'nationalist propaganda' in its dealings with African countries. Thus when the great polemic between China and the Soviet Union came into the open, it was only natural that many African leaders should sympathize with China, especially on the question of 'peaceful co-existence', which was then the great Soviet battlecry for detente. African Marxists, unable to distinguish between ideological (or class) interests and state interests, having had no experience of the latter, were utterly confused and almost distraught, and even more confounded when they were classified by the enemies of Marxism as being either 'Peking-oriented' or 'Moscow-oriented'—a classification which had no real meaning, but worked quite well for the practical purposes of imperialist propaganda.

To some extent, American propaganda on this issue did succeed in isolating known Marxists in Africa; and, through political and economic pressure, the frictions were created between the Marxists and the leaders in the newly independent African states. African Marxists were very vulnerable in that, except for the Sudan, they had no political organizations of their own and consequently devoted their energies to working within the nationalist movements. But the leaders of the nationalist movements were squeamish about the Marxists, not only because of the latter's political competence but also because of the enormous prestige they enjoyed among the masses. Their style of work and their modesty was always favourably contrasted with the pompous, often corrupt, and mediocre leadership of the other, less committed, leaders, which naturally made the latter envious of their colleagues. The result was a situation of nearly permanent tension between the Marxists and their non-Marxist colleagues.

Several outstanding Marxists were brutally murdered by their erstwhile comrades in the liberation struggle, in some cases with assistance from the imperialists. Among the most outstanding are Dr. Felix Moumie of the Cameroons, Pio Pinto of Kenya, and Abdulla Kassim Hanga of Tanzania.

Dr. Moumie led the Union des Peuples du Cameroun (U.P.C.), a

Marxist party, taking over from Ruben Um Nyobe, who had been murdered by firing squad by the French on 13 September 1958. In 1955 French troops from Chad, Senegal, Mali and Congo Brazzaville were sent to the Cameroons where the masses, mobilized by the U.P.C., were demanding independence. In May of that year these troops gunned down demonstrators at U.P.C. mass rallies in Yaounde and Douala and many were killed and wounded. The U.P.C. was immediately banned, after mass arrests of its members. The party went underground and led an armed struggle against French colonialism and its local collaborators. On 3 November 1960 Dr. Moumie was assassinated by poisoning by a French terrorist organization called the 'Red Hand', with the assistance of Cameroonian agents.

The U.P.C. is one of very few Marxist-Leninist parties in Africa; it believes in combining political work, with armed struggle when necessary, for the working class and its allies to capture state power. Although most of its leadership has been dispersed and decimated after more than twenty years of forced exile, rank-and-file supporters are still active in organizational work. Ernest Ouandie, who assumed the leadership after Moumie's assassination, was himself captured by the Ahidjo government on 19 August 1970 and executed on 15 January 1971. The 'Bloody Week' of 1955 (22–30 May) is still remembered by the Cameroonian masses, and new leadership of the U.P.C. is emerging inside the country to continue the work of the fallen comrades.

In Kenya Pio Pinto was a prominent Marxist who edited the only outspoken paper in Kenya (the *Chronicle*) to support the Mau Mau uprising, despite harassment and death threats by the British government and settlers. He had deep connections with the trade union movement and led a protracted struggle to oppose C.I.A. infiltration through Tom Mboya into the East African trade union movement.

At the political level, Pinto and his comrades worked closely with Oginga Odinga and had helped to organize the latter's political party, the Kenya People's Union (K.P.U.). Pinto and his comrades adopted the tactics of working within genuine national liberation parties because they thought the time was not yet ripe, in the 1950s and 1960s, to launch a Marxist party in Kenya. Pinto was gunned down in front of his house in Nairobi when he was taking his two-year-old son to a kindergarten. It was widely believed in East Africa that the imperialists and their local agents were responsible for his murder; to this day nobody has been brought to justice for it.

In Tanzania the most outstanding Marxist to be murdered was Abdulla Kassim Hanga. Hanga was Vice-President of the Afro-Shirazi Party in Zanzibar from 1963 until his brutal murder in 1970. He was a hard-working Marxist with a strong mass following among the rank and file of the party as well as in the trade union movement. He was widely respected by comrades throughout East Africa. Together with other Zanzibari Marxists he took an active part in the overthrow of the feudal

monarchy there in the uprising of 12 January 1964. Hanga became Vice-President of the short-lived People's Republic of Zanzibar between 12 January and 26 April 1964. When the union between Zanzibar and Tanganyika was formed and Tanzania was born on 26 April 1964, Hanga became Minister for Industry in the new Tanzanian government. In his new role, he worked on the mainland and so was removed from the immediate political scene on Zanzibar. A similar fate befell several other Zanzibar Marxists and progressives.

In 1967, Abdulla Kassim Hanga was detained in prison on the mainland and was later sent to Zanzibar with assurances given to President Julius Nyerere by the Zanzibar authorities that he would be given a fair trial for his alleged attempt to overthrow the Zanzibar government. Three years later, in 1970, he was eventually executed without any trial whatsoever and in spite of the assurances which had been given. What is more: those responsible for his death are believed also to have been involved in the deaths of several other Marxists on the island, notably Abdul Aziz Twala, Mohamed Abdulla Meki, Abdulla Macho and others. The truth is still unknown because no inquiry into the matter has ever been conducted.

In the Sudan, Ahmed Mahgoub and Joseph Garang of the Sudan Communist Party were internationally respected Marxists and played an outstanding role in bringing Numeiri to power in the 1970 coup. Both were accomplished Marxist theoreticians, Joseph Garang having written several treatises on the national question, on economic development strategy, on agriculture, and other topics. Numeiri had both of them killed, in 1971, together with the entire Central Committee of the Party, when he was beginning to lose popular support and was temporarily overthrown in a leftist coup. Ironically, it was the Communist Party that saved Numeiri's life after the shortlived coup. Numeiri was restored to power in a counter-coup organized by Sadat's Egypt and he made the Communist Party his main target for attack.

Other outstanding martyred Marxists in Africa include Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, Ben Barka of Morocco, and Amilcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau, whose cases have already been extensively documented and publicized and need not be detailed here. There are several other lesser-known Marxists who have been massacred and whose stories have yet to be told. As a result of these treacherous acts by unprincipled and opportunistic leaders, many Marxists in Africa have gone underground. The fruit of their silent, invisible and selfless service to the people will be enjoyed in the future by the masses of Africa.

African Marxists have always preferred a low profile, partly because of their fear of rocking the boat by appearing to want to usurp the reins of power, partly because of their conviction that time was on their side, but most significantly because of a lack of organized Marxist parties. The most serious setback for African Marxists was that, while organizational techniques devised by them were always utilized during the

pre-independence struggle, they were unable to put into effect their economic or ideological strategies once independence was achieved. In despair they saw their countries being dragged by the imperialists into one hopeless economic mess after another and they were unable to do anything more about it than to recommend simple palliatives; for to put Marxist economic theories into practice required a completely different political atmosphere, and this the 'nationalist' leaders, who were effectively in power, were reluctant to introduce. The Marxists could not appeal to the people to demand such a change of political atmosphere without exposing themselves to accusations of subversion, and thus destroying the little opportunities they did occasionally enjoy to put forward some concrete and progressive measures which kept their countries from sliding into total economic and political opportunism. Whether this was a desirable tactic for the eventual social revolution is a debatable question, which only history and future experience will be able to answer.

Having no organization of their own African Marxists had very little opportunity to get together to exchange experiences or summarize and synthesize the wealth of new knowledge at their disposal, gained as a result of their participation in the creation of the new states. Because of this they have never been able effectively to influence the world-wide revolutionary scene. Comrades from the socialist countries, who have relegated world revolution to a low priority and put their state interests as number one priority, have confined themselves to using local comrades for their own national interests—to gain influence here, to put pressure there. But for the most part the role of African Marxists has been very passive, both at home and abroad.

Africa Europeanized

At the time when African countries were becoming independent states (in the wake of the most serious political revolution on the continent thus far—the Algerian victory of 1962) and the subsequent foundation of the Organization of African Unity, a new polarization of forces was taking shape in the rest of the world. European powers, especially Britain and France, were rapidly losing world status although their influence in Africa remained largely intact, since while their military and political influence there was waning, their ideological presence was very much a fact of life. Their efforts to regroup themselves in Europe in defence of their interests against the encroachment of the U.S.A. sent shivers of uncertainty throughout Africa; many thought that Europe was 'abandoning' Africa. The Europeans noticed this and took full advantage of it. 'Association' with the European Economic Community became the vehicle through which European countries sought to re-establish their economic and political

influence in Africa. Europe worked very hard to win over 'moderate' African leaders to its side. These were the leaders who made opposition to Nkrumah and to socialism in general their main foreign policy objective. Europe made this policy a paying proposition by extending 'aid' to those countries that upheld it, incorporating them as close associates of the E.E.C.

This strategy, of course, was intended to cover up what was going on behind our backs: the life-and-death struggle for the survival of capitalism as a world system. The deception worked. Nearly fifteen years after independence we found ourselves more and more inextricably involved with the capitalist world. African Marxists, for the reasons described above, helplessly watched these developments, unable to influence events decisively.

The difficult conditions in which African Marxists found themselves were aggravated by the Sino-Soviet dispute, which came into the open about this time. The noisy quarrel between the 'big brothers' was not without its repercussions among Marxists all over the world, and in Africa it robbed them of an opportunity for sober discussion, in a tranquil atmosphere, of crucial theoretical and practical questions brought to the fore by post-colonial developments, unique and challenging as they were. While a number of theoretical questions were either deliberately postponed or bypassed by Marxist comrades elsewhere for the simple reason that history had confronted them with a *fait accompli*, in Africa, at this momentous time, history was in the making; a creation was taking place, and it posed questions which perhaps no Marxists outside Africa had ever had to confront.

One of these was the question of 'nation states'. While the Soviet Union had had the earliest and, in its way, unique experience of tackling the problem of nationalities within the Soviet Union, the problem of nation states as an accidental offshoot of imperialist aggression was a uniquely African experience which called for an African solution. Where African 'nations' had been artificially created without regard for homogeneous ethnic, cultural, or even (in some cases) linguistic identity, so that a single ethnic group could exist in two nations at once, the question was: would the application of the theory of 'socialism in one country' be revolutionary or counter-revolutionary? Where ethnic loyalties were more real and profound than national loyalties, would the partial, national approach to socialism hamper or accelerate the revolutionary struggle? In short, was the concept of socialism in one country applicable to Africa, where the 'countries' talked about were mere administrative concoctions, originally designed to minimize political conflicts among our colonial masters, and given inviolable boundaries by a mere O.A.U. resolution a few years after independence? Might Pan Africanism be a more reliable vehicle than national entities for the coming African Revolution?

Apart from their theoretical significance, these questions have a

practical bearing on the day-to-day decisions of political strategy and tactics. To a Somali Marxist born and bred in Ethiopia, let us say, the answers to these questions are real and urgent, especially when the Ethiopian and Somali armies are facing each other waiting for the resolution of the issue of who is a Somali and who is an Ethiopian. To Eritrean and Ethiopian Marxists, too, the question is significant. And M.P.L.A. and FRELIMO comrades were daily confronted with these questions, although they were somewhat less pressing, as both movements enjoyed universal African support. But the potential danger of disruption, as the M.P.L.A. knows all too well, is always present.

Another question which could have been fruitfully discussed among African Marxists at this time was that of race and the national question. One cannot have a clear picture of Africa without tackling the question of race, since racism in Africa has been elevated to an ideology by the white South Africans in their doctrine of *apartheid*.

The doctrine of the master Race has a long history in Western bourgeois—mostly Anglo-Saxon—culture, and Hitler gave it the dignity of a state philosophy. It helped him to mobilize national prejudice against the Jews in Germany (as well as Slavs, Africans, and Asians and elsewhere. And he made the question of race the scapegoat for all the ills of the bankrupt bourgeois economic and political systems).

However, whereas in Germany racism was directed against a minority which was also in some cases economically powerful, in Africa it is directed against the majority which is numerically powerful. Where Hitler used the instrument of racism to justify his atrocities and enhance the morale of the dispirited German people, *apartheid* uses it to give temporary comfort to the beleaguered, guilt-ridden white minority in Africa and to justify their brutal exploitation of the African masses.

As a counter to white racism many petty-bourgeois intellectuals in Africa tend to waste their time and ours in trying to analyse social situations from a racial standpoint. This is dangerous in that it is the surest way to arrive at erroneous conclusions. In essence, racism alone has never been and can never be a reliable key to understanding the roots of social contradictions and conflicts. Far less will its abolition automatically solve all social problems. The more these intellectuals delve into false assumptions, the further away they get from reality; and what is worse, since most of these intellectuals are also leaders (or misleaders) of public opinion and state politics, their erroneous private views often become generalized into public opinion.

In the African context, racism is nothing but an outward (and irrational) manifestation of deep-rooted class antagonism between the owners of the means of production, who have traditionally been non-African, and the dispossessed workers and peasants. The emerging new owners of the means of production and holders of state power, however, are now African petty bourgeois who adopt the demagoguery of racism to cover up their exploitation (jointly with the metropolitan bourgeoisie) of

the African masses. That racism as a reactionary variety of bourgeois ideology, like fascism, which is its counterpart, should have the pernicious power of winning mass support should not surprise us. As Dimitrov aptly explains, the putrefaction of capitalism penetrates to the innermost core of its ideology and culture, 'while the desperate situation of the broad masses of the people renders certain sections of them susceptible to infection from the ideological refuse of the putrefaction'.

In Africa the struggles against national domination and racial oppression have been fused into one by the very nature of white colonial and cultural domination. Very often the one is mistaken for the other, to the extent that in many cases it is irrationally accepted that there cannot be one type of struggle without the other. But experience has amply proved that we *can* win our national liberation while still remaining dominated by neo-colonialism and bourgeois culture. The way to wage the second struggle (against racial oppression) is not through simply opposing racism but through the class struggle, because now the supervisors of this oppression are 'our own kith and kin' who have sold themselves to their original masters. Of course, they use the demagogy of racism to cover up their treachery.

However, where class differentiations are becoming clearer and clearer to the people, and class antagonism is gradually becoming the dominant fact of life, as in the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, and some other countries, the emerging working class is rapidly developing independent class interests and is contemptuously refusing to be won over by the demagogy of racism. Autonomous working-class organizations are springing up like mushrooms all over Africa, covertly under the one-party petty-bourgeois dictatorships and overtly under the multi-party regimes. In Senegal, for instance, a vigorous and popular Marxist-Leninist party is daily gaining strength by renouncing Senghor's demagogy of *négritude*.

It is increasingly becoming clear to the working class in Africa that the national question is one thing, where all classes within a nation get together in the struggle to establish national identity and fight against foreign domination; and the class struggle is another, where only the working class in alliance with the oppressed peasants and advanced petty-bourgeois intellectuals can lead the struggle against the oppressive and exploitative classes *within* the nation and their foreign supporters.

Ideally these questions, and many others, such as the evolution of uniquely African class differentiations and class antagonisms at this particular historical moment—given the colonial background under which they took shape—should have been the basis for fruitful discussion and the eventual evolution of a theoretical position for all African Marxists. But unfortunately the wider issue of the Sino-Soviet split not only dominated every discussion to the exclusion of everything else, but, because of the influence of the two socialist giants, the Soviet Union and China, among Marxists internationally, the polemic between them

actually divided African Marxists on issues which, although important in theory and practice, were divisive rather than constructive. This is a topic which requires separate treatment; it is raised here only to highlight an aspect of development which was subjectively affecting the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle at a time when imperialism was itself struggling to re-establish itself in a new guise suited to the conditions of post-colonial Africa.

At no time was it more urgent for Marxists to synthesize all these specifically African problems than at the moment of establishing these new nation states. But if the opportunity was lost then, it is still not too late. A coherent and correct theoretical formulation, broadly applicable in all parts of Africa irrespective of our uneven development, is the most urgent task facing African Marxists in order to give correct leadership to the people in their struggle at this new stage of our political evolution.

The Struggle between the U.S.A. and Europe

While the socialist camp and Marxists everywhere were thus negatively engaged, the bourgeois camp was in an even worse state. European reconstruction, which the U.S.A. helped to accelerate through the Marshall Plan, meant also European semi-independence from the American orbit. It implied the development of an independent European course of action, motivated by national self-interest, towards the underdeveloped sector of the capitalist world order. Since Africa appeared to be a 'natural' partner of Europe, without actually issuing their own version of the Monroe Doctrine the Europeans made it quite clear to the U.S.A. that Europe needed natural resources for her survival and that those resources traditionally came from Africa. Therefore, while Europe and the U.S.A. were jointly responsible for keeping Africa free from the 'red peril' through NATO and other military alliances, Europe must be left alone to enjoy the fruits of this freedom.

The struggle between Europe and North America over the control of Africa and its resources became more subtle especially after their disastrous clash of interests at the time of the Suez Crisis in 1956 made its ugly appearance for all the world to see, resulting in both sides emerging as losers. Their brutal aggression against Egypt that year, in collusion with Israel, was the last desperate bid by the European powers to regain their presence in Africa by resorting to outdated gunboat diplomacy. America's public disassociation from this debacle not only wounded its European allies but also brought home to them the realities of the post-war world and the meaning of true power and might.

The lesson Europe learnt was simple and straightforward: If you want to survive you must be powerful and independent. The world was no longer the pre-war world of pocket-size industrial powers; it was a world of giant industrial powers, of superpowers. It was no longer a

world of independent initiative on the part of any country acting without the consent of one or other superpower. A clash of interests with the U.S.A. must be backed by strength, otherwise there would be no point in precipitating one. Problems henceforth were to be solved in Washington, not London or Paris. Europe had to choose between remaining for ever under the umbrella of one giant, the U.S.A., or developing into a giant in its own right. It chose the latter course, and the Treaty of Rome of 1957 became the instrument by which to bring the independence of Europe into reality.

The European Economic Community was henceforth to become the collective instrument for the economic battles of the future, while Europe was in the process of establishing its credentials as a giant. What was originally conceived of as an organization for the pooling of technological know-how and better utilization of steel, coal and other resources, which needed not only advanced technology but also a larger area for efficient economic results, now became the precondition for Europe's very survival in a world of giants.

The survival of Europe as a capitalist stronghold required in addition the existence of an unlimited source of supply of cheap raw materials and cheap labour so as to render its industrial goods more competitive. If the U.S.A. had its Latin America for that purpose, who was to begrudge Europe if it wanted Africa for the same purpose? After all, both sides of the Atlantic were committed to the same end of saving the 'free world' from the 'red peril', were they not? This piercing logic (suspiciously French in its sharpness!) was sometimes misunderstood by the Americans, who wanted their world clearly demarcated into opposites—for or against, black or white, the reds or the blacks, good guys or bad guys, and so on—so that problems, when they arose, could be neatly dealt with by computers, free of human frailties!

However, the point was not missed by African leaders, especially in the ex-French colonies, later to be known as the Yaounde group, who at once saw their survival to be inextricably interwoven with the survival of Europe. This group became famous at the O.A.U. meetings for their 'realism' and 'pragmatism', which meant, in plain language, simple opportunism. Europe in turn pinned its hopes for the success of its grand strategy in Africa on this group, seeing it as a potential political force whereby to influence the whole of Africa through the councils of the O.A.U.

The United States, on the other hand, while ready to concede to Europe some measure of responsibility in Africa, was reluctant to allow all important initiatives in our continent to come from those quarters. While it was true that it shared with Europe the responsibility of keeping Africa free from communism, it was equally true that the vital interests of a superpower knew no bounds, and Africa was too vital to the American scheme of things to be left to the weaklings of Europe enfeebled as they were by their own internecine wars. And wasn't there

that inscrutable, horrible old man, de Gaulle, making things messy for the great Western alliance? How could he be trusted to have a free hand in Africa? No, America reserved for itself the right to poke its nose into African affairs as and when it felt necessary. This American resolve, bitterly resented by its European allies, was to turn Africa into an arena of conflict between European and American interests. But these modern conflicts, in the epoch of the proletarian socialist revolution, had to be handled more subtly than their earlier versions, not so obviously that the Russians and other 'Bolshies' would notice and take advantage of them. And subtlety demanded ruthlessness and speed: any unpleasant emergency was to be got over and done with immediately, before it spread or was ever properly understood by those who had no right to know—the African people themselves.

The drama that was to unfold in post-colonial Africa must be looked at from this intriguing background. It started in West Africa, where Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana had just emerged as the first, free, black star of Africa. In the aftermath of a long and bitter struggle, Ghana was not quite fully prepared for the new type of struggle implicit in independence under conditions of the epoch of socialist revolution — conditions in which socialism was on the offensive and capitalism on the defensive and which, as a result, entailed diplomatic actions of a new type; consequently it seriously, if naively, adopted a policy of trying to play off America against Europe.

