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THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION IN ISLAM by THOMAS HODGKIN

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'Sizwe Bansi is dead' – a critical look

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Number 3

The revolutionary tradition in Islam THOMAS HODGKIN	221
'Once this land was ours': agricultural labourers and adivasis in India GAIL OMVEDT	239
Frantz Fanon: the revolutionary psychiatrist HUSSEIN ABDILAH I BULHAN	251
'Sizwe Bansi is Dead': a study of artistic ambivalence HILARY SEYMOUR	273
Notes and documents	291
UK commentary: Fighting Tory racism (A. Sivanandan)	291
Book reviews	297
<i>Paul Robeson Speaks: writings, speeches, interviews, 1918-1974</i> edited by Philip S. Foner (A. Sivanandan)	297
<i>Minority Families in Britain: support and stress</i> , edited by V.S. Khan (Jenny Bourne)	299
<i>Corporate Imperialism: conflict and expropriation: transnational corporations and economic nationalism in the Third World</i> , by Norman Girvan (Bill Freund)	303
<i>Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815</i> , by Kenneth J. Logue (Bob Catterall)	305

- White Britain and Black Ireland*, by Richard Lebow (Bill Rolston) 308
- Marxism and the Metropolis*, edited by W.K. Tabb and Larry Sawers (Lee Bridges) 310
- Positive Image: towards a multiracial curriculum*, by Robert Jeffcoate (Hazel Waters) 313
- Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific*, by Alexander Mamak, Ahmed Ali and others (Raymond Evans and Susan Gardner) 315
- The Political Economy of Health*, by Lesley Doyal and Imogen Pennell (Geoff Hunt) 318
- An Act of Genocide: Indonesia's invasion of East Timor*, by Arnold Kohen and John Taylor (Anna Rossa) 319
- The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, by Colin Bundy (Ken Jordaan) 321
- Birds of Passage: migrant labor and industrial societies*, by Michael J. Piore (Harold M. Baron) 322
- Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925-1937*, By William H. Harris (Jeff Henderson) 325
- Medicine and Slavery: the diseases and health care of blacks in antebellum Virginia*, by Todd L. Savitt (Lesley Doyal) 327

Books received

329

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The revolutionary tradition in Islam

What is the strength of the revolutionary tradition within Islam? How far can Muslims and marxists work together, from the standpoint of both theory and practice, in the continuing struggle against the institutions of capitalism and imperialism? These are questions in which I have been interested for the past forty years and more, since I was in Palestine at the time of the outbreak of the Arab revolt in April 1936, and indeed before that. It has always seemed to me a subject of immense importance. Now is perhaps a moment when one might try to think again about it — in the context of the Iranian revolution partly, of course (these questions seemed to crop up from time to time in the recent special issue of *Race & Class*), but also of the continuing failure to achieve revolution in the Arab world and the sharpness of its internal conflicts. What in the Muslim world generally is the way forward?

I feel some diffidence about writing this very unlearned article, which is meant simply as a contribution to discussion. I know too little about recent work on the subject. I have not spent time recently in any part of the Muslim world. I am not a practising Muslim, and I am often bothered by the uncomprehending, misrepresenting way in which non-Muslims write about Islam — as uncomprehending and misrepresenting as much that non-marxists write about marxism. I am some kind of would-be practising marxist. But, just as a Muslim cannot say 'I am a believer', but only '*In sha' allah ana mu'min*' —

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'If God wills, I am a Believer', so probably I should say '*In sha'allah* — if nature and history (including my nature and my history) permit, I am a marxist'. But my main justification for trying to say something about this question is simply its intrinsic seriousness.

After all that (as they say), let me try to state a few basic presuppositions.

Basic premises: 'religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature'

1 I take for granted that we can dismiss, without further fuss, the kind of stereotypes of Islam that were developed (and are still being promoted) by western imperialism and its academic offspring, western 'orientalism':[1] that 'Islam is a fanatical, obscurantist religion, which trains its adherents in a narrow dogmatic creed, hostile to liberty of thought and the free development of ideas'.[2] A classic statement of this view was Ernest Renan's Sorbonne lecture on 'Islam and Science', delivered in 1883, at a critical and early phase of the epoch of imperialism, to which Jamal al-din al-Afghani (about whom more later) wrote his classic reply.[3] But what — someone may ask — about the *hadd* penalties (stoning for adultery, scourging for wine-bibbing, chopping off the hands of thieves), about purdah and the legalised subjection of women, about the emphasis on the submission of the masses to shaikhs and rulers ('the Sultan is the shadow of God on earth' and all that)? Is that not evidence of obscurantism? Of course, of course. These are terrible things, and they are justified (by those who perpetrate or defend them) by reference to Islam. But they are not what Islam *means* — any more than the total subordination, oppression and exploitation of the 'non-white' population of South Africa is what Christianity means, or the expulsion from their homes and land, imprisonment, torture, bombing from the air, of Palestinian Arabs is what Judaism means, or the crimes committed in the USSR and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe under Stalinism is what marxism means, though these too have been justified by appeals to sacred texts. Honest Muslims, honest Christians, honest Jews, honest marxists, are deeply distressed by these terrible things and spend as much of their lives as they can (though less than they wish) seeking to change them.

2 What is Islam? I am presupposing, rather crudely and provisionally, that Islam, like other great world-views ('religion' is, I think, a term that we can do without), is essentially a system of values, a body of imperatives, a view of how women and men ought to live, to order their relations with one another and with society. Islam includes also, like other world-views, a complex of beliefs about man's — and woman's — relations with history, nature, the cosmos — their purpose and destiny. These values, imperatives, ideas, are expressed in myths, legends, rules, institutions, practices, rituals, patterns of

behaviour, works of art, literature, scholarship, the whole making up what we think of as that marvellous achievement of the human mind, Islamic civilisation.

3 This involves the further presupposition that statements about God, transcendence, the world to come, have, certainly, meaning and importance, but they are basically ways of saying things about humanity, society, this actual world of experience, and can be translated, in principle, without loss. 'The earthly family is the secret of the Holy Family.' [4] 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation.' [5] Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, are some of the numerous and varied ideal structures that humanity has created to express its longing for a transformed social order in which the forms of oppression, exploitation and injustice existing in this actual world can be overcome, in which men and women can be wholly human.

4 Historically important world-views, like Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, are not themselves ideologies and acceptance of any one of them does not commit one to the acceptance of any particular ideology. If one presupposes, as Marx did and I do, that 'religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature', then one seems justified in presupposing also that there is a natural affinity between these world-views and radical or revolutionary ideologies. (Indeed, I would argue that both Christianity and Islam were, in the time of their founders, revolutionary movements.) But, since these world-views have all at different periods of history been taken over by ruling classes and transformed into state religions, they have also been associated with conservative, traditionalist, authoritarian, hierarchical ideologies, whose function it has been to justify and maintain the existing political and social order and the ascendancy of the existing ruling classes. This is particularly evident in the cases of Christianity and Islam. Thus the history of both Christianity and Islam can be thought of as a continuing struggle between the revolutionary-democratic and the conservative-authoritarian interpretations of these two world-views. Donatists, Circumcelliones, Khawarij, Qarmatians, Bogomils, Cathars, Lollards, Anabaptists, Familists, Levellers, and innumerable other radical Christian and Muslim sects, including all the Third World millenarian and messianic movements, Kimbanguists, Matswanists, Hamallists, and many others, have constantly restated in language relevant to their own time and situation the basic principles of their world-view, in its pure and uncorrupted form as they conceived it. Against this revolutionary interpretation the popes, emperors, kings, caliphs, sultans, and the main body of clergy and '*ulama*' have constantly restated the conservative-authoritarian interpretation, insisted that this is the true Christian or Muslim faith and that the revolutionary interpretation is

heresy and burned, hanged, tortured, imprisoned and made war on those who thought otherwise.[6]

(In this connection one must remember that there is an important difference of organisational form between Islam and Christianity. Islam has no church and no priesthood — the '*ulama*' are simply those learned in the Islamic sciences, a clerisy, not a clergy. Hence there can be no orthodoxy and no heresy, though historically *ijma*', the consensus of the faithful, has become the main criterion of the validity, or acceptability, of a particular interpretation of Islam.)

5 An ancient trick of the exponents of the conservative-authoritarian interpretation of Christianity has been to assert that the transformed society, in which oppression will be overcome — the 'Kingdom of Heaven' — is not to be conceived of as realisable here and now (as the revolutionaries have insisted), but elsewhere, out of time, in an other-worldly sense — 'pie in the sky, when you die — that's a lie', as the old Wobbly song has it. But it has always been more difficult to interpret Islam in this kind of other-worldly sense, since the idea of a just society, regulated by the principles of the divinely revealed *Shari'a*, to be achieved here on earth, in historical time, has for the past fourteen hundred years been an essential component of the Islamic world-view. In fact Islam, as a world-view, has always had a particular concern with human history — its meaning, direction, possibilities and problems.[7]

6 It follows that in matters of social and political theory Christians and Muslims who are committed to a revolutionary interpretation of their respective world-views are much closer to marxists, and, of course, to one another, than they are to their so-called 'co-religionists' who accept a conservative interpretation, and should be closer also in social practice. But this does not at all mean that they are some kind of marxist fellow-travellers — and a serious mistake of marxists from time to time has been to treat them as though they were. (Sultan Galiyev — see below — had sensible things to say on this point.) I once asked a British marxist friend who had visited the USSR shortly after the last war whether he had learned anything about the situation of Islam there. 'Well', he replied, 'Imams are very useful people to have on peace committees.' A joke — but not simply a joke. For even if one believes, as I do, that statements about the transcendent can be translated into statements about the world of experience, that is not the way in which most believing Muslims or Christians think about things. Respect for the presuppositions of others — and the maximum effort to comprehend them — is surely a precondition of effective co-operation within a revolutionary movement, or front. This must exclude any kind of instrumental approach to Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, or indeed the world-views of Dogon or Dinka, or any of the thousands of faiths that continue to influence

human thought and practice. Expressions which one slips into, like 'the revolutionary potential of Islam', are undesirable in that they appear to treat Islam as a means to an end beyond itself — social revolution, the achievement of socialism. But for a believer, however much he may regard social revolution as not merely compatible with Islam but necessary from the standpoint of Islam, an assertion of the principles of Islam, Islam must be ultimate, the end to which all other ends are related. Moreover, to be a Muslim means not only to hold certain basic beliefs about man's relations to God, to society and to history. It means also to belong to a civilisation which, whatever its imperfections, present and past, one respects, enjoys and seeks to maintain.

7 I assume, of course, the general validity of marxism as a method of seeking to understand, and transform, society and the general necessity and desirability of revolutions, seeking to establish socialism, or to advance towards it, under some form of marxist leadership, in capitalist countries (industrialised and Third World, *colonisants* and *colonisés*).[8] In Muslim and partly Muslim countries, from Senegal to Indonesia, such revolutions must involve not only the active participation of the Muslim masses but also the collaboration of Muslim revolutionaries with marxists in the planning and execution of revolutionary strategy. In continuing to hold this belief I seem to qualify for membership of the category which Maxime Rodinson, in his gloomy *Le Monde* articles, somewhat dismissively describes as 'certain intellectuals or semi-intellectuals who were formerly inspired by the marxist spirit and who remain under its spell, either through faith, misty vision, ignorance or hardening of the arteries'.[9]

8 What about the 'withering away', or 'dying-out', of religion? Am I concealing my presuppositions on this point? I hope not. But I find myself diffident about long-term predictions. Much has turned out in ways that we had not anticipated. Marx and Engels were, I think, cautious too:

The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to nature.[10]

We are still quite a long way from that. In any case, cut off from their associations with conservative-authoritarian ideologies, shorn of the superstitions which Lucretius rightly believed grew out of man's terror of the unknown, Islam, Christianity and the other great world-views will (I believe) remain important as ways of thinking about human destiny, as sources of moral imperatives, as patterns of culture.

