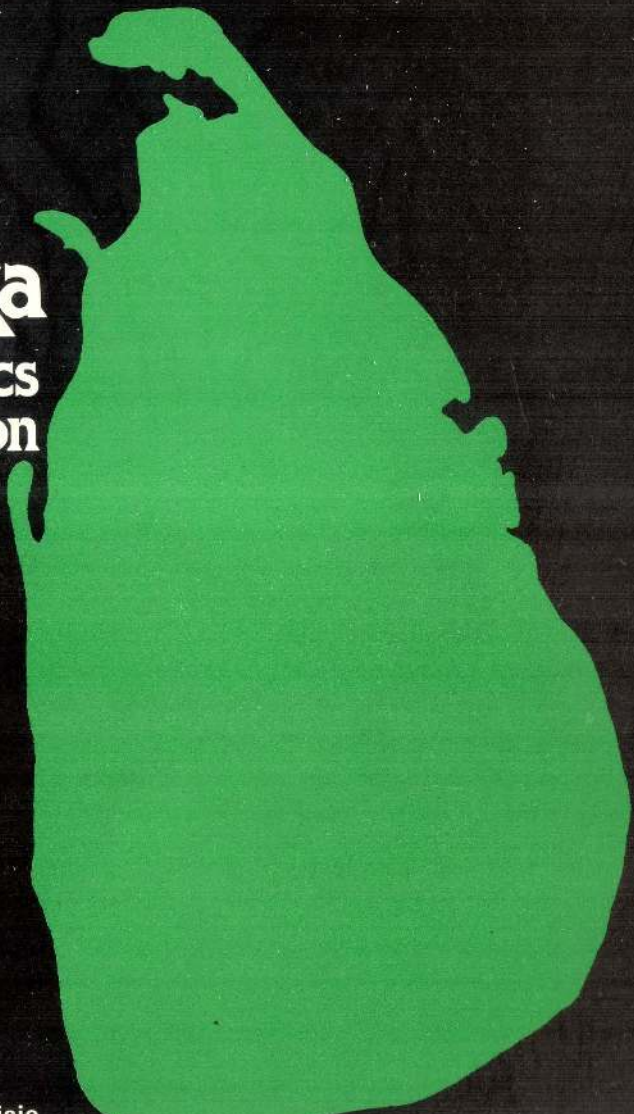
RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL FOR BLACK AND THIRD WORLD LIBERATION

VOLUME XXII
AUTUMN 1980
NUMBER 2 £1.50/$3.50



$ri Lanka
The economics of capitulation

Pakistan in crisis
Xala and the black bourgeoisie
Creative women in changing societies
Arab women – Imperialism in the Philippines – Free Trade Zones

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions, correspondence and books for review should be sent to the Editor at the Institute of Race Relations, 247-9 Pentonville Road, London N1, England. The Institute of Race Relations and the Transnational Institute are precluded from expressing a corporate view: the opinions expressed are therefore those of the contributors.

While welcoming contributions, particularly on Third World problems and realities, we would like to remind our contributors that manuscripts should be short (ideally, 5,000 words), clear (as opposed to obscure) and free of jargon. Typescripts should be double-spaced.

RACE & CLASS is published quarterly (in July, October, January and April) and subscriptions are payable in advance to any bookseller or to the Institute of Race Relations, 247-9 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NG. Subscriptions can be entered at any point in the volume. Current subscription rate £9.50/US$25.00/DM55 to institutions, £6.00/US$14.00/DM30 to individuals. Subscribers from West Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands please pay in DM or the equivalent in local currency. Single issues £2.75/US$7.00/DM15 to institutions, £1.50/US$3.50/DM8 to individuals. Special rates for booksellers are available on request. Back copies of Volumes 1-19 can be obtained from Wm Dawson and Sons Limited, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent. Volumes 1-4 available in reprint at £2.50 per issue; Volumes 5-19 available in the original at current subscription and single copy prices (Volume 20 and 21 available at the IRR).

US Mailing Agent, Expediters of the Printed Word Ltd.,
527 Madison Avenue, Suite 1217, New York NY 10022, USA
2nd Class Postage Paid at New York, NY.

RACE & CLASS

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS AND THE TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Volume XXII Autumn 1980 Number 2

ISSN 0306 3965

Cover design by M
Typesetting by FI Litho (TU), 329 Upper Street, London N1
Printed by The Russell Press, Gamble Street Nottingham

SATCHI PONNAMBALAM

Sri Lanka: the economics of capitulation

Since 1948, when Sri Lanka became independent, the two major parties – the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) – have alternated in governing the country. The SLFP, in coalition with the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) and the Communist Party (CP), last held office as the United Front (UF) from 1970 to 1977. The current UNP government came to power in the July 1977 elections. The years of the UF government had been marked by a state of emergency (following a major insurrection by the youth in the countryside), lasting for almost the whole term of their office, which severely curbed political and trade union activity, drastically circumscribed civil liberties and substantially curtailed judicial independence. The UF government's policies of land redistribution, promotion of rural development, increasing self-sufficiency in food production and lessening dependence on tea and rubber exports were not far reaching enough to halt or reverse the steady pull of Sri Lanka into the world capitalist system. What resulted was a so-called 'mixed economy' professing to reflect the Buddhist virtues of 'the middle path'. But such policies were simply not viable, and in any case tended to be undermined by corruption and inefficiency. In the end, the government was discredited and suffered an overwhelming defeat in the elections of 1977.

Satchi Ponnambalam is a Sri Lankan lawyer and economist who has written extensively on government policy in local journals. He is now resident in Britain.

Race & Class, XXII, 2(1980)

The landslide victory of the UNP marked a significant change in Sri Lankan politics, and has disturbing implications for the country's future. Elected on a platform of 'just and righteous' government, on promises of restoring civil rights, and pledged to 'democratic socialism', one of the government's first acts was to promulgate a new constitution which vested sweeping powers in the newly-created office of Executive President.

From the beginning, the UNP has stressed its commitment to a 'free economy' and its wholehearted welcome of foreign investment and western aid. It is now pursuing, with frightening speed, a series of massive and far-reaching 'development' policies whose effect can only be to bring the country into a state of total dependency within the imperialist system. We examine some of these extraverted policies and their implications in the following article, which is based on a chapter from the author's forthcoming book on Sri Lanka: The Crisis of Dependent Capitalism: the Sri Lankan economy 1948-1980 *(Zed Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN).*

The first act of the new UNP government was to liberalise imports. The cabinet, at its first meeting held on 19 August 1977, released Rs700 million in foreign exchange for this purpose. The government also announced that all consumers would soon be entitled to a weekly ration of four pounds of rice and four pounds of flour, in accordance with the UNP's electoral pledge. The price of flour was reduced from 80 to 60 cents a pound and bread from 75 to 60 cents. The sugar ration was increased, and supplied at the subsidised price of 75 cents a pound.

From then on, government policy became explicitly capitalist. The new Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel, visited a number of western countries to seek aid. In an address to the British press in October 1977, he outlined the economic policies of the UNP government as follows:

> My government welcomes trade, aid and foreign investment. These are the cornerstones, the very foundations of our economic policy. It is our objective to maximise foreign investment in Sri Lanka by giving foreign investors the necessary incentives and the necessary guarantees and safeguards consistent, of course, with our national sovereignty and economic goals. We expect aid and support from the World Bank and the IMF and also from the countries of the Aid-Group ... We shall give the private sector its due place in our economy ... The basis of a free and just society, in my opinion, is a free and just economy. We will accordingly move away from restrictive policies and controls of the last seven years to a more liberal economic policy.[1]

From this time onwards, Sri Lanka's economic policies came to be at the beck and call of the IMF and World Bank. The World Bank

required the government to cut down on subsidised rice and on health and education expenditure. It stressed the importance of private enterprise, including that carried on by foreigners.[2] The IMF, for its part, in what it calls a 'stabilisation programme', often requires devaluation of a country's currency, reduction of government spending, curtailment of welfare expenditure, encouragement of foreign private investment by providing incentives, removal of foreign exchange controls, etc. These are pre-conditions for the grant of new stand-by loans, credit for the import of consumer goods and for re-scheduling maturing debts. The results of the IMF's stabilisation programmes in Indonesia after the military overthrow of Sukarno's government in 1965, in the Philippines after 1962 and in Argentina in the years 1958 to 1963 are well known.[3] More recently, in 1976, the IMF's stabilisation programme in Peru involved a 31 per cent devaluation of the sol, higher transport fares, higher excise taxes, increased rates for electricity, etc. The introduction of this programme resulted in riots in Lima, the imposition of a national emergency, and the dismissal of the Prime Minister. In 1978, the IMF's programme in Egypt, as a pre-condition for new loans, involved cutting down food and fuel subsidies. Its announcement sparked off three days of street-rioting in which at least seventy-eight people were killed, and the programme had to be abandoned. Yet it was the World Bank, IMF and 'Aid Group' countries which the new Sri Lankan Finance Minister visited in late 1977.

The IMF and World Bank: Sri Lanka's new masters

The extent to which the IMF and the World Bank's diktat came to determine the new government's policies became evident in the very first UNP budget presented in November 1977. The UNP's pledge of eight pounds of cereal was abandoned only two months after its introduction. The budget cancelled all subidised rations of rice, flour and sugar, except for one pound of free rice and three pounds of rice at Rs1 per pound for those earning below Rs 3,600 a year. Flour was taken off ration and made available at the previous price of 80 cents a pound. The same happened to sugar. In this way the guaranteed supply of these two commodities to the entire population was abolished at a stroke.

Although, in the past, three attempts to cut the subsidised consumer goods had failed, the new Finance Minister did now succeed. His budget speech made this explicit:

> I propose to begin to rationalise our extensive food subsidy and distribution programme which was introduced into this country as far back as 1943. Their continuation over the last three and half decades, while attempting to ensure that the basic needs of the population were being met, has been at substantial cost to our domestic resource mobilisation effort, development and economic growth.

According to his priorities, access for the people to essential food is unimportant compared to the need to supply petrol for motor vehicles (for which he provided a subsidy of Rs400 million) or fertiliser to the affluent landowners and state-managed estates (for which he provided another Rs 600 million).

The Finance Minister in his budget devalued the rupee and set the rate at 16 rupees per US dollar. This meant a nearly 100 per cent devaluation of the official rate and a 14 per cent devaluation of the FEEC rate.* The FEEC rate was abolished, a single exchange rate for the rupee established and the currency was allowed to float under a 'crawling peg' exchange system.

In the name of creating an 'open and free economy', the Finance Minister abolished in toto all import controls which had existed in the form of licences and quotas, and opened the door to unrestricted private sector imports. He also abolished the whole system of exchange control. This was only possible because of a one-year stand-by arrangement with the IMF. One immediate consequence was the abolition of all public sector monopolies for the import of yarns, textiles, oil, fertilisers, milk, medicines, tractors, etc. This meant, as the Minister put it, a substantial increase in 'private sector participation in both domestic and external trade'. He also allowed authorised dealers to sell foreign exchange without prior exchange control approval. In addition all curbs on foreign travel were lifted, and chairmen and directors of corporations and companies became entitled to US$75 a day when travelling abroad.

The results of the import liberalisation policy became evident within a few months. The country was inundated with all manner of foreign luxury goods and consumer durables. When almost all the industrialised countries of the West and Japan were protecting their home markets from imports from the poor developing countries by quotas and tariffs (e.g., the EEC textile quota seriously affected Sri Lanka's exports of ready-made garments), the UNP government's policy was one of unrestricted flow of imported goods. These included, according to a UNI report: 'expensive radios, tape-recorders, refrigerators, air-conditioners, liquor, tinned foods, carpets, toys and trinkets. Cars are also coming in large numbers. Even TV sets are available, although television will not come to Sri Lanka for at least another year.'[4]

All this was financed by what the Finance Minister called 'our share of the IMF's Trust Fund Resources and the Extended Fund Facility'. The EFF is a medium-term loan programme which allows drawings of

* The Foreign Exchange Entitlement Certificate (FEEC) scheme was a dual exchange rate system first introduced in 1968, which gave a higher rate of exchange for non-traditional exports such as gems, garments, leather goods, petroleum products, etc. Thus, it effectively subsidised the export businesses in this sector.

up to 140 per cent of a member country's quota over a period of up to three years, with repayment to be made within four to eight years. EFF drawings are allowed only when the IMF is satisfied that the country faces a deep-rooted balance of payments problem, has already exhausted the four credit tranche drawings of up to 200 per cent of its quota and is in serious financial difficulties. Such a country, moreover, must subject itself to IMF performance criteria and specific policy measures. Only four other countries in the world have so far been borrowers from the EFF.

Because of the UNP government's adoption of policies at the behest of the IMF and the World Bank, the IMF made available to Sri Lanka a stand-by credit of Rs5,000 million (US$300 million). Soon afterwards, the IMF posted a resident officer in the country for the first time. The World Bank followed this up by sending its Regional Vice-President for South Asia, Dr David Hopper, in March 1978. Dr Hopper congratulated President Jayewardene's government on the 'courageous steps taken in its first budget' and promised the Bank's support for the completion of the 'accelerated' Mahaweli Diversion Project – a major irrigation, agricultural and hydroelectric project. He also stated that the western powers in the Aid Sri Lanka Consortium were 'most sympathetic to the government's efforts to revitalise the economy, to establish a Free Trade Zone and particularly to harness for agriculture and power the waters of the Mahaweli Ganga basin'.[5] The Mahaweli Project had been in existence since 1970 and the World Bank could have mobilised additional foreign assistance for it much earlier than 1977 had it been really concerned with the interests of Sri Lanka and its people; instead, of course, it waited for a new government to come to office which would be a willing tool of World Bank and IMF policies.

On 30 March 1978, the Finance Minister announced that 'the World Bank and the IMF will back Sri Lanka's case to the hilt at the Aid-Group meeting to be held in Paris early next month'.[6] Then came the news that the Paris meeting had pledged a record aid package amounting to Rs6,800 million for 1978. This was over and above whatever loans might be pledged for the Mahaweli Project, which was reported to have 'captured the imaginations of the Aid-Group countries'!

The final tally of the UNP government's foreign loan mobilising efforts was disclosed by the President on 31 May 1978: 'We have been promised international finance up to Rs11,000 million for the Mahaweli programme and Rs6,000 million for projects outside this programme for the years 1978 and 1979.' Anyone who can meaningfully relate what these vast numbers mean for Sri Lanka's economy cannot help but conclude that, after thirty years of independence, Sri Lanka has now been firmly integrated within the world capitalist

system as its latest satellite dependency in Asia. One remembers what a former President of the World Bank, Eugene R. Black, said of US foreign aid programmes:

> Our foreign aid programmes constitute distinct benefit to American business. Three major benefits are: (1) Foreign aid provides a substantial and immediate market for US goods and services; (2) Foreign aid stimulates the development of new overseas markets for US companies; (3) Foreign aid orients national economies towards a free enterprise system in which US firms can prosper.[7]

Economic policies

Not surprisingly, the Finance Minister announced a five-year tax holiday for companies engaged in food production, industry and deep-sea fishing. He also abolished price controls on most goods on the basis that 'price controls never functioned except on paper and only paved the way for corruption'. Yet price controls have been in existence for over thirty years and have been effectively enforced. The abolition of price controls in the context of monopoly production and constant shortages – as in Sri Lanka – is bound to result in the consumer being held to ransom by producers as well as retailers.

The 1978 budget offered the people nothing to alleviate the mounting cost of living, although the UNP election manifesto had said that the 'utmost' priority would be given to this problem. In fact, by ending subsidised food rations, devaluing the rupee and abolishing price controls for locally manufactured and imported goods, the budget was a ready-made recipe for escalating price levels still further.

The Finance Minister also announced an increase in the GPS* price of paddy from Rs33 to Rs40 per bushel.[8] Ostensibly, this was to make the cultivation of paddy more remunerative with a view to reaching the goal of self-sufficiency within a short period. In reality, raising the GPS price was a political hand-out, not an economic measure. Even at the earlier GPS price of Rs33, farmers were getting substantial profits. The new GPS price will serve to increase profit margins from the 30-40 per cent level to nearly 100 per cent, with the benefits accruing mainly to the small class of large landowners who sell paddy to the government at the GPS price. For, as of 1977, out of a total paddy production of 80.4 million bushels, only 23 million were sold at the GPS rate. This is because, of the one million farmers in the country, some 35 per cent are tenant cultivators and another 35 per cent cultivate such small plots that they do not grow any surplus paddy to sell at the GPS rate.

As a sop to those who would be hardest hit by the abolition of food

* GPS, introduced in 1948, is a guaranteed price scheme for local producers of paddy.

subsidies and price controls, the Finance Minister also announced the introduction of an unemployment relief payment (for the first time in the country's history) of Rs50 a month to every unemployed person – at a total annual cost of Rs645 million. This constitutes a significant feature of the budget and has implications for Sri Lanka's other social and economic policies, so it is worth considering in some detail.

Sri Lanka's population can be characterised by its youth (39 per cent are under 15), high level of literacy and education, and high level of political involvement (voter turn-out in the last general election was 86.7 per cent). The number of unemployed youth has been estimated at 1.5 million out of a total population of 14.5 million. Many Sri Lankans now migrate to the oil-rich countries for work.

Unemployment relief, per se, is at present inappropriate in an agricultural country like Sri Lanka, where there is considerable scarcity of labour for farm work. The new measure also overlooks the vast number of underemployed, estimated at 638,846 persons or 20 per cent of the labour force. These underemployed (44 per cent of rural households and 59 per cent of estate rural households) had an income of less than Rs40 per month in 1969-70[9] and may well abandon such seasonal, piecemeal or part-time employment in order to receive the regular monthly payment of Rs50 from the government. So this unemployment relief measure will actually cause more rural unemployment. Government policy, however, demands the creation of a disciplined labour force which can serve the needs of foreign investors, once adequate facilities have been built up for them to take advantage of. Moreover, many of the present government's economic policies are dictated by fear of the unemployed, and the need to be seen to be doing something about unemployment has even resulted in it altering previously planned development policies. Thus, the Mahaweli Ganga Diversion Project (which is examined in more detail in another section) has come to be presented more as a scheme to solve unemployment than as an irrigation project to supply water for double-cropping. Similarly, an integrated development programme has been sacrificed in favour of just three prestigious schemes – the Mahaweli Project, the Free Trade Zone and the Greater Colombo Development Scheme.

Turning to the revenue and expenditure pattern of the budget, this made no departure from its predecessors. Revenue continued to be chained to the foreign trade sector. From a pre-budget estimated revenue of Rs6,813 million, budgeted revenue increased to Rs10,830 million. About 90 per cent of the increases were to be realised from higher duties on foreign exports. The export duty on tea alone was to raise Rs2,695 million, while duties on rubber and coconut were to yield Rs840 million and Rs300 million respectively. Crippling export duties were imposed on tea. These extortionate levels of duty meant that the prevailing low level of wages would continue for the country's nearly one million plantation workers.

On account of the extravagant recurrent expenditure proposals contained in the budget, and despite the cancellation of the food subsidy, very little money was left over to finance capital expenditure. From the draft estimate of Rs6,674 million, recurrent expenditure increased by Rs3,429 million to Rs10,103 million in the budget. This increase was caused by the proposed unemployment relief (Rs645 million), salary increases to public servants (Rs420 million), additional interest payments on the public debt (Rs335 million), fertiliser subsidy (Rs430 million) and the rice and flour subsidy (Rs894 million). Consequently, the budget's recurrent expenditure estimate took Rs10,103 million of an estimated total revenue of Rs10,830 million, leaving a current account surplus of just Rs760 million. This was to be raised by domestic and foreign loans to the tune of Rs1,750 million and Rs2,820 million respectively. This was the highest budgetary deficit in Sri Lanka's history.

The outcome of the devaluation/liberalisation budgetary package became evident almost immediately: by the end of 1978, the economy had been completely diverted from any meaningful development effort and was being sustained by massive amounts of foreign loans. What overtook the country's economy was the exact opposite of what would ordinarily be expected from a devaluation of the currency. The volume of imports rose by a staggering 27 per cent – the highest level since 1960. As for exports, the depreciated currency failed to spur any notable increase in export earnings; these rose a bare 3 per cent above 1977 levels. Consequently, Sri Lanka emerged as a total loser from the devaluation. The consequence of this parasitic import boom was a staggering balance of trade deficit of Rs2,173 million.[10] This trade deficit in 1978 was the highest in the history of Sri Lanka's foreign trade and came after two consecutive years of trade surplus.

With soaring import payments and stagnant export earnings, the external resource gap jumped from Rs860 million in 1977 to Rs3,798 million in 1978. The gap was financed by long-term loans. These increased to Rs3,680 million in 1978, a 65 per cent increase over 1977. Rs1,680 million came in as commodity and food aid, Rs1,222 million as project loans, and the IMF provided Rs756 million as stand-by loans and Rs778 million from the Trust Fund Facility. The public debt at the end of 1978 was Rs30,950 million made up of a domestic debt of Rs16,370 million and a foreign debt of Rs14,580 million. What is striking about the debt economy being created by the UNP government is that the foreign debt, which amounted to 25 per cent of the total public debt in 1975, increased to 42 per cent in 1977 and 47 per cent in 1978. Moreover, more than 60 per cent of the capital budget in 1978 was financed by foreign loans.

In the domestic economy, the liberalisation of imports had disastrous effects on the local production of food crops. Wheat flour

imports, which were 380,00 tons in 1976, rose to 524,00 tons in 1977 and 603,000 tons in 1978. As a result of the availability of wheat flour, production of yams, sorghum, maize, potatoes, etc. declined in 1978. Paddy production did reach a new record harvest of 90.6 million bushels, but this gain was only achieved at the price of an unbelievable Rs451 million given out in credit. In 1976, credit granted was only Rs74 million. Further, of the Rs451 million credit granted in 1978, only 20 per cent was recovered – the lowest recovery rate in the whole history of cultivation loans.

The budgets of 1979 and 1980 have followed the same pattern as that of 1978. These have reduced wealth tax, company tax and income tax at the higher levels. A five-year tax holiday has been extended to new companies involved in construction and land clearing, to pioneer industries, etc. Revenue raising has been shifted to indirect taxes, including taxes on essentials. Consumer subsidies have been further withdrawn and the price of essential goods has increased steeply – by an estimated 200 per cent over the last two years. To alleviate the plight of the very poorest – i.e., those receiving an income of less than Rs300 per month – a Food Stamp Scheme was introduced in late 1979. Food Stamps are to be used to purchase a specified 'basket' of essentials each month, but what is offered under the Scheme is barely sufficient for a week. The Scheme was motivated, as the Central Bank admitted, by the government's determination to reduce further the food subsidy bill.[11]

Development projects

We must now turn to analysing the government's three proposals – the 'telescoping' of the Mahaweli Ganga Project, the Free Trade Zone and the Greater Colombo Development Scheme – for these three schemes have been held out as the panacea for all the economic ills that afflict the country. It is claimed that telescoping the Mahaweli Project will make 'unemployment a thing of the past' and the country self-sufficient in food and power. The Free Trade Zone is supposed to generate the much needed foreign exchange and also provide employment. And the Greater Colombo Development Scheme is touted as providing the necessary housing facilities for the capital's population and once again making Colombo the 'Garden City of Asia'.

The Mahaweli Project

The Mahaweli Project is a gigantic undertaking. Initiated by the previous UNP Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake, and funded through the World Bank by a number of different donor countries, it was originally planned to take thirty years to complete. It will eventually cover 39 per cent of the country, clearing the lands of the Mahaweli

Basin for agricultural development. It is intended to increase food production, so that Sri Lanka can attain self-sufficiency.

> Work involves 14 multi-purpose reservoirs, two trans-basin diversions and several hydroelectric projects. The overall aim is the development of irrigation facilities, roads, social and commercial infrastructure, land clearing and preparation. There is also agricultural experimentation and introduction of new crops, construction of new villages, service centres and a host of other facilities to provide for the needs of existing settlers and about 150,00 new settlers. To carry out this task, the government proposes to mobilise the vast army of unemployed youth ... in Chinese style.[12]

Now, since the UNP government has come to power, the thirty years have been telescoped to *six* – the lifetime of the present government. At the time the decision was taken, the engineering designs for projects in the second and third phases had not even been put on the drawing board.

Not only will the 'acceleration' of the project impose an enormous foreign debt burden on future generations (cost of the Mahaweli Project is currently estimated at 25-30 billion rupees), it also leaves no time to assess the effects of the enormous changes that will result. Questions of social cost/benefit, national economic priorities, sociological considerations involved in the establishment of new human settlements, ecological problems arising from the clearing of large tracts of jungle, questions of water seepage and the consequent raising of the water table, soil salinity, etc. – all need close analysis and detailed study which is impossible in the new time limit.

As for employment creation, the settlement of families on the newly-opened lands will offer the biggest avenue. The intention is to allocate to each settler a family farm of three acres.[13] The 654,00 acres of new land cleared from jungle will therefore absorb 218,000 families and, assuming an average of two workers per family, the employment potential by way of settlers will be about 436,000 persons. New jobs will also result from land clearing, construction of dams, tunnels and reservoirs, but how many jobs will depend on the techniques adopted. Since accelerated completion has now been decreed as the principal objective, this must entail extensive use of machinery. This will correspondingly reduce opportunities for employment. In this sense, accelerated implementation actually conflicts with the employment creation objective in the construction phase of the Project. In conclusion, the total employment opportunities arising from the accelerated completion of the Project by 1983 will – if successful – be about 640,000 persons (this includes some 200,000 people in non-agricultural occupations). Assuming that only 175,000 additional people seek employment each year during the period of construction, there

will be an additional 1,050,000 persons on the labour market by 1983. The Mahaweli Project will thus create jobs for only a little more than half of the total new addition to the labour force which will come into existence. So, on the employment front, the proposal for accelerated implementation of the Project must fail to match up to expectations.

The Mahaweli Project, in today's situation of high capital costs, really cannot be justified. Before any resort is made to lumpy, high-cost irrigation projects, which have a necessarily long gestation period as new land is rendered cultivable, maximum productivity ought first to be obtained from the existing area under cultivation by removing inhibiting institutional factors, out-dated cultivation practices and misuse of water. Indeed, the settlement of people on previously uninhabited land for irrigated cultivation will have negative results if the existing levels of productivity and farmer performance are transplanted to the new areas: this was the case under all previous colonisation schemes. Self-sufficiency, and even a surplus, can be achieved on the existing area under cultivation by abolishing the land tenure system and giving the land to the tillers, redistributing land over and above the optimum operational size and effectively mobilising the farmers. A paddy farm of 4 to 6 acres in size is the most efficient operational unit in Sri Lanka. Holdings in excess of this are economically indefensible and national priorities demand that the excess lands under cultivation be redistributed before money is spent on any expansion of the overall cultivable area. Analysing farm size and productivity in Sri Lanka,[14] Professor Keith Griffin makes the following pointed observation:

> Despite the much greater use of machinery and chemicals by the large farmers, their output per acre is less than that of small farmers. The latter use more labour-intensive techniques of production than the larger farmers, and they were the only ones in 1966-7 who managed to obtain an average yield greater than 35 bushels an acre. If the data from this sample of 3,000 parcels are trustworthy, it would appear that Sri Lanka could increase both employment and rice output by dividing the larger holdings among several small farmers. Given that unemployment is increasing, that real wages may be falling and that the country continues to import a substantial proportion of its rice, a policy of redistributing land would bring multiple benefits ... The implementation of such a policy also would result in a more equal distribution of rural income, of course. At present the bottom 40% of rural households receive only 14% of rural incomes, while the richest 5% receive 22% of rural incomes. This pattern could be radically altered if the land now organised in large farms were cultivated with more labour-intensive techniques of production. Indeed, as is evident from the figures, a redistribution of

land would have a significantly greater impact on employment than on output. Those who are anxious to create more jobs in the rural areas of under-developed countries should be ardent supporters of land reform.[15]

Sri Lanka achieved 73.1 per cent self-sufficiency in rice in 1970 and 73.4 per cent in 1974 by obtaining only a third to a half of the potential yield of the new hybrid varieties. If agricultural policy concentrated on encouraging transplanting combined sowing in rows, renewing seed paddy every two to three years and judicious use of water by farmers, the national average yield could be increased to 80 bushels per acre. This would take the country into self-sufficiency in a single year, rather than having to spend – as the accelerated Mahaweli Project involves – Rs30,000 million of borrowed money over six years to reach the same goal.[16]

*The Free Trade Zone**

The UNP in its 1977 election manifesto proposed the establishment of a Free Trade Zone (FTZ): 'Industrial development through foreign collaboration or direct involvement will be encouraged and promoted by way of Free Trade Zones geared to export, to increase employment, to earn foreign exchange and obviate the dependence on foreign aid.' The SLFP, with its LSSP and CP partners in the United Front government, had put out a White Paper as far back as 1972, proposing the establishment of a similar zone in Trincomalee. It was called the Export Processing Zone and involved inviting foreign investment for export-processing industries. It is the current government, however, which has turned the proposal into a reality by enacting legislation in 1978.

The FTZ area covers about 150 square miles on the western seaboard, from Maha Oya in the north to the Kelani Ganga, just above the Colombo City limits, in the south. The Greater Colombo Economic Commission, which administers it, has various powers including that of laying out industrial estates for sale or lease and entering into agreements with enterprises. It can also grant exemptions and modify or vary certain specified laws. Even more extraordinary, it is empowered to authorise banks to operate secret numbered accounts for foreigners. The proposal overall has the prospect of making the Commission a government within the government. The law creating it is so skeletal, with just thirty-five sections and giving the Commission only powers but no limitations, that within the area of its authority the Commission, not the government of Sri Lanka, is omnipotent.

The Greater Colombo Economic Comission announced in March

*See 'Notes and documents' on FTZs in the Third World generally.