According to this policy, if complete independence for Africa were to be the top priority in Ghana's foreign policy, and if European powers were the ones against whom the struggle for the total liberation of Africa was to be waged, it was essential that America should be won over to the side of Africa, or at least neutralized. America's allegedly anti-colonial record, especially Roosevelt's firm stand against Britain during India's struggle for independence, was sufficient grounds to justify the hope that the Americans could indeed be won over. If one played one's cards correctly, so Nkrumah thought, that great power could be relied upon to put pressure on its kith and kin in Europe to grant independence to the rest of Africa. Under the circumstances, therefore, it would not be prudent to show excessive zeal towards the Soviet Union, although, in order to assert one's independence, it was necessary to seem to be having diplomatic dealings with it, although always in reality keeping it at arm's length.

To make this policy of winning over the Americans to the side of Africa more meaningful, it was good politics to show the Americans that there were also economic attractions to the proposition. Therefore, as soon as Guinea voted for independence in 1958 and invoked the wrath of France, Ghana immediately went to its aid and formed a union between Ghana and Guinea; since the two countries together produced a good deal of bauxite and other minerals, their union presented a not unattractive picture to the American multinational corporations. The

Ghana/Guinea co-operation also meant the first emergence of an anti-colonial axis in Africa, directed economically and politically against Europe. This was far too much for the Europeans to tolerate. If the trend were allowed to spread, with quiet American backing, vital European interests would be in grave danger. A European solution was therefore urgent if the situation were not to get out of hand.

However, before Europe had recovered from this shocking outrage, and while it was still too shattered to formulate any new policy to contain the situation, hey presto, Lumumba's Congo, the pearl of Africa, stormed into existence! It immediately sought to join the Ghana/Guinea axis. To Europe this was adding insult to injury. On the other hand, our friends the Americans were also taken by surprise at this latest development and decided that the Congo (later Zaire) was too important strategically to be left to the manipulation of the 'novice' hands of Nkrumah, the leading figure of the new axis. To the Americans the loss of Zaire as a reliable Western ally not only meant a loss of resources, which they did not mind as long as they had a hand in it through remote control, but posed a more serious political threat to the whole of Southern Africa, an area which was now a firm bastion of the Western presence in the continent. Here the ambivalence of capitalism in the epoch of proletarian socialist revolution came into the open. While economically America was compelled by the logic of monopoly capitalism to crush all competitors, brothers and all, politically it had to safeguard the overall interests of the world capitalist system in the face of the socialist challenge. A secure base, in this case Southern Africa under white control, was essential if the advance of socialism was to be checked in Africa.

America's intervention in Zairean internal affairs, the subsequent 'chaos' which was a direct result of this intervention, and the murder of Patrice Lumumba, were part of a global policy to preserve Southern Africa as a bastion of imperialism. To the Europeans Nkrumah was the arch-villain who had now deprived them of Zaire and all its immense wealth, and given it to the Americans on a silver platter. It was imperative that a way be found to remove Nkrumah from the scene before he went too far. It is interesting to note that Gaullist France opposed United Nations (i.e. United States) intervention in the Congo in July 1960 and the subsequent imperialist military interventions there.

Inexperienced, and lacking in analytical thoroughness, Nkrumah for his part did not interpret the African situation in the full context of world-wide developments. He failed to see Africa as part of the global struggle between the rising sun of socialism and the setting sun of capitalism and imperialism. His socialism was a socialism of reforms, not of revolution. His anti-colonialism was partial, not universal. He saw only physical colonialism, which is but one aspect of imperialism, and he was ready to hobnob with the agents of the latter, the multinational corporations, in the hope of removing territorial colonialism from the

face of Africa. His call for African unity, therefore, sounded hollow; it sought to achieve only partial ends, which were by their nature ultimately useless. Nkrumah failed to see the emergence of neo-colonialism and the implicit support he was accidentally giving imperialism, and which was inherent in the policies he was pursuing.

To counter Nkrumah's 'vicious influence', the French hastened to create a French-speaking 'Community' in Africa, the OCAM, which distinguished itself by its docility towards Europe. They were so European that they were even anti-American; more Gaullist than de Gaulle. To them, too, Nkrumah was the arch-villain, and they made it their business to oppose anything, but anything, Nkrumah proposed. They were against him in principle. They shared French prejudice in suspecting the Anglo-Saxons, and Nkrumah was a product of the Anglo-Saxons. (When President Olympio of Togo showed dangerous signs of flirting with the Americans, he was instantly assassinated. His assassin chased him while he was literally running for his life to the American Embassy, and he was shot at the Embassy gates.) In return for their subservience, Europe offered the OCAM countries favoured treatment within the E.E.C. in the celebrated Agreement signed at Yaounde. In reality, the OCAM countries were guaranteeing to preserve and safeguard European bourgeois interests in Africa. Nkrumah's call for African unity carried no weight with them; they thought it was a crazy idea.

While Zairean events continued to be front-page news, even in the absence of Lumumba (this was now a straightforward U.S. versus Europe struggle, conducted through Zairean leaders with Moise Tshombe representing European bourgeois interests), suddenly the Algerian people won their independence from France. Ben Bella, the new president, immediately lent Algeria's enormous revolutionary prestige to the Ghana/Guinea axis. History was made. This was an unprecedented development in African politics; for the first time a North African country, from an area hitherto considered at best indifferent, or at worst outrightly hostile, to anti-colonial struggles in tropical Africa, had identified its political destiny with that of the rest of Africa. Algeria even offered its army to help fight anti-colonial wars in Southern Africa, the first African country ever to do so. This latest development upset the entire European strategy in Africa and its convenient division of the continent into mutually hostile ethnic regional groupings. A new type of Africa was emerging, not the Africa of outdated reactionary rulers, not an Africa of subservience, but an Africa with revolutionary (i.e. national-democratic) potential. The entire youth of Africa was immensely inspired for action; a new era had set in.

The Ghana/Guinea axis, in addition to Algeria, was soon joined by Modibo Keita's Mali, and it was through the initiative of this group that the first conference to set up the Organization of African Unity was convened. No leader, however subservient to foreign interests, dared to

oppose openly the call for a Pan African organization, so inspired were the masses who had expected action from the leadership. African national-democratic revolutionaries pinned their hopes on Nkrumah, who had now become the symbol of African struggle; they expected him to give the O.A.U. the revolutionary stuffing which was necessary for transforming it into a true headquarters of African struggle.

Unfortunately, Nkrumah did not rise to the occasion. No other leader did either. The founding fathers were all preoccupied with the form, not the essence, of African liberation.

These progressive leaders in the O.A.U., in the interest of preserving the embryonic organization, had to tone down their call for immediate liberation of the whole of Africa lest they frightened off the reactionaries. They misread the mood of the African masses, especially the new youth of Africa, who wanted action, not discussion forums. Action to transform the continent of Africa into an inferno for imperialism; action to regain the dignity of her people in struggle; action to enable the workers and peasants of Africa to hold up their heads politically, economically and culturally; action to do away with feudal and bourgeois despotism; action to put Africa at the forefront of the world-wide struggle against capitalism and imperialism. Instead, the progressive leaders chose rapprochement with reactionary idealism. They failed to seize the historic moment, and they let Africa down. While the objective conditions for revolutionary struggle existed, the subjective conditions were missing. In the end the O.A.U. became a quasi-U.N., a headquarters of compromise.

To the Europeans, nevertheless, the O.A.U. presented a threat, and they blamed it on Nkrumah. Because of their colonial past, the Europeans were better prepared to deal with African nations as separate entities and their influence was more effective at that level; there they knew everybody who mattered. But dealing with global Africa in the form of the O.A.U., they were at a disadvantage. They also suspected that the move which had led to the creation of the O.A.U. had actually been engineered by the Americans, who in contrast were better manipulators at the global level, as the Europeans had learned to their cost years before in Latin America. In that continent, the Americans had succeeded in pushing out European, especially British and French, influence through the creation of the Organization of American States, or O.A.S. (Incidentally, the O.A.U. was originally going to be known, ominously, as the Organization of African States—or OAS—but the proposal was strongly opposed by the French-speaking group; it was enough, though, to confirm the Europeans' suspicion that the organization was an American brainchild.)

To safeguard European interests in Africa, under the circumstances, it was essential either to smash the O.A.U. or to render it ineffective by removing its initiators from positions of leadership in their own countries; or better still to do both. It was too late to frustrate the

actual establishment of the O.A.U., which had come into being at the least suspected moment and caught the Europeans off guard. So the Ghana/Guinea/Algeria axis had to be smashed instead. And smashed it was by removing Nkrumah and Ben Bella from Africa's political scene, even though the European fear was of course unfounded, as both Nkrumah and Ben Bella had lost the opportunity to transform the O.A.U. into an effective instrument against imperialism.

Ironically, the assassination of Tom Mboya in East Africa must also be seen in the context of the struggle between Europe and the U.S.A. for Africa. Mboya was the biggest American influence in the area, thanks to his trade union and C.I.A. connections. Nearly all prominent trade union leaders were in Mboya's pay, or had been at one time or another, through the well-known 'solidarity fund' which was paid, via Mboya, by George Meany and the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Mboya, of course, was not as formidable as Nkrumah or Ben Bella, but his influence in Kenya and his capacity to survive the ever-present political intrigues characteristic of that country were not to be taken lightly. His well-placed position on the economic front, both with respect to Kenya and to the East African Community, which noticeably influenced the economic direction of the whole region, was a cause for discomfort within European circles.

Whether or not Mboya was potentially a future president of Kenya was not relevant to the immediate calculations of those who felt that their interests were threatened by his existence as a political force in the country. The balance of power in Kenya was such that whoever was ultimately to succeed Mzee Kenyatta would find it difficult to alter decisively the economic base as long as Mboya was around, in whatever capacity. His political influence was not limited to the trade union movement; it extended, naturally enough, even to African business circles, where he was regarded as the champion of African businessmen struggling to penetrate a field of operation formidably defended by the local Asians, who enjoyed a considerable strategic advantage. Was it not Mboya who arranged with American financiers, through U.S.A.I.D., to advance credits to the up-and-coming African entrepreneurs who were to be the 'agents of economic transformation'? Again, whatever differences he had with the former Vice-President of Kenya, Oginga Odinga, his credentials as a *bona fide* Luo leader were not in question. (Note the brief Luo/Kikuyu clashes after his assassination.) In an environment where tribal connections play a decisive role, his Luo support put Mboya in an even stronger political position.

Mboya's influence on Milton Obote, the President of Uganda, must also be taken into account. It went back to the pre-independence trade union days. Some people went as far as to suggest that Obote was Mboya's own creation; that it was thanks to him that Obote was launched into Ugandan politics almost out of the blue. All these factors contributed towards making Mboya a serious threat to European

interests in East Africa and his elimination was considered necessary for the safeguarding of these interests.

The Lessons We Learnt

It is now obvious that, having failed to assess correctly the essence of the struggle in this historical epoch, especially in the post-war era, we in Africa inadvertently exposed ourselves to a vicious campaign of intrigue and counter-intrigue by outside forces whose ultimate objective was, and is, the domination of the continent. We played with fire and we burnt our fingers. In our efforts to prove our maturity, we exposed our immaturity. In assuming that we could play off America against Europe, we gave them both an opportunity to play their dirty games on us, ourselves unable to lift a finger to stop them and thereby safeguard the genuine interests of the people. Unable to reflect these interests, because the policy-makers ceased to belong to the people, we failed to evolve foreign policies which would serve the true interests of Africa. As Nasser frankly admitted, in foreign policy we rarely *acted*, we only *reacted*. Armed only with our inherited nineteenth-century diplomatic doctrine, we missed the whole point about the modern world. As Nyerere once confessed: 'We groped in the dark.' We modelled our institutions, national and international, on archaic principles and assumptions, and the result has been disastrous. We lost some of the most outstanding and promising sons of Africa, the necessary material for preparing Africa for future struggles the warning signals of which are only now beginning to appear. This is not a cry of self-pity; it is a summary of the lessons that must be learnt by all who want to ensure the true cause of African liberation and its emergence as a solid force in a world plagued by the poison of a dying order.

Lumumba was brutally murdered as a result of the naive belief in Africa that there was such a thing as a U.N. peace-keeping force at a time when this same 'peace-keeping force' had only recently emerged, dripping with blood, from a most brutal aggression against the Korean people on behalf of Syngman Rhee, the U.S. puppet dictator, a man who made Hitler look like a Salvation Army major by comparison. Nkrumah died in exile, his unscientifically conceived hopes unfulfilled, because of his mistaken belief that he could play off America against Europe to our benefit. Not only did we lose Nkrumah, but neither Ghana nor Africa benefited from his ill-conceived strategy. Ben Bella languished in confinement for more than fourteen years. His erstwhile colleagues in Africa, indifferent to his fate, were unable to understand the significance of his African policy, and his colleagues at home in Algeria even less. The latter dumped him in prison and the former chose to speak, hear and see no evil. Perhaps he himself did not fully appreciate the implications of his African policy in the context of world imperialism.

His ill-preparedness disarmed him and it cost Algeria and the rest of Africa a good deal. Modibo Keita, too, decayed and died in prison isolation, battered by a string of failures, from his ill-fated union with Senegal to his misconceived notions of socialism which benefited nobody, least of all the Malian masses. Only Sekou Toure in Guinea-Conakry is still holding out, but at a price! All these great and patriotic sons of Africa deserve our respect, not so much for what they have done, which was not much, but for having had a glimpse, only a glimpse, of what could have been a global struggle for a truly African policy. Failure was inevitable under the circumstances, partly because they misunderstood the realities which governed all the political and economic aspects of imperialism. Of one thing we can be certain, they were never opportunistic; they erred because of a limited, petty-bourgeois world outlook, but they erred in good faith.

As a result of their, and Africa's, misfortune we can now sum up their experience. In doing so we can see that several characteristics are common to almost all African countries. For that matter, they are common to all the developing countries outside the socialist camp. Failure to understand thoroughly the nature of imperialism in both its economic and political aspects has led to failure on our part to conduct a serious and correct analysis of the current situation of the post-war era. Yet such an analysis is a necessary condition for formulating a consistent policy. Our tendency to pick up isolated facts and generalize them into the basis of policy, whether domestic or foreign, is as misleading as it is dangerous. In these circumstances, a scientific conception of imperialism is reduced to the level of empty sloganeering about 'liberation', whose purpose at present is no loftier than that of maintaining in power a bankrupt leadership long after its effectiveness for the job has been exhausted.

In other words, in the absence of a thorough and comprehensive analysis of world problems in the epoch of the proletarian socialist revolution; in the absence of full appreciation of the causes of the turbulence of the present period, in which the ups and downs of imperialism in its struggle for survival also affect our vulnerable states; in the absence of a world perspective for the solution of many of the problems arising from this very situation, our true national interests are undermined, since events always take us by surprise when we least expect them to occur. As a result, we react to these situations very unpredictably, thereby confusing not only our friends and foes, but—and this is more serious—also our own people. As we see only isolated aspects of the problem that confronts us, and not the whole problem, we come out, if we are lucky, with only fragments of the solution, never the whole solution. In the circumstances, there can never be a consistent policy; and inconsistent policy is often worse than no policy at all. When the imperialists play cat and mouse on our continent, with ourselves as their victims, we share the blame for making that game possible. Thanks to

our ill-conceived economic and diplomatic policies, we invariably confuse what is good for the country with what is harmful; we confuse friend with enemy; and, in the end, even the declared objective of our foreign policy, the total liberation of Africa, begins to sound unconvincing.

While the struggle for the control of Africa continues between the United States and its European partners, most of the principal actors, wittingly or unwittingly, are our own selves. In assuming that by siding with the Americans (or trying to neutralize them) we thereby weaken the economic and political hold of Europe on Africa, we are not only deceiving ourselves but are exposing ourselves to wicked manoeuvres, which always work against our interests in the final analysis. Failure to appreciate that the U.S.A. and Europe are part and parcel of the same system, whose precondition for survival is the political and economic domination of Africa and other developing countries, and failure to see that their apparent contradictions are not really fundamental, is costing Africa enormously in terms of the leaders we lose; in terms of military coups and all their negative consequences; in terms of economic stagnation; in the ultimate suffering of the people.

As the real struggle in Africa is still at its early stages, and as it is not our intention to be caught unawares again by events, it is necessary to have a more thorough look at what is taking place around us, and to this end no effort is too great to make, so important is the task. While what follows, therefore, cannot claim to provide the definitive answer to our needs in this field, it is an attempt to show the range of investigation which is necessary for formulating realistic policies suitable for the needs of a liberated Africa. But before we come to that, let us complete our panoramic survey of Africa by examining the situation in those areas of Africa still occupied physically by the enemy. We must try and see how these white-occupied areas fit into the pattern of the U.S.A.—versus—Europe struggle for control and domination of our continent.

Southern Africa—The Forces at Work

White South Africa, the dominant power in the southern part of the continent, started its industrialization more than a hundred years ago with a massive influx of foreign capital and skilled manpower through active encouragement of white emigration from Europe. The country is very rich in mineral resources and its climate very congenial to European settlement. With these endowments South Africa, by capitalist reckoning, should have been one of the richest countries in the world. However, it is still classified as underdeveloped in spite of more than two hundred years of hectic economic activity and one hundred years of industrialization. There are of course a few millionaires, the mining magnates, but the vast majority of the population, including some whites, are still in dire poverty.

The reason for this contradiction, of poverty in the midst of plenty, is to be found in the structure of the country's economy. This is a highly advanced form of dual economy of the kind previously discussed, in which an enclave of some four million Europeans, mainly living in the urban areas, is surrounded by many millions of African peasants, operating on subsistence farming almost wholly outside the money sector of the economy. What the 'modern' sector produces is not for these peasants but for the urban population and for export. Thus, although the country has a population of over twenty-four million, the demand sector for its commercial production consists of only a fraction of this number, even if you add urban Africans and wage-earning mineworkers to the white population. Here we have a very extreme example of the inherent contradiction of the capitalist mode of production—namely, the tendency towards the expansion of productive forces combined with the systematically limited growth of effective demand. In this particular case the situation is aggravated by a politically imposed phenomenon which further limits the growth of effective demand. This is, of course, the notorious policy of *apartheid* which excludes Africans from the mainstream of political and economic activity in their own country.

Almost the entire mineral wealth of South Africa, including gold and diamonds, is extracted exclusively for export. A large proportion of the wealth so produced remains outside South Africa. The little which filters back into the country is shared between the maintenance of the vast military machine necessary for suppressing the Africans in pursuit of the policy of *apartheid* and the importation of consumer commodities essential for keeping the whites contented. However, since there is only a limited supply of minerals, a time is bound to arrive when the supply will show signs of exhaustion. And that time has already arrived. This is true of diamonds and gold, the two most important sources of wealth for South Africa. The country has supplemented the export of these and other minerals with the export of non-tropical fruits and wines, especially to Britain, its traditional market ever since the days of 'Commonwealth preference' (which ensured preferential treatment for Commonwealth as against other commodities). Even after it was kicked out of the Commonwealth South Africa enjoyed preferential treatment (although this was not admitted), thanks to its links with major British firms which have a formidable stake in South Africa's economy.

When the British applied for membership of the E.E.C., South Africa at once became aware of the dangerous implications entailed in the move. It implied a serious threat to its exports, especially fruit and wine, which would in the future be discriminated against in favour of Britain's E.E.C. partners, especially the French and Italians, who dealt in similar products. Thus, in addition to its diminishing previous minerals, South Africa was faced with a seriously diminishing export outlet for the products of its extensive white farming community. As the same white

farmers constituted a significant consumer base within the country, the entire economy was consequently threatened.

The situation not only worried the South Africans themselves, but it was also a serious cause for concern to foreign investors, especially the American multinational corporations. Isolated from the rest of Africa, unable to compete in a world market already shrinking owing to the ubiquitous tariff walls, and suffering from a very limited and now threatened home market, South Africa saw an impending economic disaster looming. The situation could be alleviated only if two conditions obtained: if either the home market were significantly developed, which meant extension of democratic and economic rights to the twenty million Blacks; or if a breakthrough were achieved in the expansion of export outlets to the rest of Africa. The two alternatives were interlinked, for the second was impossible without the first, which in turn was impossible as long as the obnoxious policies of *apartheid* continued to be pursued.