Let me now try to say something about the revolutionary tradition within Islam, its character and content. This is a vast theme about

which much has been written. I can only deal briefly and selectively with four aspects.

Aspects of the Islamic tradition: 'Judgment belongs to God alone'

First, the *Khawarij* (plural of *Khariji*), meaning 'those who went out', the name given to those Muslims who separated from the rest of the community (*umma*) in protest against the arbitration to which the fourth Caliph, 'Ali, agreed under pressure from his troops at the battle of Siffin in AD 657.[11] Their basic principle, 'Judgment belongs to God alone', showed the tendency which has been characteristic of radical movements throughout history, to move towards an anarchist standpoint, the rejection of government as such. The Caliphate, the crucial Islamic institution, they thought could only be justified on utilitarian grounds. If the people were sufficiently mature and virtuous to ensure the application of the *Shari'a* (the divine law) there would be no need for a Caliph. If there had to be a Caliph the *Khawarij* insisted on the maximum popular participation in his election and on the right of the community to depose him for errors, particularly for oppression or corruption. Here, as often, their political theory was a logical outcome of their theology, since error, in their strict view, automatically transformed a Muslim into an unbeliever. Among the essential qualifications for a Caliph were humility, austerity in personal life, knowledge of the *Shari'a* and courage in war. Lineage was unimportant. Anyone of the faithful, if worthy, could be elected, 'even if he were a black slave'. The relatively large measure of freedom and initiative — in political, intellectual and military affairs — permitted to women by the *Khawarij* had also a theological basis, since it was associated with their conception of *jihad* as an individual, not a collective, responsibility, binding on every believer — therefore women also must participate. Their insistence on a high educational standard as a precondition of membership of the community (candidates were required to pass an examination before acceptance) arose from their sensible belief that to act in accordance with the divine law it was necessary to understand it.

For the *Khawarij* this rationally consistent system of beliefs was not a revolutionary interpretation of Islam (as I have presented it). It was Islam. All other so-called Muslims were in fact unbelievers and *jihad* against them was in principle obligatory — and in practice often bloodily conducted. At the same time they showed a remarkable degree of toleration towards Jews and Christians. In spite of tremendous efforts by the Umayyad and 'Abbasid Caliphates to exterminate them, they maintained themselves in various regions of the Muslim world during the first three centuries Hijra, sinking particularly deep roots among the Berber peoples of North Africa, to whose democratic traditions their doctrines naturally appealed. 'Nowhere', as Charles-

André Julien picturesquely put it, 'did ascetic and egalitarian attitudes, inseparable from the hatred of rulers, reach such a pitch of intensity.' [12] But in general the *Khariji* creed, with its rejection of all forms of ethnic and social privilege, had a powerful attraction for the poor and oppressed, including Negroes. Like other movements in history which have attached great importance to theory and have insisted on the necessity for taking correct positions in regard to difficult ideological questions, the *Khawarij* developed out of their doctrinal controversies a rich variety of competing sub-sects and produced — for internal and external consumption — a large and important body of literature. While surviving sub-sects (of which the best known is the *Ibadis*) have in the main lost their revolutionary dynamism and become ossified tolerated dissenting groups, the basic ideas of *Kharijism* have maintained themselves throughout the history of Islam, constantly restated and renewed. It would not indeed be far-fetched to see the Algerian revolution of 1954-62 as, in part, a reassertion of *Khariji* principles.

Mahdism: 'the earth will bring forth its fruits'

Secondly, *Mahdism*. While *Kharijism* was based on clear, rational, theological presuppositions, *Mahdism* has throughout history been the Islam of the people, the way in which the truths of their faith have been apprehended by the masses, particularly in those situations in which they have not only become conscious of oppression but are ready to respond to a movement which seems to offer a revolutionary way out. 'If the present belongs to the oppressors the future belongs to us, the revolutionary community — and outside the community there is no salvation and no future.' The basic text for the theory of *Mahdism* is Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, where the following short summary provides the point of departure for a long and learned critique of popular traditions:

It has been well known and generally accepted by all Muslims in every epoch that at the end of time a man from the family of the Prophet will without fail make his appearance, one who will strengthen the religion and make justice triumph. The Muslims will follow him and he will gain domination over the Muslim realm. He will be called the Mahdi. Following him the Antichrist will appear, together with all the subsequent signs of the Hour [the Day of Judgment] ... After the Mahdi 'Isa [Jesus] will descend and kill the Antichrist. Or Jesus will descend together with the Mahdi and help him kill the Antichrist, and have him as the leader in his prayers. [13]

The essentials of *Mahdist* theory in its developed form, one might say, are, first, the conception of crisis, during the period before the end of time in which the Mahdi will appear; secondly, the idea that

the Mahdi, as the divinely guided one, can exercise a special revolutionary initiative in his interpretation of the Qur'an and the *Sunna*, and is responsible for conducting *jihad* against nominal and backsliding Muslims who reject his mission, thus ensuring the universal triumph of Islam; thirdly, the association of the Mahdi with the approaching end of the world and the brief intervening golden age, during which he will 'fill the earth with equity and justice, even as it has been filled with tyranny and oppression'. The characteristics of this millenarian society have been described in fascinating detail:

The Muslims will enjoy under him [the Mahdi] a prosperity the like of which has never been heard of; the earth will bring forth its fruits and heaven will pour down its rain; money in that day will be like that which is trodden under foot and will be uncounted; a man will stand up and say — 'O Mahdi, give to me', and he will say — 'Take' and he will pour into his robe as much as he can carry ... [14]

The point to bear in mind is the constant recurrence of Mahdis and Mahdist movements throughout the Muslim world at all periods of Muslim history. Though originally associated particularly with the *Shi'a* community, Mahdist beliefs early became an integral part of popular Sunnism. It would, I imagine, be impossible to list all the Mahdis who have aroused, and disappointed, the messianic hopes of the Muslim masses. Some have been major world figures who established themselves as rulers over extensive regions, like 'Ubaid Allah, the founder of the Fatimid dynasty in the tenth century, Ibn Tumart, the founder of the Almohad dynasty in the early twelfth century (both in North Africa), and in more modern times Muhammad Ahmad, the Sudanese Mahdi, inspirer of one of the last great pre-colonial African Islamic states. But there have been countless minor local Mahdis, and there have been Mahdist beliefs and prophecies associated with Muslim leaders (like 'Uthman dan Fodio or 'Abd al-Qadir) who refused to regard themselves as Mahdis. The 'political strife, social disorder and moral degeneration' traditionally associated with the state of crisis in which the coming of a Mahdi could be expected were, of course, as endemic in the Muslim as the Christian world. But by the nineteenth century, with the increasing pressure of the West on the Muslim world and, from about 1880 on, the beginnings of the 'epoch of imperialism', involving generalised European invasion, occupation and annexation of Muslim states, there seemed particularly clear signs of such crisis and particular need for the appearance of a revolutionary liberating Mahdi, the 'Expected Deliverer'. So in fact in sub-Saharan Africa (and I think fairly generally elsewhere in the Muslim world) there was an eruption of Mahdist movements at the turn of the century, which continued on into the early, and middle, colonial period. [15] 'Mahdist propaganda',

associated in a confused and shadowy way with Bolshevism, the Third International, Egyptian nationalism, Panislamism and ideas of world revolution in general, was an object of terror to British colonial administrators in northern Nigeria in the early 1920s. According to the lurid, and sometimes fantastic, Tomlinson-Lethem Report a factor contributing to the spread of 'Mahdist propaganda' was:

The widespread belief (not, of course, confined to Nigeria) that the end of the world, which is to take place in A.H. 1400 (1979 A.D.), will be preceded by the supremacy of the false prophet ('Dajjal' or Anti-Christ), followed by the second coming of Nebi Isa (Jesus Christ), after which all the world will be converted to Islam. It has been the practice of agitators of late to identify the European conquerors of Muslim countries with Dajjal.[16]

Why not? I had a long conversation with a pious Muslim in Nema (Mali) in 1952 who was convinced that AH1400 (this year) would be the fatal year. He may be right. There are plenty of candidates for Dajjal. But where are the Mahdi and Nebi 'Isa?

Jamal al-din al-Afghani: 'What is the cause of the poverty, indigence, helplessness and distress of the Muslims?'

A third important strand in the Islamic revolutionary tradition stems from Jamal al-din al-Afghani (1838-97). As I have begun to learn more about him (from Nikki Keddie, Homa Pakdaman and his own writings) I have found him increasingly fascinating as a person and serious as a revolutionary.[17] True, it is possible to derive from him theories also of an anti-revolutionary and fundamentalist kind. But this seems to me a subordinate aspect of his thought. Al-Afghani was probably the first altogether modern Muslim revolutionary, a wandering scholar, journalist, teacher, philosopher, gathering his students and disciples around him in cafés as well as mosques. His impact on national and reforming movements throughout the Muslim world, from Morocco to Indonesia, was profound. Much of that world he travelled through and knew at first hand — India, Afghanistan, Iran (his country of origin), Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Uzbekistan; he spoke and wrote their languages, as well as French, English and Russian; was involved in their anti-imperialist struggles and expelled from most of them. His early experience of India and continuing concern with its problems gave him a particular hatred of British imperialism, a characteristic which I personally find very sympathetic.

Al-Afghani's starting-point was the immensity and complexity of the problems raised for the Muslim peoples by the fact of western imperialism (which he was the first Muslim thinker to understand and to analyse at all adequately).

What is the cause of the poverty, indigence, helplessness and distress of the Muslims, and is there a cure for this important phenomenon and great misfortune or not?[18]

Al-Afghani himself was far from clear about the solution to be found for this problem, but, as we are still by no means clear a hundred years later, he can hardly be blamed for that. What was particularly valuable about his approach was the tremendous emphasis he placed on 'philosophy', meaning a re-examination and critique of first principles, and above all on the principle of *ijtihad*, the idea of free enquiry, the right, and responsibility, of every believer to interpret the Qur'an and the *Sunna* for himself (or herself, but one must admit that al-Afghani was somewhat weak on the woman question). He was somewhat elitist too as a rule in his application of the concept of *ijtihad*, since he tended to stress also the necessity for an unquestioning commitment to Islam on the part of the masses, to enable them to resist the corrupting influences of imperialism. But, though he is thought of as the father of Panislamism, and did indeed play a part in the development of that ideology, he was no narrow Islamic revivalist, insisting in his Indian lectures and writings on the historical basis of Indian patriotism and the need for unity of Muslims and Hindus in the struggle against British imperialism. Central to his thinking was the idea of science and technology as the main source of the power of western imperialism; hence the need for Muslims and other oppressed peoples to master science as the means to their liberation and the reassertion of their own power. All this fits within the framework of his crucial activist view of history, associated with the often-quoted Koranic verse (which he, as far as I know, was the first to use in this particular way) — 'Verily, God does not change the state of a people until they change themselves inwardly'.