1978 that it would provide 'modern infrastructure facilities for the area. These would include an air cargo terminal, a container marshalling yard for sea-going containers, rapid telecommunication system and special banking area ... water, power and sophisticated telephone and telex facilities ... road, rail and air communication in close proximity and first-class hotels and housing accommodation within easy reach.'[17] (The communication system will in fact be one of the most advanced in the world – by 1981 it is planned to install a sophisticated electronic switching system which is at present only available in the US and France.[18]) Six months later, the Commission announced that the following tax incentives would be granted to investors: (1) tax exemption for 7-10 years; (2) a turnover tax of 2 per cent in lieu of income tax for 15 years thereafter; (3) exemption of royalty payments from tax during the tax holiday period; (4) exemption of dividends during the tax holiday period and for the next 15 years; (5) exemption from export and import duties and harbour dues, and (6) exemption of all foreign remittances from exchange control.

When the FTZ was planned, the government expected that these extraordinary tax incentives would lead the big western and Japanese multinational corporations to invest in it. Indeed, the Finance Minister met with the main confederations of industry and trade in West Germany, UK and Japan. The meetings were attended by a variety of investment and business interests including such well-known giants as Krupp, AEG, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, Sumitomo and Thyssen.[19] One news report stated that the Commission had 'received investment proposals capable of generating almost 16,000 jobs within a matter of weeks since its inception. Electronics, garments and other light industries are highly favoured.'[20]

But realities seem to have contradicted expectations. Up to the end of May 1979, of the 36 projects for which agreements had been signed, 22 were for garment manufacturing, 3 for the making of canvas shoes and rubberised products, 2 for gloves, 2 lapidaries for gem-cutting and 1 each for the making of tea bags, industrial chemicals, glass-making, cashew kernel oil, fishing gear and consultancy service. Apart from the glass-making project, they were all small ventures, involving an investment of Rs710 million (Rs521 million foreign and Rs189 million local) and providing employment for only 17,239 persons at capacity operation. The cost to the government of setting up the different facilities in the FTZ is Rs300 million. Garment industries predominate because of Sri Lanka's relatively large quota in the EEC market as a new entrant and small supplier, compared to Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea, major suppliers on whom severe restrictions have been placed. In fact, over half the foreign garment investors in the FTZ were from these three countries.[21] The FTZ has so far failed to attract the great multinationals or even the Japanese component manufacturers. All

that has taken place is joint ventures with the new local manufacturing class.

But there is evidence that the global system of manufacturing by the multinationals is on the increase and sooner or later they are bound to invest in Sri Lanka's FTZ. For this system takes the machines to where the workers are, to make use of cheap labour,[22] and takes back the intermediate labour-intensive components to be integrated into the final product at home. A few countries, like Hong Kong, Singapore, Mauritius and Taiwan, have been early hosts for the multinationals. What is relevant from Sri Lanka's standpoint is, firstly, the extent to which this kind of foreign capital intrusion will be acceptable in a country with a strong sense of nationalism and secondly, the extent of economic benefits that will result.

On independence, Sri Lanka inherited a deformed economy with a plantation estate enclave on the one hand and a stunted impoverished peasant sector on the other. Over the last three decades, no real effort has been made to redress this structural imbalance and to free the economy from the shackles of this colonial system. The FTZ is just another enclave system, which will stand apart from the rest of the economy. And, like the plantation enclave before it, it will sharpen the contrast between modern and backward sectors and widen social and economic disparities.

Uneven development and the sacrifice of social justice will very likely result from profit-motivated development in an enclave like the FTZ.[23] But the worst feature of this type of development is that it is not under the control of a country's political process, indeed it makes the political process dependent on it. Free Trade Zones, as Professor Helleiner has pointed out, constitute

> an 'outpost of the mother country' in as real a sense as a foreign-owned mine ever did. These disagreeable features, moreover, are combined in a manner which leaves the host country with the minimum of bargaining advantage. Not only is the export manufacturing activity extraordinarily footloose, dependent as it is on neither local resources nor local markets, but it is also likely to bind the host country both to sources of inputs and to market outlets over which it has an absolute minimum of control. Bargaining strength is likely to be considerably less for a country manufacturing components or undertaking middle-stage processing than it is even for a raw material exporter.[24]

The most serious implication from a national standpoint is that, once foreign investment under state patronage has come in, the state will defend the interests of the foreign investors against those of its own citizens. Already, trade unionism and strikes have been shackled by the state.[25] Wage slavery will be authorised. These are the unwritten

incentives foreign investors demand. And if the state fails to defend the foreign investors, they will threaten to pull out en masse.

Whatever incentives are offered and however large the volume of foreign investment that goes into a developing country, development in the sense of improving the standard of living of the ordinary people will not take place and in fact has not taken place. All that happens is the 'development of underdevelopment'. So, while the initial capital comes in once and for all, the outflow of profits continues indefinitely. As a result, the outflow of capital will soon outstrip the initial inflow many times over. Free Trade Zones can only increase these adverse effects and accelerate the drain of scarce capital from the Third World to the advanced capitalist countries.

The Greater Colombo Development Scheme

Rapid development of the tourist industry and, within that, the promotion of Colombo as a central commercial and tourist attraction in South Asia, is a major government policy. It is in that context that the Greater Colombo Development Scheme, which is currently being held out as the third important development project, has to be understood. In fact, no definite programme has been officially announced, but the Scheme apparently involves the construction of several multi-storeyed complexes in Colombo itself, consisting of hotels, offices and shops. A number of hotels are currently being built by the big international chains, under what is called 'a new architectural design which will enhance the beauty of Colombo', and a Hilton-style hotel will soon grace one of the finest spots overlooking the capital's waterfront.

The Scheme also includes the construction of a new Parliament building within Greater Colombo at Kotte. Kotte (already renamed as Jayewardenepura) will become the new capital and Colombo will be developed as a super-commercial city. This type of city development is one facet of the now generally discredited elitist development 'package' of 'industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation'. In a number of countries, this has resulted in the migration to the cities of a vast multitude of rural people and the creation of a host of problems of environment and human misery. In terms of Sri Lankan national priorities, it is another step in the wrong direction, for what the country requires is rural development, since more than 80 per cent of the people live in the countryside.

Colombo was developed by our foreign rulers as a port to serve the colonial export-import trade. It was linked by road and rail to the plantations to facilitate the transport of what was being extracted by exploitation to the metropolitan centre. It had no relevance to any programme of genuine development of the country from the standpoint of the ordinary people. The regions in which genuine development has to start are the Dry Zone areas, the entirety of which lie away from and are unconnected to Colombo.

The politics of capitulation

To sustain a path of capitalist development dependent on foreign Western multinationals, the watchword among the rulers has become 'political stability' – an all-embracing pantheon before which everything must be sacrificed.* The state and the Constitution have had to be subordinated to achieving 'political stability'. Proportional representation has been introduced in the new Constitution in terms of which a party must get at least 12½ per cent of the votes in order to qualify for seats in the Assembly; this obviously favours the ruling party at future elections. While the elections may be free, the electoral system itself is rigged by placing disabilities on smaller and less organised political parties. Another proviso disqualifies MPs who change their party allegiance. By-elections have been abolished and this enables the government to be indifferent to public opinion and pressures during its terms of office.

The reasons for these changes were made quite clear by President Jayewardene in August 1979:

> The development process needs stability and peace ... Foreign investors have been invited and incentives given to them. They will hardly care to come when there are riots and governments are overthrown by bloody coups and not by the ballot. Even by the ballot, when a government with a two-thirds majority is reduced to a few members ... investors are cautious. When a party which commanded a more than two-thirds majority in the House when it assumed office loses its majority during the course of its period of office through defections; or at a general election is reduced to a few members and another party returned ... again foreign investors do not feel secure. We have therefore taken two measures, one to ensure stability for a government during its period of office. The new Constitution prevents cross-overs from one party to another ... Secondly, we introduced proportional representation as the system of voting. It is unlikely that any party will obtain a two-thirds majority in the future and fundamental changes of policy will be rare.[26]

What are these 'fundamental changes of policy' which the President hopes will be rare? Why does he fear any party in the future getting a two-thirds majority? The reason relates to the guarantees incorporated in the new Constitution for foreign investment. Article 157 states:

> Where Parliament by resolution, passed by not less than two-thirds of the whole number of Members of Parliament (including those not present) voting in its favour, approves as being essential for the

*See A. Sivanandan, 'Imperialism and disorganic development in the silicon age', (*Race & Class*, Autumn 1979) on the political implications of such 'development' for Third World countries.

> development of the national economy any Treaty or Agreement between the government of Sri Lanka and the government of any foreign state for the promotion and protection of the investments in Sri Lanka of such foreign state, its nationals, or of corporations, companies and other associations ... such Treaty or Agreement shall have the force of law in Sri Lanka, and otherwise than in the interests of national security, no written law shall be enacted or made, and no executive or administrative action shall be taken, in contravention of the provisions of such Treaty or Agreement.

Thus the Constitution safeguards the rights of international capital, and effectively fetters the freedom of action of future governments. In this manner, the present government is seeking to make foreign investment an immutable part of Sri Lanka's future.

Having thus safeguarded the interests of international capital, the government then turned its attention to domestic matters. One of its most significant pieces of legislation was the 1979 Agrarian Services Act, no 58, which, briefly, reduced the rights that landless tenant cultivators had previously enjoyed, made it easier for landlords to dispossess them, increased rents and imposed a maximum acreage that the tenant is legally allowed to cultivate (five acres). Penalties for contravening the law have been stiffened for tenants and reduced for landlords.

Such legislation is of a piece with the measures that the government has enacted against the working class. First of all, the UNP government put out a White Paper on employment relations by which it sought to eliminate trade unions and replace them with docile employees councils. Although the White Paper was abandoned because of mounting opposition by the trade unions, some parts of it have been implemented in the Employees Councils Act, 1979. Further legislation to control labour has been enacted in the 1979 Essential Public Services Act, which declares certain services 'essential', and bars strikes in them.

Inevitably, this has led to a confrontation between the trade unions and the government, with the UNP's own trade union breaking up pickets and demonstrations. At the time of writing, opposition to the government is growing rapidly. A strike and demonstration was called for 5 June by the Joint Council of Trade Unions, to protest against the massive rise in the cost of living. Counter-demonstrations were then called for by the UNP, picket lines were attacked by UNP *goondas* and, in the violence, one trade unionist was killed. This had the effect of widening the action so that, a few days later, despite the banning of strikes in the essential services, public servants came out in a general strike. The government has declared a state of emergency and mobilised its armed forces. Demonstrations have been banned, a press

censorship imposed and the funds of striking unions confiscated. The scenario is not unlike that of other Third World countries which, having capitulated to IMF and World Bank economic policies, have had to move to authoritarian regimes in order to sustain those policies.

References

1 *Ceylon News* (20 October 1977).
2 See Birger Moller, *Employment approaches to economic planning in developing countries with special reference to the development planning of Ceylon* (Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Monograph Series, No. 9, 1974), pp.259-64
3 Cheryl Payer, 'The IMF and the Third World', in Steve Weissman (ed.), *The Trojan horse* (Cal., 1974), pp.64-6; see also Cheryl Payer, *The debt trap* (New York, 1974).
4 Quoted in *Tribune* (Colombo, 10 June 1978).
5 *Ceylon Times* (30 March 1978).
6 *Ceylon News* (20 April 1978).
7 Eugene R. Black, 'Domestic dividends of Foreign Aid', in *Columbia Journal of World Business* (Vol. 1, Fall 1965), p.23.
8 Quoted in *Economic Review*, (Colombo, People's Bank, April-May 1979).
9 *Matching employment opportunities and expectations ... Ceylon* (ILO, 1971).
10 For statistics in this section see Central Bank of Ceylon, *Annual Report* (1978).
11 Central Bank of Ceylon, *Bulletin* (September 1979), p.806.
12 *Asia yearbook 1979* (Hong Kong, 1980).
13 *Feasibility study for Mahaweli Ganga Development Project I of Stage 2* (MDB, Ministry of Irrigation, Power and Highways, Colombo, 1972).
14 On the basis of figures in Central Bank of Ceylon, *Survey on cost of production of paddy* (1969).
15 Keith Griffin, *Political economy of agrarian change* (London, 1974), pp.41-3.
16 The World Bank has in effect admitted this, *Sun* (Colombo, 18 February 1978).
17 *Ceylon News* (30 March 1978).
18 *Asia yearbook*, op. cit.
19 *Ceylon News* (10 November 1977).
20 *Ceylon News* (20 April 1978).
21 See T.B. Karunaratne, 'Capacity expansion and market potential in the export oriented made-up garments industry of Sri Lanka – the situation for 1979' (Study Papers, People's Bank, Colombo, 1979).
22 The Sri Lanka GCEC, in an official brochure, states the average wages per day as follows: skilled $1.25, semi-skilled $1.05 and unskilled $0.80. See *The new investment and banking centre in Asia* (GCEC, June 1979).
23 Harry G. Johnson, 'Multinational corporations as an agency of economic development', in Barbara Ward et al. (eds), *The widening gap* (Columbia, 1971).
24 G.K. Helleiner 'Manufactured exports and multinational firms: their impact upon economic development' quoted by Gyorgy Adam in Hugo Radice (ed.), *International firms and imperialism* (Harmondsworth, 1975), p.100.
25 In the debate on the bill to establish the FTZ, J.R. Jayewardene, then Prime Minister, said: 'So, we have demarcated a certain area. In that area, I want to say quite frankly, let the people of the world including our own capitalists come and make it a "robber barons"' area ... Let anybody come and invest ... You cannot have industrial establishments having wildcat strikes ... In this area there can be no strikes ... So, if you are going to make this area an area where capitalists ... invest, certain laws have to be non-operable in that region.' *Hansard* (19 January 1978).
26 *Ceylon Daily News* (28 September 1979).

NUBAR HOUSEPIAN

Pakistan in crisis: an interview with Eqbal Ahmad

Nubar Housepian: What are the characteristics of the present regime in Pakistan?

Eqbal Ahmad: On arriving in Pakistan, the first thing that strikes one is the totality of the military government's isolation. It is a regime which does not seem to have any basis of support. It lacks even the support, that is the open support, of vested interests in the country. It is difficult to find people in any social class or among any nationalities who are willing openly to defend or justify the existence of the military regime in Pakistan.

The second striking thing about the regime is that it is not as openly nor as heavily repressive as you would expect it to be. This is so, I suspect, for two reasons. One is that Zia ul Haq does not have the full cooperation of the federal and provincial bureaucracy, including the police forces and the security forces. And the cooperation of the bureaucracy is essential to carry out systematic and massive repression. The second reason is that the regime is quite aware of its extreme isolation and fears that massive repression could ignite a popular revolt.

But when I say that repression in Pakistan is not widespread, I do not mean that the regime is not repressive. Rather, its repression has two characteristics. One is that it is quite selective, much more selective

Eqbal Ahmad is a fellow of the Transnational Institute, Washington and Amsterdam, and a member of the Editorial Working Committee of *Race & Class*.
Nubar Housepian writes for the Arabic daily *Al-Safeer*, published in Beirut.

Race & Class, XXII, 2(1980)

than under Mr Bhutto's regime. There were some 30,000 to 50,000 political prisoners in Bhutto's jails; there are less than 500 in Zia ul Haq's. Two, it aims at brutalising the political culture of the country. The most dramatic examples of this are the series of floggings that were carried out in the first two years of the military regime. The floggings were administered publicly, generally for petty crimes and sometimes for political crimes. These floggings were not only public; rather, mass attendance was encouraged and stimulated by the government, and in a few cases they were even televised. In several instances they put microphones before the mouths of the victims so that the public could hear their cries. This was clearly aimed at brutalising our political culture, at preparing people to accept repression and repressive measures. But the public response appears to have been one of anger and resistance. For example, one of the flogged men in Lahore drew wild cheers from the crowd and a nearly riotous demonstration of sympathy when, after receiving his prescribed thirty lashes, he spoke into the loudspeaker: 'By God, I shall be back here soon.' So, over the last six months or so, public floggings have stopped. They may resume, but for the time being they have stopped.

NH: Were the religious leaders against these floggings?

EA: No.

NH: They were not?

EA: No. There is no religious opposition in the country.

NH: I see. You said selective repression was the second characteristic of the regime. What other features do you see in it?

EA: The third feature of the regime is that for the first time it is unable to invoke the full cooperation of the civilian bureaucracy. The regime of Mohammed Ayub Khan had the full cooperation of the bureaucracy. Bhutto, by and large, terrorised the bureaucracy and to some extent changed its character, but on the whole obtained its cooperation. This regime is encountering a sort of quiet, non-cooperative attitude from the bureaucracy which is a very important phenomenon because the bureaucracy still constitutes the backbone of Pakistan's administration. The fourth characteristic of the regime is that, for the first time in Pakistan's history of military rule, the army officers' corps appears to be seriously divided internally, so that you hear rumours of, and at least one recent attempt at, a coup d'état from within. In past years, the officers' corps of the army by and large remained unified; junior officers had a tendency to accept the orders of senior officers; senior officers had a tendency to act as a small club-like elite. Now that their unity has broken down, the possibility of coups and counter-coups within the army is very high for the first time.

NH: What explains the dissatisfaction and divisions in the officers' corps?

EA: Professional stagnation, politicisation and nepotism in the army. Many young officers and some old soldiers are concerned over the debasement of professionalism, training, exercises and morale in the army. The generals are too busy politicking to attend to military affairs. Nepotism and corruption have begun to affect even promotions and postings. These problems always existed to some degree, but the army's latest asssumption of power has compounded them. After the debacle over Bangladesh many officers had hoped that the army would return to the barracks and there reorganise into a fighting force. The professional soldiers – and there are still some in the Pakistan armed forces – are naturally unhappy that the army has again become Pakistan's only functioning political party.

NH: Are the young military officers, junior military officers, ethnically and nationally the same as the senior officers?

EA: Yes. By and large. The officers' corps is predominantly Punjabi. Among the minority nationalities only the Pakhtuns are more or less fairly represented, in the sense that their percentage of the population is reflected in the armed forces – both among the *Javans*, i.e. the rank-and-file, and the officers' corps. That is a question to which we should return later when we are talking about the question of nationalities.

The fifth thing that is quite striking about Pakistan today is that the economy has deteriorated structurally. The two factors that still keep up the country economically are: one, the foreign remittances, i.e. income from the migrant workers abroad, particularly those in the Persian Gulf; and two, over the last years the crops have been quite good, so that Pakistan needs to import only about 20 per cent of its food from abroad, the money for which is being provided by the receipts from migrant workers. Otherwise the economic structure of the country has been terribly weakened and it is likely to be in a worse state in another two years. One gauge of the critical economic situation is the piling up of foreign debts, and one of the biggest problems the government faces is debt repayments. We have a total outstanding foreign debt of $9 billion; our foreign exchange holding stands at an all time low of $90.4 million; and debt service ratio to export earnings is an incredible 30 per cent.

The last striking thing about Pakistan is the public mood. It is a very strange mood, something I have never before witnessed in that country. It is important to note a characteristic of Pakistan. If you fly in from India, of which Pakistan was an integral part until thirty-three years ago, or from Iran or Egypt – countries which are culturally, politically and economically very similar to Pakistan – the one thing

that strikes you is the intensity, the obvious dynamism of Pakistani street life, Pakistani social life, the fast traffic, the frequency with which people break out into laughter or singing or prancing in the streets, the intense nervous energy with which you will find workers working; in other words, it is a strikingly dynamic population, healthy, hard-working, outspoken and prone to spontaneity.

NH: Almost like describing Beirut?

EA: Yes.

NH: An intense city. Beirut is very similar.

EA: Algeria was very similar. However, what you find very striking now is that a sense of extreme sadness pervades Pakistan today. You feel that the energy of these people is sapped by some sort of grief. You notice that nobody is talking politics as they used to talk before Bhutto's execution; not even the *Tonga* (horsecart) drivers, the taxi drivers, the rickshaw drivers of Lahore, the men in the inner city whose favourite pastime was to talk politics. Today, even in Lahore – which boasts the most political and sharp-tongued of Pakistan's population – if you ask a political question from a man who previously would have jumped at the opportunity to give you his views, he is likely to curse under his breath and drop the subject. So you ask what is behind this silence, this sadness. When you ask common people you discover that they are not afraid. Fear has not silenced them. It is not political indifference either; it is not that they have become de-politicised. Rather, they have a feeling of guilt, perhaps of shame, a sense of responsibility for what happened. One must understand that sense of responsibility on the part of the common man. These are people who had overwhelmingly voted in 1970 for Mr Bhutto, because he had contested the elections on socialist and populist slogans. After the population of Pakistan had been satiated for twenty-five years with slogans of Islam, an Islamic state and economic development, Bhutto ran on a platform which he summed up in three words: '*Roti, Kapra, Aur Makan*' ('Bread, clothing and shelter') was the basic slogan on which Bhutto won the very large majority of the popular vote.

When Bhutto held his first election, in March 1977, these same people voted against him in very large numbers – we do not know if they were the majority because the elections were clearly rigged, and they were too rigged for us to determine whether Bhutto would have won or lost. My own reading is that if the elections had been free in 1977, Bhutto would have won by a narrow margin; and that result would have pleased the voters. What the voters were trying to do was not so much to vote him out of power, but to give him a warning, teach him a lesson by saying 'you have not fulfilled the promises you had come to power with, you have gone back on your promises'. Theirs was a

protest vote, not an adversary vote. The people were still grateful to Bhutto for at least having promised the right things, which nobody in the past had done. After the rigging of the elections, the Pakistan National Alliance, which was his opposition, launched a campaign of disobedience and demonstrations to force him into holding new elections. A lot of people, particularly in the cities, mostly workers, and some also in the countryside, joined the demonstrations for holding new elections. Mr Bhutto responded to this pressure by calling on the armed forces. And when martial law was declared the people came out in the streets for three long months, intermittently agitating, challenging the armed forces, until Bhutto was on the point of giving in and agreeing to hold new elections. That is when the coup d'état came; Zia ul Haq staged his putsch, on 5 July 1977, precisely at the moment when Bhutto and his opposition were reaching a resolution of the post-election crisis. When you talk to people, they say, 'Well, we had voted for him in 1970. Some of us voted against him becaue he didn't keep his promises. Many of us voted for him in 1977 but also joined in the demonstrations because he did rig the elections. But it wasn't our intention to put the military in power.' They feel a certain responsibility for the reinstitution of military rule in the country. Then Bhutto was arrested, and after a year of trials and imprisonment he was executed. When Bhutto was arrested, mass feeling turned in his favour once again, because people accurately perceived that he was being punished by the armed forces, not for the crimes he had allegedly committed, but for having made the right promises, for having changed the political climate of the country, for having given the workers and the peasants a sense of dignity, for having raised the issue of their rights. People felt that the man was being punished not for his faults but for his strengths, for his goodness. This sympathy for Bhutto became massive and yet there was no one to lead them into protests. They became silent spectators of his unjust, inhuman execution.

NH: So Bhutto remains a symbol of their demands?

EA: Exactly. And yet, they were silent witnesses to his martyrdom. They also knew that Bhutto expected the people to revolt, and the revolt did not come.

NH: Did it not come because there was no one there to lead it?

EA: The leadership of Bhutto's party made no attempt at organised resistance; the rank-and-file cadres suffered from severe repression. And Mr Bhutto himself both played and not-played the judicial game, which confused people. There was no way for mass action. Yet, people have a sense of guilt about Bhutto. Also, as you were saying, Bhutto has become the symbol of the suppressed rights of the common people, a symbol of land reforms, of economic reforms, of equality, of a

regime that will bring '*Roti, Kapra, Aur Makan*'. And now that the military has killed him, people believe that he was not able to fulfil his promises because right from the beginning he was a prisoner of the armed forces and the bureaucracy. So his death has meant that all the blame for the nonfulfilment of Bhutto's socialist promises as well as the blame for his death, and for the end of democracy in Pakistan, is now being put on these two institutions – the armed forces and the bureaucracy. Bhutto has become the Peron of Pakistan. No popular political force in Pakistan is likely to emerge until the country has gone through another Bhuttoist regime. Today, a great deal of attention is focused on his family because Bhutto did not leave the legacy of a political organisation. His Pakistan People's Party is basically a shell. He did not leave the legacy of a consistent or functioning ideology, or of a coherent cadre which could organise and aggregate public demand. There were once good cadres in the People's Party, but they were completely demoralised by misuse, nepotism and corruption.

NH: It is almost like talking about the transition in Egypt between Nasser and Sadaat.

EA: Yes, very similar in some ways. But Abdel Nasser changed Egypt in fundamental ways and did not leave as hollow a vacuum as Bhutto did.

NH: You have talked about people's silence – what lies behind that?

EA: The silence should not be misunderstood as depoliticisation, or indifference. It should be understood as a suppression of deep collective and individual feelings, and it is precisely the kind of feeling which leads to mass explosion. Pakistan is likely to produce in time a popular explosion unless there is a change soon through an internal coup or because of foreign pressures.

NH: What are the inherited factors that account for the crisis of the Pakistani state? Perhaps you could discuss this in the general framework of the post-colonial state?

EA: We ought first to underline that Pakistan is experiencing several very fundamental crises. And what has happened now is that all of these crises are coming to a head. We can characterise them as the crises of (a) legitimacy, (b) state power, (c) integration, (d) economy, and (e) external relations.*

*For reasons of space, we have been forced to omit the final section of the interview on external relations.

The crisis of legitimacy

The most important of these is the crisis of legitimacy. By legitimacy I mean title to authority, that is the extent to which a state and a political class can enjoy authoritative or hegemonic command over the majority of the population. What, then, legitimacy requires is that a set of values, ideology, ascriptions commanded by the ruling class are accepted by the majority of the populace as authoritative, and even enjoy the consensus of the majority. I am not sure if I have defined it properly, but that is what legitimacy implies.

Now, in Pakistan's case, the state came into being in 1947, carved out of the Indian subcontinent. It was founded on Muslim separatism, whose primary argument was that in the Indian subcontinent two distinct peoples had lived for a thousand years – the Muslim people and the Hindu people – and these two peoples constituted two different nations. You will remember also that the two-nation theory, or the Pakistan movement, did not invoke the support of the Muslim masses of India until after the Second World War, so that as late as 1936 and 1937, when the first general elections were held in India after the passage of the Government of India Act in 1935, the Muslim League (the party that led the Pakistan movement) polled only 2.6 per cent of the total Muslim votes in India – which is to say that the overwhelming majority of Muslims had supported the Indian National Congress and the Unionist Party and not the Muslim League's politics. This changed dramatically after the first governments had been formed by the Congress in 1937, because the Muslim people felt by and large that this party, dominated by a Hindu elite, was not giving them a fair stake in the economy or in power. And if you study the Pakistan movement, you will notice that what underlay the dramatic upsurge in the support for it – between 1938 and 1944 the Pakistan movement grew from being a minority interest faction to becoming the movement of the majority of Indian Muslims – was not so much the slogan of a separate state; nor was it Islam abstractly conceived. To the ordinary Muslim it meant that Muslims were demanding a state in which economic and social justice would become possible. At the heart of the Pakistan movement lay the aspiration for economic and social justice, political democracy and cultural freedom; underlying it was the fear of the Muslim community that Hindu businessmen, British corporations, colonial institutions would continue to dominate them at their expense unless they had a separate state of their own.

NH: So it was a question of equity and equality?

EA: A question of equity, of economic justice and cultural freedom. The Pakistan movement, for example, first emerged and was most popular in what is now Bangladesh; there, landlords were largely

Hindu, peasants were Muslims. That's where it first began; that's where the Muslim League's first government was formed, and its earliest battles were won. Ironically, it was the Bengalis who seceded from the country they had literally founded.

I am going into all this simply to say that after the creation of Pakistan, the Pakistani ruling class could not acquire legitimacy because it would not define the ideology, the values, the programme and the structure of the state in a way that could fulfil the aspirations on which the state was founded. Instead, what did we have? The first ten years, 1947 to 1957, were characterised by the attempt of an elite to legitimise a military-bureaucratic-feudal system of power in the name of Islam. This elite had its first rude shock when it held the first elections in 1953 in Bengal which represented more than half of the total population of Pakistan. The people of Pakistan overwhelmingly voted the Muslim League out of power and elected the National Awami Party, which promised to carry out socialist policies under the leadership of Bhashani, the populist, peasant and worker leader whom the establishment had dubbed the Red Mullah.

So the first period was one of trying to legitimise the state on the basis of a rather spurious Islamic ideology, which was completely shorn of social and economic content. It never acquired legitimacy, and a ruling class without legitimacy, without the title to authority, cannot consolidate state power in any meaningful sense of the word. For the first two or three years people were hopeful, because when a Muslim says he wants an Islamic state it is a common Muslim's way of saying he wants a just state. An Islamic state means to him a state marked by *Musawat* (equality), *'Adal* (justice), and *Jumhuria* (democracy). But the Pakistani elite could not define Islam in these terms, it resisted giving Islam any social or economic content, and it acquired no legitimacy. So the next stage was the coup d'état of Ayub Khan. The election of 1953 had underlined the nature of popular expectations; as such it had frightened the ruling elite of Pakistan. The stage was set for a military take-over when, in May 1953, the Parliament in East Pakistan was dissolved and governor's rule was instituted by the federal government. General Iskander Mirza, the Defence Secretary, was appointed Governor of East Pakistan; five years later Mirza was to become President and institute military rule with Ayub Khan. The 1953 election result sounded a warning. It was very clear that this was not the Islam that people wanted and they were going to vote it out if a national election were held. And it was in this climate, marked by expectations of a general election, that Ayub Khan staged his coup d'état. The coup actually took place at a time of increasing mass pressure for social democracy and economic reform, and a rejection of the establishment's Islamic ideology. Significantly, when Ayub Khan took over, he dropped the epithet of Islamic state for Pakistan

and, by and large, during his ten-year rule, Ayub Khan did not use Islam as the legitimising principle of Pakistan.