The futile attempts by the South African leaders to break out north of their borders—the famous, but shortlived, policy of Dialogue—were a diplomatic expression of the above dilemma. The multinationals desperately used their influence both in Europe and Africa to make the policy work but, while it initially showed some signs of acceptance by reactionary African leaders, the so-called ‘European boys’, the policy ended in total failure, thanks mainly to the concerted and well coordinated opposition of the radical African countries. However, to the multinational corporations, the situation was too serious and the stakes too high for them to abandon the struggle without further efforts. On the other hand, their efforts were doomed before they ever started, since the whole problem of South Africa at that time was so complex, so interwoven, so aggravated by the clash of so many interests that no simple solution was forthcoming.

First, there were the interests of the white South Africans, who believed that their survival as a race was dependent on a strict and uncompromising adherence to the policy of *apartheid*. For such a policy to be effectively pursued, South Africa needed secure borders to ensure firm control of movement of the African population into and out of the country. This control could only be possible if the country had neighbours sympathetic to its cause. On the other hand, to ensure their own survival the neighbours, i.e. the Portuguese colonialists and the white Rhodesians, were all too ready to co-operate, and in the 1960s and early '70s they turned ‘their’ countries into a *cordon sanitaire* in return for South Africa’s support in the suppression of ‘their own’ Africans, who now happened to be carrying guns all over the place and demanding their liberation. The white South Africans seemed prepared for this deal, although it entailed economically ruinous preparations for a long drawn out campaign of oppression against the African masses in the entire region. It led to the adoption of a myopic policy based on a

siege mentality which left no room for a calm appraisal of its long-term effects on its exponents. This was one aspect of the problem.

The second factor was the interests of the foreign multinational corporations, both American and European, firms with global interests which were not too keen to be associated with any ideological position other than the straightforward, honest-to-god ideology of capitalism and profit. To them the market was the god of progress, and the wider it was, the more rewarding. They were not too happy about *apartheid* because it restricted the natural expansion of the market, and this was evil. The situation was made even more complicated by the existence, now widespread throughout Africa, of opposition to the South African government and the threat of boycott of those firms whose only crime was to be doing honest business down South. And as if this were not enough, the Russians, the Cubans and the Chinese were now giving military aid to the 'disaffected' elements to create chaos in this otherwise 'peaceful and prosperous' region. To the multinationals the way out was to encourage some liberal opinion to come forward in South Africa itself, in Portugal and in the rest of Africa, so that a compromise solution could be worked out which would ensure the elimination of the dangerous tensions in the area. Otherwise, the only beneficiaries would be the communists who, of course, flourished under 'chaotic' conditions. To achieve a compromise solution, a policy had to be formulated which would work towards the elimination politically, or physically if necessary, of all extremists on both sides. To this end, not only had the entire resources of the multinationals to be mobilized, but also diplomatic pressure was to be exerted at the highest levels. The American authorities, for economic and political reasons, saw no problem in this proposition and they were quite prepared to play their part.

The third aspect of the problem was the liberals themselves. In South Africa liberals had been pressing for democratic reforms ever since the Boers came to power in 1948, but somehow they made no impact on white public opinion—not surprisingly, since the liberal leaders were complacently getting very rich in their role of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. With the ongoing pressure of the multinationals and the historic development of the armed struggle in the region, they have been forced to revive their pressure for liberalism. They also took their part in pressing for a liberal revival in Rhodesia, especially when it became obvious that Ian Smith's economic and political policies were advancing at an alarming rate towards a fiasco.

In Portugal itself the liberals, under the pressure of the multinationals, had been busy too. With Europe rapidly reconstructing its industries and developing new ones, the Portuguese bourgeoisie, along with American and British interests, busily began to demand the large-scale industrialization of Portugal. They felt that, given a peaceful climate in their colonies, it would be possible to utilize the enormous

natural resources of those colonies and their potential market to develop Portugal rapidly and put it on the same economic level as the rest of Europe. To achieve this goal, they reasoned, two things were necessary: First, a lasting peace in the colonies, which meant that a 'responsible' African leader had to be installed who would put each colony firmly under Portuguese influence and at the same time have the outward trappings of independence—a sort of Portuguese Hastings Banda. Such a 'freed' colony would then be acceptable for O.A.U. membership. Secondly, to achieve this objective, the multinationals, through their home governments, should bring pressure to bear on African governments to work towards a peaceful solution rather than resort to armed struggle. The attainment of both these goals, they argued, would work for everybody's good and the ultimate good of Africa. (The same tactics were later applied in Zimbabwe, even though they failed in Portuguese Africa).

The fourth aspect of this complex problem was the independent African countries. If the reactionary African leaders have been explicitly or implicitly apprehensive about the spread of the armed struggle in Africa and its dangerous influence on their own 'disaffected' elements, the radical leaders have never been too happy either, about these revolutionary activities, although in principle they have felt obliged to support them. Experience has shown them that the imperialist counter-espionage organizations, especially South African, have been able to infiltrate their agents into liberation movements, who not only spied for their masters but also acted as *agents provocateurs* within the movements. As most of the liberation movements were not vanguard parties, but merely mass parties, there was no reliable method by which they could monitor the infiltration. Again, as the political consciousness of most of the rank and file was still in the making, liberation movements provided a fertile ground for the disruptive activities of *agents provocateurs*. This tendency was specially dangerous for those host countries who granted permission and provided facilities for the use of their territories for training and arming some of these unruly elements over whom they had no legal or organizational control. This was a serious problem, which also worried responsible leaders of the liberation movements.

For these reasons, it was in the interests of even the radical leaders in these countries to work towards a speedy end of the armed struggle. But there were other reasons, mostly ideological, which made the argument even more convincing. The imperialists and the white bourgeois liberals in Southern Africa understood the situation perfectly, and they knew the answer to the problem, but their own extremists, the Vorsters and the Smiths, were not making it easy for them to come up with a compromise solution. The white bourgeois liberals, rightly or wrongly, read the famous Lusaka Manifesto as an African effort at bridge-building with them, allowing them to retreat gracefully from the

precipice. The Manifesto, in their view, sought only a promise from the whites in Southern Africa to commit themselves to the *principle* of eventual majority rule. Such a declaration of intent would, they thought, be enough to make African states and the O.A.U. call off the armed struggle. They saw it as a brilliant face-saving device for both sides.

Whether this was in the mind of the drafters of the Manifesto nobody, of course, will ever know, but the document was ambiguous enough to make some leaders of the liberation movements somewhat hesitant in giving it their enthusiastic and whole-hearted support. It was particularly worrying to them to learn that certain African countries had already groomed an alternative leadership, more 'flexible' and less committed to the armed struggle, who would take over when the time came for a compromise solution. They saw the assassination of Amilcar Cabral as an attempt in this direction, as a simple removal of extremists on one side in exchange for the removal of extremists on the other. The several assassination attempts on Agostinho Neto were seen in the same light.

The conflicting combination of all the above aspects made the solution to the problem of liberation a very complex one. If the Boers had their way, the Africans would continue to suffer the humiliating indignities of racial oppression in a rapidly deteriorating economic and political atmosphere. If the white liberals had their way, the result would have been permanent underdevelopment for the vast majority of the African masses, since, as we have seen in the earlier chapters, the liberal solution to underdevelopment is to perpetuate underdevelopment. But this was not all. The white liberal bourgeois solution would have also meant an end to African unity, for now that unity would be effectively hampered by the proliferation of Bandaism in the higher councils of the O.A.U.; at best it would be a unity of the graveyard.

On the other hand, if African leaders felt endangered by the existence of armed African guerrillas in or near their own countries, the alternative situation was even more dangerous to their security; for by avoiding a positive solution in the short term they would only be pushing Southern Africa's contradictions under the carpet, from where they would surely emerge later in a more ferocious form. Nobody has the right to suspend the solution to a problem knowing that posterity will suffer its consequences in a more serious and disruptive manner. The liberal tendency always to see a solution in a middle course was in this context a very dangerous piece of wishful thinking. History has shown that, if contradictions are not resolved in a systematic way, beginning in each case with the principal one (in this case complete liberation from imperialism, racialism, and Bandaism), the entire forward movement of the people comes to a standstill. A compromise solution will never lead to a successful resolution of the contradictions in Southern Africa, nor, consequently, in the rest of Africa. It will only postpone it, in the meantime condemning millions of Africans to untold suffering.

The only rational way out was to allow the tendency of history, in this case the resolution of the contradiction through armed struggle, to take its course. The historical obligation of the free African states was to give this tendency—and the liberation movements who are its vehicle—maximum facility and support, although temporarily this might involve some security problems. But such risks were part of the struggle. Our sacrifice would ensure greater freedom and real happiness to future African generations. This was the task allotted to the present generation by history. The various aspects of the Southern African problem which confronted the die-hard conservatives, the liberals and the multi-nationals at the time of South Africa's Dialogue proposal still to a large extent remain unsolved, despite the fact that the Portuguese colonies have gained their independence.

As we see it, it was the economic forces at work that prompted all these political and diplomatic manoeuvres on the part of the bourgeois imperialists desperately attempting to safeguard the world-wide capitalist system in the face of the socialist challenge. Once again we see the American and European bourgeoisie coming together to put up a united front against the emerging African forces, tactically burying their conflicts in order to achieve an overall strategic victory. Once again we see some African leaders unwittingly being out-maneuvred and thus exposing Africa to a much more ruthless oppression on both the economic and diplomatic fronts.

The compromise solutions sought after by the white liberal bourgeoisie have many dangerous consequences. A liberal 'democratic' South Africa enjoying world-wide prestige, surrounded by puppet regimes throughout the area, backed by the U.S.A. as a powerful bastion against communism, and ready to intervene in any African country which may seek to take an independent line of development—this is the scenario for a new Middle East-type situation in Southern Africa. The bourgeois, throughout their long oppressive history, have known no other way of safeguarding their world-wide interests than to create areas of instability. And failure to solve the Southern African problem thoroughly and in a revolutionary way will lead to just that situation.

Destabilising Africa

However, the job of destabilizing Africa requires at least two additional preconditions, both of which will work against African interests as a whole. The first is economic and the second diplomatic. The economic precondition is that the neighbouring African states must remain weak and tied to the South African economy. We have discussed in previous chapters the damaging effects of a dependent economy: permanent stagnation, deteriorating living standards of the masses, especially the workers and peasants, increasing international indebtedness, and

ultimately a lack of real political independence. So here we shall deal only with the second precondition, the diplomatic one.

This will also give us an insight into the reason why the Mulungushi axis (the Tanzania/Uganda/Zambia axis) at the beginning of the 1970s met with the same fate as the Ghana/Guinea/Algeria axis a decade earlier. Historically it has been the policy of the Western powers to isolate East and Central Africa from the 'Muslim North'. This was the result of their fear that a close link with North Africa might lead to a strong Pan African/Pan Arab movement which could effectively block Western penetration into Africa. A university researcher, John Lonsdale, has recently unearthed most interesting evidence to support this contention. It reveals a long-standing Western—especially British—policy aimed at weakening Africa by Balkanizing it into tribal kingdoms. The following minutes were circulated to the provincial administration in East Africa as far back as 1917. The minutes stated:

The participation of natives in British East Africa in the campaign in German East Africa, whether as soldiers or as porters, has given unprecedented opportunities of enlarging their ideas by contact with the natives of other dependencies. Certain of them have become acquainted with the Pan African ideal of the Ethiopian Church, with native politics from Abyssinia, and for the first time in the history of the Protectorate, a conception may have arisen in the native mind of the possibilities of a black Africa.

It may be urged that the coherence of the native tribes in Central and Eastern Africa, outside the littoral, renders any conflagration impossible, but such premises cannot be considered as a safe basis for argument in connection with native feeling after the War.

It is in connection with a native conception of the idea 'Africa for the Africans' that any conjunction with Islamic propaganda is to be regarded as a real danger. Islam would provide a cementing factor, and the consequent fanaticism would enormously increase both the military and political difficulty in dealing with such a movement. Converts are notoriously fanatic.

In East Africa Islam has tended to consider itself a political as much as spiritual force and there has recently been noticeable a tendency on the part of the natives to call themselves members of the Mohammedan nation. After the War it may be expected that proselytizing propaganda will be actively disseminated from Mecca, and, through such propaganda, it is almost sure to be of an anti-European character.

German East Africa is common ground for Pan Islam and Pan Africa; many of the natives educated in the German secular schools have embraced Islam, and the German Administrators have confessed to a feeling of apprehension respecting an African Jihad; i.e. a conjunction of an African political Islam against Europeans. Such a Jihad is not an improbability, and, after the War, it might meet with enthusiasm.

Lonsdale concludes: 'And the above minutes ended by asking views on the best means of implementing the suggestion that a "definite policy of encouraging strong and isolated tribal nationalism may be one of the most effectual barriers against a Pan African upheaval".'

The British pursued this policy of isolating East and Central Africa from North Africa with unprecedented vigour. They went as far as to foment racial antagonism between 'Arabs' and 'Africans' in both the Sudan and Zanzibar, and elsewhere in East Africa. Unfortunately, that policy was blindly followed even by our own governments after independence. In many ways it is still being pursued to this day, especially when the ruling stratum is faced with internal problems and feels the need for a little bit of racialism in order to maintain itself in power a little longer. However, what frightened Western interests with the advent of the Mulungushi axis was a simultaneous development outside Eastern Africa. This was the overthrow of the Libyan monarchy by the young Colonel Gaddafi and the coming into power of Numeiri in the Sudan. Both these young army officers were political unknowns and their files in the Western intelligence centres were either non-existent or too thin for any comprehensive appraisal of the men. Subsequent actions by Western intelligence against these young men suggest the conclusion that their assessment of these new leaders was arrived at *a priori*, that is, through inspiration rather than perspiration. Gaddafi was dubbed a Nasserite, and since Nasser in the Western intelligence files was a Russian satellite, therefore Gaddafi was assumed to be a Russian satellite too. Numeiri, also, having been brought to power by a popular uprising headed by the Sudan Communist Party, was immediately regarded as at worst a communist and at best a fellow-traveller. Thus with these two Northern 'Communist outposts' appearing virtually out of the blue, and the articulate Mulungushi axis asserting its presence in East Africa in no uncertain terms (with blue-capped Chinese engineers, armed with their 'little red book', scattered all over the place!), the possibility of extending the axis to include Sudan and Libya was becoming a real nightmare to the imperialists. The potential for a 'political rift valley' extending from the Mediterranean right down to the very heart of the Western bastion in the South of the continent was a prospect that could not be taken lightly; they would be insane to ignore it. And Western policy-makers are anything but insane. It is true they saw red and went as far as to call this potential axis the 'red axis' in their intelligence files, but that was their only misjudgement. A 'solution' had to be found.

On the basis of their own version of the 'weakest link in the chain', Western intelligence, with the active support of Israeli intelligence, chose Uganda as the break-up point. This, in the minds of the Western policy-makers, would serve two purposes: first, it would remove any possibility of the emergence of a political 'rift valley' by cutting it right across the middle; second, it would create favourable conditions for a

possible new axis which would be more dependable and more amenable to a policy of 'encouraging strong and isolated tribal nationalisms' which would be a 'most effectual barrier against a Pan African upheaval'. This hoped-for right-wing axis, the 'blue axis', as Western intelligence christened it even before it was born, was to be a horizontal one, extending from Kenya across to Zaire with the 'new' Uganda in the middle. The vicious idea behind this strategem was to chop Africa into two parts (by neutralizing the middle, via the blue axis), leaving Israel to deal with the North and the South Africans to deal with the South. Perhaps if the former Commissioner of Police in Obote's Uganda had lived to write his memoirs, we would have had an insight into the role played by Israel in that Uganda coup, especially by Lev, the military attache at the Israeli Embassy in Kampala.

The 'Capricornists', the right-wing white settlers in Southern Africa, reacted differently to the prospect of 'the red axis'. They decided to try and prevent its emergence by restoring the monarchy to power in Libya. Rightist extremists as a rule believe only in the preservation of the *status quo*; they are never at ease with change, any change. It was therefore no accident that Colonel Stirling of the old, notorious Capricorn Society was so enthusiastically involved in the bizarre attempt to overthrow Gaddafi of Libya.

Whether the political 'rift valley' or 'red axis' would have occurred at all, had Idi Amin not intervened with his coup in Uganda, will remain a matter for historical speculation, but subsequent events in both Sudan and Libya have proved quite unfounded the myth of the communist bogey which haunted Western intelligence and provided them with the pretext for intervention in the internal affairs of an independent country. Numeiri massacred the very communists who had put him in power, and he did so with the connivance and support of Sadat of Egypt.

While these 'happenings' no doubt illustrate the political naivety of those whom accidents of history have placed in a position to lead us, they also illustrate the danger to African stability as long as the problem of the South lacks a full solution. Sooner or later, if a compromise solution is arrived at by the white bourgeoisie in South Africa, our continent will find itself even more unstable, since our instability is actually the precise precondition for the stability of a shaky, patched-up 'democratic' South Africa such as the white liberal bourgeoisie envisaged. As we have seen above, the historical epoch for the emergence of an old-style bourgeois democracy after the fashion of eighteenth-century Europe and nineteenth-century Japan is no longer with us. This is the epoch of proletarian socialist revolution and the armed struggle in the Southern parts of Africa is a glorious manifestation of this epoch. The victory of armed struggle will inevitably lead to the establishment of a democracy of a new type: a democracy leading to socialism, the highest form of political *and* economic democracy. Any attempt to impose a 'solution' from outside,

any attempt to frustrate the natural course of historical development, whether by the white liberal bourgeoisie or by the compromised African states, will lead only to a long and agonizing period of oppressive rule and bloody struggles, a long and agonizing period of economic and political instability in most of the free African countries. It will lead to the long suffering of the people. The historical role of the free African states is to help African revolutionaries to carry the struggle in Southern Africa through to the end. They must not obstruct it. In helping revolutionaries we shall not only be helping the oppressed masses under the racist regimes, but we shall also be laying the foundation for a long-lasting peace and stability in our own countries.

To sum up, then, we see Africa, a balkanized Africa, in the midst of a world-wide struggle between socialism and capitalism, in which the latter is steadily losing ground. We see that, in spite of our claim of non-alignment or 'Third-Worldism', we are in fact part and parcel of the capitalist world system, the weaker poorer part at that. All the crises of the capitalist world system are born by us, in company with the rest of the developing world; we have become the beasts of burden of the whole system. Africa has become a battlefield upon which the struggle among the capitalist world system are borne by us, in company with the rest of own independence. The ease with which the imperialist powers determine our political and economic destinies makes our juridical independence a farce. We cry for unity, but work for disunity. We cry for independence but work for dependency. We struggle for our well-being but organize for poverty. Our leaders are bumped off, overthrown, humiliated, at the same time as our countries are steadily being reduced to the status of international beggars. In this we are in company with the rest of the developing world. India and Brazil, the two developing 'giants', are models of poverty and underdevelopment; they are a warning rather than an object of emulation. The working people pay in blood, sweat and tears because it is in the interests of the cliques in power to refuse to see the world as it really is. We are all galloping up an economic blind alley; and what is more, the leaders know it. Blinded by fear—fear of their own under-fed, under-clad, short-lived masses—they refuse to accept reality.

It will be a sad chapter in Africa's glorious history of struggle if our leaders allow themselves to be blinded by the pursuit of objectives which, in the final analysis, work against the true interests of the masses. If we are to serve the people effectively, it is our responsibility to examine critically the consequences of our leaders' policies, in the revolutionary spirit of criticism and self-criticism, and to chart a course to rapid development. The historical conjuncture, in which Africa finds itself at the centre of world events, is in our favour; it is in favour of the oppressed peoples of the world. Boldness, determination and revolutionary realism on the part of our leaders will enable us to take full advantage of this historical tide for the benefit of the people. The

African Socialism or a Socialist Africa?

masses are ready to take Africa to its historical destination; this is the objective reality. The more we neglect to champion the true interests of the people, the more fearsome the people get. The dilemma can only be solved, not through timidity, but through boldness in conformity with the concrete facts of our historical situation.

7. Path Towards Socialism

The Class Question

Despite the disheartening reactions of some of our leaders to the realities of the present-day world, despite their apparent dissimulation in the face of momentous national and international events, and despite their vacillation in times of crisis, there is among the majority of our leaders an element of patriotism, which is essential to the anti-imperialist struggle. While it is true that some African leaders are disgustingly corrupt in the pecuniary sense, it is not universally true. As we shall see below, their corruption for the most part is confined to the field of political power, the proverbial corruption of absolute power.