In later life al-Afghani criticised himself for paying too much attention to sultans, too little to the masses, in his search for a strategy of liberation. But he was aware of the importance of class, as well as national, struggle, as this exhortation to the Egyptian peasantry shows:

O you poor fellah. You break the heart of the earth in order to draw sustenance from it and support your family. Why do you not break the heart of your oppressor? Why do you not break the heart of those who eat the fruit of your labour?[19]

When he thought about the part which the Muslim masses could play in anticolonial revolution he turned naturally to Mahdism. In his famous articles in *L'Intransigeant*, written in 1883, in the early phase of the Sudanese Mahdiyya, he spoke hopefully of its world-revolutionary possibilities:

Another definite victory of the Mahdi — which would undoubtedly appear to Muslims as a second miracle — would have the fateful consequence of stimulating insurrection, not only in the countries of

Islam under Turkish domination, but also in Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Sind, Hindustan, Bokhara, Kokand, Khiva, and would lead to disturbances in Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria and as far as Morocco. For all Muslims await the Mahdi and consider his coming to be an absolute necessity.[20]

Al-Afghani was, alas, overoptimistic. But Professor Kedourie, who cites this passage, is absurd to regard al-Afghani's attitude to Mahdism as evidence of religious unbelief. He wants to distinguish sharply between 'the traditional views of the actual Mahdi who believed that the true purpose of his mission was to restore religion' and al-Afghani's 'grandiose soteriological vision of an all-powerful leader followed by a vast mass of Muslims who, by their belief in him, would gain the strength to rise against and annihilate their foreign oppressors'. [21] But for one who understands Islam as al-Afghani understood it these categories of 'religion' and 'politics' have no meaning. The liberation of the Muslim community from domination by western imperialism is what Islam is all about. As for orthodoxy, see above. Who in Islam is orthodox? To accuse another of unbelief is simply to proclaim your own unbelief. So I refrain from calling Professor Kedourie a *kafir*.

Sultan Galiyev: 'all the Muslim colonial peoples are proletarian peoples'

If Jamal al-din al-Afghani can perhaps be thought of as the outstanding representative of the bourgeois revolutionary interpretation of Islam, Sultan Galiyev is certainly one of the most interesting representatives of the proletarian revolutionary interpretation. His ideas deserve much fuller study than they have yet received.[22] It is sad to recollect a discussion about them with Malcolm Caldwell at a Race & Class conference three years ago when we agreed we would both like to write something serious on Sultan Galiyev for the journal. But there is room for only the briefest mention here. Born about 1880 in Krimsakaly, in what is now the Bashkir SSR, a Tatar, he studied at Kazan, combined literature (he translated Tolstoy into Tatar) and journalism with teaching, marxist theory with Muslim reformism — much influenced, it seems, by a very interesting fellow-Tatar, Hanafi Muzaffar, who believed in the total reconciliation of Communism and Islam. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, in November 1917, he joined the Communist Party, became President of the Central Muslim Commissariat and assistant to Stalin at the Commissariat of Nationalities — a job which he held until August 1918. Thereafter he came increasingly into conflict with Stalin and the Party leadership, and his particular form of national Bolshevism/Muslim Communism came to be condemned as a heresy, a 'rightist deviation', known as 'Sultan-galievism', after 1921. 1923 marked his

expulsion from the Party and final fall from power. According to Trotsky, quoting Kamenev, 'this was the first arrest of a leading member of the Party carried out on Stalin's initiative'. Later released, he appears to have become involved in underground oppositional activities; was rearrested in 1928; condemned to ten years forced labour in a White Sea labour camp; released again in 1939, when he asked permission, unsuccessfully, to devote himself to literature. 'After 1940 we lose track of him'.

Few of Sultan Galiyev's writings are at all easily available: too little to be sure of his views on many points, which in any case changed through time — and for his later oppositional period one is dependent largely on the testimony of his political opponents, like depending on Saint Augustine for our knowledge of the Donatists. But enough has been translated (by Bennigsen and Quelquejay especially) for one to be able to grasp the contemporary relevance of his ideas. A central thesis was that the Muslim nations were entirely proletarian.

All the Muslim colonial peoples are proletarian peoples, and, since almost all classes of Muslim society were formerly oppressed by the colonialists, all have the right to the title of proletarian ... From an economic point of view there is an enormous difference between, say, the English or French proletariat and the Afghan or Moroccan proletariat. So one can argue that the national movement in Muslim countries has the character of a socialist revolution.[23]

With this went a particular, and very interesting view of Islam, as a special kind of religion — 'not a class religion ... a religion which transcends classes', as Hanafi Muzaffar had put it'. The youngest of the world's great religions, it had preserved its social and political teachings better than others, was more deeply involved in the people's social life, its mullahs were much closer to the people than Russian Orthodox priests, more democratically selected. Many of its social principles were admirable and entirely compatible with socialism — the condemnation of superstitions, prohibition of sorcery, gambling, luxury, extravagance, gold jewellery, wearing silk, drinking alcohol, usury and 'cannibalism'. [24] So anti-religious propaganda should be undertaken only with discretion, understanding and respect for Muslim beliefs. What was above all needed was the 'defanaticisation' of Islam. Moreover the unity of the Muslim *umma*, expressed through a whole range of institutions, such as the *hajj*, remained of the greatest importance, from the point of view both of political structures within the USSR (where Sultan Galiyev wanted to establish an autonomous Muslim Communist Party) and of its world-revolutionary possibilities.

Closely linked with Sultan Galiyev's view of the essentially proletarian character of Muslim society was the idea, which he formulated

quite early but expressed with increasing sharpness as he became increasingly disillusioned with the policies of the Party and the Comintern, of the essentially oppressive and exploitative relationship between the western industrialised colonialist nations and the proletarian Asian-African colonised (what are nowadays called 'Third World') nations. So that a socialist revolution in an industrialised country would not by itself be sufficient to end, or transform, this relationship:

Let us take the example of the British proletariat, the most developed of them all. If a revolution succeeds in England, the proletariat will go on oppressing the colonies and pursuing the policy of the existing bourgeois government, for it is interested in the exploitation of those colonies. It is to avoid the oppression of the workers of the East that we must unite the Muslim masses in an indigenous, autonomous, Communist movement.[25]

Hence, from a practical point of view, Sultan Galiyev came to advocate the establishment of a new kind of 'Colonial Communist International', independent of the Comintern, including the Muslim peoples of the USSR (but not the Russians) and 'all oppressed peoples' (Muslim and non-Muslim, colonial and semi-colonial, Asian, African and Latin-American). He urged likewise the creation of a great Turkic-Muslim state within the USSR. Only thus could the proletarian peoples achieve true liberation. Very heretical.

Responsibility, activism, austerity: ijthad, jihad, zuhd

Let me try to pull a few threads together. What are the main points of theory in regard to which there would seem to be a reasonable measure of agreement between revolutionary Muslims — those who belong to the revolutionary tradition within Islam — and marxists?

1 The idea of the individual's responsibility for everything he/she does — and believes: a principle of great importance for a revolutionary movement seeking to detach people from habits of obedience and deference to established authorities (sultans, Tories, neo-colonial governments, shaikhs, right-wing labour leaders, etc.). With this is associated the vitally important principle of *ijthad*, the idea of free enquiry, the right and responsibility of every believer to interpret the Qur'an and the *Sunna*, or the marxist classics, for him/herself — an idea which has constantly to be fought for, within both the Muslim and the marxist world, against the principle of submission to bureaucratic authority, of '*ulama*' or central committees — the too much centralism and too little democracy that Lenin deplored.[26]

2 The idea of activism. 'God does not change the state of a people until they change themselves inwardly.' Men make their own history.

This idea runs through the revolutionary and radical tradition in Islam; that believers have the responsibility to command the good and forbid the bad; that beliefs must be expressed in social practice; that it is the duty of believers to struggle to bring into being and maintain a perfected community, a just society, by armed insurrection, *jihad* of the sword, where conditions are favourable; by individual struggle, or reformist methods, the *jihad* of the heart, tongue and hand, where conditions for the launching of a popular revolutionary struggle are unfavourable.

3 The egalitarian-democratic idea — two closely related principles in fact, most clearly developed among the *Khawarij*, but an essential part of the revolutionary tradition within Islam. The egalitarian idea insists on the equality of all believers, irrespective of ethnic origin, lineage, wealth, social status, and certainly sex. The democratic idea stresses the rights of peoples against their rulers and ruling classes, the right of the maximum popular participation in the making of decisions at all levels, the special rights of the most oppressed classes and categories.

4 Austerity, *zuhd*. Revolutionary Islam has, of course, been closely associated historically with ideas of Puritanism. I am not thinking so much of the prohibitions in regard to alcohol, tobacco, gambling, sorcery, etc., to which Sultan Galiyev refers, as the insistence on simplicity of life, avoidance of conspicuous consumption and general *embourgeoisement*, refusal to use political office for personal gain, which should be — but has not always been — a necessary part of the social practice of any revolutionary movement, Muslim or marxist, and especially of its leadership. The Prophet himself (like Marx, Lenin or Ho Chi Minh) has constantly been quoted as a model by Muslim revolutionaries:

He [the Prophet] deloused his clothing, patched it, repaired his sandals, served himself, gave fodder to his camel used for water-carrying, ate with his servant and kneaded dough with him, and carried his own goods to market — a job he allowed nobody else to do for him.[27]

5 The idea of universality. Revolutionary Islam seeks to establish a model Islamic community on a worldwide basis, as marxists seek to establish a world socialist commonwealth. So, once the revolutionary drive has been halted, both movements find themselves confronted with a tension, between the wider perspectives of continuing world revolution and the more limited objective of the effort to construct a just society within a given region. Indeed, to see the world in Islamic terms, as divided between *dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the abode of war, or revolutionary struggle), is not so different from seeing it in marxist terms, as divided between a socialist

world and a capitalist-imperialist world. Moreover, just as Muslims have had to face the development of deep and continuing contradictions within the Muslim world (between *Sunni* and *Shi'a*, for example), so marxists have come to be confronted with comparable terrible contradictions within the socialist world, and have to think how to deal with them.

6 The idea of history. It has often been suggested that Islamic historians and philosophers of history have been predominantly backward-looking, seeing the model Islamic community in the remote past, in the epoch of the Prophet and the four (or two?) just Caliphs. This would certainly not be an adequate description of the view of revolutionary Muslims who, while referring back to this past model (as they conceived it), look forward also to the achievement of a transformed and perfected Islamic community in the foreseeable future. Revolutionary Islam, particularly in its Mahdist form (as I have argued elsewhere), shares with marxism a concept of history as involving a continuing conflict between oppressors and oppressed, leading, by a process conceived as historically necessary, to the ultimate victory of the oppressed; and generating, in a situation of profound crisis, a revolutionary movement which will bring about the overthrow of the existing corrupt and oppressive social order and the substitution of a just, and classless, society.[28]

I hope this very sketchy discussion will at least have established two points: first, that there is an authentic, ancient, but also living, revolutionary tradition in Islam; secondly, that there is sufficient common theoretical ground between revolutionary Muslims and marxists for them to be able to work together effectively in many kinds of political situation. Of course there are factors making for conflict between them too. These can, I think, occur at three distinct levels. One might be called metaphysical: the bundle of problems which Kant labelled 'God, freedom and immortality' — 'Does matter think?' and all that. Such questions are fascinating but, in my view, unanswerable — or very incompletely answerable. But they can still be divisive as they were in early Islam — and Muslim reactionaries can still stir a mob by calling marxists materialists. Another level is that of public policy. What should be done about education, the status and rights of women, law, property, agrarian reform, nationalities, etc.? That can cause trouble too. A third is that of Muslim rights, centring on the right of the Muslim *umma* to function as a universal society, to maintain and develop its institutions and culture in its own way (which is something totally different from the now counter-revolutionary idea of an Islamic state). It is in regard to this group of problems that the attitude of marxists, in the USSR and elsewhere, seems hitherto to have been least flexible and intelligent, the grievances of Muslims have been most serious, and we all have

most to learn. So I am disturbed when I find an old marxist like Maxime Rodinson (from whom I have learned much in the past) seeming almost to identify Islam with Islamic fundamentalism and conservatism, and ignoring, or much undervaluing, the strength of its revolutionary tradition.[29]

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'Once this land was ours': agricultural labourers and adivasis* in India

We publish below a chapter from Gail Omvedt's forthcoming book We will smash this prison! Indian women in struggle. Gail's research (which both sprang out of, and involved her further, in active commitment to the women's movement in India) took place during 1975-6. Her book gives an account of those ten months, of the women she met and talked to, the problems they faced and the solutions they were beginning to work out, culminating in the organisation of a 'United Women's Liberation Struggle Conference' held in Pune.