NH: Did he use a nationalist ideology?

EA: Not exactly. You could call it developmental nationalism. Ayub Khan stressed economic development much more than nationalism, though he also used nationalism. The very title of his book, *Friends, Not Masters,* which he wrote on Pakistan's relations with the United States, reflected his outlook. He wanted to stay within the American alliance but with the trappings of a junior partner rather than a subservient client. The primary ideology of the Ayub regime was the ideology of development, of economic growth. It came straight out of the American liberal development ideologues, the 'modernisation theorists'. Ayub depended on American liberals to plan Pakistan's future and hired experts like the Harvard Advisory Group to do it. In his speeches he quoted liberally from Walt Rostow's *Stages of Development.* His government was to acquire popular legitimacy by stressing economic development; and his state was to acquire strength by creating and enlarging the middle class. Thus, in the first ten years of Pakistan's existence, our elite milked the ideological cow of Islam. For the next ten years they milked the development cow. That, too, did not work; in 1968, when Ayub fell, he was actually celebrating the Decade of Development. The mass uprisings in 1968 lasted for six gruelling months and brought him down.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in West Pakistan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, leader of the Awami League, in East Pakistan – both mainstream politicians, the first a protegé of Ayub Khan, the second a product of the Muslim League – were quick to sense that both the Islamic cow and the development cow had been milked dry, and that people now wanted a regime not based on religious slogans, nor for that matter on developmental slogans, but a regime based on the fulfilment of mass needs – bread, clothing, shelter. So we entered the period of populist sloganeering. Remember that Bhutto was himself a product of Ayub's regime. He had no experience in politics until Ayub hand picked him to become first the Minister of Commerce, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Until then he was virtually unknown in Pakistan beyond his family estate in Larkana and his social club in Karachi. Bhutto was an ambitious man, as quick in sensing an obvious opportunity as he was slow in discerning the deeper, fundamental risks. He broke with Ayub just in time – 6-7 months, a year before Ayub's actual fall – and began to milk the populist and socialist cow. Bhutto sought legitimacy by promising reforms and socialism.

Now we have the fourth period – that of Zia's military regime. It has absolutely no ideology, no principles on the basis of which it can legitimise itself. The Islamic state idea has already been exhausted. The

development idea is already exhausted. Socialism proved to be a dangerous mobiliser of mass consciousness; in any case, it is too closely associated with Bhutto's name, and they cannot invoke it. So they have returned to the old Islamic cow and given it a different name. This time they call it *Nizam-i-Mustapha*; but one cannot make an elephant of a donkey by calling it an elephant. In fact, the version of Islam they are offering is much more retrograde because their only reference point is a fundamentalist group, the *Jamaat-i-Islami*. The Islam of the earlier period – of the constitutionalist period – was at least an Islam that derived from the modernist movement; it referred to the thoughts of Mohammed Iqbal, of Syed Ahmad Khan, of Shibli Nomani, etc. These were modern Muslim thinkers; theirs was at least a contemporary bourgeois Islam. This military regime is trying to espouse a fundamentalist view of Islam in a country which is unwilling to accept fundamentalism. The primary crisis of Pakistan, then, is the crisis of legitimacy which requires some ideological clarity, and on which depends the question of identity. No political party, no ruling elite, neither left nor right nor centre, in Pakistan has been able to define an ideology that is consistent, functioning and congruent with the history of the country, or the aspirations of its people. In a new country where you don't have a viable ideology or even a set of hegemonic political values, you have a crisis of national identity, of legitimacy, and therefore a crisis of state power.

The crisis of state power

The second crisis of Pakistan today is that of state power. Pakistan inherited a colonial state.* It bore some relationship to the pre-colonial state, particularly of Mughal India, but it was basically a colonial creation. Its backbone was made up of the British Indian armed forces and a modern bureaucracy. The stability of the state structure in Pakistan was defined by a certain balance of power, and a measure of social and ideological harmony between the armed forces and the bureaucracy. So that even when, as between 1947 and 1970, you had unstable government, there was a stable state and a stable polity. The economic and social life remained uninterrupted by governmental instability, the bureaucracy continued to run the administration, the armed forces continued to parade and project an image of preparedness. This balance and harmony between the army and the bureaucracy blunted in many ways the cutting edge of military dictatorship in Pakistan. Ayub Khan's regime, for example, was neither as repressive nor as

*See Iftikhar Ahmad's article on the making of Pakistan in a forthcoming issue of *Race & Class*.

isolated as Zia ul Haq's because between the army and the bureaucracy there was a close and rather harmonious working relationship. In the absence of democratic institutions, the bureaucracy performed the function of civilianising the military regime under Ayub Khan. That balance between the armed forces and the bureaucracy has now almost completely broken down, but not because the army is stronger; rather, it is that the bureaucracy is much weaker. The process towards this imbalance had begun much earlier, but the responsibility for completing this process lies with Mr Bhutto.

When Bhutto came to power he inherited not only a delegitimised and discredited, but a collapsed army – an army which had fought an inconclusive war in 1965, and lost a war in 1971. 90,000 of its soldiers and officers were prisoners in India following the Indian invasion of East Pakistan. It was an army which had terrorised Bangladesh, and most people in Pakistan knew and blamed the armed forces for the loss of Bangladesh, the loss of East Pakistan, that is to say. Furthermore, it was a military government against which people had rebelled in 1968, which had manoeuvred itself to stay in power until 1970, and then General Yahya Khan had mucked up the electoral system, in the sense that the elections that he held were free but the army did not want to live with the results. That is what produced Bangladesh. So the armed forces were discredited, demoralised, delegitimised and enfeebled when Bhutto came to power. We never had a better opportunity to rid Pakistan of its worst colonial and neo-colonial inheritance, never a better chance to affirm and institutionalise civilian rule, to restructure, professionalise and return the armed forces to where they belonged – in the barracks and on the frontiers. Yet Bhutto simply rehabilitated the army, although he tried to do it in such a way that it would serve as an instrument of his personal power. He introduced no structural change in the armed forces, did not redefine their role or deployment; but he purged the officers' corps and promoted such presumed loyalists as Zia ul Haq to high command.

NH: In other words he was trying to remould the state structure by maintaining the two old components – the army and the bureaucracy?

EA: Bhutto could not restore the army's prestige but he restored it to its prominent position. In a sense, in 1972 Bhutto had the same choices as the Iranian revolution has today. Bhutto was in power; he had the choice of restructuring the state apparatus. He did not. By the same token, he had the choice of rehabilitating completely the structure of the state that he had inherited. He did not rehabilitate it either. Moreover, in the situation of flux following the civil war and independence of Bangladesh, he had also the opportunity to introduce an extreme imbalance into the existing structure of the state, and he did just that. He rehabilitated the armed forces on the one hand and, on

the other, terrorised the bureaucracy, not so much to destroy it, but more to mould it in his own image. For example, soon after he assumed office 2,000 senior bureaucrats were fired; a new system of lateral entry was introduced so that the strict standards which defined the entry and training of the higher bureaucracy were lowered. A large number of political appointees were introduced through the system of lateral entry and a lot of political patronage was introduced. Moreover, the national security wing of the bureaucracy was expanded very rapidly, both in power and in size, at the expense of the civic sector; that is to say, the federal security forces, the central intelligence department, the police forces, etc., expanded by geometric progression, while the civic services – justice, social reconstruction, education, health services – suffered neglect and demoralisation.

Here is another irony of Bhutto's regime: while in Ayub's time the bureaucracy had played the role of civilianising the military rule, Bhutto played the role of militarising civilian rule by expanding the national security sector of the bureaucracy and rehabilitating the armed forces. The result was the introduction of an extreme imbalance between the power of the armed forces and the power of the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy almost totally lost its ethos and morale under Bhutto. It became more an instrument of personal power than of government and administration.

NH: Earlier, you said that there was not only an imbalance of power but a lack of harmony between the army and the bureaucracy. Could you explain?

EA: In the process of change, the social and class harmony between the officers' corps of the armed forces and the higher bureaucracy was lost. This was not Bhutto's responsibility. A change occurred during this period in the class structure of the officers' corps of the armed forces. By this time, most British-trained, Sandhurst-graduated, Second World War experienced and decorated soldiers who generally had come from the upper classes, i.e. feudal or haute bourgeoisie, had reached retirement age or else had been kicked out of service. A lot of that happened under Bhutto, some of it under Ayub. And rapid promotions were given to the younger officers who had a very different schooling and class background from that of the retired and fired generation. The officers who constituted the command ranks of the armed forces in the 1970s came generally from petit-bourgeois backgrounds, mostly from middle peasant families in four districts of the Rawalpindi division or from East Punjab. Zia ul Haq belongs to that second category. These people, who have had one or two years of college, did not go to elite military preparatory schools. They grew up in the heyday of nationalist agitation just before independence, and thus had some introduction to politics. They entered the armed forces

at the time when the British were recruiting in large numbers in the last years of the Second World War; else, they enlisted soon after independence as the officers' corps expanded dramatically. Many of them were from officers' temporary service, and many were later on given regular commissions when the Pakistan army was expanded after 1947. Not only is their social background different from the previous generation of officers; their political education and professional training were different. These were officers, for example, who had had their advanced training in American institutions; they were given counter-insurgency training and an anti-communist, anti-revolutionary ideological orientation. Fort Bragg is a very good example. General Zia ul Haq comes from Fort Bragg. Bhutto promoted some of these officers over many senior generals. I understand that General Zia ul Haq superceded about twelve senior and highly-regarded officers because Mr Bhutto hand-picked him for his presumed loyalty.

NH: The irony of it.

The crisis of integration

EA: So what you find now in Pakistan is that even the colonial state we had inherited has lost its former balance and coherence. Zia ul Haq has tried to redress this imbalance by forging alliances with senior civil servants and by allowing a certain augmentation in the importance of the bureaucracy. But this does not seem to work. As I mentioned earlier, this is the first time that the bureaucracy has not fully cooperated with the junta. The resulting crisis of state power is further augmented by the crisis of integration, which refers in Pakistan to the question of nationalities. Of the four nationalities that live in Pakistan – Punjabis, Pakhtuns, Sindhis and Baluchis – the last two are for all practical purposes completely excluded from the structure of the state. Sindhis and Baluchis constitute hardly 1 per cent of the armed forces, they are in negligible numbers in the federal bureaucracy and a hardly noticeable presence in the commercial and capitalist sector of Pakistan. The problem of institutional imbalance is compounded by the ethnic composition of the ruling elite.

NH: How does the capitalist class view the military regime? Are we talking about a set up similar to states like Syria or Iraq?

EA: Yes. But the difference between Syria, Iraq and Pakistan is that the Pakistani ruling elite – the armed forces, the bureaucracy and the capitalist class – I should say the propertied class – is Punjabi by and large; it comes from the nationality which makes up about 60 per cent of Pakistan's total population. Syria's Alawite ruling elite is represented by a smaller minority; somewhat the same is true of the

Iraqis. That is a very basic difference because it gives Pakistan's rulers a larger potential base of power, an opportunity to manipulate and exacerbate ethnic tensions as a means of gaining the support of the Punjabi majority, an ability to invoke the dangers of separatism and the break-up of Pakistan. Hence, the more isolated a government feels, the more its leaders tend to raise the spectre of Pakistan's disintegration. Similarly, increased centralisation and the repressive use of power is justified by invoking threats to national unity.

NH: Is this what you mean by the crisis of integration; could you elaborate?

EA: As I said, Pakistan is inhabited by four nationalities: the largest and the dominant group – numerically the largest and politically and economically dominant – are the Punjabis. Constituting roughly 60 per cent of the total population, they make up 80 per cent of the armed forces, about 80 to 85 per cent of the higher bureaucracy and some 80 per cent of the business and capitalist class. They are the owners of wealth, and also control the institutions of power in the country. They number about 50 million. Then there are the Pakhtun people along the Afghanistan/Soviet frontier, about 7.25 million people. The third nationality are the Sindhis, the second largest nationality, about 15 to 20 million, and then the Baluchis.

Since the founding of Pakistan, every government has invoked the possibility of a Pakhtun separatist movement threatening the integrity of Pakistan from the Northwestern Frontier Province. This threat has had two components to it. One, that the Pakhtun movement is supported by Afghanistan – the Pakhtun people are divided, roughly half and half, between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Its second component is that of a presumed Russian threat. The 'bogey' of Russia has always been translated by the Pakistani ruling class in terms of the Soviet Union helping the Pakhtun movement, and thus destroying the integrity of Pakistan. The fact, however, is that the least problem for Pakistan in terms of its integration is from the Pakhtun, Northwestern Frontier Province (NWFP). This is so because, of the three minority nationalities, the Pakhtun people are by far the most integrated in Pakistan. Take a few pointers: the Pakhtuns constitute roughly 15 per cent of the officers' corps of the Pakistan armed forces. They are similarly represented in the federal bureaucracy, so that in the power structure of Pakistan the middle class and the upper bourgeoisie of Pakhtunistan are very well represented. Secondly, economically the province is well integrated with the rest of Pakistan. Something like 60 to 70 per cent of the volume of trade and income of the NWFP is with the Punjab and other provinces of Pakistan, so that complementary economic patterns have developed. Thirdly, a good half of the Pakhtun male working population works outside its own province.

They are spread throughout Pakistan. There are about 300,000 Pakhtun workers in Karachi alone – which means that a very significant section of Pakhtunistan's population depends for a living on working outside Pakhtunistan itself. For all these reasons it is a much more integrated area, with much less interest in a separatist state, than the other provinces.

Now, contrast that to Sindh and Baluchistan. The Sindhis constitute roughly 25 per cent of Pakistan's population, but they do not have a representation of much more than 3 per cent in the higher bureaucracy. They have practically no representation in the armed forces, either among enlisted men or officers. Commercially, they are not a force in the country and, much worse, in their own province they have a feeling of being taken over by the Punjabis and the Muhajirs, i.e., those who came from the Indian provinces. The population of Sindh is now 49 per cent or so non-Sindhi; some believe it to be higher – 52 to 55 per cent. If the second figure is correct, then Sindh will be the second place in twentieth-century history where the indigenous people have become a minority in their own homeland – the first being Palestine. Hence the felt sense of oppression among the Sindhis is very high. Economically, they are discriminated against even in their homeland. Through irrigation developments, a lot of newly-irrigated land has been reclaimed in Sindh. Almost all of it has gone to Punjabi settlers; some to the non-Sindhi Muhajirs; very little to the Sindhis. By and large, the same patterns of exclusion, discrimination and uneven development hold for the Baluchis. These two peoples have a very serious problem in Pakistan, and therefore have been and are now at the forefront of the demand for the institution of democratic rule. Parliamentary government would mean a certain amount of representation, including that of their bourgeoisie. It is only through representative government that their numerical strength can be felt and their grievances seriously attended to. These minority nationalities also favour augmented provincial autonomy in a federal system of government because decentralisation of power is necessary to a measure of self-rule and responsive government.

NH: Therefore, you believe the national question in Pakistan to be more acute in Sindh and Baluchistan than in the NWFP?

EA: Yes, my feeling is that trouble in Pakistan is more likely to occur in the states of Sindh and Baluchistan. I am stressing this because it relates to the crisis of the economy and the crisis of international relations. Sindh may be of crucial importance, for the Sindhis are a people who fear that they are becoming a minority in their own land. They are the only people in Pakistan whose land is being taken over by settlers from other provinces. Secondly, this is an exceptionally poor, deprived province under oppressive feudal rule. Sindhi feudalism is still intact

and the changes in the land system have not profited the poor Sindhis. Thirdly, they are affected by the influx of Arab sheikhs from the Persian Gulf and the rest of the Arab world. Since the Lebanese civil war, the oil-rich Arabs have been coming into Karachi, and new contrasts are emerging between the rich and poor there. Lastly, it is a province that feels that its martyrdom, its suffering has been symbolised in the execution of Mr Bhutto. Bhutto was a Sindhi, the first Sindhi Prime Minister of Pakistan. Even when the Sindhis were opposed to him, they at least felt he was a Sindhi. A lot of Sindhis feel he was murdered by a Punjabi junta because he was a Sindhi Prime Minister. Bhutto's execution has augmented the sense of desperation, of alienation, of anger in the province of Sindh. Also, one should remember that Sindh borders on India, that its coastline is on the Persian Gulf, and that it is contiguous to and has had a long historical relationship with the province of Baluchistan.

The Baluchis, the second most oppressed people in Pakistan, have been in a state of rebellion for the last twenty years. If the present situation continues and the military regime maintains itself in power, it is likely that trouble will begin in Sindh. In fact, the deployment of the Pakistan armed forces seems to indicate that the military government of Pakistan is quite cognisant of this possibility. They have concentrated a great deal of power in and around Sindh. If Sindh explodes, Baluchis may join them, and if Baluchistan and Sindh dissidents link up with each other, which is 35 per cent of the population, that could produce a situation similar to that of East Pakistan in 1970-71.

NH: Would that mean about 40 per cent of the land area?

EA: It would mean about 60 per cent of the land area and about 30 per cent of the population. So then the possibility of India getting into the fray, the Soviet Union being in some way involved, the United States being involved and Iran being affected would be very high. It would raise the spectre of disintegration in the same way that the civil war in East Pakistan led to Pakistan's dismemberment, and created Bangladesh.

NH: If I may summarise, what you are saying is that so far the state in Pakistan has not been able to integrate its power, and therefore its hegemony, over the country, over all the peoples within its geographic jurisdiction. Could this perhaps mean the disintegration of the Pakistani state?

EA: Yes, I am saying that, and one additional thing, which is that the inability of the state to establish its hegemony over the country as a whole has been due primarily to the inability of the state bourgeoisie – the armed forces and the civilian bureaucracy – to permit a political process which would have led to a more equitable distribution of power

and to more even economic growth. The crisis of integration in Pakistan has been due primarily to the fact that the state has been centralised and dominated by the military. The irony is that it was the very slogans of maintaining the integrity of Pakistan and of assuring its defence as a country which justified military rule all these years, and justified, too, the US alliances that created the national security state of Pakistan. Yet it is the national security state that is responsible finally for threatening and, in the case of East Pakistan, actually jeopardising, the national security of Pakistan. That is the irony. The insecurity of the country has resulted from the construction of the pro-western security state with its concomitant of a centralised government and a militarised polity.

The crisis of the economy

NH: You mentioned the economy as presenting the fourth major crisis of Pakistan. How bad is the economic situation?

EA: The economic crisis is perhaps more fundamental in Pakistan now than before. As in other Third World countries, there has been a permanent economic crisis in this country. However, in the past when Pakistan faced a situation of extreme economic breakdown, it made a limited but fast recovery. For example, in the 1950s the boom in cotton, that the Korean War had produced, busted and the Pakistani economy entered a period of extreme crisis. It overcame that crisis very rapidly in Ayub's regime. Then, after the secession of East Pakistan in 1972, everybody predicted that because West Pakistan derived so much of its profit and production from East Pakistan the economy would fall apart once East Pakistan became independent. It didn't; in fact, it recovered rather fast. Now when you look at these two instances you notice that three factors were mainly responsible for this fast recovery. One was external, namely a favourable turn for Pakistan's products in the international market; an upward swing in the international economy helped Pakistan swing with it. Today, there is no upward swing in the international economy; Pakistan faces its particular problems in an environment of global slump.

The second factor which always helped Pakistan is an extraordinary, perhaps the most extraordinary, workforce in South and Southwest Asia. Pakistanis are a very hard working, enterprising, intelligent and skill-prone people. This may sound like a nationalistic statement for me to make. It is not; these people are all over the Persian Gulf today, all over Europe. Pakistanis are one of the two or three peoples in that whole area who produce large numbers of migrant workers on demand. This dynamic working population was always very important to the recovery of Pakistan. Today, the most enterprising and skilled among our working class live abroad. 1970-78 were years of exodus from Pakistan of the best people in our pool of labour – thanks partly

to Mr Bhutto's failure to create an economy of employment, and partly to the augmented wealth of the oil-producing countries of the Middle East. Their remittances, amounting to more than $2 billion in 1979, constitute the main source of Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings; yet, this increase in exchange income has been obtained at a cost incalculable to the growth and developmental future of the country.

The third factor which helped earlier recoveries was a small but aggressive and young entrepreneurial class in Pakistan. It was a class on the make, very greedy, eager to augment profits, take risks, use the labour, use the most modern techniques of management. Mr Bhutto destroyed that entrepreneurial class without replacing it. What his nationalisations did was typical of radical nationalist, proto-socialist economic planning – namely schemes of nationalisation that frighten productive capital and turn a nascent capitalist class into a class merely of contractors and contactors, licence capitalists. Bhutto's economic policies were very destructive. They did not produce new forces; they were similar to what Abdel Nasser did in Egypt, Sukarno in Indonesia, or the Ba'ath in Syria. Namely, you inhibit the nascent capitalist forces in society but you do not destroy the bourgeoisie because it simply turns into an import/export consumer-oriented, contract-oriented class of influence peddlers looking for fast bucks. These people, then, do not cease to be rich or exploitative. They simply cease to be productive. The productive industries were taken over by the state, which simply meant that the government had more power of patronage. Thus, you introduced into private industry the inefficiency and corruption of the bureaucracy, while still maintaining the exploitation associated with capitalism. In Pakistan, the entrepreneurial class either fled the country and took its business elsewhere, or else it turned into a class subsidiary to the government, dependent on it for contracts and licence grants; its riches accrued from wheeling and dealing, not from production.

So we have lost our most valuable manpower base; we have lost our entrepreneurial, capitalist base; and the international environment – the economic trends – are not favourable. The crisis of the economy in Pakistan is absolutely fundamental. In fact, it would have totally collapsed, resulting in mass starvation, but for two factors. There has been a succession of good crops. The Pakistani peasant is hard working and he does not depend as much on nature as peasants do elsewhere in the Third World because the irrigation system from the rivers is quite well-developed. So Pakistan is meeting only about 20 per cent of its food requirements from abroad, the rest of it is produced at home. And the second factor is the income from the migrant workers which is now some $2 billion a year. Still, the country is in debt; its margin of survival is narrow. And the factors which were responsible for fast recoveries in the past have been lost.

May 1980

CEDRIC ROBINSON

Domination and imitation: *Xala* and the emergence of the black bourgeoisie*

One of the most important consequences of the colonisation of the Third World by European powers has been the generation of westernised, that is Euro-phoric intelligentsias. Their appearance in the Third World is historically unique not because they are an intelligentsia. We know that societies in Africa and Asia had produced scholars and state-craftsmen long before the centres of western civilisation began to coalesce.[1] The uniqueness of Third World intelligentsia is their westernisation. This is their psychological peculiarity. Frantz Fanon termed them 'the national bourgeoisie' though others have preferred such paradoxical designations as 'modernising elite', or the more dogmatic appellation 'petite-bourgeois ideologists'.[2] Whichever colouration one prefers, be it subtle or not, the emergence of this strata in the Third World of the late nineteenth and present centuries has been a complex and contradictory phenomenon, and indeed critical for the historical direction of the modern world. This strata constitutes the social thread which links the industrial societies to those regions of the world upon which they have grown increasingly dependent commercially, materially and politically. This strata is the conduit through which the technical, political and commercial relations of the technologically sophisticated northern hemispheric peoples articulate with that vast

Cedric Robinson is Director of the Center for Black Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.

* This paper was presented at the African Studies Association Conference, L.A., October 1979

Race & Class, XXII, 2(1980)

majority of mankind which supports them materially and economically. And, perhaps most paradoxically, this is the strata through which the ideological, moral and philosophical traditions of western civilisation have been transferred, at least superficially, to non-western societies.[3]

The history of intelligentsias spawned through colonialism and imperial expansion is both a long and illustrious one. It begins, perhaps (if Hellenic scholars and Egyptologists are to be believed), in western history with the pre-Socratics of Ionia. Thales, Xenophanes, Zeno, Democritus and Heraclitus all exhibited the influence that Egyptian culture had on the colony of Ionia.[4] Twenty-three hundred years later, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the English colony of Scotland would record an identical social process in the appearances of James Mill, his son John S. Mill, Adam Smith and David Hume.[5] Consequently, the fruit of European intrusion into African societies – Dona Beatriz in the seventeenth century, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Jacobus Capitein, Ignatius Sancho, Cugoano and Equiano in the eighteenth, Alexander Crummell, Edward Blyden and Theophilus Samuel Scholes in the nineteenth, and John Chilembwe, Simon Kimbangu, Casely Hayford, Attoh Ahuma, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, Marcus Garvey, C.L.R. James, Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, Sekou Toure, Amilcar Cabral and Julius Nyerere in the twentieth (to name but a few) – has been a quite natural phenomenon.[6]

These names were chosen quite deliberately since they all were or are ideologists. Ideology, of course, is quite obviously the central concern of this essay. And though these ideologists were not representative of the social strata from which they emerged, it is equally clear that their development required the contradictory historical condition that this class has experienced. As ideologists whose childhoods were grounded in the sweet toxin of assimilation, their counteragency was critical thought and sometimes revolutionary action. Just as importantly, their opposition to European power necessarily took the form of contempt for their own class. Cabral, for one, expressed this quite clearly when he wrote:

> ... among the oppressor's most loyal allies are found some high officials and intellectuals of the liberal professions, assimilated people, and also a significant number of representatives of the ruling class from rural areas ... these two categories of people place above all principles or demands of a cultural nature – and against the aspirations of the people – their own economic and social privileges, their own *class interests*. That is a truth which the liberation movement cannot afford to ignore without risking betrayal of the economic, political, social and cultural objectives of the struggle.[7]

And although he would first prescribe to his class the act of 'class suicide'[8] as its most fitting contribution to the struggle for liberation, he later came to the realisation that such a commitment would be entirely uncharacteristic. In the end he could only hope that 'the communion of sacrifice required by the struggle' would 'reconvert' the minds of the petite-bourgeoisie.[9] Such was the conclusion forced upon one of Africa's most brilliant ideologists. His death at the hands of assassins drawn from his own class was, consequently, not entirely unexpected.

When we turn to the work of Sembene Ousmane, we find that on a certain level he is wrestling with the same issues which characterised the work of Cabral, Fanon and all those other predecessors to which we have already referred. Sembene has had to come to terms with the ambiguous cultural identity of the petite-bourgeoisie; the internalised moral and psychological oppositions of a strata whose social and professional mobility has been closely identified with a European-imposed social order; an intellectual elite developed through educational systems defined and dominated by Europeans; a social sector, in short, whose very existence and privileges are grounded in social, political and economic relations imposed by colonisation. Equally significant, however, is the fact that Sembene has found it necessary to extend the problematic represented by the national bourgeoisie beyond the particular social phenomenology of this class. However, perhaps because Sembene's roots, at least, are not in this class, his understanding has never suffered from an obsessive preoccupation with its corruption, nor from the presumption that it occupied the critical centre of his society. His contempt for his achieved class is not an issue from a deep sense of betrayal by his own but stems, rather, from an objectivity which has deftly discovered the irremedial symptoms of egoism, materialism and elitism. Consequently, the petite-bourgeoisie alone are not a fit subject matter for the committed artist or the social critic. As examples of their class, its members come too close to self-parody in their immersion in petty corruption, petty politics, petty morality and the 'brief-case' independence with which they are so intimately associated. He has come to the point of generalisation, then, only in part by pursuing the implications that this class's existence has for other strata and other spheres of social intercourse. In his latest works, *Xala* (literally, the curse) and 'Ceddo', he has attempted to define the truer societal dimensions of this problematic of social impotence and describe the historical conjunction of the native and alien social forces which brought Senegal to its present condition.

The process of formation of Sembene's ideology has been a long, complex and sometimes contradictory odyssey. It begins, at least publicly, with *Le Docker Noir*, published in 1956. It has not of course ended since his prodigious writing and film direction have only just reached full force. For our purposes, however, we must presume at

least a temporary closure with the appearance in 1977 of the film he has entitled 'Ceddo'. During this period, then, we have seen Sembene grapple with the question of the relevance of socialism and trade unionism for African workers whether they be in France or at home; with racism and xenophobia; with the utility of traditional thought and practice for a people confronted with the most sophisticated forms of repression and exploitation that contemporary society has evolved; with the proposition that women, as the most consistently oppressed sector of African society, have emerged as the most militantly progressive social force in that society; with the parasitism of townspeople on the people of the countryside; with the hypocrisies of the representatives of Christianity and Islam; and the devastation of human communities by colonialism and capitalist exploitation. These are, of course, the major issues which inform life not only in Senegal but over the entire continent. As Maryse Conde has written: 'It is Africa as a whole which cannot produce anything fruitful, as its elites and leaders are oblivious of the masses, of their needs and despair.'[10] It is in part this realisation – the increasingly acute alienation of the masses of Africans from their privileged classes – that has compelled Sembene to transfer his vision from literature to cinema, substituting in turn the Diola and Woloff languages of the masses for the French of the assimilated and the elite.[11]

The character of Sembene's ideology has progressively acquired a certain marxist aspect. But it is not a marxism of the classical form, nor one exhibiting the Eurocentrism of orthodox marxism. This would have been rather unlikely. The revolutionary ideology to which he was heir – and its complex historical tradition – as well as the social condition to which he was subject as an immigrant worker in France, largely obviated the possibility of marxian orthodoxy. The reasons for this are important enough to recount. First, the rather long and deep tradition of revolutionary syndicalism within the French left and the French working class, to which Sembene was appended in his years as a stevedore in Marseilles, probably shielded him from seduction by the rationalist and positivist economism which characterises Marx's 'mature' logic. One must remember, too, the working-class racism found in France and to which Sembene attested in his first novel (*Le Docker Noir*). Its consequence, the emergence of two mutually hostile working-class communities, one European, the other African and West Indian, had achieved a vivid form in Claude McKay's 1927 account, *Banjo*. By the time of Sembene's immersion into the immigrant ghettos which are the human wake of French maritime trade, the older generations of African workers could be distinguished from their younger cohorts by the deeper impress of their African culture and habits. 'They are doubly exiled – cut off from their origins and the French language.'[12] The segregation of the segregated fell between

generations, along the more subtle discriminations of assimilation, following colonial origins, colour and language – a social base leading to innumerable philosophies and states of mind.