African leaders are fairly responsive to the popular will, having not had time to remove themselves far from contact with the people, in the short history of free Africa. This popular will is essentially petty-bourgeois, and has its origin firmly rooted in the peasantry, the so-called 'last capitalist'. Throughout the colonial era, and in many respects long after its end, the role of the bourgeoisie proper was played by Asians, European, and Lebanese immigrants who owned much of the means of production and controlled commercial capital. Entry to this class, at both the social and economic levels, was effectively blocked to Africans. Consequently the emerging post-colonial 'national bourgeoisie' in most parts of Africa is a bourgeoisie in the ideological, but not yet the economic, sense. Our education, as we shall see below, does not reflect our own economic base but the economic base of the colonial power. In other words, our superstructure does not yet correspond to our economic base. This is a peculiar colonial phenomenon, especially where the colonizers or settlers have not put down deep roots, as they did in Algeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. It follows that our politics, ideologies, religions, and laws are all foreign-oriented.

While it would be reckless to talk of African societies as classless, it is nonetheless necessary to define in concrete terms what is meant by class in Africa and the position of the various classes in each particular mode of production. There are, for instance, some wealthy individuals from among the ruling stratum whose wealth is due to their position in the

power structure, but they do not yet constitute a separate class from their peasant base; they are still a stratum. Lenin defines classes as 'large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.' His definition is often misinterpreted by overstressing the phrase 'groups of people' without defining the concrete role of these groups in social economy and their relation to the means of production. It is a formidable task to determine a class without first defining the system of social production of a particular society in which classes coexist, peacefully or antagonistically. In a slave society, for instance, the basic or fundamental classes are the slave-owners and the slaves; in feudal society, the landlords and serfs; in capitalist society, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. These classes are historically determined by the system of social production. In other words, they are the outcome of specific modes of production, and not *vice versa*. In neo-colonies, which are a special product of historically determined relations between strong bourgeois countries on the one hand, and weak ex-colonial countries on the other (in the epoch of the proletarian revolution), with a system of social production which, apart from the sector of natural economy, as we have seen, is wholly determined by external forces, class definition is often a very intricate exercise and a source of much controversy among Marxists. It is important, therefore, that such an attempt be handled with extreme caution; it must be as closely related as possible to the concrete situation, not only in order to develop a consistent policy and strategy by Marxists but also to facilitate the work of political mobilization.

In the course of man's evolution, some social communities have been formed not on the basis of class division. This was acknowledged by both Marx and Engels after coming into contact with Lewis Morgan's study of tribal societies and village communities. Engels was led to amend the opening paragraph of the *Communist Manifesto*, which originally stated, 'The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles', by adding 'that is, all written history'. Whereas in mature capitalist societies the fundamental classes (proletariat and bourgeoisie) confront each other in antagonistic struggle, in African neo-colonies the fundamental classes are very difficult to define even where they exist, and where they do exist it is even more difficult to say whether they are still in the process of formation or already locked in antagonistic contradiction. While it is important to study and analyse the classes involved in order to understand the

underlying motive force of any given society, it is more important to make sure that such classes do exist in concrete reality and not merely in abstraction.

Bourgeois sociologists, although now forced to admit the existence of classes because of their objective nature, nevertheless try to distort the very meaning of the concept by defining classes purely in terms of material well-being, using indicators like size of income, living conditions, standard of education, and so on, without defining the positions these groups occupy in social production. A wrong evaluation of classes is an extremely serious mistake, and very dangerous for purposes of political mobilization, and therefore it is imperative that we approach such analyses with extreme caution, at the same time avoiding any dogmatism on our own part. In the final analysis one can discuss the classes in any country only after determining the level of development and the system of social production in that country. This, however, obviously is not our task here, since we are concerned with the overall African situation and its uneven development.

Without deep-rooted economic interests, either as the exploiters or the exploited, a class cannot survive as a political force. Exploiting groups must either succumb to the foreign forces which sustain them as *compradors*, in which case they become very easy to identify as foreign stooges without any roots in civil society; or they must from time to time seek popular support by 'returning to the people'. In Africa, this means the peasantry for the most part. The peasantry are historically not outstandingly progressive, and the 'return to the people' is thus not necessarily a progressive step. Experience has shown that some of the most notorious tyrants have been quite popular among the peasants, in spite of their brutality to urban working people. The petty bourgeois of peasant origin is as shrewd as he is permanently suspicious, especially with foreigners. This is hardly surprising, after generations of exploitation by alien classes: landlords, commodity middlemen, moneylenders, and foreign rulers. His instinct for survival is a 'gregarious' instinct, and his 'return to the people' is more a matter of instinct than of political adroitness. In a rapidly developing Africa, where the urban centres or enclaves exert a magnetic influence over the rural areas, and where the unending one-way movement from the rural areas to the urban centres is characteristic, the urban interpretation of reality has a tremendous influence over the rural masses. Thus the view of things which penetrates to the peasantry is often loaded with the resentments and frustrations of the unemployed urban youth, the industrial reserve army we discussed above (p. 81). When the leaders 'return to the people' they find themselves confronted with the echo of the frustrated youth they left behind in the capital. In responding to the demands of the peasants they in effect respond to the urban-influenced frustrations which are now coming from the lips of the peasants.

This partly explains the ambivalence of our leaders when confronted

with momentous national or international events. Deeply influenced by bourgeois ideology, but politically dependent on the now disillusioned peasantry, they cannot go all out to support the former without uprooting themselves from their popular base, in spite of advantages in terms of personal wealth entailed in foreign connections. Many African presidents have lost their seats of power by ignoring this delicate balance. The agonizing vacillations between reactionary and progressive policies which are common in Africa are the essential outcome of maintaining this delicate balance. In the epoch of proletarian revolution in which anti-imperialism is so crucial, leaders, however reactionary, cannot but join the anti-imperialist current, even if they merely pay lip-service to it in order to survive politically.

Rising Political Consciousness and African Unity

The victory of the Indo-Chinese people over the apparently invincible American military might, after a bitter and protracted war, was the most important political lesson in recent years learnt by the African people, who have now become very sensitive to imperialist armed aggression. The Israeli alliance with the United States and South Africa was more than ample proof of Israel's role as an outpost of imperialism in the Middle East, and made it clear that Israel posed a threat not only to its neighbours but to the whole of Northern Africa. In addition, our own armed struggles in Southern Africa have aroused unprecedented mass enthusiasm in world affairs, especially, in the anti-imperialist struggle.

The anti-Israeli stand which Africa took in the 1973 war is a case in point. It was impossible for African leaders, including the most reactionary, to take any position other than the one unanimously taken in the October 1973 war. Those who take the view that African leaders have been forced into this new position by their selfish need for the so-called petro-dollar are merely reflecting their own long-standing condescending attitude towards Africa and its leaders. There are indeed some leaders who, echoing this essentially imperialist view, have aired a bargaining proposition that the Arabs, in return for African support, must reciprocate in kind by reducing oil prices to Africa on a sort of *quid pro quo* basis. This mercenary position is most unfortunate, but it does not reflect the general attitude of the rest of Africa, which bases its position on grounds of principle rather than on material advantages.

Another element forcing the hand of our political leaders in a radical direction is the new youth of Africa. They are restless and are questioning the vacuous bourgeois values on which our leaders base their actions. The youth now see the logical destination of those values—bloody repression in Indo-China, the Middle East and Southern Africa; and they find them repulsive. Their rebellion has found an effective weapon in their persistent and resounding calls for unity. Different

people have different reasons for responding to this call. Some think in terms of political ends; some have economic reasons in mind (e.g. the development of regional economic communities); some, especially the unemployed, see in African unity an opportunity for free movement in search of jobs; petty traders see in it a potential for expansion of their area of operation; and so on. This, however, is not the kind of unity which Nkrumah had in mind. His was the unity of convinced leaders who would see it as a rational choice, as an alternative to a weak and balkanized Africa. Nkrumah's idea of unity was unity from above; unity through the strength of the argument. The new demand for unity is a call from below, a unity of the oppressed working people who are gradually beginning to develop independent class interests either as proletarians or as peasants. Whereas some leaders could openly oppose Nkrumah's call for unity without endangering their political prospects at home, practically no leader now hopes to oppose this new call for unity with impunity. Subjectively, Africa is irretrievably committed to unity.

The African unity which revealed itself during the Middle East war was a shocking event to the imperialists. They had taken African disunity for granted, fully convinced that the germ of division they had carefully planted was still active. Experience now shows convincingly that the move towards unity cannot be countered by a disruptive fomenting of disunity, because the pressure is now from below, from the people. No leader, whatever he does or says in private, can now dare to take a public position against African unity.

Of course, there may be disruptions here and there, as is inevitable in any historical movement, but the main trend is towards unity. As new leaders step into the political scene, and as more and more of these leaders emerge from the ranks of the people, and are not imposed on them by accidents of history (as was the case during the struggle for independence), nor by the unhistorical intervention of the privileged armed forces, the move towards unity will be stepped up, especially if it is accompanied by economic measures which reflect the people's material interests. Sound economic measures in turn reinforce the trend towards unity. This has been proved historically by the experiences in the socialist countries, where mutual interests, in place of cut-throat competition, have brought the socialist countries together in bonds of fraternal unity cutting across cultural and other traditional differences. The selfless support given to the Indo-Chinese people by the socialist camp during more than two decades of struggle, or the supreme sacrifice of the Chinese people in support of the Korean people in the face of brutal American aggression, are manifestations of unity in times of crisis, to say nothing of the economic co-operation among socialist countries, which has turned them all, including small countries like Albania, into self-reliant and nationally integrated economies.

But the trend towards unity is still frustratingly slow. This is because while the people's political will is subjectively for unity, the economic

forms prevalent in Africa, the objective conditions inherited from colonialism (and not yet fundamentally changed by any of our independent governments) still lead to disunity. Our economies do not reflect the universal interests of the people; they reflect only the partial interests of the privileged minority at the top and their foreign backers. Consequently, the pursuit of such partial interests inevitably leads to contradictions which are the causes of disunity. Thus, unless we transform these partial interests into the universal interests of the people, the move towards unity will be objectively obstructed, although subjectively we may be crying out aloud for unity.

We know that the economic forms we have inherited from colonialism were designed to serve the production and consumption needs of the capitalist world and not the universal interests of our people. The bourgeois rationale of these kinds of economic forms is that in producing for the capitalist world those involved in productive activities would earn some income which in turn would create demand for goods and services and set in motion economic growth (which is of course a different thing from economic *development*). This is a perfect strategy for foreign-oriented neo-colonies, for it is not designed to create conditions for development, but only conditions for the production of annual growth figures to impress the multilateral organizations and the interests they serve. Our education was designed to produce educated elites whose function would be to administer our dependency, through the world market, on metropolitan economies and their financial institutions. As we have seen above, this structure ensures that most of our surplus is appropriated by our foreign trading partners and aid donors, resulting in lopsided development and a deteriorating standard of living for the broad masses of the working people.

Even though African leaders have a capacity to respond to the popular will owing to their class origin, their outlook is distorted by the education they have received, which, although bourgeois in content, is nevertheless forward-looking compared to the peasant outlook. But, as we shall see, the bourgeois idea of progress is limited and helps to confuse these leaders even further. If, in the course of administering our dependency, a handful of people accumulate wealth at the expense of the masses, this is considered to be progress, even if in the meantime prisons go on filling up with potential opponents and social contradictions continue to deepen and threaten the very stability which made the system work for nearly two decades of independence. To the masses, however, these contradictions are healthy, since they are gradually taking on a class character and therefore, as far as they are concerned, cannot be wholly negative.

Those who do not share the leaders' views on progress are regarded by them as subversive, for the leaders believe that we are making progress, slowly perhaps, but progress nonetheless. Progress within a context of stagnation is a contradiction in terms, and yet the leaders

believe in it. This myopic attitude can only be explained by understanding the class origin of the leaders, set against their education which does not reflect that origin. As we have seen, most of our leaders, being basically petty-bourgeois and ideologically profoundly influenced by bourgeois education, tend to ignore reality if it does not fit their idealized wishes, which are ambivalent because of the ambivalent class position they occupy. As they gradually identify their class interest with that of their foreign bourgeois backers, they slowly lose the 'common touch' which originally helped to sustain them as political leaders. Many of the problems in Africa today are due to the inability of the leaders to grapple with the complex realities to which Africa is exposed. While the peasant sentiment which the leaders share with their political constituency may be sufficient to ensure temporary political survival, peasant instinct alone cannot make head or tail of what is happening around them and consequently cannot help the leaders very much. Moreover, as the leaders lose any sense of the true realities of the African situation owing to their slowly evolving objective class interest, independent of their will or sentiment, they are more and more isolated from the masses and lose even the little influence that they enjoyed earlier. In some extreme cases, they become so isolated that they tend to distort reality to suit their evolving class interests, which they now rationalize by creating an idealized 'African position'. When this point is reached, real trouble starts.

The basis of their education is responsible for most of these leaders actions, private and public, and the African masses must thoroughly understand it in order to evolve their own position in the face of these new trends. We must also study the entire hierarchy of values which stems from their education, for in the final analysis these values have a direct and profound bearing on decisions, actions, motivations, and so on.

The Bourgeois World View Inherited by African Leaders

As we have already seen, the bourgeoisie differs in motivation and outlook from the classes which preceded it historically. Capitalism, which is the bourgeois' own creation, brought in its train not only the exploitation of man by man at its highest level, but also a complete political doctrine justifying it as a system. All its many brands of philosophy and ethics are apologias for capitalism, and its exponents are not averse from distorting reality to suit their idealized objectives. As the bourgeoisie has now embarked on a massive ideological offensive, an offensive of intellectual duplicity, in order not only to defend their discredited values but also to confuse our leaders and intellectuals further, it is important also to arm ourselves intellectually in order to counter their aggression.

There is a fundamental difference between the bourgeois world outlook and the working-class world outlook. One is founded on idealism; the other on dialectical and historical materialism. We shall briefly have a look at both of these. The bourgeois or idealist world outlook has two branches, one religious, the other non-religious. The latter of these is sometimes described as 'materialist' in the non-dialectical sense, or is called 'mechanistic' materialism. According to these materialists, our knowledge of the external world is in fact subjective, depending on the efficiency of our five senses to transmit to our brain their reaction to the world. This is known as knowledge through perception (using memory as a storehouse of earlier perceptions). The essence of the existence of the world around us is therefore to be found in our brain. Truth, reality, and the rest are only linguistic abstractions, and are subject to misinterpretation since they have different meanings to different people, depending on the soundness or otherwise of their five senses, and on their psychological and cultural background, and on other factors. What is true to one person may not necessarily be true to another. Consequently, no knowledge can be claimed to be certain; at best it can be probable, or highly probable. What we hear, see, touch, taste, or smell may be a universal illusion rather than representing the real world, in much the same way as artificial flowers, fruits, etc. may look, or even smell, like the real thing without being real. The task for rational people therefore consists in defining our words correctly and unambiguously, so that those to whom we wish to communicate know exactly what we mean by those words, and words about whose meaning or usage we all agree. To attempt to go beyond these linguistic limitations, in this view, is really to talk balderdash. 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent', thus spake Wittgenstein, the father of modern Western philosophy. This is the kind of reasoning known in philosophy as scepticism or agnosticism; it is a variation of the school known as logical positivism. The entire theory of knowledge, or epistemology, of bourgeois materialism more or less revolves around this sort of rationalization.

The other metaphysical view of knowledge has its foundation in a religious outlook. This outlook stems from the premise that man's motivations must be traced back to his fall from grace, which is the well-known Judeo-Christian concept of original sin. According to this view, man is essentially egoistic, and selfishness is an essential ingredient in human nature. Man, unlike other creatures, has been endowed with soul, which makes him superior to them. The soul also identifies each person as an individual distinct from other individuals which makes him responsible and answerable for his actions. Good actions are rewarded; evil actions are punished. This is true both of this world and the world hereafter. Knowledge, absolute knowledge, is possible only if man overpowers the temptations of the flesh, which are essentially sinful and wicked; this knowledge raises his spiritual being, the soul, to sublime

perfection. In the struggle for perfection each man is alone, and must wage his spiritual battles for his own salvation. In material and spiritual life, therefore, everybody is for himself, and God is for all (or, if you like, the Devil take the hindmost). Around these assumptions revolve the ethics, and the cultural, political, and economic values which are summarized, synthesized, and transmitted in bourgeois education. All of us who are 'educated' are the products (the victims?) of this education, whether we come from English- or French- or Portuguese-speaking Africa.

The basis of the bourgeois concept of 'progress' is also to be found in the above assumptions. It holds that the motive force for progress lies in the pursuit of personal gain which is innate in man; it is part of human nature to struggle in competition with one's fellow-men; and that in the process man has developed the techniques necessary to service his own selfish acquisitiveness. As a result, this struggle for selfish ends has set in motion, quite accidentally, the process which we now know as progress. It follows, therefore, that in order to achieve progress, society must allow maximum free play of the acquisitive or competitive 'instinct' in man. At the same time, society must establish laws and social customs to ensure that, in the pursuit of these selfish ends, no one infringes upon the freedom of another to pursue his own selfish ends. 'Fair play' means that the pursuit of selfish ends must be conducted 'fairly', in accordance with certain rules.

In order to delve a little deeper into the origins of these concepts which have developed into the kernel of Western bourgeois Christianity, we must have a brief look into Judaism, the mother of Christianity. Judaism taught that for Jews the indiscriminate pursuit of selfish ends was permissible *only* in relation to 'outsiders', the Gentiles; among themselves, the 'chosen people', it was strictly forbidden. In fact, the followers of Judaism were *obliged* to help each other, rather than compete among themselves. The rich were called upon to help their poor brethren get rich. The oppressed came from other nations. The God of Judaism taught: 'And the stranger shall stand and feed your flock and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and vinedressers.'

From this follows another prohibition: the practice of usury was forbidden among the Jews, but they were free to practise it in their dealings with foreigners, the 'strangers'. Usury, or the extraction of interest on capital, was the earliest form of capitalist accumulation. So while some call usury the spirit of Judaism, others call it the spirit of capitalism. When Christianity came into existence it rejected the Jewish doctrine of the chosen people and replaced it with the broader doctrine of the universal brotherhood of mankind. Thus, when the Jews wandered into Christian Europe with their doctrine of the chosen people, they found Europe completely disarmed by the doctrine of universal brotherhood, and Europe became a fertile and profitable ground for the advance of, in reality, capitalism.

The contact of Christianity with Judaism, which begat capitalism, transferred the idea of the pursuit of selfish ends from the realm of religious thought to that of civic society. The doctrine became the basic principle of private enterprise. Social values and ethical standards were evolved to confirm and nourish it. It became the basis for the educational and intellectual formation of the bourgeoisie, the superstructure which reflected the evolving economic base of Hegel's 'civil society'.

When our leaders, the victims of this bourgeois education, fail to appreciate the problems which confront the people from the people's standpoint, the cause of this shortcoming must be traced to these origins. Limited and partial, the bourgeois world outlook has profoundly influenced our leaders. It cannot see beyond individually motivated self-interest, expressed in the isolated and separate struggles of the individual, often in conflict with other individuals, struggles which seek to make the most of life while the going is good. It sees in the confrontation between poverty and private wealth, not a bitter and antagonistic contradiction which can be resolved only through continuous and organized class struggle, but an absence of charity which can only be rectified through good will. (The current appeal for the so-called 'New International Economic Order' is a manifestation of this attitude.) The bourgeois advocate that there is really nothing one can do about the wickedness of 'human nature' except to appeal patiently to positive human 'instincts', which alone will ultimately ensure the preponderance of good over evil. Those who want to push the pace, or who ignore these human limitations, are either reckless, unrealistic, non-pragmatic, or just plain subversive, trouble-makers whose rightful abode is prison.

However much one may wish to sympathize with this simplistic, naive and altogether foreign-imposed outlook, it is, even by bourgeois radical standards, morally as well as intellectually unsatisfactory; it is also thoroughly counter-revolutionary from the working-class point of view. The doctrine of private enterprise, with self-interest as its strongest motivation, is incompatible with the doctrine of charity: selfish acquisition by one person must inevitably be accompanied by the deprivation of another. In other words, if you sanction private wealth, by the same token you sanction poverty. No amount of good will or philosophical hanky-panky will alter this dialectical truth. It is over the realistic apprehension of this truth that scientific socialism parts company with democratic socialism or any other brand of petty-bourgeois utopian socialism.

It is quite understandable that the advocates of capitalism side-step this question of principle. It is not our purpose here to argue the case against capitalism. We are assuming that the arguments against capitalism, especially in developing countries, are sufficiently compelling not to need any further elaboration. Our concern here is with the many

brands of 'socialism' that are being peddled throughout the neo-colonies, side-tracking the real problems and confusing us in our struggle for the true solutions. It is almost a truism to say that all brands of socialism other than scientific socialism are influenced by bourgeois, Judeo-Christian values; and that within the framework of these values, private enterprise and the pursuit of individual selfish ends are sacrosanct. All brands of socialism other than scientific socialism accept the principle of private wealth, insisting only that it be accompanied by 'social justice'. Given this partial outlook, they fail to see the contradiction in their position, namely, that acquisition of private wealth, on however small a scale, is by definition a negation of social justice.