When I talk about my experiences of those days, I am invariably asked, with some amazement, 'But was your experience typical? Were these women typical?' No, of course not. Why should they be? First, readers should remember that the events described here took place mainly in one part of India, the state of Maharashtra, which has a relatively high rate of women's work participation and a strong tradition of social-cultural revolt, both factors leading to a relatively vigorous expression of women's militancy. Secondly, the women I met for the most part (though not always) were in some way or another involved in organisation and protest activity. They were not 'typical' in the sense of being randomly chosen to represent a numerical average. But they are authentic.

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*'original inhabitants'.

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Ballad of the Bhils

My first salute is to Mother India,
 To the earth of India,
 There is light all over the world
 Each country has god's blessing.
 My second salute is to the red flag —
 Look, look at its glory.
 The red flag reaches to the sky
 And gives inspiration to our lives.
 My third salute is to the heroes of revolution —
 To Bhagat Singh
 To Subash Babu
 To Babu Genu.
 For the country they lost their lives,
 For the country they sacrificed themselves.
 Their fame spread over the seven seas.
 This land is the Adivasis',
 It belongs to the Bhils, Kolis, Pharsepardhis,
 Katkaris, Thakuris, Warlis, Gonds,
 To these people.
 In the dark forests on the banks of the Narbuda
 Lived the Bhils,
 And in the Satpudas lived the Bhils.
 They were kings of the forest —
 These landless people were once kings of the forest!
 1857 became the time of rebellion,
 The time of revolution.
 The fire spread all over the country,
 It spread in valleys and in mountains.
 Adivasi heroes went to war
 With bows and arrows in their hands,
 This rebellion of bows and arrows
 Made the white man helpless.
 Gomaji in Pune,
 Piraji Naik in Tarubag,
 These made revolt, these made revolution.
 The growing power of rebellion shook the Company Sarkar,
 Then they became wise
 And got hold of wealthy moneylenders —
 They found a way out
 To deal a blow to the poor.
 The cunning white sahibs found a way out,
 The cunning white sahibs used their head.
 To some they gave a bribe,
 To others they gave jobs,

And those who lost, lost because of their fate,
Don't even have shelter,
The hired thugs torment them.
How many of the Bhils, Kolis, Thakurs, Katkaris
Don't have a place to live today!
In the land that belonged to them
They can't protect themselves from the cold and wind.

*by Bapurao Bardé
Tribal ballad sung in typical peasant style*

So I am going to meet Tanubai, militant agricultural labourer, tribal (that is, a representative of one of the most oppressed sections of India's population), ballad singer of the movement, a woman who symbolises much of my earliest encounters with the fighting rural women of India.

But it seems that there is a problem about Tanubai. And that is that apparently after 1971 she has dropped out of the movement.

When I ask about her in 1973 during a short visit and again in 1975, Lal Nishan leaders both in Bombay and Ahmednagar are reticent, even evasive. Her husband, they say, along with the leader of the singing troupe — also a relative and the writer of many of the songs, those militant red flag songs of revolution — has been wooed and won by India's ruling party, the Congress! he has gone over to the other side, and Tanubai has gone with him. Why? Well, these things happen. Even the most militant and purely proletarian can get corrupted. Little more is said and I am not willing to press the issue.

Instead Suresh and I talk about Kathod Farm. It is a notable feature of northern Ahmednagar — a huge private farm owned by a textile magnate in Bombay which at one time comprised 1,200 acres, organised on a factory-like basis and growing the major cash crops of sugar cane and cotton. Of these 1,200 acres, 400 were owned outright by the family and the rest leased in from medium-sized peasants of the surrounding villages, so that the capitalists here were officially tenant farmers. There were several such farms in Ahmednagar, and it was on these that the organising of agricultural labourers first took place, initially led by the CPI, then the Socialists, then the Lal Nishan Party (LNP).

It is normal that such rural unionisation would first occur on plantations or on farms managed and run like factories. What is perhaps not so normal is what has been happening recently. The big capitalist farms of Ahmednagar are being broken up and sold off; the Bombay capitalists are withdrawing their investments; the leased sections are being returned to their original peasant owners. This has meant in many cases new pressure on the unions, since the original peasant owners are not so ready to grow cash crops and instead are

reverting at least partially to food crops which employ far fewer workers. In the case of Kathod there are only 400 acres left and 200 regularly-employed workers, though many others are hired on a contract basis. The inability of the union to prevent such developments and save jobs has laid it open to some demoralisation, and in fact a rival union has been started by one of its former activists who accuses the local leader, Bhauke, of being dictatorial and discriminatory, and who is actively using caste divisions (he is a Dalit) to build his own base.

In the case of Kathod Farm we could almost be entering a factory situation. Here are no semi-feudal relations of dependence in which landlords tyrannise weak, fragmented labourers, but professional managers who have grown accustomed like all Indian managers to dealing with strikes and *gheraos*, to negotiating with unions, to manoeuvring and encouraging splits. They are much more experienced than the managers of the Agricultural University at this; they may even feel they have the situation under control. At any rate they have to deal with the union leaders. And so we begin our visit to Kathod Farm with a discussion with the managers. It takes place in a long, low central building set under shady trees; even the buildings at Kathod seem more seasoned than those of the Agricultural University.

I want to know about the issue of equal wages for women. On Kathod Farm, of the 200 labourers most are Dalits and Christians, that is, converts from Dalit castes, though tribal people and other castes are also there. Of these, 85, all men, are on permanent status and earn 4½ to 6 rupees a day. The others are employed on a daily basis: 47 are men earning 3 to 4 rupees a day and 68 are women earning only 3 rupees a day. Besides these there are the labourers hired on contract for the harvest and heavy work periods; their women get 2 rupees a day.

Two things about these wages stand out. One is their relatively, even abysmally, low nature, considering the long history of organisation in the area. For all the factory nature of the work and the unionisation, these rates are significantly below the wages of regularly-employed and unionised urban workers. The other, of course, is the discrimination against women. Why?

It's customary, traditional, is the first response. One manager gives the main argument: 'Women don't give as much output.' Suresh points out that this is a meaningless argument since women do different kinds of work from men. The manager shifts ground: women's work is 'light work', work which can be done very comfortably. 'If men do the same work, they will do more of it.'

Then why was it, I ask, that during the famine period men and women were paid equally even though they did different types of work? This was a passing phenomenon, say the managers. 'The government was a little generous in giving equal pay,' says one, and

they had to do this and to promise an equal minimum wage because 'otherwise the people will shout'.

This I feel is getting somewhere — then the main determinant of wages is political pressure and organisation, I suggest. Perhaps the reason women have low wages to begin with is that they have not been organised in the past. Even the left parties neglected their cause up to the time of the famine period, and women have always been easier to exploit. (It is a discussion that is pointless to carry on with the managers, but it is an ongoing one. Elsewhere, a woman head of a middle-peasant farm which hires labourers from time to time agrees with her nephew that men's work is 'superior' but adds, 'women also can do superior work, but they won't. They pass time. ...' At half the wages, it is no wonder.)

Why has the farm been broken up, I ask. Because it's not profitable, say the managers. Land ceiling laws put too much pressure on them and make it impossible to maintain big holdings (though it should be noted that there are no ceilings on leases, and it was the leased, not owned, lands that were returned), while the high prices of fertilisers and other inputs versus the low prices of even the best crops make capitalist farming insufficiently profitable (this may well be true: it has been the central theme of all rich peasant agitations in India for some years).

After this we go out to a discussion with the workers, sitting in the shade of a large tree. There is a long debate on inter-union disputes, which I follow only partially, where Bhauke explains his position, the workers listen and give their responses. The workers, a group of about 100 people, are relatively outspoken. Tanubai is among them and taking part. Bhauke denies that he has been dictatorial or that he has financially benefited from his position. ('This must be true,' Tanubai intervenes, 'I've seen his home — he comes from a rich family.' What she means, somewhat paradoxically, is that because he comes from a relatively well-off peasant family and not a poor one he doesn't need to 'eat money' from the union; very often the poor trust each other's leadership the least.) Finally, he says that he won't take an active role until he is sure that they want his leadership.

Then there is a brief exchange with Tanubai. We are reintroduced, and I ask what has happened to her in the meantime. 'Why didn't you go to Dahiwadi?' asks Suresh, referring to a recent state-wide conference of agricultural labourers and poor peasants organised by the LNP. Tanubai shrugs, complains that no one invited her, that they were not ready to pay her way, but says little more. We leave the subject.

What about this issue of women's work? Is it true that women's farm work is 'light work'? The women react with scorn and anger. 'What light work?' Their work — seeding, fertilising, transplanting in rice areas — is stooping work, continuous work, whereas men's work,

though requiring periods of extreme physical exertion, has natural rest breaks. (And transplanting rice seedlings, the most typical women's work throughout Asia, is the primary example of this, requiring not only continuous stooping but also working throughout the day at least ankle deep in muddy water.) In fact the argument that men's work is paid better because it is 'heavier' or harder seems to me the most unjust of all, considering that there is no other area or country where 'hard' physical labour is paid more just because of that fact. In terms of the issues of productivity or skill, there is no evidence that women's work in the fields requires less skill or produces less output than the typical unskilled or semi-skilled labour of men, or that women cannot be trained for the more highly skilled jobs. Indeed, the last issue seems to be crucial. When it comes to a question of supervision or driving tractors, it is invariably men who are chosen and trained (and so all the 'permanent' workers at Kathod are men); or when dairy farms and sales co-operatives are set up, the women, who traditionally have always milked cows and peddled the milk, are relegated to a simple position of manual labour while the middlemen and technical workers are all men. Modernisation marginalises women as the 'light' and better paid work of sales and supervision in the new institutions goes all to men. The women labourers, perhaps, know this instinctively, yet it seems they rarely make these points explicitly when the cliché that 'women's work is light work' gets repeated.

And what about housework? It is at this point that Suresh really works up a magnificent mood of challenge to tradition. 'Isn't it an injustice that women always have to do double work? This should be changed! Where is it written that only women can do housework? Men should help with this! If both women and men work in the fields, both should share the housework. Your husband has no right to go out drinking while you work!' and he concludes with, 'We are going to form a union of women, just like your union of agricultural labourers. And the demand we will make is that men should help with the housework!'

'That's one union we won't join, we will oppose it!' The reaction from the men is at least frank. A vigorous exchange follows. Suresh finally retreats with, 'Well, we won't make that demand right away. Later. But at the very least women should get equal pay for their work. Dowry should be abolished. Girls should have the same education as boys. Women should get jobs.' And all agree to this, though the women have not been very outspoken during the entire episode.

So the discussion closes and we leave the farm, but first the women show us to their homes, impressively clean, well-polished mud-brick huts (to the extent that mud huts can be this), stocked with a number of cooking utensils, no luxuries, nothing close to urban middle-class standards but clearly a long step above the utter destitution of the

migrant workers and the uncertain hovering on the edge of hunger of the half-employed village poor like Kaminibai. This perhaps has been worth fighting for...