Even more important, the betrayals by the French Communist Party (PCF) of Marxist-Leninism, its defections from principle in the post Second World War era, sundered the obligations of many Francophone (and French) intellectuals to it. The participation of the PCF, at the ministerial and parliamentary levels of government, in post-war French colonialism, in the immediate and bloody repressions of nationalists in Madagascar, Algeria and Indochina, its obsequious collaborations in the later colonial and racist war in Algeria, compelled many Third World intellectuals to denounce it and question the revolutionary character of marxism.[13] Aimé Césaire, in his open letter of resignation from the Party in 1956, gave expression to the resolve of many black revolutionists active within France's sphere of power:

> What I demand of Marxism and Communism is that they serve the black peoples, not that the black peoples serve Marxism and Communism. Philosophies and movements must serve the people, not the people the doctrine and the movement. This, of course, applies not only to the Communists. If I were a Christian or a Moslem I would say the same. A doctrine is of value only if it is conceived by us and for us, and revised through us.[14]

Thus Césaire's declaration of disaffection with the politics of communism, though it followed George Padmore's by more than twenty years and Richard Wright's by more than a decade, reaffirmed a fundamental opposition between revolutionary Pan-Africanism and Soviet-dominated communism.[15] The gulf between a communist movement dictated to by the exigencies of European politics and the movements of national liberation in Africa, Asia and the West Indies had broadened beyond tolerance. This second historical fracture of an alliance begun in the late 1920s – and oddly enough which had had one of its first proponents, Lamine Senghor, as an organiser of African dockworkers in France – was a kind of confirmation that the crisis was not phenomenological but, rather, fundamental.

Sembene, then, was hardly in a position to become a disciplined or dogmatic marxist. He had reason to question the revolutionary character of the French industrial proletariat and its sense of solidarity with non-European workers, the level of critique found in the PCF and the applicability to his society of a theory of history which frequently referred to colonialism as a progressive force. His marxism, consequently, assumed a particular and discriminating form, retaining those analyses which appeared authentic to his own experience and relevant to those social forces experienced by African plebeian classes. As such, Sembene's ideology retained a sense of class antagonism, for this was a

phenomenon which he could observe extending its infection to his home land. Along with the acceleration of class formations in the post-war Africa, Sembene could also sense, hear and see the beginnings of collective and class consciousness. Its development among African workers from formless but militant grievances against the myriad agents of colonialism to trade unionism and finally to anti-colonial revolutionary nationalism proceeded almost organically. So, too, the connection between the critique of colonialism and the critique of capitalism. Sembene's attention to the details of post-colonial Senegalese society, rotting from within as well as from without, is a constant evocation of an intelligence trained to the primacy of commerce and production in determining the true nature of social reality. Thus, in his novel *Xala* – in direct contradiction to one critic who observed that it is 'not a political document'[16] – we see Sembene incisively stripping away the facade of political power to reveal the persistence of foreign domination. At least twice in *Xala*, once in the voice of the narrative and a second time from the lips of El Hadji Abdou Kade Beye, the novel's doomed central character, Sembene uncovers his nation's structural contradictions. As narrator, he tells us:

> (It is perhaps worth pointing out that all these men who had given themselves the pompous title of 'businessmen' were nothing more than middlemen, a new kind of salesman. The old trading firms of the colonial period, adapting themselves to the new situation created by African Independence, supplied them with goods on a wholesale or semi-wholesale basis, which they then re-sold.)

El Hadji, shocked by his expulsion from the cadre of the corrupt, screams at his former collaborators:

> We are a bunch of clodhoppers. Who owns the banks? The insurance companies? The factories? The businesses? The wholesale trade? The cinemas? The bookshops? The hotels? All these and more besides are out of our control ... The colonialist is stronger, more powerful than ever before, hidden inside us, here in this very place. He promises us the left-overs of the feast if we behave ourselves ... What are we? Clodhoppers! Agents! Petty traders! In our fatuity we call ourselves 'businessmen'! Businessmen without funds.

It is clear from the above that Sembene has imaginatively and authoritatively used Marx's political economy to portray the power relations which determine the social structure in which his moral dramas take place. The parade of Mercedeses which fills the opening scenes of 'Xala' (the film) is a stock image of the charade of chameleons, a class of charlatans who would be, in the phrase of E. Franklin Frazier, the late Afro-American sociologist, 'black to the

whites and white to the blacks'.[17]

However, the metaphor of *xala*, the curse of impotence, despite its dramatic power, is in the end inappropriate. It is, of course, not the beggars, lepers and cripples whose presence punctuates daily life in 'Ndakaru' who are the authors of the moral plague infecting the petite-bourgeoisie. Sembene's resort to a purification ritual, which has reminded at least one critic of Bunuel's Christian purgation in 'La Viridiana' (and perhaps may remind us of the conclusion of Peter Abraham's *A Wreath for Udomo*), possesses a cinematic authority which is belied by Sembene's other sensibilities. More frequently and with more reason he has informed us that the *xala* has its origins in the capitalist system.

There is, though, one other glaring error in *Xala*; one more serious than Sembene's concession to the dictates of cinematic coherence. It is an error which Sembene shares with most of his Third World predecessors and contemporaries who have become adherents to the marxian radical tradition. Like most of them, with the exceptions of Cabral, James and Nyerere, Sembene has uncritically accepted Marx's (and the European Enlightenment's) hostility towards the non-secular mind. Just how close Sembene is to Marx on this score is demonstrated by his paraphrase of Marx's declaration that religion 'is the *opium* of the people'. In *Xala*, Sembene writes of El Hadji's first wife, Adja: 'as others isolate themselves with drugs, she obtained her own daily dose from her religion.' However, what for Marx, as a self-proclaimed 'bourgeois ideologist', was a natural ideological consequence of the historical formation of the bourgeoisie's challenge to a theocratically-rationalised feudal social order, is profoundly inappropriate for Third World ideologists of revolution. The elaborate and multi-variate forms of domination which made their appearances in the temporal record of 'Christendom' and to whose confining durability Marx and many others of his generation addressed themselves, constituted a system of surplus appropriation rationalised by Christian cosmology, Christian morality and Christian definitions of obligation and duty. No such Leviathan existed in the African past, not even in the areas of Islamic expansion. Still, the temptation has undoubtedly proven to be a great one for non-European radicals to blur in theoretical abstractions the fundamental differences which exist between a social order ruled from above through extensive state apparatuses totally implicated in a patrician church more than a millenium in age, with the historical conditions which have been the settings for the conceptualisation of the philosophical and moral systems in other parts of the world. Africa had no feudal period. Its religions and philosophical systems were not, by their nature, characters or functions, identical with those of medieval Christian Europe. It is, then, quite inadequate for African revolutionary ideologists simply to adopt for their own the attitudes

towards the spiritual and supernatural that European intellectuals have acquired. Indeed, there is very little evidence that they have investigated whether religion as a concept emergent from Europe's experience is anything like the architectonic systems created by their people. The fashions and prejudices of European intellectual development are a mistaken ideational basis for the African imagination.[18]

Such, unfortunately, are some of the inevitable forms taken by an intelligentsia like that of Senegal, for one example, which has developed in a society where the caste system of colonialism was traced by the depth to which one had plundered the verities of European culture. Further, Edward Corbett reminds us, 'Proficiency in French put those now in authority in strategic positions to take command when France relinquished official control.'[19] This was the case in Senegal where formal education has been dominated by French culture for more than fifty years; where for several years even after independence the dailies, weeklies and monthlies were French-controlled; where French is the language of instruction (a dominance which gave the original meaning to the phrase 'lingua-franca'); where the basic political institutions are adopted from France; where industrial production is largely the assembly of parts manufactured in France or other parts of Europe; where 90 per cent of the businesses – over 500 firms – are French or foreign-owned.[20] Having developed in such a society, these factors add up to one reason for Sembene's dismissal of traditional thought.

His work – the novels, the short stories and films – have consistently demonstrated his antagonism towards the spiritual and moral consciousness formed by African peoples in the effort to come to terms with their historical experience. One can recall, for example, the opening scenes of his film 'Emitai', which depict a group of Diola elders whose tradition-bound debate concludes with the decision to accept passively whatever the consequences which will befall their village from an approaching French column. This same scene, however, suggests as well the other cause of his hostility, a reason he further explores in his recent film 'Ceddo': it is clear that Sembene – more so since he is Muslim in origins – believes that the traditional culture proved its inadequacy by failing to provide a successful defence against colonialism. Sembene has laid the violation of his people both on the coloniser and at the feet of the traditional moral and cultural imperatives which appear to him to have been too weak to repel the attack. His approach to his people's cultural genius is consequently doubly cursed.

Sembene has thus ignored or rejected the revolutionary and rebellious force of his own culture. He has not understood what C.L.R. James meant when he wrote concerning the beginnings of the Haitian revolution: 'Voodoo was the medium of the conspiracy.'[21] He cannot sense what Jean Rouch, the French ethnographic film maker,

captured in his 'Les Maîtres Fous' (translated as 'The Mad Masters') more than twenty years ago. Rouch's film, documenting the rites of the Accra group of the Hauka cult which had spread throughout West Africa among Islamic peoples, contained scenes of riveting power, sustained anguish and momentarily contained violence. Rouch explained:

> They insist they are not engaged in mockery or that they have any notion of revenge. I believe that is true, at least on the conscious level ... It goes back to Africans who went to Mecca. The entire rite, the foaming at the mouth, the sacrifice of the dog, and all the shouting is considered to be the action of spirits which have possessed them. These are powerful new gods who most certainly are not to be mocked. When the cult began, the Islamic priest saw them as heretics and persecuted them. The French administration joined in because they did not like the revival of strong animistic faiths that might turn political ... Everywhere they were banned and, as usual, the more they were banned the better it was for the cult ... The Hauka movement broke taboos, whether it was eating a dog or modelling behaviour on the colonial example. It was like Bunuel's attitude to the church. You cannot feel sacrilegious if you do not respect your opponent. What the Hauka did was very creative and implicitly revolutionary, just as the authorities feared.[23]

The Hauka cult is now presumed to have ceased or dissolved in the Niger Savannah. That may or may not be so. Regardless, what Rouch has recorded is a demonstration of a prototypically African response to colonialism and imperialism – a response which exploded into Haitian history in the eighteenth century, north American history in the twentieth century and African history as early as the late seventeenth century. Dona Beatriz in the 1690s, Boukman in the 1790s, Cudjoe in the 1730s, John Chilembwe in the 1900s, Simon Kimbangu in the 1920s, the Land Freedom Army of Kenya in the 1950s and countless other movements in between, whose marks are engraved in the minds of peoples all over the African continent and in the diaspora, have been left unrealised in the revolutionary visions of the westernised ideologists. The existence of these social upheavals cannot be comprehended by employing notions such as 'archaicisms'. Their existence is much more than a demonstration of the unity of African culture, as Walter Rodney has argued.[24] Foremost, as Cabral learned from experience, they are the social and cultural basis of a genuinely African response to the violation of African history which European domination incurred. The absence of this consciousness, this realisation, constitutes the tragedy of Sembene's work.

It is not entirely ironical that Rouch, a French intellectual, has possessed the sensibility to come closer to this force than Sembene. Rouch has little cause to be ambivalent towards this phenomenon.

Indeed, if his critics are correct,[25] it may be precisely his obsession with 'primitivism', regardless of whatever psychoanalytic or cultural compulsions are behind it, which has permitted him to document its existence. Had the Hauka been French, this might not have been the case. The Hauka, however, are not French, nor could they have been. Rouch was free, then, unlike his westernised counterparts, to recognise that the Hauka were not insane, were not primitives, but manifestations of an absolutely total revolutionary process. Consciousness like that displayed by the Hauka propelled Hyacinth's army in revolutionary Haiti into the routing of a French soldiery which was numerically, militarily and technically superior to any army the slaves might field.[26] This same so-called savagery inspired Chilembwe's church into its tragic confrontation with the British in Nyasaland in 1914-15.[27] It is the same force which shocked the British settlers in Kenya forty years later into conjuring up the myth of the Mau Mau, while Kenya's native Anglicised intelligentsia stood apart, convinced that nothing their people could do would have the slightest effect on the British empire.[28]

Africa's revolutionary intelligentsia, at this crucial juncture, can no longer stand aside, mired in ideological swamps from other times, other places and other peoples. As Fanon attempted to indicate in his famous record of the historical processes and clinical phenomena he had so closely observed in Algeria, in the African countryside a proto-political dynamic of enormous power is seething.[29] It is a force which does not neatly fit into the western conceptual categories of the political, nevertheless it has historically mobilised thousands in assaults, sometimes successfully, against that presence, that intrusion which has twisted their lives to an intolerable degree. It has become increasingly obvious that without some deeper comprehension of this process, Sembene, like his Third World contemporaries, will continue to produce works which are not simply pessimistic but programmatically void.

References

1 See George James, *Stolen Legacy* (New York, 1954); and Frank Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p. 109

2 For Fanon, see his *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, 1966); for the use of modernising elite, see the summary essay on this literature in James Bill and Robert Hardgrave, Jr., *Comparative Politics: the quest for theory* (Columbus, 1973), pp. 43-83 and 175-199; for the term petite-bourgeoisie, see Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution* (New York, 1974), pp. 84-109.

3 See Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul, 'Socialism and Economic Development in Tropical Africa', in Arrighi and Saul (eds), *Essays in the Political Economy of Africa* (New York, 1973); see also B. Olatunji Oloruntimehin, 'Education for Colonial Dominance in French West Africa up to the Second World War', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (Vol. 7, no. 2, June 1974), p. 348; Ladipo

Adamolebun, 'Co-operation or Neocolonialism — Francophone Africa', *Africa Quarterly* (Vol. XVIII, no. 1, July 1978), pp. 34-50; and Samir Amin, *Neo-Colonialism in West Africa* (London, 1978).

4 James, op. cit., pp. 41-53; and Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization* (New York, 1974).

5 See T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560-1830* (London, 1970).

6 See Imanuel Geiss, *The PanAfrican Movement* (London, 1974); C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (New York, 1963); George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism* (New York, 1972); and Arrighi and Saul, 'Nationalism and Revolution in Sub-Saharan Africa', in op. cit.

7 Amilcar Cabral, 'National Liberation and Culture', in *Return to the Source* (New York, 1973), p. 47.

8 Amilcar Cabral, 'The Weapon of Theory', in the collection, *Revolution in Guinea* (New York, 1969), p. 110.

9 Cabral, 'National Liberation ... ', op. cit., p. 45.

10 Maryse Conde, review of 'Sembene Ousmane *Xala*', in *African Literature Today*, No. 9 (London, 1978), p. 98.

11 See Hannes Kamphausen, 'Cinema in Africa: a survey', *Cineaste* (Vol. V, no, 3, Summer 1972), p. 36.

12 Sembene Ousmane, 'Letters from France', in the collection of short stories *Tribal Scars* (London, 1974), p. 62; for a more contemporary account, see Edima N'Goumou and Jonathan Power, 'The Clandestine Traffic', *The Times* (15 June 1974), p. 8.

13 For a history of the French communist movement, see David Caute, *Communism and the French Intellectuals* (New York, 1964), especially pp. 208-211.

14 Jurgen Ruhle, *Literature and Revolution* (New York, 1969), pp. 346-7.

15 For Padmore, see James Hooker, *Black Revolutionary* (New York, 1970), pp. 39-57; for Wright, see Cedric Robinson, 'The emergent marxism of Richard Wright's ideology', in *Race & Class* (Vol. XIX, no. 3, Winter 1978), pp. 221-237.

16 Dorothy Blair, *African Literature in French* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 240.

17 See E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York, 1962).

18 President Leopold Senghor of Senegal is already legendary for his inability to confront the less than romantic French past. Despite his extraordinary role in the development of the negritude movement, he continues to indulge in the most peculiar historical reconstructions. He, for example, has recently declared: 'We have elected to live under a system of complete freedom of the Press. This, coupled with the freedom to assemble and form associations, is one of the "fundamental freedoms". These we have put on a rational footing by drawing on the experience of the great, modern democratic societies, *particularly on the experience of France, since we were, even before 1960, the oldest French colony in Africa*' (my emphasis). 'The Role of the Press in African Democratic Society', in *Africa Currents* (No. 14, Spring 1979), p. 17.

19 Edward Corbett, *The French Presence in Black Africa* (Washington, DC, 1972), p. 40. Ronald Palmer, former US Ambassador to Togo, has put it quite powerfully: 'French religious and secular schools and French priests and French school teachers played a crucial role in importing the ideas of the French Revolution and shaping the thinking of the leaders of French-speaking Africa. The motivations that were later to urge Africans towards decolonialisation and to demand independence were largely acquired in French elementary schools from French teachers. Ironically, perhaps the most important idea transmitted by these teachers was that beyond the errant, unworthy, corrupt France of the present time, there existed an eternal, transcendent France ready and willing to share its lofty ideals with the world.' 'France and Africa', speech to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, 13 September, 1979.

20 Ibid.; and B. Olatunji Oloruntimehin, 'The Economy of French West Africa between the Two World Wars', *Journal of African Studies* (Vol. 4, no. 1, Spring

1977), pp. 51-76.

21 C.L.R. James, op. cit., p. 86.

22 Cabral, 'National Liberation ...', op. cit., p. 43.

23 Dan Georgakas, Udayan Gupta and Juda Janda, 'The Politics of Visual Anthropology: An Interview with Jean Rouch', *Cineaste* (Vol. VIII, no. 4, Summer 1978), p. 21.

24 See Walter Rodney, 'Upper Guinea and the Significance of the Origins of Africans Enslaved in the New World', *Journal of Negro History* (Vol. LIV, no. 4, October 1969), p. 345.

25 Georgakas, et. al. write: ' ... Rouch remains a controversial figure to many scholars of Africa. Some find his work unenlightened and his vision colonial. Some contend that Rouch's Africa is a mythical Africa, that it was a product of Rouch's manipulation.' op. cit., p. 17.

26 C.L.R. James, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

27 George Shepperson and Tom Price, *Independent African* (Edinburgh, 1958).

28 B. M. Kaggia, Fred Kubai, J. Murumbi and Achieng Oneko, Kenyans who had 'in varying degrees been held responsible for the revolt popularised under the name of Mau Mau', wrote: 'A remarkable feature of the personnel of the Land and Freedom Army was the absence in the forest of educated men, educated, that is, in the formal sense beyond primary school level ... The reasons go ... to the wide gulf that has arisen in many parts of Africa between the intellectuals and the masses. The symbols of the revolt ... were traditional symbols. The educated young man of today either does not understand these symbols at all or is taught to look down upon them. They represent a way of life from which he has become increasingly isolated. Essentially, this phenomenon is yet another vicious heritage from colonialism. This is not said as a plea for a return to the old ways. Far from it. But we do have to strive for a society in which intellectuals are part of an organic whole and not merely "black Europeans". Not only politics and economics but also minds have to be decolonised.' Preface to Donald Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within* (New York, 1966), pp. 10-11

29 It would be entirely appropriate to draw attention to the fact that Fanon recognised the process of the transformation of supernatural ecstasy (as canalised impulses towards violence) into revolutionary activity. Since Fanon has already received his share of opprobrium from marxists (see Jack Woddis, op. cit.), it should be said that he was not entirely convinced of the thesis presented in the body of this essay. He did, however, come quite close to it: 'The supernatural, magical powers reveal themselves as essentially personal; the settler's powers are infinitely shrunken, stamped with their alien origin. We no longer really need to fight against them since what counts is the frightening enemy created by myths. We perceive that all is settled by a permanent confrontation on the phantasmic plane. It has always happened in the struggle for freedom that such a people, formerly lost in an imaginary maze, a prey to unspeakable terrors yet happy to lose themselves in a dreamlike torment, such a people becomes unhinged, reorganises itself, and in blood and tears gives birth to very real and immediate action.' Fanon, op. cit., p. 56. This is just short of realising that the defeat of the enemy in fantasy is the precondition for the destruction of the enemy in reality.

NAWAL EL SADAAWI

Creative women in changing societies: a personal reflection

Nawal El Sadaawi was born in the village of Kafr Tahla, on the banks of the Nile. Refusing to accept the limitations that both religious and colonial oppression imposed on women of rural origin, Nawal qualified as a doctor and rose to be Egypt's Director of Public Health. Since she first began writing twenty-five years ago, her books (six novels and five collections of short stories) have concentrated on women. It was her campaigning as a doctor, a creative writer and a feminist that brought her into conflict with the Egyptian authorities. She was the first Arab woman to denounce female circumcision and other similar practices in her first non-fiction work, Woman and Sex, *published in 1972. This evoked such antagonism from the political and religious authorities that she was deprived of her job as Director of Health Education and the right to publish the magazine,* Health. *Undeterred, she followed this book with four others on similar themes (all in Arabic):* Female is the Origin, Women and Neurosis, Man and Sex *and* The Naked Face of Women in the Arab World. *The first work to be published in English is* The Hidden Face of Eve: women in the Arab world *(London, Zed Press, 1980).*

Race & Class *talked to Nawal in London when she was reflecting on the ways her views were being treated in the West, and our interview with her is published in the next section. The article which follows is an edited version of a paper delivered at the UNITAR Seminar on 'Creative women in changing societies', held in Oslo, 9-13 July 1980.*

Race & Class, XXII, 2(1980)

What is creativity?

Creativity, to my mind, is an innovative process which embraces all the arts and sciences. It includes the love, friendship and cooperation which people develop between one another in the common effort aimed at achieving a better life, and moulding better individuals. It is not confined to the intellectual activity or the mental production of the individual, but in its essence encompasses the collective action of groups, classes and nations and the mobilisation of the potential of all peoples to improve life, develop societies materially, culturally and morally, and ensure that peace reigns among all peoples. Since it is not possible to divide a human being into separate parts, the mind cannot be isolated from the body. Thus physical activity is an integral part of creative action. Dancing which might appear to be pure physical movement can at the same time be an elevated form of intellectual activity. The peasant man or woman using a hoe or carrying a jar of water on the head is involved in some form of creative action, since optimum use is being made of bodily force to achieve a given objective. The dividing line between craftsmanship, skill and creative action is not as sharply defined as many might think, although it exists within certain limits. I remember how the peasant women in my village Kafr Tahla carry heavy jars on their heads without the support of their hands, without dropping the jars or spilling any of their contents, no matter how often they turn their heads or tilt the jars at alarmingly acute angles. They have developed a 'creative balance' built on sensory perception and body movements discovered through practice. I have seen fathers and mothers wresting a livelihood for themselves and their children, fighting against death and winning the battle by a creative adaptation of work needs, production techniques and the art of survival in difficult circumstances.

The human body, whether that of man or woman, the mind and the emotions enfold a range of dazzling capabilities that reveal themselves through creative action, and also through the manifold activities carried on every day by people who are considered 'ordinary' because these activities, which to us often appear mundane and repetitive, are the result, historically at least, of a long creative effort. The tendency has been for dominant schools of thought to limit the creative and innovative process, and to see it only in some specific restricted forms of action carried out by an oligarchy of men, a limited class group, elevated by the patriarchal class system to the level of gods, upon whom are bestowed privileges and titles and who are referred to as geniuses, artists, exceptional talents, creators, extraordinary people. The vast majority of men and women are condemned to a daily struggle for livelihood, to a humdrum existence built on routine and mechanical activity, are thrown into the abyss of poverty, ignorance

and disease. Thus they are deprived of any real chance to discover or develop their mental, emotional or physical capabilities, even to be conscious of the eternal gift which all people possess – that natural, spontaneous artistic creativity so evident in popular culture.

The human being is artistic and creative by nature. He or she is capable of finding solutions to new problems, and does it all the time. This is the essence of creativity, which is a universal human gift, and not a distinction confined to any specific group. He or she is engaged in a constant struggle to improve life and make it more beautiful. The folk songs, legends, dances, arts and crafts handed down through the ages indicate that the most beautiful artistic expression can be the work of thousands or even millions of 'ordinary' men and women.

Whenever I sit writing in my closed room, despite the four walls which hem me in and isolate me from other people, and despite the nature of the writing process which is a purely individual form of action, I always feel that I derive my thoughts, or draw what we call inspiration, from the creative imagination of the men, women and children among whom I have lived or am still living. Even if I rebel against many of the traditions and customs which govern their lives, they remain the rich and lasting source of inspiration for my thoughts and feelings. I have come to realise that my literary or scientific creativity can only flourish if fed through the multiple network of relations and links which I have established over the years with the people of my city Cairo and my village Kafr Tahla. These links are also the support and the protection which have spared me the sorrow of loneliness and the alienation of excessive individualism. My desire to nurture my art, and to preserve my individual identity, my pressing need to be alone, away from people, so that I can meditate and contemplate, are accompanied by an equally pressing need to be in contact with people, not because I want to write about them, but because I must live with them and touch with my hands the fibre of their support.

Creativity, imagination and reality

Reflection, meditation and contemplation of the past enhance the sensitivity of the individual, like a tool refined and sharpened by practice, or a fine wire made taut by being stretched to its limits. Thus it is that he or she is brought step by step to a discovery of the new in the old, the particular in the general, the astounding in the ordinary, the contradictory in the harmonious and the harmonious in the contradictory. The creative process can only unfold itself in conjunction with this process of contemplation and reflection, which permits the individual to live through reality once more, yet in a way which is different, to experience a reality which, although real, is not the exact replica of the

reality known before. For ideas, thoughts and concepts are not born outside reality but within it, inspired by it, born of its matter, its energy, its dynamic forces. What grows out of the creative process is in fact reality, but it never is, and never should be, a mirror image, or a photographic copy. It is more difficult than mere copying, more complex than an exercise in imagination. It is the capacity to restructure reality, to endow it with a different content and form, so that it appears as a new reality.

As the years passed, I realised that my creative freedom expanded and developed to the degree that I became increasingly capable of grasping the details of reality, visualising its multiple aspects, seeing its different faces, probing its varying depths in time and space. I also began to understand that the practice of artistic creation led to the development of a new language and a new culture in the art of expressing reality, so that out of it was born, or could be born, a better and more beautiful reality. Then it was as though an inner voice was constantly whispering to me, telling me that my mind was capable of creating pictures other than those expressing the pain which is reality. My hand would reach for the pen and almost instinctively begin to trace the images and ideas which flooded my mind. At such moments expression became as imperative and as necessary as breathing, and I existed only in order to convey my thoughts beyond myself to others.

In the early years of my life, my outlook was idealistic and I believed in an absolute truth. Crossing over the stage of certainty to the stage of doubt, I reached a more mature and human understanding of things in which it was no longer important whether an absolute perfection existed or not. Now what mattered was the constant striving to attain that which is more perfect, to move higher, to progress. What counted now was to be sincere, to be engaged in an unending creative effort directed to humanity and life, to move along a road which can never end with success or failure.

What does creativity seek to attain?

I have never been involved in the debate on whether art should be 'for art's sake' or 'goal oriented'. In my opinion, authentic art, built on a sincere quest for truth, serves the cause of art, and with it that of life and society. Creative work or action reflects an individual's opinions in life, and his or her attitude towards the system prevailing in society in a spontaneous, almost unintentional manner, as though the creative process carries within itself the seeds, and consequently the birth, of these opinions and attitudes. It is as though a creative work is transformed from something to which life has been given into something capable of giving birth to life, from something created into a creative force. Hence

it becomes capable of evoking new ideas and feelings in the hearts and minds of others. And this is the aim of creativity. It leads to the development of new ideas and feelings which help people to attain a more complete understanding of themselves, of what constitutes the essence of the human being, what is most powerful and noble and dynamic in human nature, so that their hopes and determination in the struggle for freedom and justice, their anger and rebellion against all forms of oppression and injustice and their capacity to perceive the new ways in which beauty and love can manifest themselves are strengthened. Creative thought and action help people to become stronger, more confident and more rich internally, less prone to impose their authority, more given to treat others in a simple, gentle and helpful way.

But in all this the basic prerequisite which ensures the attainment of these goals remains a sincere quest for truth. For without this quest, creativity is transformed into an empty sterile shell. Without truth, there is no creativity.

Society and truth

That patriarchal class system prevailing in our society is based on the dominance of the man in the family and the dominance of the classes which possess wealth and authority in society. Such a system can only thrive on different forms of oppression and tyranny. These range from the denial of the freedom of the child to discover his or her own body organs, discrimination between boys and girls within the family and racial discrimination, to exploitation under the old colonial and the new colonial order, under multinational capitalist companies and world imperialism. Under such an oppressive system, freedom, justice and truth become difficult to attain, and the path leading to them is thorny and fraught with danger. And yet no other path will lead to the burial of a system based on oppression and tyranny.

The hazards and risks involved are even greater for women and for those who lack the weapons of money and authority. The whole patriarchal class system, with its sciences, its arts and religions, has in fact been built on their sacrifices, their deprivation and suffering, their sweat and blood.

That is why women's physical, mental and psychological capacities deteriorate between childhood and the end of life. The woman who is able to break the grip of this all-powerful system which surrounds her inside and outside the home, on the street, on the factory floor and in the bedroom is indeed a rarity.