Industrially developed bourgeois countries which have opted for this brand of socialism, or the welfare state, get away with it because the productivity of labour in these countries is so high that what wage-earners really gain in social welfare is only a pittance compared to the vast surplus value which their labour produces and which is pocketed by the industrialists and the extensive bureaucracy which administers this welfare. The latter in fact now constitute a new, affluent social stratum in these welfare states. For a neo-colony, however, to opt for this kind of socialism is to invite disaster. For it is essentially a socialism of consumption rather than of production (since production in these countries is predominantly privately owned); but in the neo-colonies there exists hardly any surplus from the productive sector that can be thrown away in welfare, and therefore there is just not enough to go round, except by redistributing poverty.

But does scientific socialism reject private wealth under *any* circumstances? We shall come to this question in a later chapter when we discuss the socialist tactics of controlling, utilizing and winning over private capital during the early period of economic reconstruction. As we shall see, the socialist attitude to this question is fundamentally different from the petty-bourgeois version of 'joint enterprise' with multinational corporations or the 51%/49% state participation model, which actually intensifies rather than alleviates the exploitation of the masses.

Thus, when the people are not impressed by the 'progress' which the leaders claim to have brought about in neo-colonies, it is clear why the leaders are baffled and pained. From their point of view, and with regard to their material interests, progress has in fact been achieved. Their standard plea is: 'We are sorry if our progress is not rapid enough, but it is not our fault. Look at the world situation! We are sorry if the gains are partial; we would like to see everybody enjoy the fruits of independence, but we can't do everything at once. Rome was not built in a day! Work and work harder!' The point, however, is not what the leaders believe, which is what they want to believe, but what the rest of the people experience and feel in their daily lives. This is what is known as the real, objective world around us.

The Proletarian World Outlook—The Only Alternative

Broadly speaking, it is the bourgeois system of values which influences all our leaders in decision-making and in looking for solutions to national problems. As we have seen, it is an outlook which has been influenced by bourgeois education of which they are the victims. No wonder then, that with this one-sided and superficial outlook they find it impossible to understand the situation we are in and its unlimited problems, far less find correct solutions. Why do scientific socialists, in contrast to bourgeois socialists, tend to be correct in assessing situations and finding correct solutions? The answer lies in the difference of their outlooks.

In contrast to the bourgeois world outlook, scientific socialism bases its theory of knowledge on facts, and it is guided by the method of dialectical and historical materialism. It holds that the subjective and objective factors must be coextensive if a correct solution is to be found. In an often repeated passage Marx says: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.' This is an important principle in dialectical materialism; it relates directly to the theory of knowledge. Whereas, as we have seen, metaphysics and idealistic materialism talked of gaining knowledge through introspection, memory and linguistic-juggling, in the abstract and static sense, dialectical materialism talks about knowledge in the concrete and dynamic sense, a sense in which change and motion are implicit. According to this view, everything is in a state of flux, coming into being or decaying. What was true yesterday may not be true today. People themselves change physically from hour to hour; in fact, within minutes several millions of a person's body cells die and new ones come into being. This is true of all living objects. This is what Heraclitus, the ancient Greek dialectician, meant by his observation that 'a thing is and is not'. In recognizing changes one is merely stating what is taking place in the natural world. Any change for the better takes place in the realm of conscious organization, as distinct from that of unconscious or spontaneous change. To change the hostile, natural environment into one conducive to the full realization of human potential is the aim of scientific socialism. To that end, a correct analysis of the world around us, based on careful investigation and the collection of relevant data and other information, is absolutely essential. No investigation, says Mao, then no right to speak. This is the methodology of the scientific approach. It is at the same time the distinction between scientific socialism and other philosophical doctrines which are partial and subjective.

Scientific socialism challenges the idealists' assertion that egoism or selfishness are essential parts of human nature or that it is this instinct which drives human beings forward. Scientific socialism asserts that when we talk about human nature in that sense, what we are really

talking about is an alienated man, not the real or human being. As we noted earlier, before the advent of commodity production, man organized himself in simple societies, with a socially necessary division of labour essential for his maintenance and reproduction.

As man himself is part of nature, he shares all the attributes of other natural beings; that is to say, eating, drinking, and procreating. To this extent man is part of nature and all his activities to attain the above three attributes are natural activities. But man has an additional attribute which is not shared by other natural beings. This attribute is *productive labour*. When man moved from natural or simple society to a society producing commodities, when he set off on the journey towards capitalism, that unique human attribute, productive labour, itself eventually became a commodity. Henceforth man had to *sell* his labour *in order* to satisfy his other three natural or animal needs—eating, drinking and procreating.

This metamorphosis, so to speak, so unnatural to man, has alienated him. As Marx put it, 'What is animal becomes human, and what is human becomes animal.' Thus, can we really refer to what this estranged man does as 'human nature'? Scientific socialism answers with an emphatic *no*. It argues that, ever since the intervention of capitalism, man has been threateningly confronted by blind market forces, or exchange. In addition, he is confronted by other men, in equally threatening fashion, by virtue of the contradiction between labour and capital. Consequently, this estranged man's manifestations of egoism or selfishness cannot be said to be part of human nature, but rather a symptom of the non-natural man produced by capitalism.

But scientific socialism does not (and this is very important) proceed from here to advocate a return to nature. This would be both backward-looking and reactionary; only socialist utopians, the subjective socialists, like to idealize the past nostalgically, as if the privations of simple society had any real attractions for the people who actually lived in it. In practice scientific socialism advocates that, with the enormous and sophisticated means of production now at man's disposal, with the material goods which advanced machines are capable of producing, the answer to man's estrangement and alienation, his backwardness, deprivation and degradation, lies in *transcending* the capitalist mode of production and distribution to a higher, more 'humanly natural' mode, i.e. socialism.

Socialism cannot be a retreat to the past, as the petty-bourgeois idealists would like. It is a forward movement to supersede capitalism's inhuman and unnatural subordination of man, which has resulted in his estrangement. Capitalism interferes with the full flowering of man's all-round development—cultural and moral as well as economic—and it imposes all forms of social and legal restrictions on the development of real freedom. Socialism alone can develop that freedom, precisely because it is not hampered by any bonds with the past.

To achieve socialist ends, to achieve this supersession, several things are needed. First of all, there has to be a working-class revolution in alliance with the dispossessed peasantry and revolutionary intellectuals. Secondly, these classes must dismantle the bourgeois state with all its coercive machinery, and replace it by a proletarian state, a state of a new type, under the constant and vigilant supervision of organized proletarians to ensure that power is not usurped from them by a handful of bureaucrats, and allowing a free flow of fresh ideas from emerging youth. Thirdly, a planning mechanism must be set up which will ensure that the law of planned, proportional development of the national economy (which we will explain in the next chapter) is strictly observed during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. Fourthly, economic and social institutions must be set up that will hasten rather than hinder the transition. Unlike the metaphysicist and petty-bourgeois utopian notions of socialism, scientific socialism does not agree with the idea of allowing progress to be at the mercy of spontaneous forces charged by individual selfish motivations; instead it holds that social ownership automatically destroys the laws of capitalist economy and creates its own, new, objective laws, which are as predictable as natural laws. As Marx says, 'The necessity of the distribution of social labour in definite proportions cannot possibly be done away with by a particular form of social production but can only change the mode of its appearance . . . No natural laws can be done away with.'

Even the worst reactionaries realize now that capitalism and its values are rotten and no longer compatible with the present-day needs of modern man, who wants to break away from the restrictive shell of capitalism which hinders his humanly natural development. The youth crisis of the late sixties and early seventies is only part of the expression of this rejection. It is clear that not the capitalist but the socialist environment is the one that will ensure that society reflects the universal interests of the people in place of their partial interests as they are served under capitalism. Only under socialist conditions will genuine human development be objectively an attainable goal. Only in the pursuit of socialist ends will the move towards African unity conform to objective reality and be accelerated by leaps and bounds. This is the precondition for the defeat of the machinations of imperialists whose objective is to keep this continent for ever as a source of cheap raw materials and a market for capitalism's obsolete industrial goods. No kind of New International Economic Order or any other dream-world can help us in this struggle, for the solution to the problem does not lie anywhere but at home.

Socialism in Africa Is On the Agenda

The distinction between the bourgeois idealist and proletarian socialist

approaches thus clearly has more than semantic or academic significance. The bourgeois and socialist outlooks are the only two outlooks these days which really influence the human race; there is no third outlook possible. Whether man lives in a simple society (i.e. a natural or communal society) or in a highly developed and complex industrial society, whether he is Christian or Muslim or some other religion, his view of life is either metaphysical idealist or dialectical materialist. Of course there are variations in the former, but, as noted above, their differences are more apparent than real. At the one extreme there is the metaphysical theory of the Christian church and of organized religion, theory developed by the great religious thinkers, from Augustine and Aquinas right down to present-day Catholic apologists. At the other extreme there are the numerous cults—the anti-science cult, the cult of unreason, the counter-culture movement, and so on. In between these extremes there are the rationalists, the semanticists and linguists, the free thinkers, those who adhere to the uncertainty principle of human knowledge, the logical positivists, the agnostics, the existentialists, and the rest. All these philosophical trends (and some not so philosophical) revolve around metaphysics, although some adopt a scientific method of analysis (but even this is only ‘mechanical materialism’ since its premises, as we saw, are rooted in metaphysics). They all operate within the same philosophical *milieu*, as it were. They delve into psychology only to justify and fortify the metaphysical—the ego, the superego, the id, and other occultist mumbo-jumbo. Science is made mysterious, put out of the people’s reach; it does not exist to serve them but to dominate and exploit them. Its development abides by the dictates of capitalism, which flourishes on mass ignorance and gullibility. The pursuit of selfish ends, whether in this life or the next, whether by individuals or the dominant class, is its impulsive destination.

On the other hand, scientific socialism views the drama of life from a fundamentally different standpoint. While metaphysicists and idealists regard individuals, the Napoleons and Caesars, and their psychological motivations as being the driving force of history, scientific socialism sees the social process as being the real bones and sinews of history. The former singles out individuals in isolation from the social forces at work during their time; and by thus confusing cause and effect, they elevate these individuals into movers of history instead of the other way round. But history, as we have seen, develops through conflicts of opposing forces, through class contradictions which are the expressions of the mode of production and property relations. Culture, too, is a reflection of the politics and economics of society at a given stage of development. Scientific socialism rejects the concept of selfishness as an intrinsic part of human nature, and works for its transcendence to a higher form of social organization free from these class antagonisms.

Are these two divergent world outlooks alien or irrelevant to Africa?

Is there a third outlook, essentially African, which follows 'neither East nor West'? In view of the arguments I have presented above, the question is obviously irrelevant, even meaningless. And yet how often do we hear such vacuous expressions, designed, no doubt, to confuse the African masses? Some political confusionists, frustrated intellectuals, blind culturists and so on, often urge us to look for 'our own way of development', or call upon us never to seek 'salvation from alien ways' (sounds like the 'chosen people' all over again!). Some insist that we must develop within our own 'cultural context', whatever that is, and so on. In a recently published book, *The Political Economy of Imperialism*, Professor Dan Nabudere gave us an excellent analysis of capitalist political economy. Yet some of these 'culturists' attacked the book because, believe it or not, it did not discuss African culture, and did not view political economy from the cultural context of Africa! They alleged that this is what the late Amilcar Cabral might have done. This is of course petty-bourgeois nonsense, and it reflects imperialist interests rather than genuine African interests. By wishing to diminish and divert a critical study of the very system which oppresses and humiliates us into a mere cultural exercise, an analysis of culture, which is itself only a product of the social system of production, these conscious or unconscious agents of world capitalism want to fool and bamboozle the masses of Africa and perpetuate their ignorance.

As it happens, this cultural escapism is not even original. At the height of the Asian struggle for independence, the very same call for development 'within the Asian cultural context' was quite common among Western-educated Asian intellectuals. No country in the world had a greater sense of the past, or of its cultural heritage than Imperial, pre-revolutionary China. It was Mao and the Chinese Communist Party who taught the Chinese people to forget the cultural dross of their feudal past and concentrate on the more serious business of fighting imperialism and reconstructing the economy into an independent, self-sustaining system, on the basis of the lessons learnt from the people's struggle. This was the meaning of his famous slogan 'Let the past serve the present!' For at the time when the Chinese bourgeois were preoccupied with their past glory, their past values and past culture, the Chinese masses were literally starving in their millions every year. It was not until the Chinese people cut themselves free from the anchor of the past that China began to move ahead; and it has moved ahead in unprecedented leaps since then, leaving much of the rest of Asia wallowing in its jaded past and starving in millions in the meantime.

To talk of the future in terms of rejecting what is 'alien to Africa' is really to talk in terms of perpetuating our dependency. This is the kind of talk which sounds pleasantly agreeable to the ears of our traditional exploiters. What is more, as we saw in an earlier chapter, their long-standing policy has always been to encourage 'strong and isolated tribal nationalism' as a barrier against any attempt at national, independent

development. In an Africa in need of technology and science, in need of rapid economic development, to encourage entanglement with the past, which dictates neither action nor innovation, is as meaningless as it is outdated. The needs of today's Africa and the Africa we must hand down to posterity are more serious, more complex, and require a serious and clear-sighted approach by the mass of working people in whose hands the future of Africa lies. That is why the question of socialism in Africa is on the agenda, whatever the culturists may say. Socialism is not only a social science with a future in terms of efficient utilization of labour and other resources for rapid economic development; it is *the* social system of the future. If African capitalism is a practical impossibility, and if mixed economies lead to economic impasse, the only course open to us is socialism; and the struggle of the working masses can only be a struggle for socialism. So what does it mean to say that, socialism is 'alien' to Africa? To be alien to any society, socialism must have a 'home' of its own in the first place—and what is the home of socialism? Is it Russia or China? Or Korea? Or Vietnam, or Cuba, or Albania? Is it Germany or the British Museum? The question is obviously nonsensical and does not warrant any serious consideration.

Needless to say, the confusions which have become so endemic among our leaders stem from the idealistic outlook which blurs their vision of politics, economics, history, culture and so on. They see events as being motivated by individual, self-interested struggles and hence they miss the whole point about mass mobilization. The leaders are out of touch with reality because they do not perceive correctly what moves people to action. Their ambivalence (now for the people, now against them) is reflected in the contradiction between what the people want (which is reality) and what the leaders assume they want (which is idealism, or wishful thinking), or in their conviction that what is in their interests must also be in the interests of the people. This myopic idealism is already a serious problem, but it will be disastrous if the working people, and representatives of the emerging classes of the oppressed, give up hope in frustration and let things drift along in their own merry way.

Our leaders, by and large, have not yet developed an independent economic *class* interest in the policies they pursue, most of them being motivated by simple personal gain, so that ideologically their policies reflect essentially the same interests as those of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. However, since most of them are patriotic and anti-imperialist, it may be possible, through pressure from below or organized workers and their allies, to direct them towards popular democracy or even socialism, rather as in Cuba, where a nationalist revolution was transformed into a socialist one because the leaders were genuinely patriotic, anti-imperialist and reflected the interests of the broad masses of the people.

For the pressure from below to be effective, it is absolutely essential for the masses and their leaders, the workers, in alliance with

revolutionary intellectuals, to arm themselves with a thorough knowledge of scientific socialism, through a diligent study of Marxist literature, through study groups, through constant discussion and exchange of experiences. Only with a conscious working class and a generation of militant and class-conscious youth imbued with an advanced knowledge of socialist thought can African countries move rapidly towards socialism and genuine African unity.

In some parts of Africa, however, criminal elements have taken power by force and are emulating fascist dictatorship, thus giving comfort to all the oppressors of Africa. With these crooks it would be suicidal to depend on the tactics of persuasion. In this situation a stubborn struggle must be waged by the working people for democratic liberties, an essential precondition for a socialist revolution.

In countries where 'socialism' has already been declared to be official policy but in fact capitalism is practised, workers' vigilance of the highest order must be maintained to ensure that the leaders are not allowed to wreck the economy and discredit socialism in the process. In these so-called 'socialist' countries some of the worst repressive measures against the people, especially the workers and other oppressed classes, are resorted to in the name of socialism. African Marxists are obliged to expose these fascist tendencies whatever the price, otherwise history will condemn them for their opportunism.

In yet other African countries actual Marxism-Leninism has been declared to be the official policy, but the productive forces are still very backward, and as a result, complex problems arise in the course of implementing socialist policies. In these cases, Marxists are obliged to give maximum moral and material support. Only by pooling the varied experiences of Marxism in practice can these new, socialist countries in Africa and elsewhere ever hope to find the correct solutions to the very many problems arising out of imperialist domination and economic backwardness—problems which will get worse as development begins to take place, if no long-term strategy is adopted.

The following chapter will, therefore, attempt to open discussion on the crucial question of a socialist development strategy in countries where the material and technical bases for socialism are virtually non-existent. A word of warning is, however, necessary here. Socialism is a very wide subject and it would be presumptuous for me to claim to be airing the views of all scientific socialists on the subject under discussion. More than a third of the human race, of many different cultural and economic backgrounds, are now actively engaged in socialist construction, and the wealth of experience they have accumulated is bound to enrich socialist thought in a way that would make dogmatism taboo. Since socialism is not a dogma but a guide to action, we must critically examine our situation without preconceived notions, and try to apply Marxist theories in practice to our concrete situation. We are dealing with a completely new situation never before

confronted by any socialist experience, considering the low level of development from which Africa must start its own socialist reconstruction. What Lenin called 'patriarchal' agriculture in the Russia of 1917 (by which he meant a most backward form of agriculture) is, in many parts of Africa, very advanced by comparison. In spite of the vast quantity of land and fertile soil, Africa still cannot feed itself. Under such circumstances only a non-dogmatic approach, but one firmly based on the principles of dialectical and historical materialism, will give us the key to the complex puzzle of our development.

8. Development Strategy— Revolutionary Style

The Modern State in Neo-Colonies

The most important ideological difference between Marxism-Leninism and other forms of socialism is the theory of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat which, Marxists hold, is the most essential means of establishing a society free from the exploitation of man by man, and one which will lead to the establishment of the classless society of the future. Lenin gave an extended exposition on the subject, principally in his *The State and Revolution*, as well as in speeches and other writings. He went so far as to suggest that those who do not recognize both the necessity of class struggle and of the dictatorship of the proletariat are not Marxists at all, and that, conversely, to be a Marxist is implicitly to admit the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marxists further hold that it is impossible to establish socialism if the proletariat does not hold state power and exercise that dictatorship to organize society along socialist lines.

Lenin, however, insisted repeatedly that force was not the only or even the principal ingredient of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Organization and proletarian discipline are far more important. In his address to the first all-Russia Congress on adult education in 1919, Lenin said, 'Dictatorship does not mean only force, although it is impossible without force, but also a form of organization of labour superior to the preceding form.'

There is a vast difference between the bourgeois state and the proletarian state. As we have seen, the French Revolution was the landmark of the establishment of the bourgeois form of government, whose principal moral and political aspirations were summarized in the famous slogan: 'Liberty, equality, fraternity'. Engels ridiculed this call by showing that the bourgeois conception of equality is merely absurd and stupid prejudice if it does not imply the abolition of classes. There can be no equality between the exploiter and the exploited; as long as money remains the medium of exchange, exploitation also will remain. The bourgeois conception of freedom or liberty is also meaningless as long as there are exploiting classes, for whom freedom means nothing

more than the freedom of the rich to exploit the poor and the freedom of the poor to starve. Only in a classless society would these conceptions of liberty, equality and fraternity have any meaning in real life. Thus the task of the proletariat is not to be hoodwinked by these abstract terms but to struggle to take state power into their own hands, to dismantle the bourgeois state, to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat based on an alliance between the proletariat and other oppressed classes, especially the poor and middle peasants.

The leadership to attain the above objectives lies in the *vanguard party*, which consists of the most advanced and class-conscious workers and revolutionary intellectuals. In his *What is To Be Done?* Lenin argues for the necessity for this type of organization and shows how no other kind is suited for this task. Thus you have the following order of leadership in the worker-peasant alliance, both during the struggle for state power and later during the dictatorship of the proletariat: (a) the vanguard party, the leader of the proletariat, exercising power not on behalf of the party but on behalf of the class of proletarians; (b) the proletariat, the leader in the alliance between itself and the peasantry; and (c) the worker-peasant alliance, the power base of the proletarian dictatorship, representing the largest majority of the population in any society. The major principle of the dictatorship is: democracy for the proletariat, dictatorship over the bourgeoisie.