Whatever gains the workers have made on Kathod Farm, though, have to be seen in the context of their unionising struggles and indeed far older traditions and memories. This becomes clear, in a way, during later meetings with Tanubai. For though I leave that first visit with a sense of mild frustration because we have had no real chance to talk, it seems that Tanubai is on her way back into the movement. She begins to turn up at various cultural programmes, held most often in nearby villages, or on short tours, and in one case — in Pune itself a year later — for the March 8 Women's Day programme when she is a great hit. My next encounter with her, though, is in a nearby village. A 'Toiling Women's Cultural Programme' has been organised. Tanubai has come; a newly-formed local village troupe is there; and a group of young employees from Bombay who have worked up a repertoire of several new women's liberation songs have come. It is January; the city girls' voices are cracking with the cold, but Tanubai and the other village singers shrug it off. Something like a jam session begins in the afternoon, as she pulls out her well-thumbed collection of songs (Tanubai is the only literate agricultural labourer I meet) and plays around with the harmonium, a kind of accordion without a keyboard that provides a background for singing. Her singing style itself, a vigorous, belting ballad style, is for me more reminiscent of the black musical tradition in the US than any other Indian music I have heard.

With 5,000 people gathering, the cultural programme itself is a roaring success, and there is something of an encore the next morning as special friends gather and again Tanubai sings. Once again we hear songs of the agricultural labourers and their revolution, devastating satires of rich peasants and the government (a new favourite seems to be 'The Minister Went Overseas' to live in ease and send back some imported rice and sorghum to the peasants starving at home). Then Tanubai sings her own special favourite, a song which centres on the story of the 1857 revolt against the British to weave together class and nationalist themes with the rebellion of the Bhils, a tribal group 'who were once kings of the forest' but are landless now:

My first salute is to Mother India ...

My second salute is to the red flag ...

My third salute is to the heroes of revolution ...

This 'Ballad of the Bhils' was written by the leader of Tanubai's former singing group, and it provides a major clue to her own personality

and to many of the vital traditions of northern Maharashtra.

For Tanubai herself is a Bhil, that is, a member of one of the largest groups in India classified as 'tribal', who make up 7 per cent officially of the population and together with Dalits constitute one of its most oppressed sections. There are points where the tribes are hard to distinguish from the lower Hindu castes, but by and large they are communities who up to the time of the British occupation remained outside the agrarian caste society of the plains, carrying on a hunting and gathering or slash-and-burn horticultural economy in the hills and jungles. Never fully conquered or absorbed, they sometimes paid tribute to Hindu rulers, sometimes engaged in raiding and plundering expeditions. Through a long historical process, the spread of Hindu culture and an agrarian economy transformed many such tribal groups into castes, but large numbers remained outside, preferring their own way of life, their own more egalitarian culture.

Then came the British conquest, and 'modernisation' — the invasion of tribal lands by Hindu merchants who began to take control of the land in the process of grabbing the products of the forest, and by capitalists seeking to utilise the rich mineral wealth of the hills, and by bureaucrats wanting to ensure the sources of taxation and foreign exchange. The people of the tribes in most cases became transformed into debt-bonded serfs on the land they had once owned. Today, for the process has only intensified with independence, in almost all cases the original, relatively self-sufficient economy of the tribes has vanished. Their land has been taken over and transformed into farms or mines; they have been pushed out of many of their areas and can no longer support themselves in the old way on the shrinking territory left. In the process most of them have become share-cropping peasants, agricultural labourers, plantation workers on lands thousands of miles from their original home, miners, and a very few have become factory workers or educated middle-class employees. But they have retained their unique cultural features, which include a lack of caste discrimination, a lack of social hierarchy, a great sense of romantic love and a strong element of song, dance and drinking in their festival life. And, the most important thing for the women's movement, much greater social equality for women. To find examples of women who traditionally have a right to choose their husbands, of boys and girls who can have approved sex before marriage, of women who have by custom held great social power, Indians do not have to look to the West; they can find it in the tribal communities of their own country.

The tribes have been more; they have been a centre of revolt — of uprisings against the Hindu moneylenders who oppressed them during colonial times, of uprisings against the British themselves, of communist-led class revolts more recently, and of movements for political independence. Tribes on India's north-east frontier, such as

the Nagas or Mizos, have waged continuous armed struggle for national independence ever since the British were forced out in 1947. 'The question is not whether India should give us independence,' their leaders say fiercely. 'We are an independent country that has been invaded by India; India should get out.' The tribes in the interior part of the subcontinent have, by contrast, continued to think of themselves as Indians — Tanubai's 'Ballad of the Bhils' leaves no doubt of this — but many of them have been asking for a separate tribal state within India for at least as long as the Nagas or Mizos, and behind this has lain an even longer, powerful movement of cultural revival and social independence. Around the 1930s began a strong and conscious attempt to reject Hindu customs and the 'sanskritised' ideas which were making inroads among them, and to revive their own religion and social traditions. The tribal people began to call themselves 'adivasis' or 'original inhabitants', much as the North American Indians now refer to themselves as Native Americans, and to form their own autonomous political parties. In the north-central region of Chota Nagpur and surrounding districts, known by the *adivasis* as Jharkhand or 'the forest region', this political movement has been at its strongest.

Tanubai is a member of the Bhil tribe. With around three million people, it is the third largest group of 'tribals' in the country. But unlike the people of Jharkhand (the related Santal, Ho and Munda tribes), the Bhils are more fragmented socially, with hardly a common language and no overall political organisation, spread out over far-flung districts of several states, and rarely representing anything near a majority of the population. In most cases, as in Ahmednagar district, they are only a small minority scattered among other middle and low caste Hindus, speaking the general language (Marathi), working like the other rural poor as agricultural labourers, and with their cultural distinctness muted. Tanubai's 'Ballad' shows this too, not only in its expressions of solidarity with other Indians, but by the very fact that it is sung not to any traditional Bhil tune but in the style of the customary ballad of the Maratha peasant. Nevertheless, Ahmednagar Bhils were also affected by the cultural revolt, and in the early 1950s Tanubai became a member of a singing troupe that developed to spread among their people a pride in being *adivasis*. And there is no doubt that this has become a fixed centre of Tanubai's identity; as she tells us herself, '*Adivasi* means *mul rahivasi*, original dwellers, the ones who were here first. Once this was all our land!' And despite the landlessness, even despite the relatively complete proletarianisation to be found in places like Kathod Farm, such a consciousness becomes a powerful substratum of revolt.

Times change. The original cultural autonomy movement, and the political movement that went with it, could not do very much by itself. Its leaders were mainly middle class and susceptible to electoralism and the appeals of the more sophisticated ruling class of independent 'secular' India. The rape of tribal culture and land went on, but the revolt faltered for a time. The Jharkhand Party split, and most of its sections merged into Congress, though a greater explosion began to form itself after 1967. As for the Bhils, their initial cultural revolt seemed to have spent itself, and the leader of Tanubai's singing troupe, the writer of the songs, began to waver and to develop links with the Congress party also. The revival that began to occur during the famine period — when I had my first encounter with Tanubai — was of a different nature: class themes, exploitation as labourers were now taking over. But the original leadership was not ready to stay with this new form of the movement.

Why did Tanubai herself keep on? Possibly a variety of reasons — her own instinct for struggle, the songs she cannot give up, the fact that it was primarily her husband who decided to join the Congress party at the same time as he was taking a second wife. In fact, she says, her relations with her husband 'were fine' in spite of the new wife, but she was going back into the movement at a time when he was a strong supporter of the ruling party, and these political differences added to their mutual alienation.

Still Tanubai remains somewhat on the fringe of things. Her relations with Lal Nishan leaders are not the best, and the new singing group they form uses another lead singer. Why, I don't fully understand, not getting a chance to hear Tanubai's side of the story; they say she is 'too individualistic', that she has a kind of 'star complex'. The Pune women's group, on the other hand, might love to adopt her, but they remain for some time incapable of building an organisation sufficiently strong to keep some kind of contact with Kathod Farm, hundreds of miles away. And so Tanubai remains somewhat isolated ...

Our last meeting, though, is at a women's study camp held at Kathod Farm itself, where forty women of varying ages and class backgrounds gather for discussion of basic theory and organisation. Tanubai is present; though she never takes an active part in the discussions, her moment comes when one young enthusiastic factory worker of merchant caste background demonstrates a song that she and several others have written on the theme of women's liberation. Tanubai listens for a while, then decides to intervene. 'No, no, it's too much like a Hindi film song.' It's too middle class, she means, 'too gushy' (she mimics the style which is one of delicately coy gestures). 'If you want to sing for *working* people, you have to be bold — like this,' demonstrating with sweeping gestures, 'as if you were swinging a scythe ...' The girls try to imitate her, and eventually five or six of

them are practising proud stances, arms flung wide, sharp decisive movements. The whole thing reminds me of the Chinese revolutionary ballet I have seen on television, where there was a deliberate attempt to transform the delicate and fragile movements of the classical ballet into a militaristic and revolutionary form. Perhaps there is such a thing as proletarian art after all. And perhaps there is after all in India a rich and ancient cultural base for revolution, particularly among the low castes, Dalits, *adivasis* — and women.

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Frantz Fanon: the revolutionary psychiatrist

What are by common consent called the human sciences have their own drama. Should one postulate a type of human reality and describe its psychic modalities only through deviation from it, or should not one rather strive unremittingly for a concrete and new understanding of man?
(*Black Skin, White Masks*)

Six major books have so far been written on Fanon.* In addition, there are countless articles and theses on Fanon, not to mention the numerous works appearing in non-English languages.[1] But nowhere in this extensive literature, is there systematic study of Fanon's revolutionary contributions to psychology. Such a paucity is curious indeed. For Fanon was first and foremost a psychiatrist by training and profession. Many of his psychological works, written alone or in collaboration with others, were published in various psychiatric, medical and political journals. More specifically, his better-known books (all four of them) either have psychology as their major point of departure or they at least incorporate psychological dimensions to complement, illustrate and concretise the macro-social experiences he sought to unveil and transform.[2] With the exception of Irene Gendzier and Paul Adams,[3] most of the literature has by and large

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*P. Geismar, *Fanon: the revolutionary as prophet* (1969); David Cauter, *Fanon* (1970); Jack Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution* (1972); Irene Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon: a critical study* (1973); Renate Zahar, *Colonialism and Alienation*; E. Hansen, *Frantz Fanon* (1976), and the unpublished thesis for Harvard University by Hussein Adam, *The Social and Political Thought of Frantz Fanon* (1974).

Race & Class, XXI, 3 (1980)

ignored Fanon the psychiatrist. Even Gendzier and Adams reveal little of Fanon's originality in the field of psychology. Gendzier in fact insists on portraying him as the faithful but unoriginal student of Dr François Tosquelles, Fanon's teacher during his psychiatric residency training. Adams explicitly concedes some of Fanon's psychiatric originality but maligns him as 'confusedly paranoid' and a 'sick man' for his controversial thesis on violence.

This article attempts to outline aspects of Fanon's originality as a behavioural scientist, focussing on Fanon's critique of Freud, Jung and Adler. Since the seminal ideas of this trio have provided the major intellectual stimuli for the dominant trends in contemporary Euro-American psychology, we believe that Fanon's critique of them and some of their colonial successors suggests certain fundamental limitations of establishment psychology. Moreover, the review will demonstrate the untenability of charges that Fanon made 'a hasty and incomplete study of the literature of psychoanalysis'. [4] It will be clear that when he rejected notions like the Oedipus complex, he did so not out of ignorance (as Gendzier suggests) but rather due to a critical bent which never allowed him merely to accept established dogma or embrace alien formulations without careful examination. More significantly, the review will serve as a necessary prelude and point of departure for the elaboration of Fanon's historic and creative contributions to the psychology of oppression.

It must be emphasised at the very outset that Fanon presented his psychological contributions neither systematically nor according to the canons of establishment psychology. He made a conscious decision to avoid the procedural litany characteristic of this type of psychology. In his earliest work, he wrote:

It is a good form to introduce a work of psychology with a statement of its methodological point of view. I shall be derelict. I leave methods to the botanists and the mathematicians. There is a point at which methods devour themselves.