Men, if they belong to the class of landowners, and rulers still have the opportunity to safeguard and develop their creative ability. Men of

the poorer class, who strive day and night to earn their living, like women, only have limited or rare opportunities. A woman from the landowning or ruling class may have a better opportunity to realise her creative intellectual abilities. But she still wavers between two considerations: (1) her intellectual capacities and (2) the fact that she is female. This wavering is only natural, since she has been taught since childhood, from the very first lesson in religion, that intellect is for the man who is God's image on earth and that Eve is only a desecrated and headless body.

Lucky is the woman who is able to learn how to read and write and is not fully taken up with a constant striving for her livelihood and endless household work in the service of family, husband and children. She can at least give the time and effort necessary to become aware of the manifestations of oppression and tyranny. This fortunate woman represents a small minority in Arab countries and among the people of the Third World, where the vast majority of men, women and children are left crushed and breathless in the continuous struggle for existence.

The creative woman occasionally allows herself to step back and forget her true self – she practises what men practise, uses their weapons to compete with them, to achieve what they refer to as glory, fame, genius, and all the other dazzling terms that blur her vision and blind her eyes to her own reality and to her creative striving towards truth. If a creative woman slides down into this quagmire, she is assimilated by the patriarchal class system and becomes a part of it. She loses her identity, even though she may continue to work and produce. Her creative work declines steadily, even though her bank account and her fame might be mounting rapidly.

But she is sometimes saved from this state of futility by a distressing incident in her public or private life, or a tragedy that sets her on a collision course with the system within the home or in society. It is then that she realises her deep-seated rejection of its injustice and renews her struggle against it. Circumstances might drag her down to the company of the sick, the poor, the rejected, the prisoners, the divorcees or the prostitutes, thus allowing her to get acquainted with the ugly face of this system and to realise that she is not part of it. She begins to struggle to recover her self and her truthfulness, and recovers creative ability side by side with those whose life she is now partly sharing. Her creative work rings with the authenticity that comes with truth.

The power of creative action

The basic power of creative action is the ability to penetrate and influence the minds and hearts of people. This can only be realised when the person involved really lives the life of the people and shares their

sorrows and aspirations. Keeping in close contact with people and reality, creative action makes the creative woman capable of recording the minutest details related to time, location and the incidents and personalities constituting the essence of reality. This record may permit her to immortalise the fleeting moments involved in the raping of a girl, the beating of a prisoner or the death of a child from hunger, because thousands and even millions of minds and hearts are gripped by such moments. They re-live them through a narrative, a play or a film. The incident that was a part of the past, and might have died and been buried with it, is revived by creative action and resurrected to become a living part of the present, of the minds and hearts of people in different ages and places. It disturbs the placid waters of resignation, evokes new thoughts and feelings. The minds and hearts of individuals are transformed, their determination to rebel against oppression is strengthened.

Consequently, the power of creative action lies in its ability to implant the seeds of revolution in the hearts of oppressed men, women and children. This revolution might not materialise in the form of a popular movement capable of changing the system within their lifetime, but at least the seeds will have been sown in the ground, and as surely as the sun rises from the East, they will ultimately flourish. Revolution is the natural result of creative action and freedom is the daughter of the revolution. Revolution and freedom, together, constitute the form and content of any creative action.

Originality and universalism are two sides of the coin of creativity, like objectivity and subjectivity. Subjectivity endows creativity with a genuine individual identity, with a special, local flavour, whereas objectivity provides the components for a true vision of the human experience.

Perhaps this explains my constant attachment to my country, land, people and Arabic language. No matter how far and wide I travel, I must always return to where I belong.

Problems encountered by the creative woman

Science and art

Human society, whether in the West or the East, still suffers from an arbitrary separation between science and art, thought and emotion, mind and body. For many reasons, women in particular are the victims of this dichotomy, and above all because historically it was conceived as a weapon in the service of the slave system, private property, the division of society into classes and the patrilinear family system. It was enveloped in religious mystique, provided with sacred trappings, when Eve became symbolic of the body and Adam of the mind.

It is probably true that this manner of conceiving things played a role in the development of civilisation, scientific methods and technology, the fruits of which we enjoy today. But there is no doubt also that it simultaneously served another purpose, by moulding and reinforcing the patriarchal class system, with all its injustice. By splitting the human being into two distinct parts – mind and body – mind was elevated as the throne of God, science, the prerogative of the man, religion and authority, whereas the body was relegated to the lowest level, that of the woman, the devil, shame, heresy and submission.

The creative woman, with her capacity to break through traditional values and ideas, is quick to realise that the splitting of the human being into mind and body, thought and emotion, is a concept which conflicts with nature, a concept imposed on society by the force of arms, authority and law. She is also able to understand that it gave birth to the idea that science is a product of the mind, whereas art is the product of emotion and feeling. Creative people, however, whether women or men, cut through all artificial partitions, all the walls which divide life into watertight compartments, and reconstitute the essential unity that makes of the human being a whole composed of body, mind and emotion.

Perhaps one of the first contradictions I was obliged to face in practical life was that created between science and art, between medicine and literature. As a medical doctor and a writer, wherever I went I was pursued by the traditional question, 'How do you manage to combine medicine and literature?' The question was, of course, always asked in a tone denoting disapproval and suggesting a dire need for me to choose one profession. This, of course, could only be medicine, and in particular gynaecology, so that I could examine women and spare them from being handled by a male doctor. The few male doctors (about three or four) who had opted for a literary career, abandoned the medical profession at quite an early stage, and devoted themselves to their literary activities or else worked as journalists. So how was it possible for a woman to combine two professions which even the men were incapable of practising at the same time?

As far as I was concerned, I did not perceive any fundamental contradiction between my medical and literary activity. On the contrary, they nourished one another. My knowledge of the medical sciences, my work in rural areas, my relations with male and female patients, fed my writings with a deep and rich experience, and with human and artistic material characterised by its reflection of the reality which I was living and the wealth of details related to it. In the same way, my passion for writing, my love of art and my contemplation of life as it flowed past permitted me to see human beings in depth, helped me in my work as a medical doctor and made me realise the imperfections of my profession and its inability to cope with the fundamental problems of society and

people.

I think it is possible to say that medicine provided me with facts, knowledge and living experience, whereas art gave me vision, clarity, courage to express my views, a love of freedom and justice and a hatred for human bondage and oppression. However, the simultaneous practice of medicine and art sometimes made me feel the difficulty of the path I was following. But then, progressing along it I began to discover new ideas and feelings – ideas and feelings that had their source in the interlinking of science and art, the body and mind, the male and female, God and human beings.

Conflict with authority

One of the most difficult problems that confronts a creative woman is the inevitable conflict which breaks out sooner or later between her and authority, between her and the system dominant in society, because this system is built on patriarchal class relations. The intensity of this conflict is proportionate to the effectiveness of the action undertaken by the creative woman. The methods and weapons used against her differ according to the type of society, and the surroundings in which she lives. There are many factors which permit the system to succeed in overcoming her resistance in most cases. Foremost among these is the fact that it possesses a whole range of oppressive instruments such as censorship, police forces, prisons, newspapers and mass media, as well as religious and cultural institutions. It is, therefore, always capable of breaking any individuals who try to rebel against it, unless these individuals succeed in building up a people's political organisation, capable of standing up to the powerful forces that will be unleashed against it. This task is an extremely difficult one in societies where liberty and freedom are words devoid of content, where a single individual commands the destiny of a nation and where any criticism or difference of opinion is outlawed. Where this is the case creative people, and especially creative women, feel themselves surrounded, cornered, threatened by obvious and obscure dangers every moment of their lives.

I too have had this sensation of being encircled by enemy forces at different stages of my life. I could feel the silent struggle going on between me and these forces, a struggle which increased in intensity as time passed and I became more mature, and as my activities grew in extent and depth whether in the medical or the literary field. Now it was no longer hidden or silent, but open and declared, characterised by the variety of weapons used, which ranged from neglect, disapproval, criticism and vilification to warnings and threats, and which ended in my being deprived of a job (from 1972-8) and in total censorship of all my writings. I was obliged to publish my books outside Egypt (in Beirut). This situation prevailed until I was able to obtain a job in the

ECA as an Advisor on Women's Programmes for Africa, and later in the ECWA as Senior Programme Officer in charge of the Women's Voluntary Fund.

My work in the field of Women's Programmes, and my choice of the United Nations in particular, was an attempt to break through the siege which was meant to close down upon me and stifle whatever efforts I was making. But to my great disappointment, I discovered after two years of work in the United Nations that things were no different, because once again I was trapped in the logic and the rigid chains of a bureaucratic establishment built on patriarchal class relations, and the balance or struggle between international and national forces. A man or woman who enters the ranks of this establishment is not evaluated on the basis of his or her work and creative ability, but rather on their capacity for adapting to the traditions and norms which prevail within it, for submissive obedience to those in command, for cleverness in maintaining or creating relations with influential circles and people. The UN establishment, to my mind, resembles a cemetery in which the tombs are carved out of smooth, expensive marble surrounded by decorated walls and rich heavy curtains, furnished with luxurious leather armchairs and thick soft carpets and run by soft spoken men who move and speak with studied care in return for high salaries, a comfortable life and security. It is a cemetery because, despite the beautiful trappings and outwardly efficient appearance, within its precincts, any attempt at creative original work is buried and suffocates deep down under the smooth marble.

Problems of the creative woman arising from her sex

Society is not yet accustomed to the creative endeavour of women or their original thinking in any field of activity, irrespective of what it may be. As a result, a creative woman has to be extremely productive, and expend much greater efforts than her male colleagues in order to obtain recognition as a creative individual.

Certain subjects are considered to be so sensitive that they are placed out of bounds in many societies. Among these are the subject of sex and matters of a religious nature. They take on explosive proportions if dealt with by a woman. There are also certain forms of struggle which the ruling authorities refuse to recognise or bring to light because they consider them as a danger to the system. The class struggle is one of them. Yet is it not true to say that any original creative thinker, man or woman, cannot give free reign to the intellect and produce works that are of value, while at the same time avoiding the three subjects of sex, religion and the class struggle? A woman who dares to touch upon them runs much greater risks than a man, due to the double moral standards prevalent in our societies. For a man, in general, enjoys a much greater degree of freedom in the areas of sex, moral and social

behaviour, and thought than does a woman. The mere fact of being female carries with it a whole range of constraints and a woman is therefore obliged to pay a much greater price if she wishes to express herself freely, both in thought and action.

Marriage remains the only legitimate channel through which woman can satisfy her need for love, sex and motherhood. This is particularly true in the Arab countries where marriage is still governed by rules and traditions that make the man a guardian and keeper of his wife's body, her thought and her social, economic and political activities. A creative woman inevitably lives through an acute conflict between her need for love, sex and motherhood and her refusal to accept the tutelage of the man, and the rigid mould of a traditional marriage. In addition, the duties of a wife and mother in serving her children, family and husband still remain sacred in the eyes of society, since they are the duties which she has been born to fulfil. Other activities are considered secondary, of little importance or even harmful, since they can divert her from carrying out the tasks related to husband, children and family.

At certain stages of my life, the care I was obliged to give first to my daughter and then, later, to my son, and the efforts entailed in providing this care, were the cause for much loss of time and effort, and for a fatigue which often reached the point of severe nervous and physical exhaustion, just so that I could be sure that they would obtain the minimum of food, rest, cleanliness and affection which was their due. My feelings of motherhood were deep and strong, and it was often so difficult to think of my medical or literary work when, for one reason or another, I might be worried about them.

Loneliness and the political vacuum

At all stages of my life, I experienced the need to cooperate with my female colleagues in order to overcome a feeling of loneliness and gain the necessary strength with which to confront those who were in authority. Even within a small family, I tried to cooperate with my sisters so that we could obtain more rights. This was also the case in school, at the university and after I graduated. That is why at one stage I tried, for example, to establish an Association for Egyptian Women Writers registered in the Ministry of Social Affairs. This Association was active for some time, but was quickly smothered by the influential circles in the literary movement. I attempted for several years to work through the Medical Association and reach my female colleagues working in urban and rural areas, but once again the pillars of reaction in the medical profession closed in on me and cut down my efforts, although at that time I had already lost my job in the Ministry of Health. In addition, I was instrumental in the establishment of an Association for Health Information and Education which published a monthly magazine of which I was the Editor in Chief for several years.

We were forced to close down by a financial boycott orchestrated by the then Minister of Health, who issued instructions preventing companies from advertising in our magazine.

More recently, I have been travelling in the Arab region and this has permitted me to make contacts in different Arab countries with women I have come to know over the years, and to promote the constitution of groups which I hope will grow into an Arab Women's Movement. These groups are now meeting to discuss their objectives and programmes of action, but who knows whether they will be left to grow and develop, or be crushed by the forces of reaction before they are sufficiently strong to continue despite the numerous obstacles they have to face?

No doubt my contacts with people and the outer world depend essentially on my writings. But experience has brought me to the realisation that thought and writing, no matter how essential, are not capable alone of bringing about the necessary social and political changes. In addition, creative women are in dire need of organised popular support if they are to resist with success the numerous attacks and pitfalls to which they are increasingly exposed.

In Arab countries, there are a number of progressive parties and organisations. Yet, despite their 'revolutionary' orientation, they have so far proved to be incapable of reflecting the problems of women and mobilising them to tackle these problems. Quite often they consider this area to be of secondary importance. In addition, party politics are often built on a kind of rigid loyalty and obedience which precludes discussion and original thought. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why I have never belonged to any political party. A few years ago I made an appeal for the constitution of a women's party, but the idea was opposed bitterly right from the start. For, despite the fact that I know full well how complex the cause of women's liberation is, and how it can never be served outside the framework of the struggle for a comprehensive radical change in the structure of society as a whole, yet I believe that the creation of a women's organisation is an extremely important contribution to the total revolutionary effort. This organisation must live and grow and mature so that it can fuse its efforts with other organisations in the struggle to overcome the patriarchal class structure of our present society, and its numerous ramifications within our institutions, including those of marriage, the family and the relations between the sexes.

Creative women within a profession

Because of the prevailing system few women become professional, and those who become creative are even fewer. Certain professions are

more traditional than others. The medical profession, to my mind, is more traditional than writing. Being a doctor and a writer, I have noticed that women doctors are more traditional and less creative than women writers.

I think creative women or men can change the ethics and attitudes of their profession if they represent the majority or mobilise others towards this change. Traditional women cannot change the prevailing ethics and attitudes. Sometimes they safeguard them. However, the mere presence of women in a profession, even if they are veiled, creates a new working atmosphere and new social relationships between themselves and their colleagues. New ethics and attitudes may develop.

A female physician may be treated as a nurse, especially in rural areas. This is considered degrading, since the nursing profession is looked upon by the patriarchal class system as lowly. What we need is equality between professions, as well as equality between female and male colleagues.

I did not pay much attention to whether I was treated as a physician or not. Sometimes I preferred not to belong to the medical profession. I noticed how the sick people were exploited by doctors, especially in rural areas. Most of my friends were not doctors. However, I did not like to be treated as a nurse either. I came to realise over the years that the creative doctor finds her real self among the sick more than she does among doctors. I also reached the point where I preferred reading the letters of readers more than the comments of professional critics, which no longer gripped my attention as they had done in the past. Most of those critics are men who intentionally attack creative women writers or ignore them.

A creative woman can be exposed, especially within her profession, to men or women who manifest a form of hate or envy towards her. Women might appear to be more hostile to and jealous of the creative woman than men. My experience in life, however, has taught me that the envy and hostility of men towards creative women is deeper and more intense, but they are more capable of masking their feelings as they have become well-versed, under the existing system, in disguising their real feelings. Men, moreover, are more sympathetic to the patriarchal system since they are men and fathers. The creative woman poses a constant threat to the man, not simply because he is a man, but because she is a threat to the whole system that has made him this kind of man (the word man in this context means the masculine values of domination, competition and aggression).

This kind of man could be a colleague of the creative woman at her work, or her boss, her husband, her father, her brother or any other man who crosses her path, within the home or without. She might have to engage in a struggle with him in order to move him out of her way. Her most effective weapon in such a struggle is her creative work – the

umbilical cord that links her to the people and is the source of her strength. Therefore, she should not abandon her creative work for any man or any other reason. How well I remember the day when my husband said to me threateningly: 'You must choose between me or your writing.' I said: 'My writing.'

Strategies for psychological and economic survival, and for coping under stress

The situation and problems of women in our contemporary societies are born of developments in history that made one class rule over another, and men dominate over women. The creative woman cannot expect praise or acceptance. This understanding can alleviate the impact of the attacks to which she might be exposed. Moreover, the expectation of the infliction of harm makes her ready, and this readiness equips her to confront her enemies, helping her to win, or at least sustain as little loss as possible. Even though victory is a pleasant experience for any human being, defeat can also be a useful experience. This transformation of defeat into experience requires that the woman should have no regrets and that she should press ahead steadily with courage, confidence and freedom.

The freedom of human beings is restricted by their essential economic needs, or by non-essential needs that become essential due to the exploitative commercial movement and advertisements. Moreover, the ruling classes can threaten creative women by depriving them of certain economic needs. Consequently, the creative woman must learn to restrict her economic needs to the realm of necessities. This increases her economic independence, and so increases her freedom. The same holds true for her psychological needs. She must learn to be psychologically and socially independent, and thus become able to live alone under any conditions.

Under the prevailing system stress is inevitable and the creative woman might be called upon to pay a heavy price in her private or public life.

The basic power of creative woman, in my opinion, is the ability to penetrate and influence the minds and hearts of people. This ability is only translated into creative action when she really lives the life of the people, sharing their agonies, sorrows and aspirations. The real support for the creative woman is organised collective action both national and international. Such organised networks can also be a vehicle for communication between large numbers of women in the same country and outside.

No creative person (man or woman) can live without love and true, close friendships. Only the men and women who have maintained their

real self or, in other words, who have a capacity for creative work, are capable of such human relationships. How fortunate is the woman who meets such people during her lifetime. They are admittedly few, but they exist and I think they are increasing in number as we proceed along the path of progress, revolution and freedom. My joy at meeting such a man or woman has no parallel in anything else.

Conclusion

It is undoubtedly a difficult task for the creative woman to safeguard and develop her capacities under the prevailing system of society. She is often called upon to pay a heavy price in her private or public life. She may divorce (I was divorced twice) or be expelled from her job (my experience more than once). She might have to face harsh circumstances which pose a threat to her reputation, or to her economic, psychological or even physical stability (sometimes I have been threatened with violence, even death, by bigoted, fanatical individuals, groups or institutions). The creative woman must realise that she is struggling against established forces which are equipped with powerful means and deeply-rooted values. She must mobilise all her powers in this struggle and depend on the real forces which can support and protect her – those men, women, young people and children whose hearts and minds she touches through her creative production. I believe that, were it not for the hundreds and thousands of readers who sincerely and enthusiastically support my writings, buy my books and attend the lectures which I give, I would not have been able to maintain my activity and keep on writing. Moreover, the forces of authority in my country and in other Arab countries would have been able to crush me completely.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN IRAN TODAY?

MERIP REPORTS

Just Published! Three special issues of **MERIP Reports** provide the most comprehensive and incisive coverage of the Iranian revolution available in any language. MERIP authors know Iran intimately, and they convey the facts with a deep regard for historical context and social nuance. These issues include exclusive interviews, photographs and documents, and provide unparalleled access to understanding Iran's revolutionary dynamics today.

#86 **The Left Forces** features Ervand Abrahamian's history of Iran's guerrilla movement, a major piece of contemporary historical research, and Fred Halliday's interviews with spokesmen of the major left organizations.

#87 **The Rural Dimension** examines the extensive participation of young Iranians of village origin in the revolution. First-hand accounts from the countryside explain the fusion of social and economic demands with the nationalist and religious ideology that mobilizes Iran's masses.

#88 **The First Year** evaluates the revolution's accomplishments and limitations so far, with a particular focus on the urban situation and the workers' councils that have become a feature of Iranian factory life. Includes a full translation of Khomeini's New Year's speech of March 1980, the most comprehensive statement yet of his world-view.

- Only $1.65 each. All three for $4.75 _____
- Get any one issue free when you subscribe to **MERIP Reports** for one year (9 issues/$12.00) _____
- Add 70 cents post and handling
  Outside US additional postage _____

- Send your check or money order to

MERIP/Dept. B, P. O. Box 1247, New York, NY 10025

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Notes and documents

Arab women and western feminism: an interview with Nawal El Sadaawi

Race & Class: Many commentators in the West lay the blame on Islam for the oppression of Arab women. How should we understand the oppression of Arab women and distinguish between the elements in their oppression?

Nawal El Sadaawi: Yes, quite a lot of people in the West think that Islam is the major element in oppressing Arab women, but in fact this is not true. If we study Islam scientifically, look at its origins, compare it with other religions – Judaism, Christianity and other Asian religions – we find that almost all these religions have similar attitudes to women. Indeed, sometimes we find attitudes to women much more tolerant or progressive in Islam. So it is not Islam, it is not religion even that oppresses women. And Islam is not one Islam. There is the Islam of Saudi Arabia, the Islam of Tunisia, the Islam of Lebanon. What you do find is that governments and politicians invariably pick from religion what suits them and use it to justify their position. South Yemen, for example, is an Islamic country. In South Yemen, when the political system moved towards socialism, the laws relating to women changed rapidly and equality between men and women is now coming into being.

Or take Egypt under Nasser. When he tried to introduce socialist measures and some socialist laws, the religious authorities were very quick to pick up some verses from here and there, from the sayings of Mohammed and from the Koran, that would accord with a socialist system. Islam was backing socialism because the government was preaching socialism. When Egypt abandoned socialist policies in favour of capitalism and relations with imperial powers, then people

began to quote verses to show that religion was in favour of capital and profit, laissez-faire and 'freedom of the individual', etc. When Sadat went to make his peace deal with Israel at Camp David, you found religious people saying Islam is for peace; if your enemies want peace, you have to make peace. Yet when Afghanistan happened, then religious people declared that Islam was for war and we were pushed to go and fight with the Muslims there. So you see Islam, like any religion, is very flexible and very wide. You can choose whatever you like from it and use it as a political tool. Islam is not the enemy of women, but it has been and is being used by patriarchal systems so that its most repressive and reactionary aspects are emphasised.

R&C: You have characterised Islam in *The Hidden Face of Eve* as having had progressive tendencies within it throughout history. Can you explain how these progressive tendencies have related to the position of women?

NS: If you study pre-Islamic societies, you find that women were oppressed in most tribes. There were some tribes that were matriarchal, where women had high status, but most tribes were patriarchal – in some, girls could even be killed at birth. So when Prophet Mohammed came, and defended women and slaves, this was progressive. You know Christ also defended women and slaves. Thus these new religions had revolutionary aspects in the beginning. But once Islam had become part of the settled order, when its revolutionary phase was over, then it was used to defend the state and the ruling class.

R&C: You have written that Arab women were amongst the first to resist patriarchy. How can we explain their position today if they were 'in the vanguard of the struggle' so many years ago?

NS: They are still struggling now – except of course for the privileged women. But the majority of women have to struggle every day, even for their existence. But they are not organised, they are aware of oppression but they cannot express it. When I first published my books on women, they would say, Oh yes, we feel that. The majority of Arab women don't as yet know how to fight back politically. But if they really organised they could do so much, not only against patriarchy but against the class system too. They are in fact more conscious of economic exploitation than of patriarchy. They feel the man, the husband, the father dominates, but still the major issue is the economic struggle.

R&C: Are you making a distinction between a purely 'culturalist' feminism and one which takes in a class dimension?

NS: Yes. We discussed this at Copenhagen* where there was a group of radical feminists from the West (mostly middle- or upper-class women) and a group of what I call revolutionary feminists from the developing countries. We felt that the radical feminists were not aware of the class struggle, of economic problems, of social problems, of the real suffering of the majority of men and women struggling for their livelihood every day. They concentrated solely on issues relating to sexuality and male domination. And that was the major difference between us and them. Our position is that we must not merely fight against patriarchy but against the patriarchal *class* system.

We had to tell the western women in Copenhagen not to sensationalise marginal issues. I gave an example. I live in Beirut, now working with the Economic Commission for Western Asia, Women's Programme. I told them to come and visit me in Beirut to suffer from the war, where we are bombed every day by Israeli planes, where we hear shooting every day, where we are physically unsafe, where we might be killed at any time. How can we, in this situation, bother about whether we have an orgasm or not?

Indeed, one thing I felt strongly in Copenhagen was that western women continually concentrated on the issue of female circumcision and isolated it from its political, historical and economic context. All that they know about Sudanese women, for instance, is that they are circumcised. They do not even know where Sudan is on the map! This made us angry and we told them that they first had to understand such an issue from all its angles.

R&C: Why do you say that it is so important not to isolate circumcision as an act, but to relate it to its total context?

NS: Firstly, unless we know the roots of a habit like female circumcision and understand its origins, we may do more harm than good to the people who practise it. They may go on the defensive. That is what happened to some of the African women when the American women wrote about female circumcision. It was used as a stigma against African and Arab women to prove that they still belonged to 'backward races'. Some people use these 'backward habits' to justify colonialism. But if you study it in the historical, political, social and economic contexts, then you see that it has nothing to do with religion, country or race. All women have been oppressed by the same patriarchal class system for thousands of years. And those women who think that they are free and that circumcision is done only in certain areas will then understand that they too are circumcised – psychologically, and educationally. Educational circumcision is as harmful as physical

*The NGO Women's Conference in Copenhagen, July 1980.

circumcision, perhaps more so, because it creates the illusion that you are complete and free. When you have the knowledge that you are not free, that you are not complete, that you are also circumcised, then you can fight back. International solidarity should be based on such knowledge, not on ignorance. Knowledge means that you know your enemy and you make a correct diagnosis of the enemy. That is why I insist that such an issue should not be isolated from its context.

R&C: What essentially is it that western feminists can learn from Third World women?

NS: I think they can learn to go really to the root of things. They understand that women are oppressed, but they should not stop there – with a description of the situation – but look deeper, to know why and understand who the major enemy is. Quite a lot of western women say it is the man, and even want to dispense with him totally, but we must remember that men too are the victims of society, that men are also used as sex objects and as work objects, and are victims of the same patriarchal society.

We, in Third World countries, are facing life and death issues. We cannot speak about equality for women when many people have no country – when, as in Palestine, they have lost their land, their culture, their history and live in constant insecurity. We cannot speak about equality when most women live in poverty, where there is no pure water, little food, where they work hard all day and bear many children, many of whom die in the first year. We cannot speak about equality when the natural resources of our countries are being exploited and sucked out by imperialist powers and multinationals. In the West today they do not face these problems. For us in the Third World, because capitalism and imperialism have distorted our societies and we live on the margins of existence, the problems that face us as a people, irrespective of gender, bring us together. At the same time, there are contradictions between us in our sexual roles which are made worse by our particular histories.

R&C: You have written that 'it is Arab women alone who can formulate the theory, the ideas and the modes of struggle needed to liberate themselves from all oppression'. Why is this so and how can solidarity from other women, which you see as 'a powerful force of change', best be expressed?

NS: Solidarity among women from other countries is needed, but not in order to liberate the women in our countries from our oppression; this is our duty. I cannot expect western women to come and fight the Iranian revolution against the veil or 'international' women to come to Egypt to fight our economic struggles against the imperialists. You know, even when the issue of imperialism came up at Copenhagen,

western women were not aware that they too were victims of capitalist imperialism in their countries. There was a sort of illusion that they, as western women, could help us though they were ignorant of our problems.

What I mean is that American women who are really aware should fight against Carter at home. Their battleground is there. Who is going to liberate American women from psychological, educational and cultural oppression? They are, it is their duty. So with Arab women, so with women in every country. Solidarity comes after that, because then it is on equal terms, not paternalist – 'them' helping 'us'. That kind of help, which they think of as solidarity, is another type of colonialism in disguise.

So we must deal with female circumcision ourselves. It is our culture, we understand it, when to fight against it and how, because this is the process of liberation. Liberation is a process and we must go through all the stages of that process ourselves in order to be truly free. Others cannot liberate us, but they, in liberating themselves, liberate us too. The enemy is the same but the struggle is different.

There is a solidarity in the struggle of women all over the world, but the nature of that struggle differs. Principally, it differs in the age of imperialism between western capitalist societies and our Third World societies, therefore western women should not misplace themselves in the struggle of Third World women.

You see, in our societies, because of the nature of the struggle, we are forced to take a class position and so liberate our men also from capitalist patriarchy. Similarly, if western women fought their own system from within, then they would also have to take a class position. And once they had done that, then there could be real solidarity between us.

R&C: Could you tell us something about what happened to you personally when you took the stand you did about women's oppression in the Arab world some twenty-five years ago?

NS: Well, the attack on me was severe at the beginning. Because everything was hidden, kept under cover. Speaking about virginity or sex or female circumcision was at that time very difficult. Not only religious people but also politicians were furious. I even lost my job and *Health*, which I edited, was closed down. There was total censorship of all my writing so that I was obliged to publish books outside Egypt. But there was also a positive side to it. People began to think about these issues. Now, quite a lot of people question female circumcision and quite a lot of families, particularly in the cities, have given up the practice altogether. Quite often it is the father himself who does not want his daughters circumcised, not just the mother. Even in rural areas, for instance in my village, some of the women are beginning to

give up the practice of circumcising their girls. But, of course, it is still prevalent in the rural areas generally.

R&C: Apart from your campaigning on circumcision, you are one of the only Arab women to point out the contradictory position of women in a society which puts a very high premium on virginity (and family honour) and yet subjects women to sexual abuse before marriage.