Many Marxists, including former close collaborators of Lenin's, notably Rosa Luxemburg, opposed this method of organization and claimed that it was not suitable in countries with a long tradition of bourgeois democracy. In our own time, some leading Marxist parties in Europe—in France, Spain, and Italy, for example—have recently questioned the validity of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Western Europe. They argue that Marxists must seek to attain power through electoral means, and be ready and willing to be voted out of power like any other political organization. There is currently a very lively debate among Marxists on this issue, one group accusing the other of 'reformism' and the other accusing their opponents of 'dogmatism'. The former argue the impossibility of establishing a genuinely socialist society through parliamentary means while the bourgeoisie still remains as a force to be reckoned with. They point to Chile as the best example of this mistaken road. The West European parties, on the other hand, argue that the situation in fully developed, industrialized capitalist countries has become so complex that the Leninist prescriptions for revolution in the Russia of 1917 are now largely inapplicable. They argue that just as Lenin enriched Marxism by introducing a new analysis to include monopoly capitalism and imperialism, which were characteristic of his time, so must present-day Marxists introduce a fresh Marxist analysis in keeping with this latest stage of capitalist imperialism, i.e. the epoch of socialist revolution and the rapid decline of capitalism. They argue that to oppose this proposition is to remain an

incurable dogmatist, in effect anti-Marxist, since Marxism, guided by dialectical and historical materialism, must accept *change* as the basis of the real world which is in constant flux.

Whoever is right, both sides agree on the need to change the bourgeois state, their disagreement being on the means of changing it—parliamentary means or revolution. We shall not digress into the philosophical justification of either position at this stage. Suffice it to say that experience has shown that, whatever their power base, proletarian or bourgeois, modern states tend to develop or degenerate in more or less the same manner. Bureaucracy tends to grow bigger and bigger; the military tend to have greater say in the running of state affairs; the people are allowed fewer and fewer opportunities to involve themselves in the running of the state; secret police, appointed to ‘safeguard the security of the state’, tend to have the last word in the coercive process; and so on. The task of this chapter is to examine some of the aspects of the modern state and to discover how the state can use its power constructively without resorting to unnecessary force, especially in economically and culturally backward conditions where indigenous capitalism has not established deep roots and where social classes, still nascent, have not yet fully developed independent class interests and where history has been arrested by the intervention of colonialism and has left the people without any firm identity with the past which can teach the present. Since the present is inevitably part of our immediate past and if this immediate past consists of scores or hundreds of years of colonialism, to talk of a historical perspective is to talk of the colonial past, a social and economic order which, through the use of force, has made us not part of our own history, but part of bourgeois world history. In the creation of uniquely colonial ‘states’ controlled by excessive use of force, the economic development of the people was completely ignored, and the state machine reflected this too.

This is the model of the state which we have inherited from our colonial masters and our petty-bourgeois leaders; and rather than change this model and make it popular and more responsive to the people, they have perpetuated it, and in the case of military dictatorships have consolidated the system by resorting even more ruthlessly than the colonialists to excessive use of force. Modern states in Africa continue the kind of set-up which hampers the development of the people’s material well-being, and so we must look at possible ways of altering their colonial set-up. This chapter assumes that the development of an independent national economy in the neo-colonies is the most essential prerequisite for the emergence of a virile and dynamic working class who will be the future leaders of socialist revolution and who will exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat. It further assumes that, being historically part of the world-wide proletarian revolution, neo-colonies cannot develop in any other way except on the basis of genuine self-reliance in word and deed, based on popular democracy, and with

massive and disinterested assistance from the socialist countries.

The Bourgeois versus the Proletarian State

Running a modern state, whether bourgeois or socialist, is a complicated business which needs not only competent and efficient leadership in all sectors, but also a scrupulously scientific approach. At the political level, it needs ideally from its leadership, not only experience and intelligence, but also diligence, discipline, loyalty to the people, respect for democratic rights, moral integrity, and dedication. Above all, the leadership must command respect from the people based on their outstanding work in the struggle. Moreover, the leadership needs modesty, and plenty of it, given the unlimited powers that they wield in modern states. To be effective, there must be equally competent supporting staff at administrative level, with more or less the same moral qualities as are expected in those under whom they serve. These need in addition the ability to administer and organize, plus the ability to anticipate events and alertness of mind. These are admittedly super-qualities; but running a modern state is a super-task.

In capitalist countries the business of governing is slightly less demanding. In these countries the governing authority is too far removed from the people, and its day-to-day contact with them is at the level of the local police constable. All economic transactions are handled privately by highly competent practitioners (the dead wood having already been cut out of business through bankruptcy and other hazards of the competitive market system). Social and cultural affairs, except in fascist societies, are also handled through private organizations or fairly efficient municipal authorities, which usually comprise local people from various walks of life. The population is largely literate and communication between them and the local authorities is maintained through the filling out of one type of form or another. The distribution system for consumer goods is handled by an extensive network of privately owned retail shops, large and small, and any discontent on the part of the consumer regarding the quality or price of goods, or their scarcity (which is rare), is directed against the shop-owner, rarely against the governing authority at the top.

In other words, in capitalist society, political leadership is 'political'—inspiring national self-confidence, summarizing and articulating the aspirations and fears of the many social classes that comprise the nation, organizing the internal machinery of social control, as well as national defence, and so on. These are comparatively easy tasks, especially when security and defence are both handled by professionals. With an eye on the stock exchange indicators, governments manage to zig-zag along from one election to the next, and the citizenry is either happy or disappointed or indifferent, depending on what group of politicians (or

‘party’) is in power. But even under conditions of political bliss such as these we still see leaders perpetually drifting from one chaos to another, permanently threatened by myriads of pitfalls, and always absorbed in petty political infighting motivated, often enough, simply by the need to assure the contenders of an advantageous position in the leadership hierarchy, which will look good in the memoirs at the end of an eventful political career.

In spite of the need for a competent and efficient leadership in a modern state, in capitalist societies incompetent leaders do emerge at the helm from time to time without causing serious disaster to the population. But if incompetence can muddle through in advanced capitalist societies it is because the most crucial aspect of national affairs, the economic aspect, is largely run and controlled by a competent private sector in which incompetence means failure and ruin.

In a centrally planned economy, however, the story is different. Here incompetence spells outright disaster. In a country where, for instance, food is grown by a centrally controlled organization A, bought by organization B, transported by C, distributed by D, and so on, all these are co-ordinated by a single highly efficient, scrupulously incorruptible body, above reproach in its integrity, or there will be no food for the people. It's as simple as that. The situation is even worse when the country concerned is also economically and culturally underdeveloped. The underdevelopment of a country is partly reflected in the inefficiency of the local councils (where these still exist), in the absence of local enterprises to cater for people's needs, but also in the almost complete absence of local initiative, and in a culturally backward and uneducated population. In these circumstances, initiative has no choice but to come from the top down to the people, without any intermediaries. Thus there is, as it were, an absence of a buffer between the top and bottom strata to soften any blows arising out of economic incompetence. When such blows come they hit the people directly, and hit them hard.

Consequently, the need for a competent, honest, and imaginative leadership is doubly great in developing economies which are at the same time centrally planned. But experience in most African countries, in so far as selecting candidates for top positions is concerned, shows that such qualities are not seen to be necessary; what qualifies a chap to be a leader is his personal loyalty to the person or persons in power, and a fair degree of shameless sycophancy. This happens because those in power feel so insecure, because of their own failure to satisfy the people's wants, that they distrust anybody who does not hypocritically prostrate himself before them in abject humility. But nobody with any intellectual and moral honesty, to say nothing of competence, would stoop himself so low, for if he did he would cease to be honest and competent. So the leaders get what they want: mediocrity and guile; and the country loses its ablest sons, who either go into exile in frustration, or engage

themselves in undertakings not commensurate with their talents and abilities.

These disruptive practices are alien to scientific socialism. They are characteristic of the type of communal and feudal leadership whose effectiveness depends on total domination by a personal ruler. The price for this sort of leadership is paid by the masses in terms of their lost liberties and economic misery. A combination of personal rule at the top with a supporting staff of incompetent but cunning mediocrities results in laxity, commandism, arbitrariness, corruption and, finally, tyranny. Scientific socialism has no room for such personal domination—only socialist ideas, based on its theory, prevail.

Since scientific socialism advocates class dictatorship, it is incompatible with personal dictatorship. In a socialist society only socialist ideas must dominate, not individuals. This is necessary for ensuring democracy for the oppressed, control over bureaucracy by the masses, so as to ensure mass enthusiasm for production, which is essential for rapid economic advance. To run a modern, centrally planned underdeveloped economy, therefore, a scientific approach is obviously much more urgently needed than in any other type of economy. For here leaders are required to be not only political, but also competent in economic management, in educational innovation, cultural development, scientific inventions, and so on. No individual can ever hope to dominate all these fields without disastrous consequences affecting the economy and the nation as a whole, to say nothing of the damage brought about by the loss of democratic rights and human freedom. Even a group cannot dominate such a complex situation without considerable harm, unless they are guided by the scientifically conceived theory of socialism. Just as without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary party, so also without a revolutionary theory no socialist transformation is possible. But socialist countries, guided by revolutionary theory, have managed to achieve economic miracles in a shorter period than any other society in history.

Conditions for a Self-Reliant Economy

With the above in view, let us have a look at the problems of African development, with the benefit of hindsight and in the light of socialist experience elsewhere of more than half a century on the one hand, and the disheartening experiences in Africa and the rest of the developing countries on the other.

Experience has shown that for a neo-colony to achieve the short-term objective of economic independence and self-reliance it must adopt a socialist approach to its development strategy. A capitalist strategy is demonstrably unworkable, and in the long run obstructs development. But socialism is not simply a declaration of faith; it is a theory and a

discipline in its own right. It gives guidance in the organization of society as well as in planning the economy. To succeed it requires the political will essential for bringing about a socialist climate conducive to socialist development.

Development, however, must have a purpose, otherwise it becomes merely an excuse for keeping the bureaucrats in business. That purpose is man himself. He is both the object of development as well as its subject. Man, the oppressed man, is the end in himself, not a means to any other ends. To attain a rapid and all-round development of man, the workers, peasant and other oppressed classes must together struggle to rid society of class antagonism through the establishment of a scientific socialist system. This done, the society must organize itself in such a way as to create conditions that will stimulate man's latent resources in order to fully control the natural forces that surround him. If productive labour is the most natural, but at the same time, under capitalism, the most alienated attribute of man, it is obvious that the process of transcendence or supersession must begin by allowing labour its fullest freedom of expression, both in production and organization. Individual initiative is not out of place in a socialist society provided it is not aimed at exploiting the people or hampering their development. A systematic method of investigation and analysis is essential for ensuring the fullest rapport between the masses and the leaders at both local and national levels. It is imperative that leaders and the masses are trained in methods of analysis; the same is true of the technocrats and experts in various fields. The development of a scientific method of investigation and a scientific approach to implementation is an essential prerequisite. This is a style of work indispensable for scientific socialism.

Social development, like all other development, is subject to contradictions and our investigation and analysis need to be directed at discovering these contradictions and at understanding them in order to resolve them. As noted earlier, these contradictions may be, for instance, between small-scale and large-scale production (which one is to receive a higher priority, and why?); between industry and agriculture; between heavy industry and light industry; between labour- or capital-intensive production; between the city and the countryside; and so on. The process of analysing and resolving these contradictions is in fact a never-ending process which forms the basis of social and economic development. A correct analysis of the present situation ensures a correct posing of questions about future development, and the latter ensures the discovery of the relevant contradictions, whose resolution determines the solution of other contradictions.

As the purpose of socialism is to change the world, a 'two-way traffic' must be evolved in the working relationship between leading cadres and the masses, who are the real agents of change. This arrangement needs to be flexible without being lax; it needs to be simple and workable without being threadbare; it needs to be thorough without being rigid.

This is necessary to ensure the evolution of a working style which promotes the essential trio—experience, theory, and practice. In other words, in order to facilitate change we are obliged constantly to evaluate our experience, to locate it within the context of the theory of socialism, and put the result into practice; to observe the resultant new situation, evaluate it anew, put it in the theoretical context, again put it into practice, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Theory must be accompanied by and tested through practice, and vice versa. Otherwise, theory without practice degenerates into starry-eyed otherworldliness; conversely, practice without theory degenerates into vulgar practicalism. The purpose of this never-ending process is the satisfaction of people's wants, which in turn stimulates their latent capacities for production and ensures fuller satisfaction of their growing range of wants. Thus a continuing process of investigation and analysis, and arriving at correct solutions, is a process which also ensures economic and social development. To have a right attitude of mind to socialism without consciously and correctly developing these objective conditions is subjectivism. To develop these conditions without a theoretically sound, comprehensive and all-embracing view of a given situation is empiricism, which is akin to groping in the dark. That is why, as we said before, the objective and subjective conditions for socialism must be coexistent. And this marks the fundamental difference between the socialist and non-socialist world outlooks.

The main problems of neo-colonies are identical in almost all cases, irrespective of the level of development in each case. In basically peasant societies, the majority of the people suffer from the urban/rural contradiction, which always leads to the neglect of the peasantry in favour of the town dwellers. But this is only a manifestation of much more serious contradictions, namely, between large-scale and small-scale production; between industry and agriculture; and between heavy and light industry. Without the correct resolution of these contradictions there can be no progress; there can be no transcendence to expanded reproduction. In conditions of stagnation the worst hit are the masses, mostly the peasants. But the peasantry in neo-colonies constitutes potentially an unlimited reservoir of human resources. Paying close attention to the development and transformation of the peasantry will in turn have the effect of arousing their enthusiasm to awaken and utilize these resources. So far, all neo-colonies without exception have failed to tap these resources, owing to their exploitative system of production almost exclusively for export. As exposure to the capitalist-controlled world market always hits the peasantry directly, it is impossible to arouse their enthusiasm for increased production, however well-intentioned the policies may be. Instead of becoming a source for quicker development the peasants become a heavy burden on society. The contrast between the capitalist and socialist approaches to this problem is dramatically illustrated by the development experience of China and India. In the one

case the peasantry is a source of rapid development, in the other it is a heavy burden on the economy; in one it is an asset, in the other a liability.

Without mass enthusiasm there is economic stagnation, resulting in a downward spiral in living standards, accompanied by untold hardship for the masses. In some cases a backward movement even sets in. On the other hand, if a serious policy to develop the masses, as suggested below, is formulated and vigorously implemented, bearing in mind the above-mentioned qualifications for cadres, a different trend will set in: an upward spiral of rising incomes.

An Objective and Revolutionary Planning Approach

For socialist economic development, a revolutionary planning approach is imperative, free from the unprincipled pursuit of commercial or mercantilist goals. The revolutionary approach places man at the centre of planning objectives, and not cold economic abstractions such as the annual national product, national income, per capita income, etc., figures which are really pointers to assessing results rather than the ultimate objective of planning.

The prerequisite for successful economic planning is to understand in the first place that planning is a *political* action first of all, and not economic. A socialist planner plans for freedom; he makes a conscious effort to liberate the economy from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Political leaders must have no illusions about the political nature of these objectives; and they must articulate them to the masses. But to bourgeois economists, to assert this is to introduce into planning 'value judgements' which do not form part of their economic terms of reference. An economist, in their view, is apolitical. He is strictly a technical tool for whoever rules the country. Tweedledee or Tweedledum. For these economists there is a dividing line between politics and economics, and the two should never be mixed up, otherwise there will be chaos. According to this view an economy has its own dynamism, and, given certain conditions, it will behave in a predictable manner. If anything goes wrong, it is because certain rules have not been observed correctly or strictly enough.

For a socialist economist this approach is 'economism', and it is not only theoretically faulty but in the long run dangerous. A socialist economist is not only a technician; he is also politically motivated, not to serve one party or another, a civilian or a military regime, but to serve socialism and to serve the oppressed in the transition to socialism. He is unsuited to serve any other kind of regime. This is because he begins from a premise which is fundamentally political—freedom. The objective of a planned economy is freedom: to facilitate and hasten the move from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Ever since

we parted company with our cousins in the animal kingdom, ever since we made our first fire, we have been freeing ourselves step by step from the realm of necessity. The journey has been haphazard, with the class struggle as its main feature. Only now, in the epoch of socialism, is a conscious journey made possible through planning.

What is planning for freedom? Freedom has three aspects: (a) freedom from natural fetters; (b) freedom from the constraints imposed by man; and (c) freedom to exercise one's essential powers. All those aspects are interrelated. As man continues to develop the productive forces, he gets further away from the bondage of nature; but as long as property relations are governed by the private appropriation of socially produced wealth man remains in man-made bondage. Under this condition man is obliged to sell his labour as a commodity in order to subsist; and to that extent he cannot exercise his third freedom, the freedom to exercise his essential power in productive labour. The journey to freedom, then, must begin by changing the relations of production, so that the wealth that is being socially produced is socially controlled, a precondition to real human freedom in all its three aspects.

Socialist planning must ensure that (a) the productive forces are rapidly developed to hasten man's liberation from natural necessity; (b) the social relations of production are radically altered, to realize social control of socially produced wealth; and (c) a steady increase in the well-being of the working people through an increased supply of consumer goods takes place, followed by a steady lowering of their prices and a steady increase of wages and agricultural income so that each year the masses see for themselves that they are better off than they were the preceding year.

In the neo-colonies, however, the problem is rather more complex. The question which always confronts neo-colonies which want to extricate themselves from the clutches of the imperialists is: where do we get the capital and expertise essential for a genuinely independent and self-reliant economy? This is a valid and serious question and it will be worth our while to discuss it in greater detail.

How To Get the Capital and Expertise Required

Unfortunately, very few socialist economists hitherto have paid sufficient attention to the problems of neo-colonies struggling genuinely to free themselves from imperialism in this epoch of antagonistic confrontation between socialism and imperialism. We are therefore deprived of some of the most important information we need for a correct appraisal of underdevelopment, such as relevant data, thoroughgoing analyses, detailed case studies from a socialist standpoint. As we know, our underdevelopment is not a natural process; it is a result of external intervention, direct and indirect, which has hampered the natural course

of our development and distorted our economies. Furthermore, these dependent economies are part of the capitalist world system and, as appendages, they cannot be studied in isolation from that system. As long as this situation remains structurally unchanged, it is immaterial whether we African nations *describe* ourselves as capitalist, socialist, or mixed economies; we are simply part of capitalism in its world context. It is, therefore, wrong to study underdevelopment in isolation, and this is the reason why most of the current studies, whether by the United Nations, by UNCTAD, by the 'Committee of 77', by the Economic Commission on Africa, or by individual African countries, do not succeed in striking at the right solution, and are on the whole, indeed, miserably unsatisfactory. At best they touch only the form and not the essence of the problem.

The problem of capital accumulation for neo-colonies that genuinely wish to develop independent and self-reliant economies is one which requires a much closer and more serious study by Marxist economists than it has had hitherto, for herein lies the whole problem of development into expanded reproduction. It is all very well to advise the more patriotic and anti-imperialist leaders in the neo-colonies, the Sun Yat-sens of the neo-colonies, to draw back from the suffocating hug of imperialism, but it is only natural for them to hesitate, if the alternative appears to be all the more perilous for being unknown. The first socialist countries, in particular the U.S.S.R., went through the phase of capital accumulation under exceptional historical conditions. At the time this entailed ruthless measures which negated the very principles of socialism as taught by Marx and Engels. This is sometimes justified by the argument that, owing to the fact that socialism began to take roots in a Russia which was culturally and economically backward, with a basically peasant economy and an extremely low growth rate, it was historically unavoidable that socialist capital accumulation should have been accompanied by harsh and unwarranted sacrifices by the people. The question of whether the ends justified the means was immediately put forward by the imperialists and it has been their most deadly—and by no means ineffective—ideological and propaganda weapon against socialism. (Incidentally, the phrase 'the ends justify the means' is a Jesuit one, not a socialist one.) While this propaganda is no longer very relevant as a weapon against socialism, the question of the sacrifice necessary for capital accumulation is a very serious issue for neo-colonies.