I should like to start from there. I shall try to discover the various attitudes that the Negro adopts in contact with white civilization. [5]

Most of his seminal ideas were rather dispersed in journal articles and books. A few of these ideas were explicitly broached, others only alluded to in writings that are heavily polemic and political.

The fact that his psychological contributions are dispersed and mostly implicit in his various writings suggests a caution certain interpreters of Fanon have failed to appreciate. It is not enough to select a few isolated reactions of Fanon towards a particular concept or school of psychology and then arrive at a categorical conclusion. One must instead examine the evolution of his ideas from the time he wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* to when he completed *The Wretched*

of the Earth — a book published only a few days before his death. This article is hoped to serve as a preliminary corrective to certain serious distortions casting doubt on the man's originality, creativity and even sanity. A more detailed exposition of the issues highlighted here is offered in my forthcoming book on *The Social Psychiatry of Frantz Fanon*.

FANON AND FREUD

Early in his career, Fanon identified himself as a psychoanalyst and stressed that 'only a psychoanalytic interpretation of the black man can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the [inferiority] complex'.^[6] He invoked a wide array of recognised authorities including Anna Freud, Lacan, Rank and a host of other psychoanalytic-oriented psychologists. Fanon used Freud's topographic (conscious, preconscious, unconscious) and structural (id, ego, superego) theories. That Fanon also had an abiding interest in problems of sexuality and aggression is hardly a secret. Two chapters of *Black Skin, White Masks* focus directly on sexuality within a colonial and racist context: 'The woman of color and the white man' and 'The man of color and the white woman'. In the chapter 'The Negro and psychopathology', Fanon elaborated the dynamic function of casting the black man as 'phobogenic', a stimulus for anxiety, and then commented that 'If one wants to understand the racial situation, psychoanalytically, not from a universal standpoint but as it is experienced by individual consciousness, considerable importance must be given to sexual phenomenon'. Indeed Fanon's early statements, like 'every intellectual gain requires a loss of sexual potential', are strong reminders of Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* and more generally of his notion of sublimated instinctual energies that must find socially acceptable means of expression.

Similarly, Fanon stressed throughout his works the significance of aggression as a central component to the human drama he studied and sought to transform. His extensive treatise concerning violence is in fact the first and most controversial chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth*. From the very beginning, starting with *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon examined the clinical and political ramifications of the violence endemic to the colonial situation. He discussed the covert as well as overt expressions of aggression and sexuality; their dialectical substitutions; their manifestations in language, fantasy, dreams or psychopathology; and their relations to narcissism, masochism and self-hate.

Yet it would be misleading to conclude from the above that Fanon dogmatically embraced psychoanalytic theory. Even more misleading

is to suggest that Freud's and Fanon's interests in aggression and sexuality derived from identical social and personal sources. Freud's theorising emerged out of a tightly nuclear, patriarchal and bourgeois family context within a sexually repressive Victorian Europe. Though he challenged the Victorian mores of his day, Freud was essentially an apologist for the status quo within the bourgeois family and the larger capitalist society. Fanon, on the other hand, was not a member of the ruling bourgeoisie or the white race. Coming as he did out of a totally colonised island in the Caribbean, he had first-hand knowledge of what it meant to be black and down-trodden. He observed how the search for recognition in a racist milieu was easily perverted to a consuming desire for 'lactification' through sex and inter-racial marriage. He was also a veteran of the Second World War who, having directly witnessed the horrors of war and tortures, later gave himself uncompromisingly to the Algerian liberation struggle.

Fanon was bold in his critique of psychoanalysis even during the formative years when he wrote *Black Skin, White Masks*. Concurring with Leconte and Damey's critique on the classification of psychiatric syndromes, Fanon introduced this, his first book, with a distinction of *sociodiagnosics* from the traditional medical model. He took pains to dissociate himself from Freud's ontogenetic perspective: 'It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Besides phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny.' But nowhere was Fanon's critique of psychoanalysis more acute than in his outright rejection of the Oedipus complex theory. Forming the edifice upon which rest Freud's interpretations of individual psychology and social organisations, the Oedipus complex theory is a crucial notion whose rejection amounts to a serious departure from psychoanalysis. Fanon left no ambiguity about his view:

It is often forgotten that neurosis is not a basic element of human reality. Like it or not, the Oedipus complex is far from coming into being among Negroes... it would be relatively easy for me to show that in French Antilles 97 per cent of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratulate ourselves.[7]

One may question Fanon's statistics. In fact, his estimation of 97 per cent is an example of his frequent tendency to make categorical affirmations even in the absence of precise empirical data to support them. But taken figuratively, and as a way of emphasis, Fanon's arguments against the Oedipus complex theory are nowhere as ludicrous as Gendzier suggests, without herself presenting a cogent defence of the theory.

On the surface, Fanon invoked cultural relativity, ethnocentrism and the prevailing moral collapse of Europe in his attack on the Oedipus complex theory. But on a more fundamental level, and this

is what I believe his detractors failed to appreciate, Fanon's outright rejection of the theory derives from his radical perspective toward the notion of culture. His rejection underscores a persistent determination to explain human psychology within its essential socio-historical coordinates. He found unacceptable Freud's thesis that neurosis is an inescapable consequence of all cultures, inherent in the human condition. He believed instead that psychopathology and particularly the neuroses are expressions of dysfunction in a given culture: 'every neurosis, every abnormal manifestation, every affective erethism ... is the product of the cultural situation'. [8] But, lest one mistakes Fanon's view for an extremely monistic contention in the nature vs. nurture debate, it is necessary to explain what the notion of culture meant to him.

Unlike the so-called Neo-Freudians and cultural relativists, Fanon never subscribed to the common conception of culture which isolates beliefs, values and norms from their material foundation. In a 1956 speech before the First Congress of Negro Writers and Artists, he defined culture as 'the combination of motor and mental behavior patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow men'. [9] Amilcar Cabral later elaborated the same view of culture as 'the more or less dynamic expression of the kinds of relationships which prevail ... on the one hand, between *man* (considered individually or collectively) and *nature*, and on the other hand, among individuals, groups of individuals, social strata or classes'. [10] Since the level of productive forces and the mode of production form the material base of culture, psychological reductionism of any kind (least of all the Oedipus complex mythology) has no place in the Fanonian conception of culture. Nor in fact should culture be viewed only as an instrument of repression, as Freud had assumed. For if culture is the dynamic synthesis of man's encounter with nature and with his fellow men, that encounter with both can turn out to be as deadly and repressive as it is life-sustaining and liberating. Fanon demonstrated these two possibilities in a given culture. On the one hand, he unveiled how the black man's encounter with his European fellow men entailed a profound depersonalisation under the weight of a repressive colonial culture. On the other, he described how the struggle for liberation from an oppressive culture frees a hidden reservoir of creativity which transforms that culture into an invigorating, nurturing force. The Fanonian perspective therefore posits man's vocation to be both the *object* and *subject* of history. The Freudian formulation, in contrast, is grounded in a pessimistic and Schopenhauerian philosophy, negating man's ability to transform nature and himself.

FANON AND JUNG

It is primarily this radical approach to man and culture which also led Fanon to reject Jung's Lamarckian explanation of the psyche generally and of the 'collective unconscious' particularly. That Fanon made use of Jung's insights and concepts is of course without question. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, he adopted Jung's notions of extraversion, introversion, complex, archetype, shadow, anima, animus and the collective unconscious. In one study, for instance, Fanon made use of Jung's Word Association Test. He interviewed some 500 members of the white race and on occasions inserted the word 'Negro' among twenty other words. In almost 60 per cent of his subjects, the word 'Negro' brought forth associations of biology, penis, strong, athletic, potent, savage, animal, devil, sin, etc. At the same time, however, Fanon did not hesitate to point out certain serious limitations in Jung's contributions. In his characteristic manner, Fanon conceded the value of Jung's insights but simultaneously offered a devastating critique:

I believe it is necessary to become a child in order to grasp certain psychic realities. This is where Jung was an innovator: He wanted to go back to the childhood of the world, but he made a remarkable mistake: He went back only to the childhood of Europe.[11]

Implied in the above is of course the same kind of ethnocentric orientation in Jung for which Freud's Oedipus complex theory was partly debunked. What Fanon resisted was the effort to generalise the psychology of the European into a universal human condition. Even Jung's research in non-western cultures, far from providing the necessary corrective, was itself ingrained with ethnocentrism. In addition, Jung failed to appreciate the traumatic effects of colonialism on the psychology of the non-western peoples he studied. Fanon's criticism of Jung centred on the interpretation of the 'collective unconscious'.

Continuing to take stock of reality, endeavouring to ascertain the instant of symbolic crystallization, I very naturally found myself on the threshold of Jungian psychology. European civilization is characterized by the presence, at the heart of what Jung calls the collective unconscious, of an archetype: an expression of the bad instinct, of the darkness inherent in every ego, of the uncivilized savages, the Negro who slumbers in every white man. And Jung claims to have found in uncivilized peoples the same psychic structure that his diagram portrays. *Personally, I think that Jung had deceived himself* [emphasis added].[12]

What Fanon objected to was not in fact the notion of the collective unconscious per se but rather the interpretation Jung made of it. Not only was the Jungian interpretation ethnocentric or even racist, it was

also too archaeological and mystical. In particular, Fanon found the Lamarckian underpinnings of Jung's interpretation too strong a brew to swallow. So, for this, he substituted a cultural-historical foundation. He differentiated instinct and habit on a philosophical level. Instinct, according to him, is inborn, invariable and specific; habit is acquired, learned. Making this distinction, Fanon then argued that Jung had confused instinct and habit when he located the collective unconscious in the cerebral structure and characterised it as 'permanent engram of the race'. This Lamarckian conception was clearly discordant with the radical view of man and culture Fanon was elaborating. He proposed that 'the collective unconscious is cultural, which means acquired'. [13] By taking this cultural-historical view, Fanon was by no means denying the significance of the biological substrates of the psyche. He was only asserting that the sociological dimension is more viable and determining for the psychology of man *in the aggregate* as a class, nationality or race.

FANON AND ADLER

Similarly, Fanon initially adopted Adler's concepts of inferiority, superiority, dominance, compensation, life style and social interest. He was in fact using an Adlerian formulation when he remarked that 'the white man behaves toward the Negro as an older brother reacts to the birth of a younger'. [14] Fanon also made a number of references to Adler's *Understanding Human Nature* and *The Nervous Character*, adeptly using some of Adler's concepts to unveil the psychopathology endemic to the colonial situation. Yet in spite of these Adlerian influences, Fanon's critical and creative mind could never allow him to embrace any formulation conceived under other skies and for people different from his own. He could not accept Adler's obvious trenchment in the tradition of the medical model and social Darwinism. He was particularly critical of Adler's teleological and ontogenetic explanations:

In effect, Adler has created a psychology of the individual ... [But] the feeling of inferiority is an Antillean characteristic. It is not just this or that Antillean who embodies the neurotic formation, but all Antilleans. Antillean society is a neurotic society, a society of 'comparison'. Hence we are driven from the individual back to the social structure. If there is a taint, it lies not in the 'soul' of the individual but rather in that of the environment. [14a]

When Adler paid relatively more attention to sociogenetic factors, his theorising did not extend fundamentally beyond the parameters of family dynamics and sibling constellations. What he conceded ideologically but failed to accomplish in fact was the grounding of

his theories in a socio-historical and cultural foundation in which the family itself is a microcosm and a mediator. Since the development of a genuine sociogenetic psychology had eluded him, social reality remained for him merely encounters between separate and distinct egos interacting and dominating each other within the limited space-time coordinates of the family. This narrow and personalistic over-emphasis of Adler was of course incompatible with Fanon's repeated observations and theorising. For, according to Fanon, the black man feels inferiority *historically* and not because of an organic defect or an isolated familial dysfunction, as Adler would have argued. Hence Fanon's personal dissociation from Adlerian psychology.