NS: But this is the contradiction which is created by a double standard and by an exploitative system. When you have a patriarchal class system, when you have a minority of people mastering the wealth of society and exploiting the majority, then inevitably you must use double standards and contradictions will arise. Because you have to govern the majority of men and women, you look for ways to suppress and control them. So you use every weapon – economic, political, social, sexual and moral (through religion). Such a system creates contradictions over, for example, chastity, and virginity and monogamy, because you want women to be asexual, to fit into the monogamous system, to be just mothers and wives. Yet, at the same time, in a capitalist society you need them as sex objects – in a capitalist society you even want to commercialise sex. Here in the West, you use women's bodies to advertise consumer goods and boost profits. Thus you exploit the deprivation of the majority of even their sexual needs for commerce. And the laws of commerce contradict the rules of morality – which are still needed to oppress and control people. As people become aware of this they will revolt. Girls, especially, when their eyes are opened and they see they are victims of these double standards will refuse to accept them.

R&C: So what you are saying is that Third World women have got to fight on two counts, but there is already a contradiction between the feudal elements of Third World societies and the capitalist elements of those societies. With the one the emphasis is on sexual purity, with the other on the commercialisation of sex?

NS: In addition to that, capitalist society needs women as a cheap labour force – they need their mobility so they want to bring women out from under the authority of the feudal man. When we look at the way women are exploited under feudalism and under capitalism, we find that the type of exploitation differs but it always fits in with the interests of the particular ruling class. The values and standards that govern her life alter, depending on whether she is needed to work in a factory, to work in a sex shop, to commercialise her body, or, as in feudal society, to enable her to be a slave, to work as an agricultural labourer. Under feudalism, stress is laid on sexual purity. When feudalism and capitalism collide in one society, then the changes in the way women are exploited and the contradictory expectations made of

them become very sharp.

There are two conflicts. Under the feudal system a woman's labour is under the control of the man and under capitalism she is cheap labour under the control of the factory owner. Third World women are caught between these two oppressions and the contradictions which are thrown up. In view of these double oppressions and contradictions we cannot take a middle-class position when we begin to discuss the position of Third World women. Because of the nature of the oppression of every Third World woman, she carries within her the seeds of a working-class consciousness.

R&C: What does the Iranian revolution teach us about women and liberation?

NS: First of all, the Iranian revolution is positive, both politically and economically. They got rid of the Shah's regime and they are anti-imperialist. And women have to take an organised part in that revolution.

The issue of wearing the veil has become sensationalised, blown up by the western media, which covers it continuously. (One wonders if they are concerned about the women in Afghanistan, whether they are going to remove the veil and lead a more progressive life. There is a total imbalance in the news we are given on Iran, and we are at the mercy of the mass media. Imperialism is not only an economic system but controls information put out all over the world.) It is for Iranian women to decide whether to fight back now, not submit to wearing the veil, or to treat this tactically, saying they will take this step back and submit to the veil in order to make a further advance. In a revolution, you have to draw up priorities, decide tactics and strategies, and on these the Iranian women must decide. It may be that some Iranian women who are politically aware do not want to abort the revolution over something like the veil. Maybe they will wait a month or two, or maybe they will fight back now. Whatever it is, it is they who must decide.

Personally I am against the veil, of course, and if I were an Iranian women I would be there fighting back, organising women to fight against it and to correct the revolution. No revolution is ever 100 per cent, you have to correct it. And there are lessons to be learnt from elsewhere, from the Algerian revolution for instance, where women used the veil to hide weapons, to carry guns – for a particular political purpose. But after the revolution, Algerian women faced the problem of being told to wear the veil and return to their homes. There is a warning there: women should organise and participate within the revolution itself together with men, but at the same time remain aware of their particular problems.

R&C: I have heard Arab revolutionaries say that if the majority of women in Iran do accept and wear the veil, then that is the starting point from which to organise.

NS: That is a very good point and that is the scientific approach, because we cannot just separate ourselves from the majority of the people. That is the problem of middle-class educated urban women, even those with roots in the village – they may know nothing about the majority. Most ordinary people are still deeply religious, though not necessarily hidebound by it, for in an economic crisis they can leave religion to attend to their basic needs. So any revolutionary person must start from this reality – not ignore it – accept it and go step by step to cure it and raise the consciousness of the people so that they themselves will do the fighting. It's no good patronising or talking down to them, you must bring them along.

To my mind, any revolution that is against feudalism, capitalism or imperialism is good for women – directly or indirectly. Maybe the men in such revolutionary movements are also affected by the patriarchal system and are victims of their own schizophrenia and want still to be masters – you cannot ignore that. But who is going to fight them? The women can teach the men how to be progressive by participating in the revolution, but at the same time they should have their own women's organisations so that they have the political power to carry on their own struggle.

10 July 1980

US imperialism in the Philippines*

The Philippines is one of the Third World countries in which, to quote the United Nations 'Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order' (1974), 'vestiges of alien and colonial domination ... [and] neo-colonialism in all its forms continue to be among the greatest obstacles to the full emancipation and progress' of its people.

When the United States annexed the Philippines in 1898 as its Asian colony, along with Cuba and Puerto Rico as its Caribbean possessions, its policy-makers expressed their intentions unequivocally. Admiral George Dewey, then commander of the Pacific Fleet, justified the presence of US gunboats in Chinese and Korean waters: 'What we all want is Chinese trade.' Senator Henry Cabot Lodge told President

*An expanded version of a statement given at the Oil Workers' World Antimonopolist Conference, Tripoli, Libya, 26-31 March 1980.

McKinley that the US 'home market is not enough for our teeming industries and the great demand of the day is an outlet for our products ... With our protective tariff wall around the Philippine Islands ... we should have so much additional market for our home manufactures ...' After a brutal war of conquest (1898-1902), the US suppressed the first Philippine Republic, which had fought victoriously for national liberation from Spanish colonialism, and established its hegemony in the Philippines.

Since 1898 the Philippines has been made to serve US corporate goals: as a market for surplus manufactured goods, a field for investment capital, a rich source of cheap, vital raw materials and a reservoir of cheap labour.

Historical records show that US economic policy from the start called for, and was integrated with, a global military thrust. Dr D.B. Schirmer, a noted American historian, observes that US military bases in the Philippines were used as the staging area for US military contingents that participated in the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, in the intervention in Soviet Siberia in 1918-1920 and in protecting the International Settlement in Shanghai in 1927 ('US bases in the Philippines: a position paper', 1976). In 1958 these bases were used in the intervention against Indonesia, and from 1965 to 1975 in the US aggression against the Indo-Chinese peoples. Recently, the US sent aircraft-carriers from the Philippines to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. In brief, the Philippines has functioned for US corporate interests as a strategic foothold for the expansionist policy of converting the Pacific Ocean into an 'American lake', so as to increase the profit from the despoliation of Asia.

For nearly fifty years the US fostered underdevelopment by preserving the feudal system of agricultural production geared only to export crops (sugar, tobacco and hemp). Through various schemes, in particular the 'free trade' policy, US colonialism prevented the growth of industry and the requisite infrastructure. When the US granted formal independence in 1946, it forced the Philippine government to amend its Constitution so as to give equal or 'parity rights' to US monopolies in exploiting Philippine natural resources and in operating public utilities. Together with agreements which allowed the US absolute control over twenty-three military bases and installations, the special privileges of US monopolies and their hold on the state apparatus instituted and maintained a neocolonial economic and political structure which, by exacerbating class contradictions, generated its opposite: the massive nationalist resurgence of the 1960s and early 1970s.

* * *

By 1972, the value of US investments totalled over $1 billion, compared to $200 million in 1935. US business owned 42,000 acres of land,

valued between $60 and $100 million. Meanwhile, the percentage of landless tenants rose from 29 per cent in 1903 to over 60 per cent in 1960. Confronted by the oppressive rule of a minority elite of feudal landlords, compradors and bureaucrat-capitalists subservient to US dictates, the rural and urban workers, peasants, intelligentsia and nationalist business sector began to unite to change the status quo. And so in 1972, after the Supreme Court ruled that US ownership of land was unconstitutional and its interference in major businesses illegal, President Marcos imposed martial law. Marcos suppressed all democratic processes and civil liberties. He reversed nationalist legislation restricting foreign ownership of land, banks and other enterprises; at the same time, he guaranteed multinationals full repatriation of profits (covering both gains and principal, without any time limit). He decreed generous tax reliefs and exemptions to foreign investors, including 100 per cent equity in all local companies.

After seven years of martial law, what has been the result of the dictatorship's policy of 'export-oriented industrialisation' under the patronage of US multinationals, the IMF and World Bank?

Only the ruling elite, in particular the military and bureaucratic clique around the dictator (less than 1 per cent of 46 million Filipinos), has enjoyed any benefits from the rise in the Gross National Product. According to government statistics, 68 per cent of all Filipino households live below the poverty level; 75 per cent of rural inhabitants have annual incomes of less than $200, the poorest 20 per cent receiving 5.5 per cent of the national income; 70 per cent of the people (85 per cent of all schoolchildren) suffer from malnutrition, and 40 per cent of the population die from it. The Asian Development Bank confirms that the Filipino calorie consumption of 270 per day, below the standard minimum requirement, is the lowest in all of Asia. An independent US group, the Center for International Policy, concludes that 'there are more desperately poor people in the Philippines today than any other time in its history' (*CIP Report*, October 1979).

Why is this so? Under martial law, wages of workers have declined to the lowest in Asia: $1-$1.50 for an 8-hour day. Strikes and all independent union activities are prohibited. *Business Week* (30 July 1979) reported that multinational electronic industries are leaving Korea and Taiwan for the Philippines because of the incredibly low wages there. Two strike attempts in 1979 by major labour unions were suppressed: that of over 25,000 workers at the Ford Stampling Plant in the tax-free haven of multinationals, the Bataan Export Processing Zone; and that of 23,000 workers at five US military bases which, for 32 hours at least, paralysed Subic Naval Base, headquarters of the US Pacific Fleet, and Clark air base, headquarters of the 13th Air Force.

Despite its much-publicised 'land reform' programme, on the basis of which Marcos tries to legitimise the imposition of martial law, not a

single tenant farmer has received a land title. Age-old imbalances in the countryside persist and deepen as corporate techniques in farming displace more and more tenants, and staple food production gives way to the cultivation of export crops whose world-price keeps fluctuating.

At present the Philippines suffers from 40 per cent unemployment and an annual inflation rate of 40 per cent, which cuts deeply into earnings. Workers and salaried employees have suffered a 37 per cent decline in real wages between 1970 and 1975, while consumer prices rocketed up by 200 per cent. And according to the IMF, from 1975 to 1979 real wages declined by 12 per cent (*International Financial Statistics*, May 1979).

One study found that in the category of 'manufacturing industries', the rate of exploitation (that is, surplus paid to the capitalist divided by wages paid to worker) rose by 180 per cent between 1971 and 1975, whereas in the preceding fifteen years (1956-71), it rose by only 78 per cent. In the first two years of martial law (1973-4), the rate of exploitation increased by 110 per cent *(Philippine Liberation Courier*, 15 December 1978). Multinationals control the manufacture of motor vehicles (Ford, Toyota, Chrysler, GM), rubber and tyres (Goodyear, B.F. Goodrich, Firestone) food processing (Del Monte, Carnation, Kraft), soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola), oil refining (Caltex, Shell), soap (Unilever, Proctor and Gamble, Colgate-Palmolive), drugs (Muller-Phipps, Bristol-Myers, Wyeth, Mead Johnson) electrical machinery (Singer, GE, GTE), paper products (Scott, Kimberley-Clark), chemicals (Dow, Shell, Bayer) and office equipment (IBM, Xerox, Burroughs), to name only a few. These monopolies control 46 per cent of the net national product.

US investments in the Philippines, totalling at least $3-4 billion, represent 80 per cent of all foreign investments. As of 1970, about a third of all the total equity capital of the 900 largest corporations was owned by Americans and represented 60 per cent of US investment in South-east Asia (Corporate Information Center, NCCC, USA, *IDOC*, no. 57, November 1973). Since martial law this has grown in volume and scope so that today US banks dominate the strategically crucial financial/credit sector. For example, the First National City Bank alone controls over 10 per cent of the country's banking assets and 50 per cent of total dollar deposits (NARMIC Country Profile Series, *The Philippines*, 1978). The ten largest US corporations that controlled vital areas of the economy, as of 1976, were: Mobil Oil Corp., Caltex (Texaco and Standard Oil of California) which dominate oil refining and marketing; A. Soriano y Cia (mining), Cargill Industries (sugar export), Baker Commodities (coconut oil), Proctor & Gamble (coconut processing), Ford Motor Co. (car and truck assembly), California Packing Co./Del Monte (pineapple, banana export), Castle & Cooke/Dole (food export), and American Smelting and Mining Co. (copper mining).

Practically all studies have shown that the extraction of surplus value by multinationals in the form of profits, dividends, royalties and other payments has drained the Philippines of the capital and resources necessary for industrialisation and the building of a self-reliant economy. From 1956 to 1965 US multinationals borrowed $490 million, of which only $79 million (16 per cent) came from outside the Philippines. The remaining 84 per cent was borrowed locally, thus penalising Filipino entrepreneurs. Out of the $79 million came a total of $386.22 million net outflow of profits. From 1964 to 1975 the net outflow remitted to the US was a staggering $2.8 billion. Recent figures show that from 1972 to 1975 repatriated foreign investment income reached $418.3 million, compared to capital inflow of $137 million. In 1976 alone, profit remittances of foreign companies amounted to $253.49 million, compared to $108 million investments.

In general for Asia, profit outlay was five times capital inflow between 1950 and 1965, according to the Corporate Information Center of the National Council of Churches, USA (*CIC Brief,* September 1973). In Third World countries US firms receive an average of twice the domestic rate of return on stockholders' equity. In the Philippines returns for 1971 in mining were 53.9 per cent, compared with 13.8 per cent in the US; for rubber, they were 36.4 per cent versus 9 per cent, and so on. In the mid-1970s US corporations earned at least $3.58 for every dollar invested in the Philippines, of which $2 was repatriated (*Asia Monitor*, Third Quarter, 1978). Endless data on multinationals taking advantage of local savings and credit can be cited. Thus, despite the unequal terms of trade which doom it to its traditional role of raw-material exporter and manufactured-commodities importer, the Philippines acts as a net exporter of capital, totally belying the myth of local capital shortage, the myth of foreign capital as the irreplaceable catalyst of national development.

* * *

It might be instructive to focus here on two examples of the negative impact of multinationals on the Filipino people.

With the dictatorship's approval, Westinghouse Electric Corporation is at present constructing a nuclear plant for $1.1 billion on the slope of an active volcano, along a geological fault, in a scientifically-proven earthquake belt. The plant design has 200 mechanical defects, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists in Boston (*Science for the People Magazine*, January-February 1980). The siting, design and environmental problems of this facility – no safe plan for radioactive waste disposal exists – combine to present gross risks to health and safety, as well as threatening grave socio-economic damage to millions of people.

The Westinghouse reactor is unsafe, high-profit technology which represents a callous distortion of Philippine national development. Electricity from it will chiefly benefit multinationals in the US-dominated Bataan Export Processing Zone. The reactor will also serve two important US bases nearby, Subic and Clark, for which the Carter administration is paying a $500 million rental in military assistance to the unpopular Marcos regime. A handful of rich Filipinos may enjoy the trickle-down effect of nuclear power, but not the majority of Filipino peasants and workers who are really the ones subsidising the multinationals (including the reactor) with their taxes and labour power. Farmers and fishermen inhabiting the site have already been evicted, their lands confiscated and their fishing-grounds ruined. The reactor also spells ecological disaster and genocide for indigenous peoples in Australia, Africa and elsewhere, where uranium fuel is mined.

Over 50,000 Filipinos have already risked imprisonment and death protesting against this project. Appropriate and alternative energy sources which are safer and cheaper exist; but with a reported $40 million bribe to a relative and business partner of Marcos, Westinghouse appears determined to capitalise on the corrupt, fraudulent and fascist character of the Marcos regime to boost its sales.

As the nuclear industry in the US comes to a halt, corporations like Westinghouse and GE rush to sell reactors to US-supported dictators. In the last four years, the nuclear industry had zero net sales in the US, but during that period sold five reactors (worth $2.2 billion) to Third World countries. Westinghouse and other monopolies, desperately competing with their French and German counterparts, are bound to strive harder to impose their will on those Third World nations where the US can dictate policy, especially those dependent on US economic and military aid and on IMF and World Bank loans.

Our second example, epitomising the effect of multinationals in the Philippines, involves US agribusiness. Del Monte and Castle & Cooke corporations dominate export agriculture, specifically the fruit-manufacturing industry. Del Monte's subsidiary, Philippine Packing Corporation, accounted for 61 per cent of all sales in 1971, while Dole Philippines (Castle & Cooke) accounted for 38.8 per cent. These two firms operate the largest pineapple plantations in the world in Mindanao, where five million Moro people are waging a just revolutionary struggle for self-determination. Because Filipino labour costs only 3.5 per cent of Hawaiian labour, Dole has transferred all its operations to the Philippines. In 1970 Dole made a 174 per cent profit on its investments.

Hundreds of thousands of Moros living on ancestral land, small settlers, minorities and sharecroppers have been and are being dispossessed by the Marcos dictatorship in favour of foreign-owned plantations,

ranches and the infrastructure of these capitalist enterprises. US agribusiness has succeeded in amassing superprofits by working closely with the ruling elite to acquire lands through legal manipulation, trickery, coercion or outright seizure, keeping wages low and depressing people's living standards.

In 1926, when Del Monte moved their pineapple operations to Bukidnon (a province in Mindanao), it 'persuaded' the government to lease it 17,000 acres of prime land for the ridiculously low annual rental of about $2 per acre. In 1975 it sought to expand its acreage by exploiting another 16,000 acres in five villages. It succeeded in circumventing Philippine laws by imposing anomalous lease agreements on ignorant or deceived farmers; those who refused to lease their lands were harassed by the military. Today, Del Monte is the largest food company in the Philippines and the world's largest producer of fruits and vegetables. It is the leading exporter of two of the Philippines' top ten foreign exchange earners: bananas and pineapples. It uses 60,000 acres for growing bananas. It also engages in diverse businesses, such as rice growing, canning, transportation, production of livestock feed, etc. This corporate giant grew on the basis of a phenomenal profit rate: 33.4 per cent in 1946, or four times that on consolidated equity in the US (NACLA, September 1976). In 1957-73, Del Monte made a spectacular 200 per cent profit on land not even technically owned by it but by the people. In spite of these record earnings, Del Monte was the single largest borrower in 1977, absorbing $50 million of local credit.

According to an American observer, in one of Del Monte's plantations it was 'the deliberate policy of the farm management to operate a campaign of violence and harassment against the workers and other barrio folk in order to hold absolute power in the area. This has enabled them to suppress any voice of dissent or attempt by the workers to organise and improve their conditions' (*Philippine Liberation Courier*, 18 November 1977).

Labour costs in Del Monte plantations equal only 15 per cent of the retail price of its fruit products. In 1974, for example, casual labourers were paid ₱4.80 per day ($0.65) while regular workers received ₱9.60 ($1.30) per day. Of 5,000 workers, only 2,000 were classified as regulars. Not only are the workers subjected to health hazards by their exposure to pesticides and other chemicals, they are also victimised by the deplorably congested and unsanitary housing conditions.

The fortune of Dole Philippines (Castle & Cooke) parallels the success story of Del Monte. It is the largest pineapple producer in the world, controlling 15,000 acres in the contested province of South Cotabato. In 1970 return on its equity was 174.3 per cent. While Del Monte's return in 1971 was four times greater than the consolidated return for all operations, Dole's return was seventeen times greater in the Philippines. After a visit to these plantations in 1977, two American scholars commented: 'Investment by multinational

agribusiness generally reinforces the economic domination of the pre-existing elite' (*Philippine Liberation Courier*, 18 November 1977).

Just as multinational ventures in mining and lumbering have destroyed 70 per cent of the Philippine tropical forests, pineapple growing is rapidly depleting the fertility of the land and transforming large areas into barren wasteland. As one scientist puts it, because of the indiscriminate plunder of Philippine natural resources allowed and abetted by the Marcos dictatorship, the country is 'in the midst of an environmental crisis', coinciding with a socio-economic and political crisis, 'which portends an irreversibly diminished capacity for supporting human society' (Friends of the Filipino People, *Brief on Westinghouse*, Washington, DC, 1979).

* * *

In the petroleum industry as well (in both refining and marketing), multinationals – Exxon, Mobil, Texaco, Standard Oil of California, and Shell – exercise virtual monopoly, with 96.2 per cent of all equity and 97.6 per cent of all income derived from the business. Because 90 per cent of Philippine energy requirements depend on imported oil (mainly from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; Iran has cut off its supplies in sympathy with the Moro people's cause), the US oil cartel manipulates oil prices, charging up to 50 per cent more for crude oil than independent companies. When Marcos imposed martial law, he gave the multinationals unrestricted exploration and drilling rights, with a government subsidy as part of the service contract. Two US companies (Chevron and Texaco) are already drilling in 1.2 million hectares of the Sulu Sea – the patrimony of the Moro people – adjacent to Shell and Exxon concessions.

Ever since the Philippines received nominal independence in 1946, the progressive and nationalist movement has called for the restriction of the activities of multinationals because, on the basis of massive evidence, instead of benefiting the nation with their capital, technology and managerial know-how, they perpetuate and enhance the structure of underdevelopment inherited from centuries of colonial and neocolonial dependence. Thus they also undermine any attempt at rational social planning of the whole economy so that a more equitable distribution of social wealth among the people can be implemented.

Not only have multinationals accumulated vast profits – 300 per cent or more over and above the capital invested – but they have also ignored, dismissed or helped suppress those basic human rights mandated by the United Nations Charter through open or covert, tacit or expressed support of a regime universally condemned (by Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists among others, as a flagrant violator of its citizens' human rights.

E. SAN JUAN
FRIENDS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

Free Trade Zones: a capitalist dream

A Free Trade Zone (also known as an industrial free zone, free export zone or export processing zone) is a colony within a neo-colony. Cut off by wire or concrete walls from the rest of the country, the zone is an enclave in which the laws of the country (almost always a Third World one) do not apply. The zone has its own authority to which the central government's functions are largely relegated in order to provide the foreign investor with the ideal conditions for producing commodities for export. These conditions involve fiscal, technical and commercial incentives. The Free Trade Zone (FTZ) is an industrial estate where land, factory buildings, power supply and other infrastructural elements are furnished by the host government, yet over which the host government has abjured all jurisdiction. What results is something entirely new – an alien territory within a national territory – where a zone authority acts as the zone government and is responsible for supplying cheap local labour and for controlling the zone workers. The combination of these three factors makes the FTZ system highly attractive to foreign investors, a veritable 'paradise for international capital'.[1]

UNIDO recommendations

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) has promoted FTZs and assisted many Third World countries in establishing them. UNIDO has made a number of recommendations on technical equipment and commercial and financial incentives[2] which, in the main, all governments with FTZs provide – although governments compete between themselves over the nature and extent to which they will put their countries in 'hock' to foreign capital. The UNIDO list includes:

—Full exemptions from duties and taxes for a certain period on machines and equipment, raw materials and components.

—Income tax exemption of five to ten years.

—Freedom of foreign exchange control with the same status guaranteed in the future and with the assurance of free repatriation of profits up to a fixed annual rate (Hong Kong's profit tax is a mere 15 per cent; Malaysia's free zones can give tax exemptions up to ten years; Sri Lanka gives 100 per cent total exemption for ten years and a further concessionary period up to fifteen years; Egypt waives all exchange control regulations and tax laws for an unlimited period).

—Preferential financing facilities for establishing industries, including the construction of non-standard factory buildings (for the construction of factory buildings in export processing zones of Taiwan, for example, credit up to 70 per cent of the construction cost is granted for ten years at subsidised interest rates).

—Preferential tariff rates on transportation, use of utilities, rent of ground and buildings (Mauritius, for example, offers electricity at subsidised rates; Mexico's northern border zone offers cheap transportation rates).

—Opportunities to rent or purchase pre-constructed standard factories. This can relieve investors of the necessity of tying up capital in long-term fixed assets (Taiwan offers special credit facilities; Santa Cruz, Bombay, offers subsidised rents for factory buildings and for land).

—The availability of workshops, canteens, medical services, banks, post and telecommunications, etc. all established in the zone to reduce initial investment.

But even more blatant than these incentives is the way that governments seek to sell their own people in order to woo foreign capital. In the hands of the promoters of FTZs and the copywriters for glossy investment brochures, the labour itself is a commodity to be traded in in non-human and purely commercial terms.[3]

Labour supply

Firstly, every country boasts of its extensive labour supply, recognising that managements do not wish to be bothered with maintaining or reproducing their labour force. Questions of health care, working conditions and negotiated contracts of employment can go by the board, since companies can merely replace their labour force by moving to another site and a new reserve army. Thus South Korea boasts an 'abundance of cheap diligent labour', 'one of Korea's primary resources is labour'. Colombia has 'an ample supply available', 'Sri Lanka's greatest natural resources are its educated, intelligent labour. The country has a labour reserve of over half a million highly trainable ... men and women available for employment.' Puerto Rico competes on the unemployment stakes with '921,000 workers, half under 35 – the island's richest resource with 100,000 available for immediate hiring. At least five candidates for every job.' Some countries even use their rural poverty, and the ravages of uneven development, as a selling-point to capital. In Colombia, 'Male and female workers are easily obtained due to the high rate of unemployment, rapid increase of population and the emigration from the rural zones to the cities.' Malaysia offers 'untapped sources of cheap labour in the countryside'. Singapore and Hong Kong, which both lack large populations, boast of their labour corrals, whereby 'the labour force is concentrated in special housing schemes near to production centres'.

Productivity

But in addition to the need for a large reserve army of labour, businessmen need to be assured of the productivity of the labour force. Thus countries compete to sell the high quality of their workers and their capacity for learning new skills. 'The most important wealth of Mauritius is its people. They combine the inherent resourcefulness of their forebears with the progressive outlook of a young nation. Mauritian labour is adaptable ... to new modern techniques of production.' Tunisia offers a 'large supply of dextrous and easily trained workers'. And an advert in *The Times* on 12 June 1975 for investment in the Philippines reads: 'Our labour force speaks your language. Whether you're talking electronic components, garments or car-manufacturing. National literacy was placed at 83.4% in 1973. (English is the medium of instruction) ... The generally high level of education of the Filipino worker makes him highly adaptable, easy to train in new skills.' The Dominican Republic finds an attraction in its history, which has made its men and women 'intelligent, cooperative, disciplined, ready to be trained, having lived in a community with a century-old industrial tradition'. Sri Lanka, arriving late on the FTZ scene, is forced to go even further in selling its 'eager, hardworking people'. According to its brochure, workers have been known to volunteer 'to work free, even on holidays, just to learn new techniques'! (Sri Lanka also reassures the businessman that his wife will rejoice that 'here, too, domestic help is not only abundant and reliable, but cheap'). Sri Lanka even has a bureaucratic class with which to tempt the investor: 'There is a growing indigenous supply of able management – accountants, engineers, management personnel – from Sri Lanka's 6 campuses and various professional institutes.' Singapore has a 'highly motivated, immediately available, educated, constant-turnover workforce, even in a region with a limited reserve army'. Malaysia's workforce sports English, high literacy, and is 'so easy to train and so productive' that US multinationals operating there have expanded into more sophisticated products. Thailand, too, has the inevitable 'abundant supply of cheap trainable labour', but finds also a national characteristic to reinforce its appeal: 'The Thai people are naturally clever with their hands.' They are quick to learn new labour processes, have concentration, adaptability and initiative. 'Thai workers have been praised for their dexterity.'

'The oriental female'

It is this emphasis on some inherent, biological characteristic that is used to justify the singling out of women as 'ideal' workers in the FTZs. For example, in 1975 Mauritius paid the lowest wages of all zones, and

women received less than half the wages paid to men. That women made up 80 per cent of the workforce in the zone was 'not necessarily' because 'women in Mauritius receive lower wages than men, but rather because industrialists ...' found that women are more adaptable than men to most of the skills required'. Similarly, 'Brazilian women are particularly responsive to training requiring manual dexterity'. Even UNCTAD preaches this new 'orthodoxy': 'it seems that much of this work – semiconductor assembly for example – is carried out with a higher degree of efficiency by female than by male workers'. Malaysia goes one better to boast a combination of sexual and racial advantages: 'The manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small and she works fast, with extreme care. Who, therefore, could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a bench-assembly production line than the oriental girl?' Not a word about the effects of this intensive production on the women – the heat, dirt, fumes, poisons to which they are exposed, the effect on their eyesight of using microscopes to weld hair-thin wires on to circuits – all of which leave them, by the time they are 25, on the employment scrap heap with no future but prostitution.[4] No, in the words of *Business Week* (30 March 1974), Malaysia is 'A Capitalist Dream' where 'nimble-fingered women' willingly assemble integrated circuits for less than $2 a day.

Cheap labour

It is the low cost of the labour in all the FTZs that is the most crucial factor in attracting investment and it is here that we find the keenest competition. *Korea Invites Foreign Investment and Entrepreneurship* states: 'Low cost labor is abundant and will provide an excellent advantage for products from the zone to compete on international markets ... The average cost of labor in Korea is about 50% that of labor in Hong Kong, 30% of that in Japan and roughly the same as that in Taiwan.' Colombia has 'an ample supply ... available with wages ranging from US$0.13 to US$0.24 per hour actually worked for unskilled workers. This compares favourably with rates in most Free Zones ...' Mauritius says 'wage rates are relatively low ... a properly managed firm can obtain the productivity in quality and output attainable in any developed market economy'. Malaysia has the 'lowest labour rates in the region', 'female factory workers can be hired for US$1.50 a day'. Tunisia, looking to German capital, advertises its labour at DM1.50 per hour. The Dominican Republic has the lowest wage rate in the Caribbean islands, 77 cents per hour for skilled and 51 cents for unskilled. Mexico boasts lower wages and higher productivity than in the USA. Singapore offers a wage rate at about one-tenth of that in America. Sri Lanka, not to be outdone, offers in 1980 an

'average monthly wage in manufacturing industries ... about US$35 – the most competitive labour rates in Asia', and sees itself as the 'natural successor to such export centres as Singapore and Hong Kong, where labour costs are rising rapidly'.