In African neo-colonies it is probably the most serious economic question facing socialists. How much more sacrifice can be asked from a people who have just emerged from the stifling and repressive rule of imperialism which has already squeezed dry every ounce of their energy? Without a ruthless and repressive dictatorship, can a political leader ever hope to survive, politically at least, by asking for more sacrifices from the downtrodden without providing concrete evidence of

economic improvement, which in the modern world is universally measured by a high level of consumer prosperity? On the other hand, once the trend towards excessive consumption is set in motion, where do you put a stop to it? With national incomes very small and the industrial base almost non-existent, even if the entire surplus were to be productively invested, would it be sufficient for the economy to develop, in time, into expanded reproduction before either the military or the imperialists or both intervened to 'restore democracy'? Again, how can the neo-colonies justify the enormous waste quite common in those countries, especially in terms of unproductive, sometimes called prestige, investments? Perhaps the answer to this question is that these prestige projects are funded by external credits, and the funds would not have been available for any other type of projects, since infrastructural projects such as iron and steel mills, etc., though economically crucial, do not as a rule, yield quick profitable returns and are hence unattractive to the donor countries. And so we come to the original question—how to accumulate capital.

We know that so-called 'primitive accumulation' began long before capitalism became predominant. That is to say, it grew in the womb of feudalism. Socialism, however, has no such past. It begins its primary capital accumulation at the end of the capitalist era. What then is meant by primary capital accumulation? It is the initial capital investment before the socialist sector of the economy (assuming there still exists some capitalist formation in the immediate aftermath of socialist revolution) begins to produce a surplus for further investment in expanded reproduction. Theoretically, as soon as the proletariat takes over state power it confiscates or nationalizes all major means of production, and socialist accumulation begins from the net earnings of these state-owned enterprises. So far, so good. But when such means of production are very limited or virtually non-existent and when the entire nationalized sector is not large enough to lead to expanded reproduction and socialist reconstruction, then the question of the sources of capital and expertise becomes urgent.

Moreover, the total taxable income in our countries is so low that it is often impossible even to balance the annual budget for recurrent expenditure, aggravated as it is by rapid population growth and expanding demand for social services like education and health. All these make tax as a source of accumulation for large-scale productive investment out of the question. The mounting demand for social services is a fairly substantial and reasonable claim on resources, which makes it a most serious competing factor threatening a balanced development.

On the other hand, the message from bourgeois economists is simple and clear: invite in foreign investors with their capital and skills; make maximum condemnatory noises to embarrass Western liberals into dishing out more aid and credit; and step up exports of primary and

semi-manufactured commodities. The only snag about this proposition is that it simply doesn't work. Neo-colonies have tried it for years, and see where it has landed us!

The Masses—The Subject and Object of Development

Since one of the preconditions for a viable socialist development is the welfare of the people, especially the working people, and the satisfaction of their wants, then the answer to our development problem must take these issues into account. A policy which satisfies the people's material wants also creates conditions for an expanding home market, and in turn makes the development of light and heavy industries inevitable. The problem of capital accumulation must, therefore, be tackled from this starting-point, since it contains both the subject and the object of development—not profit, but man. We know that the basic needs of man are: food, clothing and shelter. Consequently the answer to solving economic problems must be found *in the course* of supplying these basic needs, especially at the low level of development at which African neo-colonies must start their development process. At this level of development these basic needs are real, acute and widespread.

In the course of supplying food there is enormous potential for industrial development, in the areas of dairy products, the leather industry, the manufacture of fertilizers, for instance. Clothing the people cheaply will expand the textile industry, ginnery output, the mechanization of agriculture (which involves tractor production, water pumps for irrigation, and the heavy industry to produce these), inevitably accompanied by increased agriculture productivity. Historically, increased agricultural productivity has always led consumer industry to go through what development economists call the 'crucial stage' which in turns leads to industrial development. Historical evidence also shows us that, beginning with the Industrial Revolution in England, and more dramatically in the United States, the textile industry has always been a most important stimulant to industrialization and the concomitant economic development, and even to the expansion of world trade. In England this was made possible thanks to the cheap labour of colonial cotton producers; and in the U.S. thanks to cheap slave labour. In both these cases, however, demand came largely from the simultaneous development of industry and urban centres internally.

Housing and urban development, accompanied by or resulting from industrialization, have always been, like the textile industry, an important stimulant to further economic development, involving such sectors as timber, cement, ceramics, pipe manufacturing, electrical appliances, glass manufacture, and engineering equipment. No wonder the early American pioneers used to say, 'When the building industry is all right, everything is all right.' But the truth of this saying can only be

realized if building construction is directed at housing the masses and is carried out within the context of a general strategy for development, and not in isolation, as is generally the case in all the developing countries. In the latter case a housing programme becomes a burden rather than a stimulus to the economy.

Thus, in attempting to solve the basic needs of the people we succeed at the same time in producing conditions for a rapid development of the productive forces both in Department I and Department II (heavy and light industry). However, how are we going to be able to implement this policy in the face of the constraints on it in terms of capital and expertise? There is no doubt that, for the development of the industries mentioned above, external economic relations of a special type for a specific period of time will have to be entered into, with the centrally planned economies. The basis of these transitional economic arrangements with the socialist countries will be objective economic complementarity. A trade arrangement aimed at economic co-operation, rather than dependent on mercantile considerations, with these countries for the supply of capital goods and the training of manpower in exchange for agricultural or mineral raw materials should transform neo-colonies in the shortest possible time into genuinely self-reliant, self-sustaining and independent economies.

Such a national economic strategy would be accompanied by an independent fiscal and monetary policy (free from interference by the I.M.F.) aimed at utilizing the medium of exchange both to facilitate the objectives of the plan as well as to accelerate development, instead of hampering and distorting it as is the case at present. This will ensure the evolution of a sensible monetary system free from external manipulations, free from the chronic monetary instability of the capitalist world, and free to admit adjustments as and when necessary in the interest of the people's well-being.

Thus, beginning with answering the most vital planning question—development for whom?—a way is opened for a smooth and steady development, taking man as the centre of economic activity. It is immaterial whether the country is small or large, whether rich in resources or not, although size and abundant resources are undoubtedly an advantage. In principle, a small or resource-poor country can reorientate its economy towards serving the people in the manner described above. The objective is to make the life of the people happier so that their enthusiasm for production will be boundless. As long as man, rather than the world market or profit, is made the subject *and* object of development, hitherto untapped human ingenuity and material resources will come into full play, crushing all obstacles, natural or man-made, on the way. The examples of North Korea, China, Vietnam, and Albania can hardly be overemphasized.

Order of Priorities—Resolving Economic Contradictions

Whatever the capitalists may say to the contrary, objective economic laws demand the maintenance of proportionality in a country's national economy. I.e. a planned balance between the various productive sectors must be kept. In capitalist society this proportionality is achieved spontaneously, and after punishingly severe economic crises, accompanied by untold hardship and damage to the people's well-being. But in socialist society the balance is maintained through strict observance of the law of planned, proportional development of the national economy. In any socialist society, the strategy outlined in the preceding section will have to be implemented within the context of this law. Moreover, the strategy will be meaningless if it is not linked with the dialectical theory of development. Like every other scientific theory, socialist development has its own rationale, which determines its priorities independent of the subjective wish of its planners. Dialectical materialism, as was pointed out earlier, shows that the whole process of life and all objects develop through contradictions, and a study of these contradictions and their correct resolution is the essence of successful and conscious development. Without this scientific approach, development will be haphazard, irrational, and eventually destructive. For the purpose of our analysis, as a follow-up to the above strategy, we shall confine ourselves only to the problem of principal contradictions and the principal aspects of contradictions as a guide to determining priorities. As Mao says, complex situations always contain several contradictions, and it is essential to single out the principal one, which, as a rule, influences the development of other contradictions.

In a socialist development strategy, therefore, it is necessary to identify the following contradictions: (a) between the development of the productive forces and relations of production; (b) between consumption and production; (c) between industry and agriculture; (d) between large-scale and small-scale production; (e) between labour-intensive and capital-intensive projects; (f) between urban and rural development. (We do not include the contradiction between accumulation and consumption because this is determined after the priorities have been established. In each case, the contradiction has a principal aspect which determines the development of the other, and with that, several other secondary contradictions. It is therefore essential to identify which should be resolved first, at what stage of development, and why. Again the key to unravelling any complex situation is to discover the starting point. Without this the problem will tend to get increasingly confused, the more complex it is.

Capitalism, as we have seen, has its own costly way of solving this problem—it relies on 'spontaneous' market forces. Its main concern is with those people who can spend; if these exert pressure in the market (i.e. demand) then the economy must respond (supply). If there is no

demand there is no supply; and that's that. This is a painful and destructive way of solving problems of underdevelopment, and as the economy meanders through the labyrinth of never-ending twists and turns of the market, it leaves by the wayside millions of people who are too poor to spend. These do not count; they merely constitute 'the rest of the economy', and they do not constitute 'effective demand'.

Not so with socialism. It is the only social system whose *raison d'être*, as we have seen, is the liberation and development of man. To this end it must devise and organize scientifically a systematic method and strategy for resolving the problems that surround man. Hence the need for identifying and resolving the contradictions inherent in every aspect of social life.

Let us begin with contradiction (*a*) above, namely, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production. Social progress depends on the development of the means of production and skilled manpower, that is to say, the productive forces. In a capitalist society the productive forces are privately owned and controlled and the wealth they produce is pocketed by these private owners. In a socialist society, on the other hand, the productive forces are socially owned and controlled, and the wealth they produce serves society as a whole. The first of these systems known as capitalist relations of production and the second as socialist relations of production. When one says one must solve the contradiction between development of the productive forces and relations of production, one really means: 'Should society concentrate a large proportion of its resources and time on developing the means of production, even if some of these are owned privately, or should one first ensure their social ownership, even if this would mean slowing down their development and expansion?' Thus when we say that 'in the contradiction between development of the productive forces and relations of production, the *principal aspect* of this contradiction is the development of the productive forces', one means that under certain circumstances it is more important to develop the means of production and skilled manpower, even if some of these are privately owned, and that for the time being the question of ownership is less important than the need to develop the means of production at a rapid pace.

This does not mean that one must accept the principle of private wealth (as the utopian socialist did) in order to achieve rapid development. It simply means that using some private wealth as a *temporary expedient* is not the same thing as accepting, *in principle*, the system of private acquisition of wealth. While the former is temporary and for a specified objective, the latter is for all time and under any circumstances. This strategy is known as the strategy of 'utilizing, transforming, and controlling' private wealth and technical and other expertise during the period of laying the economic foundation for socialist construction. It was devised by Lenin when he introduced his New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) following the disruptions of the Russian

civil war. It has become an important strategy for the socialist countries which are faced with building socialism from the basis of a backward economy.

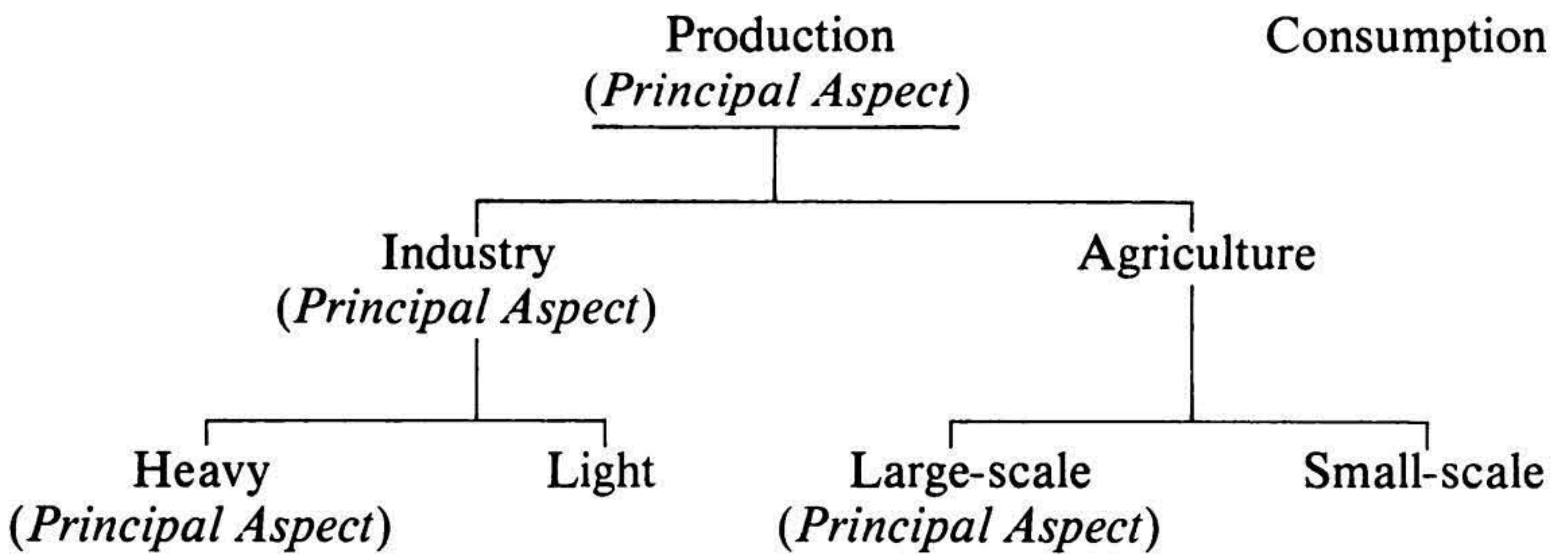
However, in advanced capitalist countries the principal aspect of this contradiction (*a*) seems to be the relations of production and not the development of the productive forces, since these are already in existence and have attained a certain level of development. There the task for socialists, as soon as they capture state power, destroy the bourgeois state, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, is to appropriate the means of production for the state and make the entire productive wealth of society the property of the whole society. The strategy of altering the priorities for neo-colonies, on the one hand, and for metropolitan countries in the event of social revolution on the other, is necessitated by the objective consequence of capitalism's uneven development, which depresses one sector (the neo-colonies) and develops the other (the metropole). Hence the kind of problems initially encountered in either case are necessarily of the opposite nature.

In any economy, developed or underdeveloped, capitalist or socialist, contradiction (*b*) is of paramount importance. This is the contradiction between production and consumption. But, as noted above, whereas in the capitalist economies there is a perpetual crisis of overproduction, in the neo-colonies the problem is underproduction. Consequently, in contradiction (*b*), the principal aspect of the contradiction is production. Production in the neo-colonies must receive top priority.

In contradiction (*c*) between industry and agriculture, the only two productive sectors of the economy, the principal aspect is industry, since industrial backwardness is tantamount to underdevelopment. However, since agriculture in neo-colonies plays a predominant role in the economy, not only on the consumption side, but even more on the production side, in as much as the majority of the population earn their living directly from agriculture, agriculture itself must play a significant role in the industrialization programme of neo-colonies. The strategy for industrialization in these countries must revolve around agriculture, both supplying it and being supplied by it. Without this strategy there will be uneven, unproportional development, resulting in chaos. The experiences of Brazil, South Korea, India, and Taiwan, for instance, confirm this. In spite of this caution, however, the role of industry must still remain predominant in the contradiction between industry and agriculture.

In industry the contradiction is between heavy and light industry; in agriculture it is between large-scale and small-scale production. In conformity with the above rationale, in contradiction (*d*) the principal aspects are heavy industry and large-scale agricultural production. The following diagram will help illustrate the point.

Principal Economic Contradictions



For an all-round, internally integrated development, a balance must be maintained in the course of resolving the contradiction between heavy and light industry, and between large-scale and small-scale agriculture. This balance will materialize by responding to the objective imperative of the strategy to revolve industrial development around agriculture. Without heavy industry there can be no light industry, but without light industry, excessive and irrational development of heavy industry will be a terrible burden on the economy. Heavy industry must supply light industry so that the latter can satisfy consumption. It would be irrational for a developing economy to embark on an aeronautical industry or to waste its resources in armaments production. But it would be rational and desirable to develop heavy industry in order to expand the textile industry to serve consumption; or to develop the production of farm implements or allied industries to serve agriculture so as to serve consumption; or to develop the engineering industry to serve the construction industry which will serve the people in various ways. In this strategy agriculture is made the foundation, with the determination of development priorities in heavy and light industry revolving around the needs of agriculture.

In agriculture, as we have seen, the principal contradiction is that between large-scale and small-scale production, and the principal aspect in this contradiction is large-scale production. Needless to say, large-scale production in time benefits from 'economies of scale'. That is to say, it reduces the cost of production, which in turn supplies industry (raw material and food for the workers) more cheaply; correspondingly, industry comes to serve consumption more cheaply too. But large-scale production not only supplies industry cheaply, it also ensures abundant, and consequently cheap, food. Lowering the cost of living for the people in terms of both industrial and agricultural goods means in effect raising their standard of living correspondingly. This is the essence of development. Small-scale, peasant-based agriculture, on the other hand, tends to lead to an opposite trend—low yields, increased cost per unit,

scarcity, and finally increased cost of living, deteriorating living standards, and worsening underdevelopment.

In our dual economies, as noted earlier (p. 74), most of the large-scale farms are owned privately, mostly, in fact, by foreigners. If in contradiction (*a*), i.e. between development of the productive forces and relations of production, we give priority to the former, this being the principal aspect of the contradiction in our circumstances, would this mean that we should let these farms continue to be privately owned and owned by foreigners? In a country where land is in abundance, as in most parts of Africa, and where the problem is not so much the availability of land but the use of it to yield better economic returns, the simple answer is *yes*, with the following proviso: that the tactics of 'utilize, transform, and control' are strictly applied. You utilize private owners by making use of their expertise to increase production. You transform them by directing them to shift, if necessary, from producing for the world market to serving the home market, producing raw materials for local industries and food; step by step, you change them into state farms, win over the management employees to work for the state, and so on. You control their income through fixing the price of their products, giving proper incentives, and confining their sales only to the state purchasing organizations; you tax their profit, and control its repatriation. You discriminate by giving more business to those willing to co-operate with the state without sabotage attempts, and decapitalization. All this must be declared openly and above-board as policy, so that all concerned know exactly where they stand. Thus any future misunderstandings and accusations of bad faith, which a socialist state must scrupulously avoid, are prevented. In our situations, development of the productive forces cannot be overemphasized. Let there be abundance even if privately produced, while at the same time mobilizing and organizing the small-scale sector, i.e. the peasants, towards large-scale production and socially owned means of production.

This policy, however, is valid only with agriculture, not with industry, especially heavy industry. Whereas in agriculture the main problem is production efficiency, in industry a certain level of efficiency, i.e. organization, technology, skilled manpower, and so on, is assumed in the very act of setting up an industrial project. On the other hand, the peasants are on the farms not by choice, nor as a result of having acquired some special agricultural skills, but simply because they were born there; very often they wish to leave the farms for urban centres at the earliest opportunity. That is why their production is a subsistence production, not producing any surplus either for the market or for future consumption. It is not due to laziness that they produce thus, as alleged by the imperialists and their local agents; it is just that peasant subsistence farming by its very nature is not conducive to the production of surplus. To abandon large-scale farms just because they are privately owned, and hand them over to the peasants, will only mean

the destruction of large-scale production without really helping the peasants in any meaningful way, and will simply reduce large-scale farming to subsistence farming, a form of production which it should be our task to rid ourselves of in the first place.

As most other contradictions are the result of our uneven development, especially (e) and (f), if the above contradictions in production are successfully resolved, and as steady progress towards a balanced development is maintained, these contradictions will resolve themselves in the course of development, not spontaneously, but in harmony with the planned development of the economy as a whole.

For the entire strategy to be effective, two preconditions are essential: Politically, there must be a complete break with world capitalism or imperialism during the period of reconstruction—after reconstruction trade and economic relations can be resumed, this time from a position of strength, not from the weak position in which we are at present. This break with imperialism is a necessary condition for the development of the other precondition, which is economic. With our continued dependency on imperialism in financial, trade, and economic affairs in a relationship which creams off nearly all our economic surplus, there can be no possibility of the accumulation necessary for expanded reproduction. World-market-oriented economies tend to divert resources to export branches whose development subsequently entails permanent liabilities which damage the economy, for instance, building costly airports in order to export flowers and fruits, or building expensive roads primarily to attract tourists or facilitate the transport of ‘cash crops’ for export. The maintenance costs of such infrastructure in the end can be met only at the cost of serious economic and financial damage. Economically, there must be a deliberate policy, as a matter of top priority, to awaken the people, especially government and party functionaries, to the objective of serving the masses through the rapid development of the material and technical basis for socialist construction.

Finally, it is obvious that a socialist development strategy, being scientifically conceived, requires strict discipline in its implementation: discipline among planners, implementers, government institutions. The colonial state which we have inherited must be destroyed and replaced by a people-oriented state, since the colonial state is not fitted to this kind of development activity, but is only designed to oppress and suppress the people. Secondly, government and party leaders must be specially trained and made thoroughly conversant with the theoretical basis of the strategy.