FANON AND MANNONI

Fanon's critique of establishment psychology was not confined to a re-examination of the ideas of Freud, Jung and Adler. He also critically broached formulations by other less-known successors of the trio. For instance, Jacques Lacan's theory of the 'mirror image', though not formulated to address issues of oppression, had entailed certain theoretical problematics which Fanon felt compelled to question in the light of his observation of the colonial situation.[15] Mannoni's 'dependency complex' in contrast was essentially a racist theory concocted to rationalise the oppression of the man of colour. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon in fact devoted a whole chapter to 'The so-called dependency complex of colonized peoples'. The chapter is a careful and strangely restrained critique of Mannoni's contributions to a scandalous psychological tradition founded on blatant racism and complicity in colonial oppression.[16]

In his attempt to analyse the fundamental coordinates of the colonial situation, Mannoni propounded a basic 'dependency complex' as inherent in the psychological structure of the African. This complex, assumed to predate colonialism, found, it was suggested, a happy gratification in colonial domination. Among the Malagasy, Mannoni asserted, 'the *vazaha* [i.e. the European] is primarily a substitute for the father image'. For, 'the non-civilized man...if his personality is constructed like the Malagasies, is obviously totally unfit for the orphaned state and he absolutely never, clumsily or in any way, tries to 'grow up' as we do'. [17] Even the attempt at liberation in one abortive rebellion was explained away as an ineffectual effort to resolve infantile conflicts. Indeed the conclusion is drawn that the Malagasy lacks the honour of living out his Oedipus complex.

The psychological sequence in the Malagasy rebels was probably this. The father-image was projected on the *vazaha* they were

attacking. The rifles symbolized the male sex organs ... In order to be able to attack the father, in the person of the *vazaha*, the Malagasy rebel had persuaded himself that the father, too, was only harmless child ... Thus, instead of protesting, like the European, that he is a man like his father, the Malagasy appears to claim that all men are children. He projects his own dependency on everyone else.[18]

Fanon calmly and with incredible politeness exposed the absurdity of Mannoni's psychological reductionism. Colonial racism was not merely the work of petty officials, as Mannoni had claimed. Colonial racism has economic-structural foundations in European societies. Debunking Mannoni's claim that the French brand of colonial racism was more humane than others, Fanon pointed out that all forms of exploitation amount to 'the same collapse, the same bankruptcy of man'. Re-interpreting the dreams to which Mannoni had so crudely attributed sexual meanings, Fanon emphasised their deadly political content: 'The rifle of the ... soldier is not a penis but a genuine rifle, model Lebel 1916.' [19] These critical responses of Fanon represented his relentless assault on racist theoretical formulations and oppressive structural elaborations. Indeed, notions like Mannoni's 'dependency complex', Carother's view of the African as a 'lobotomized European' and repeated observations of the unquestioning complicity of medical doctors in the practice of oppression led Fanon to affirm a fundamental dictum: 'science depoliticised, science in the service of man, is often non-existent in the colonies'. [20]

A SOCIOGENETIC, HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Freud, Jung and Adler were of course embedded in a particular socio-historical context. That context was European and thoroughly bourgeois. Necessarily, the preoccupations and peculiarities of that context were reflected in the nature of the problems they studied and in the content of their insights. Not only had they formulated their theories from the affluence of Victorian Europe, but also the patients they treated belonged to a relatively stable socio-cultural milieu hardly shaken by the kind of violent ruptures then rampant in colonial Africa. The explanation of *individual* difference and pathology was therefore dominant in their thinking and clinical engagements. Their contributions in these respects were no doubt momentous. But the trio and their followers had made a major blunder. They had postulated a type of human reality — namely, bourgeois psychological reality — as the inescapable, if not the ideal, condition of man everywhere. Conformity or deviation from this class- and culturally-specific reality has since become the absolute

criterion for health and pathology in the psychological tradition they founded.

Fanon in contrast was rooted in a vastly different historical moment. In personal commitment and social origin he had the special advantage of experiencing and grasping the meaning of oppression from the perspective of a colonial victim. As a psychiatrist and social theorist he set himself the formidable task of elaborating the 'laws of the psychology of colonization'. Within the short period of his intense engagements, he left behind a corpus of seminal ideas about the psychology of oppression. Even from the very beginning, there was a marked tendency in Fanon to question and then reject intra-psychic, atomistic explanations. A sociogenetic perspective took for him a definite precedence over the traditional emphasis on ontogeny and phylogeny. Ontogeny tends to emphasise man the individual as an isolated, helpless and hopeless object of a repressive, over-powering social structure. Phylogeny tends to stress the futility of resistance against a genetic curse that has its origin in the unretrievable past of the race. Thus, in very fundamental ways, both perspectives tend to negate man's vocation as the subject of history and underestimate his capacity collectively to transform himself and his world. The conservative thrust of these traditional perspectives was clearly incompatible with Fanon's burgeoning radicalisation.

To Fanon, psychology was essentially social psychology. The healthy or pathological condition of man had to be cast within a definite sociocultural, historical context. This social psychological perspective of Fanon was nowhere better illustrated than in his analysis of alienation among people of colour. According to him, this alienation is collective and sociogenetic. Genuine disalienation is therefore impossible without a total re-structuring of socio-economic realities. Indeed as early as the introduction of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon stressed the dialectical and materialist underpinning of his work:

The analysis that I am undertaking is psychological. In spite of this, it is apparent to me the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process:

- primarily, economic
- secondarily, the internalization — or, better, the epidermalization — of this inferiority.

The above quote in fact contains two nodal concepts which I believe are crucial in understanding Fanon's sociogenetic, historical perspective to psychology. These are the concepts of internalisation and objectification. Internalisation refers to the process by which

'external' socio-historical reality is assimilated into 'internal' psychological reality. Objectification is the reverse process in which man, through praxis (and more particularly through labour), objectifies and actualises himself or his personality in the world around him. Taken together, internalisation and objectification refer to a double process mediating the dialectics between the human psyche and the broader socio-historical reality. As the above quote indicates, Fanon explicitly referred to the notion of internalisation. He even used the term 'epidermalisation' in order to underscore the qualitative and profound transformation of economic inferiority into subjective inferiority complex. The concept of objectification was never explicitly formulated by Fanon, although such a notion is implicit in most of his works.

In fact implying these nodal concepts and exerting formative influences on Fanon's insights into oppression is the Hegelian master-slave dialectic. Fanon devoted a whole section of his first book to 'The Negro and Hegel'. He explained that recognition and reciprocity form the foundation of the Hegelian dialectic. Man attains self-worth and conscious reality only through recognition by another self-consciousness. But where the desire for recognition is frustrated, there is a struggle, a conflict. It is out of the struggle for recognition that 'subjective certainty' becomes transformed into 'objective truth'. Not surprisingly, a central problem for Fanon as for Hegel concerned situations in which reciprocal recognition is thwarted. He who attains recognition without reciprocating becomes the Master. The other, who submits to non-recognition, hence to 'thinghood', becomes the Slave. The Slave, lacking recognition and independent self-consciousness, internalises inferiority and seeks to find his 'self' in the person of the Master. The Master, in contrast, usurps all recognition and consciousness, all the while retaining unlimited license to use the Slave's body and labour for his self-objectification.

Building on this Hegelian dialectic, Fanon studied the oppressor-oppressed psyche historically. He found that reciprocal recognition was totally negated in the encounter of the man of colour with the white man. The latter's unrelenting desire for self-objectification had given rise to the internalisation of inferiority, depersonalisation, and 'thingification' in the man of colour. The white man and the black man are in fact victims of an alienated and alienating social structure whose inertia neither has the will, the consciousness or the organised means to resist. Born into and willy-nilly socialised within a situation of oppression, these two protagonists (victims) behave according to the dictates of long established patterns. Even in their most intimate encounters, they always run the risk of re-living the two historical disasters which Fanon succinctly summarised thus: 'The disaster of the man of color lies in the fact that he was enslaved. The disaster and inhumanity of the white man lie in the fact that somewhere he has killed man'.[21]

Slavery and the violent expropriation of labour it imposed on the black man denied him self-objectification. The internalisation of self-defeating inhibitions, the loss of social nexus and a compensatory hunger for 'lactification' have since become components of his character structure. Fanon provided ample illustrations of how slave-mentality, tormenting depersonalisation and a pathological desire to be white manifest themselves through the use of language, choice of sexual partners, fantasy, dreams, social deportment and interaction with others. On the other hand, the aggressive and predatory history of the white man seals him as the prisoner of his own greed for profit, delusions of superiority and guilt complex. Aware that somewhere he (his ancestors) killed man, the white man is given to fears of reprisal, a stubborn resistance to recognise the other and sometimes to disgusting 'negrophobia'. Brought into contact with the man of colour, he readily (if unconsciously) attempts to re-create the slave-master dialectic. In the colonies, Fanon observed the white man's practice of tyrannical persecution or — what is but a defensive reversal — his flaunting of paternalistic mollifications. The blatant racism of colonial administrators, the wilful or blind practices of medical doctors, the false disguises of 'liberal' intellectuals and the psychotic reactions of former police torturers all provided him with ample resources for illustrating the contemporary psychology of the oppressor.

Throughout his works, Fanon stressed the dialectical interpenetration of the objective and subjective dimensions of human existence. Establishment psychologists have adamantly affirmed the paramount significance of man's subjectivity. In so doing, they remain true to their idealistic, metaphysical world view. Vulgar marxists oppose this with an equally stubborn and one-sided emphasis on economic determinism. In so doing, they too are faithful to their mechanistic materialism. Fanon in contrast sought to illuminate the dialectics between macro-social reality and micro-psychological experiences. In a perceptive and determined manner all his own, he exposed the intricacies, nuances and phenomenology of objective oppression transformed into subjective depersonalisation. Self-analysis, dream interpretation, results from interviews, responses to word associations, analysis of the projective value of a novel or of a prevailing folklore and insights derived from personal engagement in revolutionary praxis were all integrated and dynamically cast into a socio-historical, cultural view of the psyche. Herein lies the kernel of the Fanonian method of study of the human psyche.

A THEORY OF AUTO-DESTRUCTIVE VIOLENCE

Fanon's committed praxis in Africa had further enriched his original

insights into the dynamics of oppression. He elaborated the crude and subtle processes by which the forced occupation of one's land soon entails the occupation of one's psyche by the same oppressor. An oppressor who occupies another's land sooner or later settles in the very centre of the dominated. Oppression is thus neither piecemeal nor selective. In the end, the victim is totally victimised.

There is no occupation of territory, on the one hand, and independence of persons on the other. It is the country as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured, in the hope of a final destruction. Under this condition, the individual's breathing is an observed, an occupied breathing. It is a combat breathing.[22]

This occupied, combat breathing occurs in a 'Manichean world' inhabited by two irreconcilable species: the coloniser and the colonised. The two are irreconcilable precisely because the development and self-objectification of one entails the underdevelopment and dehumanisation of the other. The wealth and well-being of one rests on the poverty and bondage of the other. The elevation of one goes hand in hand with the denigration of the other. One is identified in terms of the sublime and beautiful, while the other is depicted as absolute evil. 'In fact, the terms the [white] settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. He speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarters, of the breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulation.' [23] These disparaging characterisations, the numerous military barracks, the towering statues of conquering generals, the rampant police brutality, the imposed national anthem, the alienating history lessons and the racist glances all constitute different expressions of the violence to which the Manichean world owes its origins and sustenance.