Compliant workforce

But investors cannot be lured merely by cheapness; they also want guarantees regarding the compliance of the workforce to their super-exploitation. Sri Lanka uses her unemployment and poverty to reassure investors that, 'because jobs are *important* to these workers, job turnover rate and absenteeism are low'. Thailand has recourse to her culture: 'Foreign investors should realise that the Buddhist religion and Thailand's social history have ensured that the relationship between employer and employee is normally more that of a guardian and ward than of master and serf ... it is easy to win and maintain the loyalty of the workforce as long as they are treated with kindness and due courtesy'!

But far more direct an incentive is the fact that strikes are prohibited and are suppressed in the majority of countries in which FTZs operate, e.g., Indonesia, Egypt, Tunisia, Brazil, Haiti, Philippines, Singapore and now Sri Lanka. In South Korea, for example, investment capital is attracted by the possibility of a sixty-hour working week and the guarantee of 'special protection' from labour disputes. Malaysia offers a special 'safeguard for pioneer industries during the first five years of existence or for any such extended period against unreasonable demands of Trade Unions'. Because of a spate of strikes in Malaysia during the 1960s, an amendment to the Industrial Relations Act (1971) stipulates that management 'rights covering such matters as promotions, transfers, recruitments, retrenchments, dismissals and allocation of work, are non-negotiable'.

The waiving of legislation in the FTZs can have particular impact on labour laws. For example, foreign investors in Mauritius are exempted from contributing to even the most minimal social security schemes. In Hong Kong there is no legal restriction on the hours of work for men over the age of 18 years. In Malaysia, Thailand and Mauritius, where labour law forbids night work for women, this is waived for shift-work in the FTZs. Other countries allow themselvse an open-ended power to waive laws at any time. For example, in Sri Lanka, the Greater Colombo Economic Commission is empowered to 'grant exemption from, or modify the application of certain laws of the country'.

Political stability

The suppression of political rights is an integral part of the political

system in many of the countries with FTZs. Stability is maintained through dictatorship, martial law or emergency rule.[5] Those countries with a semblance of democracy stress in their promotion materials the very stable nature of the neocolonial system. For example, Arthur C. Clarke, a writer who has made his home in Sri Lanka, is used as salesman for social democracy: 'Thanks to her history of parliamentary democracy, Sri Lanka is, perhaps, the most fortunate of Asian countries, with changes taking place through the free choice of the people.' And in case any businessman should remain dubious about Sri Lanka's democracy, it is now built into the Constitution that a two-thirds parliamentary majority is needed to change any terms relating to the security of overseas investment.

References

1 *AMPO*, Special issue, 'Free Trade Zones and industrialisation of Asia' (Vol. 8, no. 4 and Vol. 9, nos 1-3, 1977).

2 UNIDO, *Industrial Free Zones as Incentives to Promote Export-oriented Industries* (1971).

3 The quotations are taken from the following documents (most of which are cited in F. Fröbel et al, *The New International Division of Labour* (London, 1980)): Office of the Masan Free Export Zone Administration, Republic of Korea, *The Masan Free Export Zone — Korea Invites Foreign Investment and Entrepreneurship*; Ministry of Commerce and Industry, *Mauritius Export Processing Zones* (1972); Zona Franca Industrial y Commercial Manuel Carvajal Sinisterra (Palmeseca)/Zona Franca Industrial Commercial de Buenaventura, *Two New Free Zones in Colombia* (1973); Trade Development Council, *Industrial Investment in Hong Kong* (1974/5); Federal Investment Authority, *Malaysia — A Basic Guidebook for Potential Investors* (1973); *How to Invest in Egypt* (1975); The Export Processing Zone Administration, *Investor's Guide* (1975); Ministry of Commerce and Industry, *Investing in Mauritius: Investment Incentives* (1975); Mexico Institute of Foreign Trade, *Different Fiscal Incentives and Comments to the Law of Foreign Investment and Registry of Technology* (1975); Development Commissioner, *Santa Cruz Electronics Export Processing Zone*; Economic Planning Board, *Guide to Investment in Korea* (1975); *Business Week* (30 March 1974); *African Development* (July 1976); Business International Corporation, *Nationalism in Latin America* (1970); *Business Latin America* (8 May 1974); UNCTAD, *International Subcontracting Arrangements in Electronics*; The Office of the Board of Investment, *15 Powerful Reasons Why You should Invest in Thailand*; Banco Central de Nicaragua, *Nicaragua — A Market for Off-shore Assembly*; Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Economic Development Administration, *Arbeitskräfte, Berufsbildung, Löhne*; Zona Franca Industrial y Commercial Cartagena, *Investor's Guide*; *Financial Times* (18 June 1976), 'Mauritius'; *The Times* (12 June 1975); Federal Industrial Development Authority, Malaysia, *Opportunities for European Investments, Labour and Wage Rates, Malaysia: The Solid State for Electronics*; Sri Lanka, *Investment News* (March 1980); *Sri Lanka's Investment Promotion Zones*.

4 See Rachael Grossman, 'Women's Place in the Integrated Circuit', and A. Lin Neumann, '"Hospitality Girls" in the Philippines', in *Southeast Asia Chronicle* (No. 66, Jan-Feb 1979).

5 See A. Sivanandan, 'Imperialism and disorganic development in the silicon age', *Race & Class* (Vol. XXI, no. 2, Autumn 1979).

BULLETIN
OF CONCERNED ASIAN SCHOLARS

An International Journal

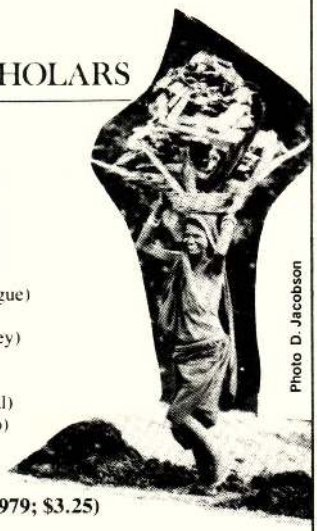


Photo D. Jacobson

Volume 12 #1 (1980; $3.50)

INDIA

- Women & Subsistence (M. Mies/The Hague)
- *Adavasi* Minorities (G. Omvedt/India)
- The Untouchables (Jurgensmeyer/Berkeley)

JAPAN

- Peasantry & Growth (B. Bernier/Montreal)
- "Japanology" & E.Vogel (H. Bix/Tokyo)
- Corporate Zen (D. Victoria/Los Angeles)

Volume 11 #4 (1979; $3.25)

- A Dialogue on Kampuchea and Vietnam by Anthony Barnett & Laura Summers (England)
- A Report on Kampuchea (B. Kiernan/Australia)
- Labor Intensive Factories (Snow/Honolulu)
- K. A. Wittfogel, 1926-39 (U.Vogel/Frankfurt)
- A Comment on Wittfogel (Tu Wei-ming/Berkeley)
- Asiatic Mode & India (H. Gardezi/Canada)
- Bibliography on Korea (Halliday/London)
- China: "Surplus" Labor (J. Adams/Iowa)
- Two Film Reviews (M. Young & P. Bertocci)

* * * * * * * * * *

Subscriptions

	1 yr.	2 yrs.	3yrs.
Individuals in U.S.	$14	$25	$36
Individuals elsewhere	$15	$27	$39
Students/Unemployed	$11	—	—
Institutions/Libraries	$23	—	$65

B.C.A.S.: BOX W, CHARLEMONT, MA 01339 USA

Book reviews

Iran: dictatorship and development

By FRED HALLIDAY (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979). 2nd ed. 361pp. £1.75

This is a perceptive and informative work on the reign of a 2,500-year-old empire's last king. The quality of its organisation is uneven, and one occasionally finds conclusions a few pages or chapters before the supporting evidence is fully presented. Nonetheless, it is well-researched and indicates knowledge of a wide variety of opinions among the secular Iranian opposition on the part of the author. Its outstanding weakness is in its lack of cognisance of Iran's religious opposition.

The book is centred on Iran's repressive political situation in the 1970s and its relation to capitalist development, which intensified under the Shah following the US-induced 'reforms' of the early 1960s. This period of Iran's history is one about which evasive and rhetorical works far outnumber illuminating exposés. But Halliday is factual and detached, so much so that 'it is probable that all of the Shah's Iranian opponents will find something in this work with which they disagree'.

One major question concerns the roots of dictatorship in Iran. Halliday asks why, unlike for example Turkey and Pakistan, bourgeois democracy did not develop in Iran. His answer: (1) Iran's non-subjection to colonialism perpetuated pre-capitalist economic relations, thereby retarding the growth of the bourgeoisie; (2) the latter was fragmented and felt a need for dictatorship to prevent radical change from below and to attract foreign capital; (3) Iran's largest demographic group – the peasantry – was apathetic; and (4) the state-

controlled oil revenue was used to co-opt some and repress others. Since petroleum production characteristically does not foster overall industrial development, a privileged managerial class did not emerge as an overt political force. It is concluded that Iranian autocracy originated in Iranian society itself.

One of Halliday's other concerns is whether or not charges that the Shah's policies were erratic are correct. His answer is an emphatic negative. In the framework of leading Iran towards ever more advanced capitalism, the state's actions were meaningful and consistent. On the prospect of socialism in Iran, he predicted that, due to the weakness of the left, the state was not likely to become socialist in the near future. Nearly two years later, this prediction holds true.

But Halliday's other views about the future have not stood the test of time. First, he did not expect the state to falter as a result of its latest crisis – the revolt that began to surface in 1977 – because the opposition was even more 'devoid of coherent organisation' in 1978 than in previous crises. Halliday did not anticipate serious institutional change before the late 1980s or 1990s. His scenario: inflation, corruption and development bottlenecks worsen; the depletion of oil reserves draws nearer, bringing with it constraints on the state's ability to manoeuvre. The already lamentable productivity of agriculture and industry deteriorates, as the Shah's personal weaknesses, like his intolerance of criticism, become more marked with age, and the state's capacity to foster capitalist development diminishes. These problems, and the inquietude they would instil in the Shah's foreign support system, might bring the regime to an end. In that case, one of three capitalist alternatives could replace it: a return to participatory government under the imperial regime (as in 1941-53 or 1961-2), bourgeois democracy or military dictatorship. Halliday considered the last to be the most likely outcome. If the army acted 'with a minimal cohesion there is no force in Iranian society that could stop it'.

This brings us to the book's most important shortcoming – underestimating the religious opposition. Halliday cannot be faulted for not sensing the forthcoming fall of the monarchy and its army at the time of writing – September 1978. But the point remains that he devotes very little space to introducing the religious opposition. The protest movement, 'we are told, was not in *any* proper sense of the word "religious" ... But it did phrase *some* of its demands in an Islamic form ... The *ayatollahs* and *mollahs* on their own can probably not sustain or channel the popular upsurge, and the greatest problem that the movement had in 1978 was that of organisation' (emphases added).

Statements like these apply at best to previous crises, as in the Mosaddeq threat of 1953 and, earlier, during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11. Yet in both of these cases the withdrawal of the clergy's support from the opposition was in no small part responsible

for the defeat of the national bourgeois forces. Furthermore, it is because he misses the unbroken intellectual line of descent from the ayatollahs who helped nullify the colonial-style Reuter concession in 1872 to their contemporary counterparts that Halliday can speak of 'a profound discontinuity' between Iranian politics before and after the 1920s.

Halliday's comparison of the clergy in Iran and other Muslim countries is also misguided.

> ...the role of Islamic ideology in Iranian society has until [December 1977] been less than in other Muslim countries. Compared with its Arab neighbours in the Middle East, or with Pakistan and Turkey, Iranian political life has in the recent decades been influenced to a small degree by Islam.

This view is probably based on the fact that in other Muslim countries where the Sunni sect is dominant, the leading clergy often accede to the rule of temporal sovereigns and are granted a visible role in mainstream political affairs. In the post-Safavid Iran, and especially since the beginning of Qajar rule (1789-1925), on the other hand, the imprint of the leading Shi'ite Muslim leaders has often been registered as institutionally and financially independent dissidents living outside Iran. In contemporary Iranian Shi'ism, secular power is by definition usurpatory and, pending the return of a Hidden Imam, illegitimate. Until the messiah manifests himself, his will is conveyed to the populace by the living ayatollahs. Not surprisingly, the latitude inherent in this process lends itself to the formation of a political base independent from the state.

The preceding analysis is not to say that the credit for ending the Pahlavi terror belongs exclusively to the religious forces. It cannot be disputed that 'The call for an "Islamic Republic" has no long tradition in Iranian political life', and I am inclined to agree with Halliday that religion was in many instances the idiom of protest for the otherwise politically and materially malcontent in 1977-9. But this very idea requires us to note that behind the subsidence of open rebellion between their bloody defeat in 1963 and 1977, the clergy busily organised. Iranian students may have provided the most vocal opposition, but the only group that had access to the masses and could organise them with relative immunity was the clergy. (Gustav Thais has produced excellent accounts of the metaphoric language they used to agitate.)

The Muslim Arabs' 1967 and 1973 defeats by Israel – a country already considered guilty of cooperation with the Shah's dreaded secret police – afforded convenient rallying points. In the meantime, the numerical growth of the clergy's staunchest allies, the petty bourgeoisie and immigrants from rural backgrounds, outpaced every other demographic group (see Behrang's *Iran: Le Maillon Faible*).

Furthermore, in the wake of Ayatollah Khomeini's exile in 1963, private funds established Islamic libraries/reading rooms in hundreds of Iranian towns large enough to have a high school. These libraries, which often did not have to compete with any other, became the meeting place of the youth nucleii that were later to form the revolutionary 'committees' and Khomeini's militia. In mosques, sermons increasingly and, in retrospect, effectively invited the oppressed to a martyrdom styled after that of the early Shi'ite heroes. During the same period, the number of theology students (*tollab*) who travelled to the countryside annually during the holy Moharram and Ramadan months increased rapidly. Coming from the Shi'ite centres at Qom and Mashad, the missionaries travelled unprecedented distances – even as far as the Persian Gulf coast – to eliminate the passive support the Shah had enjoyed among the peasantry. The hundreds of mosques that were built in villages without other communal institutions attest to the efficacy of the message.

If I have discussed the religious opposition's role in the revolution at length, it is because underestimation of it is as dangerous a pitfall for those now struggling for a truly liberated society in Iran as it was for the Shah. And if I criticise this shortcoming in detail, it is because I have found the book very useful in other respects. I wish to emphasise in closing that the factors which brought public rage to the point of explosion in 1977-9 were essentially those which Halliday anticipated. That they made their fateful impact sooner than he expected is largely due to the systematic manipulation of public opinion by the religious opposition. To deny this is as erroneous as Khomeini's claim that the revolution was the work of God.

Sacramento, USA ROSTAM POURZAL

India's Political Economy, 1947-1977

By FRANCINE FRANKEL (Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press, 1979). 640pp. £19.30.

India, since the end of British colonial rule in 1947, has passed through two phases in the long and often bitter struggle of the people to gain their just rights. In the first phase, 1947-67, there occurred the political elimination of a segment of the landed aristocracy (rajas and maharajas) by means of the land reforms of the 1950s. But even as the aristocratic landlords were being (partially) removed, the big bourgeoisie (of industry and finance) asserted its political strength to emerge as a leading faction within the class alliance ruling India. At the same time, the organised parties supporting some form of socialism

began to splinter, or fall into disarray. Faced with such a lapse of leadership and with sharply deteriorating conditions of living, the people rose up in spontaneous resistance and revolt. The second phase, 1967-77, was characterised by an uneven process of political and economic regrouping and mobilisation, both among vested interests of the ruling class (the big bourgeoisie and the 'new' landlords) and the forces of socialism emerging (initially as the 'left front' tendency and heralded thereafter by the promise and potential of the Naxalbari movement).

Frankel's study of India from 1947 to 1977 is an instructive example of an attempt to come to grips with substantive realities in the framework of a progressive liberal tradition. The principal question facing India, according to the author, is:

> How can a gradual revolution be accomplished, a revolution that can enlarge the possibilities of human development for the poorest of its people without exacting fearful costs in human life by unleashing the unpredictable social chaos of a violent upheaval?

Frankel develops her analysis by assessing what she describes as the paradox of accommodative politics and radical social change. Specifically, she examines the efforts (policies and programmes) of the leadership of the state and political parties (mainly the ruling and formal opposition parties). She covers the experience of the first two decades since 1947, the failures of India's political and economic programmes and the growing political and economic crisis leading to the Emergency of 1975-7. She concludes with a short review of the prospects for India in the post-Emergency period (the chronology of events does not extend beyond late 1977).

An examination of the material presented by Frankel shows that change and development in Third World societies like India can be usefully seen as a process which is either revolutionary or evolutionary. Both the revolutionary and evolutionary paths exemplify political forms of transformation, either from 'above' (by the 'leaders' for the people) or from 'below' (by the people for the people). The experience of India over the last thirty years falls entirely into the category of an attempted transformation from 'above'. Of this period, the first two decades are mainly examples of approaching the problems in a technocratic manner, while the third decade highlights the use of a populist cover for a modified technocratic method. Technocratic methods used in India refer both to a one-sided reliance on experts and to the attempt to apply liberal rules to politics. The populist cover has essentially been to present socialism in rhetorical slogans, perhaps the most well known being '*garibi hatao*' ('remove poverty').

Of course, the outcome of the approach followed in India is well known – sluggish and uneven increases in agricultural and industrial

output, rising unemployment, inflation, growing inequality and a serious deterioration in the standard of living. However, the cause of such meagre results has all too often been oversimplified as the crisis in the ability of the ruling class to maintain its hegemony. (Three distinct turning-points usually cited as examples of the breakdown of ruling-class hegemony are 1966-9, 1974-5 and 1978-80.) Such oversimplification has been a feature of the left movement in general, but it has taken on particularly prominent proportions in the 'communist' currents of the movement. Not surprisingly, the consequences have been disastrous in that there has simultaneously occurred a decline in the popularity and influence exercised by communist organisations in Indian politics.

The material assembled by Frankel, together with other recent studies of Indian society, reveals two important changes which have not been given the attention they deserve. First, the forces of production (organisation, techniques and technology) in agriculture and industry have been increased and improved, thereby enabling the big bourgeoisie to strengthen its leading position and role in the ruling-class alliance. Indications of such change are evident in the pattern and extent of industrial and agricultural growth that has taken place in and around the regional axis linking the following urban centres: Bombay – Ahmedabad, Ludhiana – Kanpur, Patna – Calcutta, and Madras – Hyderabad. While scattered documentation of this change exists, no integrated political assessment of it has been made.

Secondly, there has developed an uneven but sustained spread of capitalist-type agricultural cultivation, evidenced in the recent relative increase in agricultural production and stocks. This has been accompanied by an increasing displacement of the upper-caste 'kulaks' by middle, lower and even harijan commercial farmers – which in turn has led to a rise in the incidence of inter-caste violence in rural areas across the nation. A rural-oriented agro-industrial strategy of economic growth has been persistently pursued by all the major Indian political parties (endorsed by the World Bank and COMECON). In this instance, also, scattered documentation exists, but no comprehensive and integrated political assessment has been made.

In other parts of the world some attention has been devoted to serious examination of these developments. However, contemporary critiques of Third World developmental experience have concentrated on the weaknesses and/or inability of capitalist development to improve social conditions. At times, such critiques appear to assume that there are some viable possibilities in pursuing the path of economic growth followed by western Europe and north America. More often, it is argued that the experience of Japan and Taiwan should be followed. Yet in India the real conditions are different. Both the interests of the Indian ruling class (an alliance of the big bourgeoisie and the 'new'

landlords) and the strategic options of contemporary imperialism – that is in their combined and separate interests – predicate a more specific goal: entrenchment of 'modern' enclaves in industry and agriculture. In this pattern, the key areas for investigation are the forces, links and contradictions of state monopoly capitalism, state capitalism, transnationals, commercial and capitalist agriculture.

The social effect of 'modern' enclave growth is a larger proletariat and semi-proletariat. Economically, the landless and land-poor workforce is more intensively exploited in order to generate a larger surplus. The enlarged surplus, increasingly unequally distributed, becomes the basis of a wider market (commodities of semi-mass consumption, luxuries and exports). Through this pattern of extended reproduction and enlarged accumulation, the ruling class wins a new lease of life. There are limits to such a process of change, but they cannot be mechanically derived from earlier forms of analysis. However, concrete investigation in the course of contemporary struggles based on critical marxism can begin to provide some of the answers.

If the trends and tendencies indicated are an accurate description of the current reality in India, what is their significance for the New Democratic Revolution? In one sense, the preliminary answer is that the classic pattern is not applicable to India simply because the conjuncture of political and economic conditions is not the same as that which prevailed in China in the 1920s and 1930s. However, in another sense, the answer contains a more positive thrust. To release India's productive potential for the benefit of the toiling rural and urban majority, it is necessary to complete the agrarian revolution by eliminating the stranglehold of the 'new' landlords in the countryside. Only on the basis of such a rural social and economic tranformation will it become possible to begin the task of revolutionising industrial production.

Society Science and Technology Group, Montreal

SYED SHAH

Ireland: divided nation, divided class

Edited by AUSTEN MORGAN and BOB PURDIE (London, Ink Links, 1980). 225 pp. £3.50 Paper

In July 1978 a seminar was held at Warwick University on the subject of Ireland, at which papers from different strands within the Irish left were given. Now a number of these have been presented for public consumption in this book. The selection process may be somewhat open to question; the exclusion of at least two contributions from the final volume – one on the timely question of British reformism in Northern

Ireland under Direct Rule, the other on the Southern economy – has left a few serious holes in the overall presentation. Yet, despite this, the book is a valuable one, giving as it does at least a partial indication of where sections of the Irish left stand at present.

The scope is wide – topics covered include: British imperialism in Ireland; the politics of dependent capitalism; Republicanism and socialism; the Cumann na mBan, 1914-36; skilled workers in the ship-building industry; the Ulster Special Constabulary; the Irish national question; some aspects of nationalism and socialism in Ireland, 1968-78; socialism in Ireland – red, green and orange.

To claim, however, that the book 'is a critical balance sheet of the Irish left's positions and role' is slightly far-fetched. This is not merely because certain theoretical areas are not adequately analysed (for example, the question of repression in contemporary Ireland is hardly considered), but because certain people who would regard themselves as being on the Irish left, no matter the rejection of that claim by others, are not represented. There is no trade union contribution here, although the role of the unions is criticised in a number of places. Similarly, both Morgan and Purdie are critical of the Provisionals and of their claim to be on the Irish left; but there is no Provisional contributor to make that claim independently. The book is in fact less a 'balance sheet of the Irish left's positions and role' than a list of some of its main positions.

This is in fact at once the book's weakness and its value. To date, it has been a difficult tasks for the newcomer to the question of Ireland to assess where the Irish left stands. Now that task is made somewhat easier. Of course, there is no substitute for diving into the sea of real Irish politics, but at least the stranger will now have some idea of the tides and currents before doing so. In this sense it is valuable that many of the contributors contradict each other, for no one author could have done justice to their different positions. Yet, despite these differences, there is no denying that the book proves beyond doubt that marxists can say something substantial about Ireland – a fact denied constantly by bourgeois commentators, most recently by Parkin in his *Marxism and Class Theory: a bourgeois critique*.

But the book suffers from too much compression, given the task that has been attempted. Each contribution is approximately only ten pages long, except, inexplicably, Morgan's fifty-page chromatic meander, 'Socialism in Ireland: red, green and orange'. Lysaght's article on 'British imperialism in Ireland', for example, attempts what is impossible in such a short space, i.e. a definitive class history of Ireland. Similarly, Ward's contribution on the Cumann na mBan makes it clear that the general statement that women are hidden from history is specifically true of Irish history. But her treatment of the involvement of women in Republican politics is tantalisingly brief. There is a great

need to attempt a class history of Ireland and to discover women's role in that history, but this is insufficient. In some cases, the avid stranger can go on to read lengthier books by the same authors; in others, the promise of books to come on the same topics is reassuring. But a number of the contributions (Smyth's piece on the penetration of foreign capital, North and South, Wickham's consideration of the effects of industrialisation in the South and Reid's look at workers in shipbuilding in Belfast) are unfortunately too schematic, attempting important but massive tasks in too short a space.

In the light of the small amount of space available, it is regrettable that some of the contributors spent too much time attacking each other's positions, rather than succinctly spelling out their own – Bew, Patterson and Gibbon, for example, spend half their chapter criticising Wickham in the same book! But Morgan walks off with first prize. His attack on all strands of Irish marxism is destructive in the very real sense that it can leave the reader trapped in apathy. What can we possibly conclude when we are told on one page that Connolly's 'historiography, and derived social theories, was romanticism in socialist language rather than Marxism in an Irish idiom', and on the next that he 'still represents the best there is of a socialist tradition' – except that the Irish left has not had much of value to say? After fifty pages of Morgan's iconoclasm we are left with little understanding of the reasons for the weakness of the Irish left and even less conviction about what is to be done next. His final and belated admonition that the left's way forward is in 'a commitment to grounding political progress in independent working-class organisations created by the masses' is general enough to be simultaneously valid and useless. It does not tell us why such a commitment has not emerged to date. But more, in the context of the previous lengthy debunking, the message becomes totally voluntarist; the Irish left has failed in the past by confining itself to narrow socialisms of the red, green and orange variety; the way forward is this: 'red socialism should be reappropriated by socialists.'

There are reasons for the relative weakness of Irish socialism that derive from genuine foundations and not merely from the narrow-mindedness of Irish socialists. The failure of Morgan's critique is that he does not link the foundations with the positions; he stays at the political level. This ultimately is a major problem throughout the book; positions are political, and the emphasis on 'positionalism' in the seminar and the book means that the material reality of capitalism in Northern Ireland and the South is partially treated, and left positions on Ireland are (less) partially treated – but the two seldom meet. Hence, there is no real basis from which to begin to answer the question: what is to be done?

Ulster Polytechnic BILL ROLSTON

Iron Cages: race and culture in nineteenth-century America

by RONALD T. TAKAKI (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1979). 361pp. $15.95.

This is a book of admirable and wide-ranging scholarship. As Takaki rightly points out in his Preface, historians of race have increasingly tended to fragment their subject, either concentrating on a specific racial group in isolation from others or confining their analyses within particular academic specialisms. To remedy this, Takaki sets out to present an 'integrated analysis' of white racial attitudes towards and oppression of various racial groups within 'the total structure' of American society as it developed through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Takaki's thesis is a highly complex one. First of all, he sees a close inter-relationship between the exploitation of blacks, Indians, Mexicans and later Asian minorities, in particular Chinese labourers, as the American economy passed during the course of the nineteenth century from its early agrarian/commercial phase, through the Market Revolution and into the stage of a 'highly technological and bureaucratic' corporate capitalism and Empire. Thus, his book is concerned to show:

> how slavery in the South and anti-black discrimination in the North were related to Indian removal; ... how the destruction of Indians and the war against Mexico were related to the exploitation of Chinese laborers in the American West as well as New England; ... how 'internal colonies' were developed in the United States as people of color, particularly blacks, Mexicans and Asians, were exploited for their labor and subordinated to caste/class domination; ... how racial oppression was part of a larger 'labor-repressive system' and a general class structure, [and] ... how racism within the United States expressed itself in international racial conflict and violence.

As if this were not enough, Takaki links this basically political-economic analysis with a social psychological explanation of white American racism. Drawing upon Max Weber's analysis and terminology, he portrays American racism as a product of three sets of ideological or psychological 'iron cages':

> As white men in power separated themselves from the king during the War of Independence and as they set themselves even further apart from blacks and Indians, they promoted a republican ideology rooted in the Protestant ethic and devised what may be called republican 'iron cages' to help Americans rule the emotional part of

themselves. Rational, ascetic, and self-governing individuals, republicans were expected to fear spontaneity and to resist serendipity. As enterprising whites expanded the market and 'civilization' during the age of Jackson and afterwards, as they appropriated Indian and Mexican land and exploited black and Asian labor, and as they channeled white workers into factories, they opened the way for the domination of the corporate 'iron cage' of bureaucratic capitalism. And, as the nation advanced toward the Far East in the late nineteenth century and developed overseas colonies and an awesome military complex with ties to the new industrial order, American expansionists became imprisoned in an even more terrifying 'iron cage': Demonic in force and nature, it took them into imperialistic war and an irrational quest for power and destruction – a quest described metaphorically in Melville's *Moby-Dick*.

Locked within these 'iron cages', which fed one upon the other, Takaki argues that Americans 'were denied the class consciousness, the feeling of community, and the power of collective action they needed to respond effectively to ... the hegemony of a powerful, rational capitalist bureaucracy'.

How, then, does Takaki hold together these complex strands? The answer lies in his heavy use of individual biography and psychology as tools of analysis. A large proportion of the book is devoted to detailed portraits of such men as Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, George Custer, Henry George and Alfred Mahon and of their rationalisations for racial oppression. He justifies this approach on the grounds that these individuals constituted the 'intelligentsia' of nineteenth-century America, men whose 'ideas and decisions mattered, for they were consequential'. But, if one has a criticism of this book, it is that this over-reliance on personal biography and psychology, fascinating and instructive though each portrait is, inevitably gives the impression of history as the product of great men and tortured minds, rather than of deeper political and economic structures.