Finally, as the masses will be the main force of such a strategy, their complete co-operation is the key to its success. In other words, they must not be *forced* into the strategy, but rather they must first be convinced of its validity and relevance through discussion. Voluntariness is the most essential prerequisite. To this end there must be a thorough

shake-up of the entire state apparatus, removing all the bullying and anti-democratic elements. Democracy is one of the most important preconditions for development. Secret police, Gestapo gangs, officially appointed thugs, and all anti-people practices must be scrapped from the state apparatus if the people are to feel part of the system, and not regard it as belonging to the ruling clique. Countries which have declared their stand to be Marxist-Leninist cannot and must not be associated with these fascist tendencies of oppressing the people, especially the working people. The strategy we have been describing is a Marxist-Leninist strategy for neo-colonies in transition to a self-reliant, self-sustaining, independent economy. It is not yet a strategy for socialist transformation, but a strategy for establishing the preconditions for socialist transformation. Without such preconditions no socialist transformation is possible. The masses will remain perpetually poor, and the leaders will continue to appropriate the social surplus out of the people's labour.

For our strategy to work the people must first ensure that Africa is freed from the tyranny of despotic leaders; and that it must regain its democratic rights, the denial of which is the subject of the final chapter.

9. Fighting Internal Oppression

Worse Than Tigers

In his essay, 'The Taming of Power', Bertrand Russell quotes the following anecdote: 'In passing by the side of Mount Thai, Confucius came on a woman who was weeping bitterly by a grave. The Master passed forward and drove quickly to her; then he sent Tze-lu to question her. "Your wailing," said he, "is that of one who has suffered sorrow on sorrow." She replied, "That is so. Once my husband's father was killed here by a tiger. My husband was also killed, and now my son has died in the same way." The Master said, "Why do you not leave the place?" The answer was: "There is no oppressive government here." The Master then said, "Remember this, my children: Oppressive government is more terrible than tigers."'

The aim of the struggle in Africa for democratic rights, which are a prerequisite to any economic or political development, is to ensure that governments shall be less terrible than tigers. The short post-colonial history of Africa has been one long, sad spectacle of the naked misuse of power by people in authority, in some extreme cases comparable to the worst of Oriental despotism. This cancer is slowly spreading even to the most liberal and enlightened parts of Africa. It is frightening—because of the corruptive influence which the misuse of power has on both the leaders and the led; because of the denial of people's democratic liberties, which often demoralizes the population; and because such governments usually follow policies which positively hinder the course of development.

Social investigation reveals that misuse of power by the ruling clique—in plain language, an oppressive regime—not only demoralizes the community, but also reduces it to infantilism by removing from it all power to decide. The symptoms are irresponsibility, alcoholism, laziness, corruption, lying, petty theft, Uriah-Heapish servility, all of which are becoming widespread in our own experience. These symptoms, it is interesting to note, were also common among the inmates of the Nazi concentration camps. A people reduced to such a level can hardly be ready to develop self-reliant, self-sustaining, independent economies, much less to defend their nation in times of national emergency.

The inarticulate sometimes express their frustrations during these demoralizing experiences by saying that things were much better during the colonial times. In a very important sense they are wrong. The struggle for independence was fought on two important principles: (a) that, as alien powers, the colonialists had no right to impose their rule on us; (b) that such rule had impoverished us through exploiting us economically, denying us our basic human rights and democratic liberties and obstructing our development in the social field, especially in education and health.

The attainment of juridical independence automatically rectified the first of these. This was a basic human right which was denied us, the right to rule ourselves. Nobody under any circumstances can deny a people this right. To say that we were better off when we were denied this right is just plain rubbish.

Whether the attainment of independence satisfied the second principle is another question. We have discussed extensively how the economic strategies adopted by nearly all ex-colonial countries have failed decisively to alter the colonial, oppressive structure of our state machines as well as that of our economies. Some progressive economists argue that the 'progress' we have registered since independence was no more than a normal development which would have taken place in any case, with or without independence. As long as people are alive, not dead, they will always improve their living conditions one way or another. And this progress, according to these economists, is wholly spontaneous. They point out that in many respects we have not done so well at all, considering the enormous and rapid development which the advanced capitalist countries have achieved in the two decades of our independence. As appendages to such economies we could have done much better if we had outright created a climate sufficiently conducive to take advantage of that development—for example by a subservient kowtowing to foreign capital in order to attract it in large quantities. Only one or two African countries have done that, and as appendages go they have not done badly at all, these economists point out. They also point out that the still-colonized countries in Africa have registered much greater gains in terms of economic growth during the period than their independent counterparts. This, of course, is not intended to justify colonialism. What they are saying is that our independence should not be assessed by what we have achieved, which is not much, but rather by what could have been achieved, considering the mass enthusiasm at independence which could have been directed towards restructuring our economies and setting them on the road to independent development.

On the economic front, therefore, the question of whether our independence has initiated any decisive boost to development is certainly open to debate. On the political front, however, the picture is far more gloomy. Many of our countries have actually regressed, and their governments have not been 'less terrible than tigers'. The only

exceptions to this rule are probably Botswana and Gambia. In most of the rest of Africa the following tendencies are quite common: arbitrary arrests of citizens; disrespect for the writ of *habeas corpus*; imprisonment without trial; denial of freedom of movement; the compulsory carrying of identity cards—in effect, a ‘pass’ system (so hated in South Africa); organized and systematic police brutality; domination of government by secret police; mass arrests and detentions; concentration camps; physical and mental torture of prisoners; public executions; and the whole apparatus of violent repression.

In the colonial days, when the governing authority wanted to resort to some of these undemocratic and totalitarian measures it would first declare a ‘state of emergency’ which would last for days, weeks or months (in Kenya it lasted for almost ten years). But as soon as the ‘emergency’ was over, the civil liberties of the people would be restored; at any rate, such liberties as the people had enjoyed prior to the ‘emergency’. Not so with the majority of our present governments. Nearly all of our independent states have given themselves these emergency (i.e. totalitarian) powers, for as long as they are in power. An almost universal vehicle is the obnoxious ‘Preventive Detention Act’, (P.D.A.) an all-purpose legal instrument for repression, described by lawyers, with their usual understatement, as a ‘bad law’. Initiated by Adolf Hitler in Europe, extended to Africa by Kwame Nkrumah in 1958, preventive detention acts spread across independent Africa like a prairie fire. They gave heads of state and government extraordinary powers over life and property; and gave them virtual direct control over the political behaviour of the population.

Punitive Detention

This is a concrete example of what happens to a detained person in an African prison; it probably describes pretty general experience.

Under the P.D.A. a citizen is hounded out of his house, usually during the small hours of the morning (preferably at 2 a.m.), in the best tradition of the Gestapo. His house is ransacked by the invading armed gangs, who take off anything they fancy. Then the citizen is unceremoniously hauled off to prison, where he may remain for weeks, months, or years without being told why he has been imprisoned.

The prisons are usually manned by guards who are very brutal, petty-minded, and unprofessional. (Indeed, it is a common factor under all dictatorships, where loyalty to the top person in authority brings greater rewards than professional competence, that all administrative and coercive departments are manned by amateurs, who are political appointees, often with disastrous results.) The guards naturally enjoy their unlimited powers thoroughly, and quite often misuse them. Thus, although technically a citizen detained under P.D.A. is supposed to be a

'civil prisoner', these petty gentlemen know no such abstract distinctions, understand no legal frills. To them, as soon as a citizen steps through the prison gates, he is a convict to be dealt with accordingly. Here is where the citizen comes face to face with the coercive apparatus of his government. He is often beaten up, locked up in solitary confinement, denied food for the first day or two (because his ration has not yet been allocated by the authorities!), stripped naked, and generally subjected to all forms of humiliation (presumably to undermine his self-respect). The higher the citizen was in his walk of life, the greater the humiliation. Guards often resort to unnecessarily harsh and beastly measures wholly designed to undermine their victim's morale. Being either half-educated or not educated at all, they are mostly very poor organizers, and when things get out of hand, as they often do under such a leadership, they tend to resort to brute force rather than to rational solutions. The food is poor, both nutritionally and by normal culinary standards, and the manner it is dished out is enough to put the newly arrived citizen off food for several weeks. Health care is almost non-existent, and the citizen is often exposed to all sorts of communicable diseases. Only a medical assistant is in charge of dispensing treatment, and only rarely does a qualified doctor visit the prison, often enough too late to save the patient. On the whole such prisons are very inefficiently run—and inefficiency in a prison is tantamount to tyranny, for prisoners go without food, without water, without medicine, for several days, as a result.

The citizen is subjected to all these humiliations, let it be repeated, without even being told why he is there. And just as suddenly and mysteriously he may be released after several months or years of incarceration. In many African countries thousands of citizens every year are thus exposed to great brutalities without any charges being brought against them. All citizens are at risk, no matter whether they break the law or not. It just depends on what the secret police *think* the citizen is up to, or what the political leadership consider to be 'politically desirable', i.e. necessary to keep themselves in power.

Preventive detention is often meted out by the secret police. These are really rough. Almost throughout tropical Africa, these practitioners of death have been trained in Israel; it is ironic that the original victims of the most brutal Gestapo techniques have now thoroughly mastered them. Again their education is almost nil, and their reading material, for those who can read English, is limited to James Bond escapades. Once the citizen is at their disposal they can literally do anything to him. In some countries they can even murder him with impunity, maybe even get a reward. These death-masters invariably claim that they have the authority of the top man in power to do what they like to the victim. In fact, the poor citizen can 'disappear without any trace' and nobody will dare to ask questions. Again, throughout these tribulations, the citizen is not told what crime he is supposed to have committed, or what law he has flouted.

Prisoners under P.D.A. often end up mentally deranged; at best, they become subject to extreme depressions which can last for the rest of their lives. A convicted prisoner knows his crimes and knows when he is due to be released. A prisoner under P.D.A. knows neither his crime nor the end of his tribulation, which makes his situation much worse than the convict. The cause of this permanent psychological damage is thus obvious: people usually get upset, and are eventually afflicted psychologically, when they suffer undeservedly or when they see transgressors, in this case the secret police, escape punishment.

What was intended by the legal drafters of the Act to be a preventive law has, in the hands of unscrupulous politicians, been turned into a *punitive* law. The Preventive Detention Act is now 'preventive' in name only. In practice it is a Punitive Detention Act. Recourse to the use of this law by unscrupulous politicians (and their unscrupulousness tends to worsen in direct proportion to their sense of political insecurity—this is the law of the struggle for power in conditions of underdevelopment!) is increasingly becoming a most important *political* weapon; it has become a vital instrument for maintaining in power unpopular and tyrannical leaders whose usefulness has long been exhausted. In their hands P.D.A. is a law, an enabling law, to break all the other laws of the country concerned.

P.D.A. was justified in the early days of independence on two grounds. Firstly, since most countries attained independence at different times, those that got theirs earlier were confronted with the possibility of imperialist agents being infiltrated into their countries from neighbouring countries which were not yet independent. The ordinary process of the law was considered too cumbersome to deal effectively with such emergency situations, since agents could freely enter any one of the independent countries with legitimate travel documents and without breaking any laws of the country concerned. At the same time the police force was largely composed of foreign, ex-colonial officers, some of whom were not too happy about our independence. The powers to detain people were therefore necessary to defend the young states *before* the damage was done.

Secondly, since colonial rule was notorious for its 'divide and rule' policies, tribal loyalties, which had been deliberately encouraged by colonialists, threatened the peaceful evolution of a homogeneous nation, and therefore it was felt necessary for a young state to arm itself with sufficient pre-emptive powers to forestall any such disruptive developments. (This was also the argument used to justify the establishment of a one-party state system throughout Africa.) Both these arguments were valid at the time of independence, but today are no longer tenable politically, far less morally. If insecurity still exists after nearly twenty years of independence, it cannot any longer be blamed on external forces; and if it emanates from internal forces then it is an admission of the leadership's own political and administrative failure. In

any case, in at least one instance, Nkrumah's Ghana, a government was overthrown in spite of (or probably because of) the existence of the P.D.A. In other words, the P.D.A. has ceased to serve the function it was originally intended for. On the other hand, if tribalism still exists after so many years of independence, again it is an admission of the leadership's political failure. If they have solved the problem of tribalism (and the indications are that they have) then the Act is redundant. Only one African country so far has come to this conclusion. Sudan rescinded the Act in 1973, although the authorities continued to imprison students and other political activists with the same arbitrariness as if P.D.A. were still in force.

So when inarticulate people, frustrated and impotent in the face of their leadership's criminal misuse of power, say that colonialism was better, they are probably not saying that we were freer then. It is perhaps an unsophisticated way of saying that the people are not yet free even after our juridical independence; that some of our political and administrative practices have blocked the way to freedom. Understandably, leaders are always very sensitive when this question is raised, and they react very harshly. But as long as repression continues people are bound to ask such questions.

It is a sad reflection on the leaders, especially the liberal and radical ones, that this law remains on their statute books while at the same time they claim to be leading the struggle for human rights and for African dignity. Nothing dehumanizes and degrades the African more than this law. It makes him miserable and insecure in his own country. As a crowning insult to African dignity, leaders frantically attempt to justify P.D.A. by claiming that Africa is *not yet ready* for full democratic liberties! They are in effect justifying the Bothas' and Smiths' claim that Africans are not yet ready for complete freedom; unwittingly they are reflecting the same fascist and racist frame of mind.

Personal Dictatorships

The story is even worse with the more extreme governments, especially the military regimes and insecure civil governments. Here, you would prefer to face the tiger! No political or democratic rights of any sort are tolerated, excepted those sanctioned by the ruling clique. What they call democracy here would be called despotic dictatorship elsewhere. The leaders speak only one language—the language of force. Almost without exception such leaders are politically illiterate, and they make a havoc of Africa's international image. They meddle in world affairs with all the meticulousness of a bull in a china shop, and are even worse in their handling of domestic affairs. Whereas under the generals governments are straightforwardly military, under weak civilian leadership it is the secret police who govern. To the citizen the effect is the same —

oppression. To these governments the people are nothing; just faceless tatterdemalion crowds who are there to be manipulated and forced to do whatever the regime wants.

The principal danger in this situation is not just the denial of civil liberties and the arbitrariness which accompany enormous power in the hands of individuals. The serious danger is a lasting one: the perpetuation of the kind of established disorder which is slowly tending to become universal in Africa. The following characteristics are common in nearly all such type of governments. Leaders are increasingly isolated from the people and from reality, and live in a world of their own delusion, which forces them into actions which are irrational and often fatally damaging to the country and people. They then subvert the very machinery of government by covering it in a web of secrecy and still more secrecy, until secrecy itself becomes a way of government. At this point of disorder, leaders begin to lose the distinction between their private wishes and their national duties. They invent reasons and ethical justifications for doing what they should not have done, and for leaving undone what their duty obliges them to do. They degenerate morally until at last they cease to have any sense of respect for others' rights; by the same token they lose their own freedom as well. They cease to appear often in public, for they are scared of the people's resentment, for which they are themselves responsible. Naked violence is henceforth introduced into the system of government, and the secret police are allowed extraordinary powers to trample on people's liberties as they please. With only a smattering of bourgeois morality, lacking as they do the economic base to be bourgeois; with not a grain of proletarian morality, they conduct their daily business of repression under the threadbare 'moral' cover of an amalgam of half-baked political sloganeering, crude demagoguery and sham anti-imperialism. It is, in short, a highly predictable descent into the realm of politics without morality. Here is where absolute power corrupts absolutely.

To the people, a state based on established disorder is a state with no law and no rights. Injustice is taken for granted. As one Latin American revolutionary pointed out, injustice in these states is seen as an ever present element rather than a shocking intrusion in the people's existence. Those in power demand from the people only unilateral, in place of mutual, respect: the respect of inferiors for superiors, rather than the respect between equals. To such leaders the people are only part of their estate, and in such an estate the masters are insensitive to appeals for justice; to them justice is whatever is useful to maintain themselves in power. Their ideal is to govern with the minimum of perspiration and the maximum of domination. They are obsessed with the lust for power and regard themselves as demi-gods. Anybody honest enough to refuse to acknowledge them as such is a criminal and punished accordingly, mostly through the use of P.D.A. The country in the meantime moves by desultory stages nearer and nearer disaster.

‘They reduce the entire population to the economic level of beggars and the political level of convicts,’ as one African victim put it.

Africa Is Not Yet Free

Saddled with a kind of leadership which relies on commandism in place of rational persuasion, a large part of Africa is indeed not yet free. Which convincingly explains why the people do not respond effectively to the leaders’ calls for more efforts in ‘nation-building’, which simply means more sacrifices and more voluntary efforts in place of the proper material incentives. How can people be moved to the same high peaks of endeavour and heroic exertions as was the case during the early period of socialist construction in most of the socialist countries, if they are led by demi-gods who dictate that what they say shall be law and their random utterances universal truths? Such leaders can never free us from our three scourges: poverty, ignorance and disease. That is to wish for the impossible. To invoke duty from a people without rights is to make democracy stand on its head. In the modern world, the people’s rights are prior to their duties, and the reversal of this order equals tyranny.

It is on this score that the disillusioned older generation and the emerging youth of Africa, supported by the budding class-conscious workers, are coming ever closer to forming a united front against tyranny, exploitation and incompetence, and are raising awkward questions as they thunder their way into the arena of African politics. It is only a matter of time before the working class takes over the leadership of this gigantic spontaneous moral uprising and transforms it into a well co-ordinated and organized political uprising, not only because time is on their side, but because the worker is no longer faced merely by individual injustice at the factory level or by individual officials, but by the injustice of the state authority itself. And, as Lenin stresses in his ‘Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats’, ‘*only* in the working class can democracy find a champion who makes no reservation, is not irresolute and does not look back.’ The role of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who led the struggle for independence has now diminished considerably, since most of them have in any case become part and parcel of the oppressive system, and their material interests bind them to the despotic rulers and their exploitative regimes. Their identification with exploitative systems compels them to be inconsistent and to compromise in order to safeguard their salaries, their dividends, or their shares of profits. This class, as observed earlier, is two-faced by its very nature, gravitating towards democracy and working-class and peasant interests, but at the same time gravitating towards international bourgeois class interests which oppress and exploit the people. Basically they are reactionary, as they want to block the march of history towards socialism.

In the long term, it is only the workers who are capable of raising the banner of freedom for our own people and for the people who are still under colonial bondage. The working class is the only class which is capable of resolute action to introduce a new economic order and fearlessly to pursue policies which will enhance the people's well-being as well as their dignity. It is the only class which has nothing to fear from a truly free people.

Revolutionary petty-bourgeois leaders must join hands with the working class and accelerate the course of history rather than obstruct it, otherwise, as history itself has shown, any such obstruction will be swept aside to make room for the passage of the new emerging forces of the oppressed. They must either join the workers in leading this force to its logical destination as dictated by the realities of the epoch, or gracefully stand aside and let the liberation of Africa take its course, under the leadership of the workers and other oppressed classes, including those petty-bourgeois intellectuals who are genuinely revolutionary. A lot of these petty-bourgeois leaders are genuine patriots and they feel very strongly about the need to hasten the course of history, obstructed as it has been for so long by imperialism. They are also courageous enough to admit to shortcomings when these are pointed out. Genuine revolutionary intellectuals always identify their interests with those of the people, and do not involve themselves in the pursuit of their own material interests. On the other hand, non-revolutionary intellectuals set a trend towards a solitary exercise of power which is not likely to provide an intellectual environment conducive to free and comradely discussion and exchange of views. With leaders enjoying absolute power no one can be honest; the wise just keep quiet, and the opportunists resort to shameless sycophancy. This is not good enough for an emerging nation, which needs not only vigour but also a maximum pool of talents available to the people. Not only that; it needs, above all, plenty of individual initiative, mass emulation and bold but realistic innovations. Without these things there can be no development of any kind, and they can come only from a free people.

Africa is on the threshold of a new historical era. It has immense potentialities. Once stripped of the current negative and restrictive tendencies, the prospects for real African development are unlimited. Africa is probably the second richest continent in the world, and yet its people are among the poorest. This unhappy contradiction cannot be blamed solely on exploitation by foreigners. Our own inaction is also to blame.

African workers and youth are no longer satisfied with the superficial explanations of our backwardness. They know that countries which were as backward as Africa only a generation ago are now boldly chalking up one gigantic achievement after another and are rapidly developing advanced economies of which anyone would be proud. The tide for African economic and political revolution is now rising rapidly. The

African Socialism or a Socialist Africa?

objective conditions for such a revolution are present; only the subjective factor, proletarian organization, is missing. The workers must organize this, pushing the petty-bourgeois leaders of Africa to more progressive, socialist economic policies. It is only a strategy of decolonizing our economies in favour of developing independent national economies which in the long run will benefit the workers and all oppressed people. In the final analysis it is the role of the organized working class to take the people of Africa to their historically conditioned destiny. There is no third, or middle way.