Put another way, if, as Takaki claims, he takes his lead from the Gramscian concept of cultural hegemony, then it is incumbent on him to demonstrate how the ideas fostered by the intelligentsia not only fitted in with the needs of a developing American capitalism but also how they became hegemonic. That is, how and why did these ideas permeate through to the mass of the American working class, thus disarming them in the face of the onslaught of American capitalism. This is not to call for yet further studies of the effects of racism on its victims, but to ask that the analysis of white racism be extended beyond the 'great men' to show its impact on the white working class as a whole.

University of Birmingham LEE BRIDGES

Multinational Corporations and the Control of Culture: the ideological apparatus of imperialism

By ARMAND MATTELART (Sussex, Harvester Press, 1979). 304pp. £14.95.

In the economic domination of Third World countries by multinational corporations, to control and manipulate a 'culture' that can justify that domination has become essential. With the American defeat in Vietnam, the giant US military-industrial complexes which had grown rich and powerful through that war, were forced to seek new products and new outlets – not least for the highly sophisticated electronic and computer techniques they had originally developed for the war market. They decided to diversify into the civil domain – into the leisure and entertainment industries (TV, radio, films, music, books), the information industry (computers and computer networks, linked by satellites), health care and social planning (including hospital equipment, sophisticated medical techniques and, most significantly, civil surveillance). Mattelart, in this book, meticulously analyses and describes the processes by which the multinationals, in order to appropriate foreign markets, engage in a process of 'mind control'.

The defeat in Vietnam had shown the multinationals and the Pentagon that open military involvement, although profitable for the corporations themselves, was not only a wasteful and chancy business, but bad for public relations, at home and abroad. The image of the US as an aggressive imperialist power hindered the efforts of the business community to establish controlled subsidiaries in Third World countries. A new approach was needed. Mattelart describes the Chilean crisis of 1973 as the triumph of the new strategy. Multinationals, in conjunction with the Defense Department, were able, through indirect pressure, to finance a counter-revolution in Chile. This occurred without one American death (there had been 50,000 casualties in Vietnam), while preserving that country under the US sphere of influence.

The US multinationals attempted to promote an image of 'concern' for the needs of Third World countries. In the attempt to forge a closer relationship with them, and present the US as a progressive, humanitarian power, primary importance was given to the development of the ideological sphere. Intervention through the business of education and culture, peddled by the corporations with the back-up of the state, was seen as the key to penetrating the Third World and maintaining and developing US profits.

Mattelart describes how the multinationals persuade the developing nations to buy their version of 'progress'. First, they must encourage the creation of a consumer mentality, so that their products can be sold. Subsidiaries of the corporations in the metropolis are set up, employing a local labour force. A managerial class is trained to oversee

these subsidiaries, while the multinationals reap the profits. This class and its surrounding elite become the prime consumers of the exported American way of life. A complementary way of cultivating a dependency within the periphery is via the massive export of home-made American cultural products, ranging from textbooks, TV programmes and educational series to audio-visual material for the mass education of the illiterate. The near-monopolisation of these foreign markets includes the proliferation of the US communication media on which educational and cultural programmes are aired, often to the detriment of local culture.

It is only in the last ten years that the question of cultural imperialism has been paid serious attention, and so far only by a small number of international scholars. For example, Mattelart's analysis reinforces other works in this field. He extensively corroborates Schiller's analysis of the superficially attractive concept of the 'free flow of information' – a torrent which flows undammed one way only.

> The genesis and extension of the free flow of information concept are roughly coterminous with the brief and hectic interval of US global hegemony ... It is now evident that the historical coincidence of these two phenomena – the policy of the free flow of information and the imperial ascendancy of the US – was not fortuitous.[1]

But the concept is a handy one for justifying the saturation of Third World countries with US propaganda at every level; the softening up process of a system of cultural imperialism which Schiller describes as:

> The sum of the processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system ... its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to or even promote the values and structures of the dominating center system.

Mattelart does, though, have a tendency to oversimplify. The multinationals are presented as if they were some kind of 'supermen' and his vision of their role seems to leave no room for a possible alternative to corporate domination. In concentrating mainly on the mechanism of domination, he has omitted any discussion of the resistance of Third World countries against western cultural and economic domination. The anti-imperialism of Iran comes to mind, and the recreation and transformation of popular culture in countries like Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. But these questions would have demanded another volume.

The book's strength is its extreme precision, the wide range of documented facts presented as a series of case studies of multinational strategies, policies and activities. In that sense, Mattelart has made a thorough analysis of cultural imperialism and he cannot be accused of

'lack of evidence'. But the inaccessible style of his writing poses an obstacle to those most concerned with the book's content – that is to say, those who are the victims of cultural imperialism. Yet this does not undermine Mattelart's thesis and his orientation. His book is a major contribution to the understanding of the relationship between culture and economic domination in Third World countries.

Interpress, New York MARIA BLAC-BELAIRE

Reference

1 Herbert Schiller, Communication and Cultural Domination (New York, 1976).

Development and Dependency: the political economy of Papua New Guinea

by AZEEM AMARSHI, KENNETH GOOD and REX MORTIMER (Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1979). 287pp.

This book is offered as a 'radical reinterpretation of Papua New Guinea's development in colonial and modern times'. It is divided into four parts. The first is concerned with the development of peripheral capitalism in the country since its mercantile origins in the European expansion into the South Pacific in the early nineteenth century. The second section examines the changing contemporary global situation as it affects Papua New Guinea, specifically the country's relations with Australia and Japan. Part three analyses the process of social stratification and embryonic class formation that is taking place: while a final section discusses the role of political institutions in both the colonial and post-colonial periods.

As an introduction to some aspects of the political economy of Papua New Guinea for those unfamiliar with the literature this book is to be welcomed. It is often interesting and thought-provoking. However, in many ways it is also disappointing and unsatisfactory. With the exception of the chapters on class formation by Kenneth Good and a brief chapter on political parties by David Hegarty, it shows few signs of original research. For much of the book the authors are content to be heavily dependent upon the intellectual labour of others. For example, the chapter on 'The Japanese connection' draws heavily on work by Ross Garnaut: its central argument is based on budgetary estimates for 1982-3 that he made in 1975. No attempt has been made to obtain more up-to-date figures. Indeed, if the authors were more familiar with data on the Papua New Guinea economy they might have been less quick to dismiss Garnaut's assumption of constant per capita government expenditure on the grounds that 'there are ... cogent

reasons for doubting the ability of the government to pursue a fiscal programme of such austerity over any but a short period of time'. Cogent reasons to the contrary or no, that is precisely what the government has been doing. The superficial nature of this particular chapter is also indicated by the fact that the World Bank's views on aid are culled from the local newspaper rather than from the generally available Bank report.

A second serious weakness of the book is that despite its aim to provide a 'first attempt to analyse the process of the country's incorporation into the modern world system' within the analytical framework of underdevelopment/dependency theory, it fails to provide any cogent exposition of what the authors take that theory to be, or any critical evaluation of it. Papua New Guinea is undoubtedly in an extremely dependent relationship with the world capitalist system, and the forms in which this dependence manifests itself are numerous – economic, political, social, cultural. Yet, if one has arrived at the conclusion that there is a dependence theory that is analytically useful, it is not good enough to engage in the rather pedestrian activity of listing characteristics of dependence as in this book. One must answer the question: what are the specific, analytical insights that dependence theory provides? Sadly the authors never come to grips with this question, which is odd, particularly since the last decade or so has seen major critiques of dependence theory, not least from marxists and others on the left. The impression given by this book is that the debates of the last ten years have never taken place.

This is, in my view, symptomatic of the generally low level of analysis in the book. For example, the manipulation of the tenets of dependence theory is often extremely cavalier. Reference is made to a 'stunted manufacturing sector', but not to the fact that in Papua New Guinea there was no manufacturing sector at all before capitalism generated 'underdevelopment'. On one page unequal exchange is necessarily a major cause of the problems of peripheral economies, on another it results in net benefits. In the same paragraph in which it is observed that in the 1950s and 1960s 'manufacturing output in (Third World) economies experienced a very rapid increase', it is also asserted that 'classical colonial exploitation, based mainly on plantations and mines, was giving way to the neo-classical form of imperialism characterised by limited industrialisation'.

Rhetoric, indeed, often substitutes for analysis. For example, Amarshi points out that in 1973-4 the Bougainville Copper Mine employed 4,000 workers and produced an output of $A264.5 million, commenting 'in contrast the entire subsistence output – to feed, clothe and house some 2.5 million people – was estimated at $A159.5 million in the same year!' What conclusion is one supposed to draw from this? Obviously, that it is a 'bad thing'. But it would have been better if the

author, an economist, had explained why, instead of running away beneath an exclamation mark. It is implied in a number of places that Papua New Guinea would be better off without the mine. Yet the authors never quite manage to advocate its closure.

An attempt to come to grips with the policy implications of the book is made in the final chapter on the post-colonial state. Here it is pointed out, quite rightly, that self-reliance is now interpreted by planners in Papua New Guinea as meaning essentially fiscal self-reliance, particularly the reduction of dependence on Australian aid, but that the current strategy involves increased dependence on foreign investment to provide tax revenue. But what, we are entitled to ask, are the alternatives? In a situation, not uncommon in many small Third World countries, where there is no indigenous ruling class of any size whose expropriation could give rise to a significant economic surplus, fiscal self-reliance means either a dramatic cut in public expenditure or that a sizeable domestic revenue base has to be created urgently. It seems clear that the authors are opposed to the adoption of natural resource projects for the latter purpose; what is less clear to me is what they see to be the alternative.

University of Bristol ROGER BERRY

Switzerland Exposed

By JEAN ZIEGLER (London, Allison and Busby, 1978). 173pp. £3.50

To write an anti-imperialist book about Switzerland might at first sight appear to be absurd. The country has never had any colonies and has long been a by-word for neutrality and for international good works, epitomised in the Red Cross. Yet it is precisely the contrast between Switzerland's apparent innocence and its hypocritical complicity in the exploitation of the Third World that Jean Ziegler, a Swiss journalist and academic, tries to unravel in this study. For him the 'smug arrogance' of the Swiss conceals their continued involvement in the criminal activities of imperialism – as bankers, arms manufacturers, investors in South Africa and purveyors of such products as Nestlé's lethal baby-food.

Ziegler develops a concept of 'secondary imperialism' to cover the Swiss case. It is 'secondary' in the sense that its role depends on the protection which stronger and more overt imperialist countries, with their colonies and armies, can provide. But it is also 'secondary' in the sense that it performs functions that the other countries are prevented from carrying out precisely because of their greater visibility. Historically, this included the provision of counter-revolutionary

mercenaries – a function that lingers on in the Vatican's Swiss Guards. But today this role is best performed by the Swiss banking system, which, with its secrecy, performs the role of an international 'fence', or recipient of stolen money, in the world capitalist system. The Nazis, Shahs and Latin American dictators can all benefit from the anonymity which Zurich provides.

Ziegler's work is also important as a paradigm of national self-criticism, a caustic assault upon the myths of his own country. It is of a kind all too rare in these days of modish accommodation by the left to supposedly 'national democratic traditions' and such talismans as 'the British constitution'. He shows how the originally democratic institutions of Swiss society – the revolving presidency, the citizens' army, the cantonal system, the use of referenda – have been turned to reinforce a stifling system of bourgeois conformity, and how the social peace that has locked the unions into a pact with the government since the 1930s has been buoyed along by the dirty money flowing into Switzerland from abroad. He is especially illuminating on the self-censorship that operates within Swiss society, so that the ideology of banking secrecy becomes an instrument for a wider suppression of critical views and information.

Ziegler devotes insufficient attention to two key aspects of the Swiss system: the oppression of women, denied a vote until a few years ago, and the racist treatment of the immigrant workers, who make up a larger percentage of the labour force than in any other European country. Some of his information is presented in too slapdash a form to be readily of use to a non-Swiss readership. But overall this is a refreshing and convincing book. One could say that it examines Swiss society under the sign of Che Guevara. Ziegler met him in Geneva in 1964 and told him he wanted to emigrate to work with liberation struggles in the Third World. Guevara told him to stay and work in Switzerland. Ziegler did and wrote this book. Three years after their meeting Guevara lay dead in a Bolivian village. The weapon that shot him was a Sig-Schaffouse automatic rifle, made in Switzerland.

London FRED HALLIDAY

Strangers to These Shores: race and ethnic relations in the United States

By VINCENT N. PARRILLO (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1980). 496pp.

In his introductory preface Parrillo declares that his aim is to unite a primary text for a course in race and ethnic relations with a specific focus on the United States. He intends, he says, to discuss the many diverse groups who have come to the US within the framework of

'major sociological theories' purporting to explain host-immigrant relations in America. He begins, therefore, with a discussion of psychological theories about prejudice and ethnocentricism (including even the explanation of such a monstrous neologism as 'ethnocentricism') and sociological theories of assimilation and pluralism. The major issue, as he sees it, appears to be whether immigrant groups, to survive successfully, must adopt American mores and values and thus become assimilated within the 'melting pot' of American society; or whether, especially in the more tolerant atmosphere which has prevailed since the 1960s, cultural diversity is now becoming acceptable.

This might seem fairly conventional textbook stuff with nothing remarkable to recommend it, but fortunately the book quickly turns to Parrillo's real concern, which is to give a graphic historical account of the actual experiences faced by each immigrant group as it attempts to settle in the United States. This he does superbly well. But perhaps the book's greatest merit is the penetrating picture of the host society that emerges almost inadvertently as the reactions to each new wave of immigration are carefully charted.

Initially, the society developed by the American colonists, who included many different national groups mainly from northern Europe, was fairly open and tolerant. The early settlers cooperated and traded with the Indians, whose skills they needed to survive in an alien environment. Both black and white indentured workers could become citizens and cultural and linguistic diversity was accepted. But at the same time, the stamp of Anglo-Saxon protestant culture with its bigotry and chauvinism was becoming indelibly imprinted on the American consciousness.

Nineteenth-century America needed immigrant labour to expand the continent, to build roads and railways and to develop the infrastructure necessary to an industrial capitalist society. A new wave of settlers, often driven by poverty from the peasant economies of Ireland and southern and eastern Europe, came to fulfil this function. The degree of initial antagonism they faced depended on several different factors: their level of skill, their social cohesion and ability to organise as a group, the degree of their religious, cultural and physical divergence from protestantism and the American 'caucasian' ideal, and the prevailing economic and political circumstances. The unskilled suffered from low wages and wretched living conditions in urban ghettos. Their poverty was regarded as the result of their own deficiencies. They were blamed for the conditions in which they were forced to live. Organisations like the 'know-nothings' and the 'Native American' movement mobilised to harass the Germans and the Irish. Destruction of property, beatings and loss of life occurred in the Irish sections of many cities. Excluded from American social and political life, many ethnic groups formed their own alternative organisations. They were

then accused of being 'un-American' and failing to assimilate. Xenophobia increased in periods of recession and in response to political events elsewhere, for example, the Bolshevik revolution. The threat to 'the American way of life' was used as a justification for all kinds of persecution, ranging from discrimination to physical assault. Parrillo quotes an early twentieth-century educator as saying, typically:

> These southern and eastern Europeans are of a different type from the north Europeans who preceded them. Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order and government. Their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock and to corrupt our civic pride ... Our task is to ... implant in their children, so far as it can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order.

Yet this was a society in which Italians and Jews were taken from gaol and lynched when the mob disapproved of the Court's decision to acquit them. It was a country in which the peaceful Cherokee, who had done their best to assimilate, even going to the lengths of adopting Christianity, were forcibly uprooted from their land because it had become too valuable.

As recently as 1943 its laws failed to prevent Mexican Americans from mob violence while the police stood by and did nothing. It was a country which passed racist nationality laws, which allowed Jim-Crow segregation laws, and whose treatment of the Indians or, more accurately, 'native Americans' is a chronicle of perfidy, exploitation and greed which may well be unrivalled in world history. Yet an Indian girl forcibly removed to a state boarding school was classified as a problem because she objected to writing an essay entitled 'Why we are all happy the Pilgrims landed'.

There is a wealth of information in this book which indeed would be most useful to any student of race relations. It includes accounts of institutionalised racism, a critique of so-called scientific attempts to justify it and an analysis of black struggles. It provides details about legislation, comparative social mobility, ethnic attitudes, etc. It is immensely readable, its use of case studies, cartoons and anecdotes makes the historical period come alive for the reader. But, above all, it is important because it shows how assimilation means that all forms of collectivism, whether it is collective land ownership, as in the case of the Indians, or even stong family orientation, as in the case of the recently arrived Vietnamese, must finally give way to a competitive individualism based on material possessions. In short, it demonstrates how easily the American dream could become a global nightmare.

Polytechnic of North London JENNY MELLOR

'Collar the Lot': how Britain interned and expelled its wartime refugees

By PETER and LENI GILLMAN (London, Quartet Books, 1980). 334pp. £8.95

As the ninth anniversary of internment without trial in Northern Ireland passes, it is apposite to consider the use by the British state of internment at an earlier time and in a different context. This account of internment and deportation in 1939-40 is a well-documented and well-researched study, and as such a valuable addition to the literature on the use of 'emergency' measures by the state.

Following the debacle of the 1914-18 war, when over 29,000 people were interned, the Committee of Imperial Defence considered the question of internment in 1923 and decided instead on a general policy of expulsion in the event of future war. At the same time, provisions began to be made for accommodation for 5,490 internees. In early 1938, when over 55,000 refugees from fascism had arrived in Britain, the Committee was still in favour of a policy of returning all enemy aliens and a Home Office circular stated: 'It will be the policy of Her Majesty's Government to encourage aliens to leave the country ...' The policy was hastily abandoned, largely for practical reasons, in favour of one of internment.

Initially, the tribunals set up to administer the policy awarded Category A, meaning internment, to only 1 per cent of the 73,800 cases considered and recognised 75 per cent as 'refugees from Nazi oppression'. But even the 1 per cent included Jews and other refugees, as well as Nazis, and they were often interned in the same camp. The supporters of internment on a wider scale received a considerable boost after the fall of Norway in 1940 and the subsequent scare stories of 'fifth columns'. The *Sunday Dispatch*, a paper owned by Lord Rothermere who had in the 1930s expressed support for Hitler, Mussolini and Mosley and who had fulminated against 'Israelites of international attachment', for example, reported thus:

> The seriousness of the menace in Glasgow, second city of the British Empire, can be judged by the following message to the *Sunday Dispatch* from Lord Provost Dollan: 'Here there are more than 2,000 subversive agents acting on instructions from Moscow. They disguise themselves as peace societies or genuine working-class organisations. It is time they were shown up for what they are!'

By May, the Joint Intelligence Committee had located possible havens for fifth columnists not only in the British Union of Fascists but in the Communist Party and the IRA, and had begun its lobbying in government for wholesale internment. Aliens in Category B were the next to be interned, followed by (under the infamous Defence Regulation 18B) a number of British subjects including Mosley and other pro-

minent British fascists. As the German army advanced in Europe, so the demands for increased internment grew, and on the day of the surrender of Belgium the Home Defence (Security) Committee was established to deal with internal controls on aliens, a body which, the authors note, was 'quite unaccountable' and had 'virtually untramelled powers'. Within days instructions were issued authorising the internment of the lowest category of aliens:

> The instructions effectively sanctioned MI5 to nominate its own arrests ... power now rested with a tiny body of men whose very existence was secret, whose members were not responsible to Parliament or even to Cabinet, among whom MI5 and the War Office were in clear ascendancy.

As Italy entered the war, Churchill issued his instruction which gives this book its title and this 'most disreputable episode' in British history had reached its climax.

By June 1940, over 27,000 people had been interned, including the Austrian sociologist and historian Franz Borkenau, the German photo-montage artist John Heartfield and the German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters – all, as so many internees, proven anti-fascists. A survey carried out by internees on a camp on the Isle of Man of 1,491 inmates showed that over 80 per cent were Jewish. Substantial numbers of those interned were also to be deported to Canada and Australia, often in horrendous conditions, and several hundred were to lose their lives when the ship transporting them was torpedoed.

That many internees were subsequently to be released almost as quickly as they had been interned should not detract from the lessons one might take forty years later from this episode. A popular xenophobia, fuelled by sections of the media and government, an unaccountable and largely uncontrolled security service, with its own interests and ideology, a hasty resort to draconian measures and powers and a failure on the part of the executive to understand the nature of fascism and therefore of those who sought refuge from it – all these combined and resulted in the loss of liberty and lives. Primarily of historical interest, this book has obvious contemporary relevance and importance, not only in the authors' persistent investigation in the face of the obstacles and hurdles of British official secrecy (also described in the book), but in its account of the British state's treatment of 'aliens', particularly in times of crisis, and in its warnings of the machinations of the security services 'state within the state'.

Runnymede Trust PAUL GORDON

Tales from the Dark Continent: images of British colonialism in the twentieth century

Edited by CHARLES ALLEN (London, Andre Deutsch/BBC, 1980). 166pp. £6.95

This book does not warrant a substantial review, but there are important lessons in it for the reader. It is an anthology of British colonialism in Africa, made up of contributions from ex-colonial personnel. A more maudlin and tendentious book about direct colonialism could hardly have been published, particularly during the year that has seen the last British governing flag lowered in Africa. 'In this panorama I have made no attempt to confront the political issues of colonialism', asserts the editor, and then proceeds to unfold a series of recollections, self-eulogies and opinions by ex-colonial administrators, governors and district officers – obligingly prefaced by a quotation from the late Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, from his Independence Day Speech of October 1960: 'We are grateful to the British officers, whom we have known first as masters and then as leaders and finally as partners; but always as friends.'

If one was to attempt a satire or draw a caricature of colonialism and its lone hero – the district officer – one could not do better than *Tales from the Dark Continent*. 'This book', says Anthony Kirk-Greene, in the Introduction, 'will help to preserve the memory of what it was like, at the grassroots level of daily routine, to live and work in Africa in the first sixty years of this century.' For whom? Certainly not for the mass of the African people (the egocentricity of colonialism could never extend itself that far), but for the heroes and heroines of *Boys' Own* and *Girls' Own*, keeping sand out of their hair in the Sudan, or forcing their African prisoners to build squash courts for them in Uganda.

It is necessary to keep alive in our collective memories the horrors of colonialism, in the same way that the German Democratic Republic has preserved and even restored the sites of concentration camps, or Mozambique puts on display in its museums the hated relics of colonial rule: the *machila*, a luxurious portable chair used to carry colonialists through the bush, or the *palmatoria*, the round, heavy-wooded weapon used to batter the hands and feet of the colonised. Such exhibits as these, together with the clear but unintended message of this book, tell us with all their grotesque force: NEVER AGAIN!

London CHRIS SEARLE

Books received

This listing does not preclude subsequent publication of reviews

Adjustment or protectionism: the challenge to Britain of Third World industrialisation. Edited by Abby Rubin Riddell. London, Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1980. Paper £3.50.

African women: their struggle for economic independence. By Christine Obbo. London, Zed Press, 1980. Cloth £12.95.

Anti-slavery, religion and reform. Edited by Christine Bolt and Seymour Drescher. Folkestone, Dawson Publishing, 1980. Cloth £17.

Away. By Andrew Salkey. London, Allison & Busby, 1980. Cloth £5.95. Paper £3.00.

Bias in mental testing. By A. Jensen. London, Methuen, 1980. Cloth £15.00.

Black Georgia in the progressive era, 1900-1920. By John Dittmer. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1980. Paper.

The black woman. Edited by La Frances Rodgers-Rose. Beverley Hills, Sage Publications, 1980. Cloth £11.85, Paper £6.25.

The computerization of society. By S. Nora and A. Minc. Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press, 1980. Cloth $12.50.

Contemporary marxism, no. 1: strategies for the class struggle in Latin America. Edited by Marlene Dixon and Susanne Jonas. San Francisco, Synthesis Publications, 1980. Paper $5.

Current TNC bibliography: an indexing service to the literature on transnational corporations. Edited by J.L. Noyce. Brighton, J.L. Noyce, 1980. Paper £23 per year.

The developing countries and the world economic order. By Lars Anell and Birgitta Nygren. London, Frances Pinter, 1980. Cloth £12.50.

Dread: the Rastafarians of Jamaica. By Joseph Owens. London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1980. Paper £3.50.

The harder they come. By Michael Thelwell. London, Pluto Press, 1980. Cloth £6.95, Paper £2.95.

Immigrants in Britain. By Harald Raykowski and James Kerr. Frankfurt, Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1980. Paper.

India's rural development: an assessment of alternatives. By Marcus Franda. London, Indiana University Press, 1980.

Indignant heart: testimony of a black American worker. By Charles Denby. London, Pluto Press, 1979. Paper £2.95.

The invisible empire: a bibliography of the Ku Klux Klan. By William H. Fisher. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press, 1980. Cloth £7.

Israel's sacred terrorism. By Livia Rokach. Belmont, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1980. Paper $4.50.

Jose Maria Sison: Filipino revolutionary fighter. By Alliance for Philippine National Democracy. New York, The Alliance, n.d. Paper.

Justice in South Africa. By John D. Jackson. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980. Paper £1.95.

London patidars: a case study in urban ethnicity. By Harald Tambs-Lyche. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980. Cloth £12.50.

The Lumbee problem: the making of an American Indian people. By Karen I. Blu. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980. Cloth £15. Paper £4.95.

Luanda: short stories of Angola. By Jose Luandino Vieira. London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1980. Paper £1.50.

Mexican women in the United States: struggles past and present. Edited by Magdalena Mora and Adelaide R. Del Castillo. Los Angeles, University of California, 1980. Paper.

Microelectronics: capitalist technology and the working class. By CSE Microelectronics Group. London, CSE Books, 1980. Cloth £8. Paper £2.95.

Migrant workers. International Labour Conference, 66th session. Geneva, ILO, 1980. Paper £6.25.

Migrant workers in the National Health Service. By L. Doyal and others. London, Polytechnic of North London, 1980. Paper.

The modern world-system II: mercantilism and the consolidation of the European world economy, 1600-1750. By Immanuel Wallerstein. New York, Academic Press, 1980. Cloth $22.

The NAACP crusade against lynching, 1909-1950. By Robert L. Zangrando. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1980. Cloth $19.50.

Notes on dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin. By C.L.R. James. London, Allison & Busby, 1980. Paper £4.95.

The politics of school desegregation: the metropolitan remedy in Delaware. By Jeffery A. Raffel. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1980. Cloth $19.50.

A practical guide to discrimination law. By Michael Malone. London, Grant McIntyre, 1980. Paper £9.95.

Profiteering from cheap labour. London, South African Labour Education Project, 1980.

The psychodynamics of race: vicious and benign spirals. By Rae Sherwood. Sussex, Harvester Press and New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1980. Cloth £28.

Race and state in capitalist development. By Stanley B. Greenberg. London, Yale University Press, 1980. Cloth £25.20, Paper £7.25.

Revolution in Iran und Afghanistan. Edited by Kurt Greussing and Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer. Frankfurt am Main, Syndikat, 1980. Paper.

Revolutionary thought in the 20th Century. Edited by Ben Turok. London, Zed Press, 1980. Cloth £12.95, Paper £4.50.

Runnin' down some lines: the language and culture of black teenagers. By Edith A. Folb. London, Harvard University Press, 1980. Cloth £9.

Savagism and civility: Indians and Englishmen in colonial Virginia. By Bernard W. Sheehan. London, Cambridge University Press, 1980. Cloth £15, Paper £4.95.

The social origins of Afrikaner fascism and its apartheid policy. By Howard Simson. Uppsala Studies in Economic History, 21. Uppsala, 1980.

Theodore Roosevelt and the idea of race. By Thomas G. Dyer. London, Louisiana State University Press, 1980. Cloth £9.

Three plays: Gloo Joo, Full frontal, For the West (Uganda). By Michael Hastings. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980. Paper £1.50.

Unity and struggle: speeches and writings of Amilcar Cabral. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1979 and London, Heinemann, 1980.

Westindians in Britain: Caribbean impact on the United Kingdom. Edited by Arif Ali. London, Hansib, 1979. Paper £4.95.

With the people: an autobiography from the Zimbabwe struggle. By M. Nyagumbo. London, Allison & Busby, 1980. Paper £3.95.

The following recent back issues of *Race & Class* are available from The Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1

AUTUMN 1979 VOLUME XXI No 2

A. Sivanandan	*Imperialism and disorganic development in the silicon age*
Basil Davidson	*The revolution of people's power: notes on Mozambique 1979*
Cedric Robinson	*The emergence and limitations of European radicalism*
Chris Searle	*Grenada's revolution: an interview with Bernard Coard*

WINTER 1980 VOLUME XXI No 3

Thomas Hodgkin	*The revolutionary tradition in Islam*
Gail Omvedt	*'Once this land was ours': agricultural labourers and adivasis in India*
Hussein A. Bulhan	*Frantz Fanon: the revolutionary psychiatrist*
Hilary Seymour	*'Sizwe Bansi is dead': a study of artistic ambivalence*

SPRING 1980 VOLUME XXI No 4

Jenny Bourne with A. Sivanandan	*Cheerleaders and ombudsmen: the sociology of race relations in Britain*
Cedric Robinson	*Richard Wright: marxism and the petite-bourgeoisie*
Stephen Castles	*The social time-bomb: education of an underclass in West Germany*
Chris Searle	*Struggling against the 'Bandastan': an interview with Attati Mpakati*

SUMMER 1980 VOLUME XXII No 1

Horace Campbell	*Rastafari: culture of resistance*
SWAPO	*Namibia: people's resistance, 1670-1970*
Paul Gilroy	*Managing the 'underclass': a further note on the sociology of race relations in Britain*
Richard Lapper and Hazel Johnson	*El Salvador: background to the struggle*

£1.50/$3.50

Institute of Race Relations
Transnational Institute