In his first and most controversial chapter in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon elaborated the ugly manifestations of this ubiquitous violence. He also outlined the victim's various defensive manoeuvres against it. Not surprisingly, Fanon was severely criticised for his thesis on violence. Reactionary and 'liberal' intellectuals alike have characterised him as 'an apostle of violence' and denounced him as a 'prisoner of hate'. *The Wretched of the Earth* was even compared with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The thrust of these charges is quite evident. Not only is Fanon personally maligned, but armed resistance against a predatory oppressor is decried. In the end, the status quo is defended. Similar charges were of course echoed when Malcolm X articulated the determination to be free 'by all means necessary' and when Stokely Carmichael called for 'Black Power'. Yet criticism of Fanon's thesis on violence is not confined to reactionary writers alone. There are other critiques as well. Most notable among these is that of Nguyen Nghe, a Vietnamese, who attacks the thesis from a radical

vantage point. [24] Nghe argues that Fanon's discussion on violence is founded on ahistorical and subjective grounds. He further suggests that 'the cause of the flaw' in the analysis is traceable to what he calls Fanon's 'existential' and 'individualistic' past.

It is true that Fanon's style of exposition has tended to overdramatise and, to some extent, obscure significant aspects of the oppressor-oppressed dialectic. But the essentials of the thesis are hardly so esoteric or without empirical corroboration, as Nghe seems to suggest. Fanon in fact provides some rare insights into the dynamics and self-destructive consequences of imposed violence on the oppressed. According to him, the victim of oppression feels 'hemmed in' when he internalises the self-negating prohibitions of the oppressor. He initially adopts avoidance reactions. His dreams are violent and of muscular prowess. He dreams of being chased by motorcars, of jumping, swimming, climbing and bursting out with laughter. At the collective level, this repressed counter-violence exhausts itself through vigorous dances, sexual escapades, symbolic killings and exaggerated beliefs in terrifying myth and magic. In such acts, Fanon suggested, 'may be deciphered as in an open book the huge effort of a community to exorcise itself, to liberate itself, to explain itself'. [25] He also detected an aggressive component even in the very propensity to imitate the oppressor and assimilate into his culture — an interesting insight recalling the well-known psychological process of 'identification with aggressor'.

But where the repressed counter-violence finds neither sublimated canalisation nor conscious praxis, one observes an appalling incidence of crime and particularly of homicide among the oppressed.

The colonized man will manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime. [26]

There is in fact a growing literature, particularly in the United States and South Africa, which strongly corroborates Fanon's thesis of auto-destruction among the oppressed. Discussing the same phenomenon in a situation of oppression in Latin America, Paulo Freire referred to this kind of violence as 'horizontal violence'. [27] Rushforth et al (1977) found appalling rates of homicide among young black men in metropolitan Cleveland, Ohio. Moreover, the study underscored a widely corroborated fact: most assailants are relatives, friends and acquaintances of the victim. Thus homicide and generally most violent crimes are not only 'black on black' phenomena but they also occur frequently within familial and intimate relationships. Explanations for these sad facts are not easy to provide since the problem is very complex. As I have shown in a recent paper, most researchers

resort to an ahistorical instinct theory, an abstract frustration-aggression hypothesis, the limited sub-culture of violence theory, or even the narrow thesis of firearms accessibility.[28] Fanon suggested an alternative hypothesis that has both heuristic and convincing quality.

When the [white] settler or the policeman has the right the live-long day to strike the native, to insult him and make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching out for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; *for the last resort of the native is to defend his personality vis-a-vis his brother* (emphasis added).[29]

Fanon, of course, did not view such fratricidal assaults as permanent characteristics of oppressed communities. He observed that when political consciousness takes hold and the struggle for freedom is well under way, the rate and character of such violence shows striking modifications. The oppressor's violence which had been internalised and institutionalised among the oppressed is henceforth externalised and re-directed in the service of personal and collective liberation. Horizontal violence changes into vertical counter-violence. Avoidance reactions expressed in dreams, violent fantasies and auto-destructive behaviours give way to pro-active, revolutionary praxis. Pent-up anger and tension, previously repressed and somatised, now find appropriate targets and constructive avenues of discharge. The hostility which had permeated most relationships among the oppressed is markedly reduced and the community adopts affiliative terms like 'brother, sister and friend'. It is also precisely during this revolutionary period of self-affirmation and objectification that new identities unfold, creative energies long repressed are revitalised and stagnant traditions transformed into dynamic cultures. An act of violence against the unrelenting oppressor, an irrevocable action against his world strewn with prohibitions — decisive measures such as these take on new significance during this period. These demystify the power of the oppressor, restore self- as well as group-confidence and usher in strong social cohesion among the oppressed. Indeed such acts may serve as a communal pardon allowing 'strayed and outlawed members of the group to come back and to find their place once more, to be integrated'.[30]

For this provocative thesis on violence, Fanon was of course vilified. But often ignored by his detractors is, for instance, the import of the dozens of clinical illustrations he presented in the chapter on 'Colonial war and mental disorders'. As one reads his harrowing accounts, Fanon's fundamental aversion to violence becomes evident. He provided there ample cases illustrating such syndromes as homicidal impulses in a survivor of mass murder, the onset of impotence in a fighter whose wife was raped by soldiers, the

continual terror of a former police inspector who indiscriminately tortures his own children and the suicidal obsessions of a freedom fighter who becomes guilt-ridden for placing a bomb in a public place, killing ten people — some perhaps innocent, others perhaps only children. These clinical cases constitute strong evidence that Fanon preached violence neither for its own sake nor for all occasions. Armed struggle was for him only the last resort of a people who have been denied the right of self-determination and self-objectification. Even then, he fully recognised that the torturer in time begins also to torture himself and his own loved ones just as the freedom fighter in time cries for his own rehabilitation.

In short, Fanon took a hard look at the colonial world. He found it to be a seething cauldron of violence. The two protagonists of the Manichean world — one white and affluent, the other black and poor — have erected various social and psychological defences against the violent assaults endemic to that world. Fanon boldly analysed these defences and their determinants. When he realised that appeals to rationality and love could not prevail, he became convinced of the necessity for armed struggle against the calculated violence of the oppressor. Still, Fanon never preached the wanton killing of another, even in the heat of battle. It is true that his fiery and provocative style of writing has sometimes tended to obscure the humanistic core of his ideas. But a careful reading of his works reveals that it was compassion and humanism that finally drove him to desperate solutions. And it was the same basic quality that motivated him to renounce conventional loyalty to nation or professional ambition.

A RADICAL APPROACH TO PSYCHOTHERAPY

If Fanon's thesis on violence has generated a heated controversy, his contributions to clinical practice have suffered almost total neglect. Even Geismar, his most sympathetic biographer to date, has expressed doubts about the significance of Fanon's psychiatry. In contrast, Paul Adams deplores the failure of American psychiatrists to appreciate Fanon's psychiatric contributions. He suggests in his brief article that 'Fanon's major psychiatric contributions came in his presentation of colonialism and racism, of systematic violence and counter violence, of the reactive and situational psychoses, of the family roles and relations'. [31] But Irene Gendzier remains unconvinced. First subtly and later openly in her various writings, she suggests that Fanon's psychiatry is unoriginal, if not down-right reactionary. Fanon, in her view, attempted to apply in a 'mechanical fashion' Tosquelles' psychiatric innovations to Algerian realities. [32]

Professor Gendzier's contention of unoriginality in the psychiatry

of Fanon was initially couched in clever and somewhat ambiguous terms. The teacher's momentous and revolutionary contributions were openly hailed while his student's psychiatric unoriginality, administrative miscalculations and clinical conservatism were implied. But this earlier contrast between the teacher's epoch-making contributions and the student's assumed inability to measure up to them is later substituted with a sharp criticism of Fanon's psychiatry. Fanon's critique of the Oedipus complex theory and his use of electro-shock treatment are cited as major indicators of a flaw in his psychiatry. We have already discussed Fanon's critique and Gendzier's superficial defence of the Oedipus complex theory. We believe that her charge of psychiatric conservatism (because Fanon used shock treatment) is equally unjustified and rather reveals her own 'hasty and incomplete study' of the history of psychiatric treatment. She seems unaware of the clinical conditions for which shock treatment was so widely used before the drug revolution and just as unaware of the fact that, to this day, shock treatment is used in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. The accusation is both unfair and ahistorical. For to accuse Fanon of psychiatric conservatism because he used shock treatment in the 1950s is as untenable as an accusation of clinical naiveté in Freud's adoption of hypnosis during the 1880s. The point is that it is necessary to locate Fanon's psychiatry in a historical perspective in order to discover his pioneering endeavours.

Long before he immersed himself in the revolutionary climate of Algeria, Fanon presented a view of psychopathology that avoided the nature vs. nurture dichotomy still plaguing establishment psychology. According to him, psychopathology generally and the neuroses in particular are socio-cultural, historical conflicts finding symptom crystallisation in those having lower threshold for such conflicts.

The neurotic structure of an individual is simply the elaboration, the formation, the eruption within the ego, of conflictual clusters arising in part out of the *environment* and in part out of the purely *personal way* in which the individual reacts to these influences.[33]

What Fanon meant by the 'environment' is quite obvious from his various works. Unfortunately, however, the second precondition — i.e. 'the purely personal way' of reacting to that environment — was never elaborated. The notion that the neuroses are a result of person-specific reactions to a pathogenic environment nonetheless contains a basis for elaborating a dialectical and holistic view.

Yet, for reasons that are not difficult to comprehend, Fanon was increasingly engrossed with the exposition and transformation of an oppressive environment whose debilitating effects submerged the threshold of what is humanly tolerable. A nomenothetic approach had thus to be adopted and political solutions sought for re-structuring that environment. But in adopting a nomenothetic approach, Fanon

did not simply posit the paramount significance of an abstract social structure for the psychology of an undefined population. He instead unveiled the collective alienation of a people under a specific social order. His conclusion that the neurotic, the alienated, is first the victim of others and later of himself was derived from a careful examination of an oppressive social structure, the mediating role of institutions like the family, and the lived conflicts of individuals. In addition, the preference for a nomenclature approach did not entail the wholesale rejection of individual psychotherapy. Fanon himself practised psychotherapy. However, even a cursory look at his clinical contributions indicates that, in theory or practice, Fanon never sought to foster mere adjustment among the human casualties of a system.

When in November 1953 Fanon arrived in Blida-Joinville Hospital, psychiatric care in Algeria was markedly underdeveloped. In a 1955 article entitled 'Mental assistance as it looks today in Algeria', Fanon and four of his co-workers summarised the modest beginnings of psychiatric care in Algeria. By 1954, for an Algerian population of ten million, there were only eight psychiatrists and 2,500 beds. The few existing hospitals were intolerably overcrowded and understaffed. Conditions at Blida-Joinville Hospital were even worse. Originally designed to care for 971 patients, it was actually housing more than 2,000. The prevailing modality of treatment was archaic and partial care almost non-existent. What intentions Fanon may have had of adopting the Saint Alban model he learned during his residency were clearly bound to fail under these circumstances. Overcrowded conditions, lack of appropriate facilities, unfamiliar cultural realities, poorly trained attendants, the open hostility of older European doctors and a host of other problems endemic to colonial administration made impossible the practice of European psychiatry in Algeria.

Yet, in spite of these formidable barriers, Fanon was able to introduce significant and historic innovations at Blida-Joinville Hospital. Even on his first tour of inspection, he shocked the hospital staff by his bold release of strait-jacketed patients chained to their beds and by his stern commands for staff to follow suit. To each released patient, Fanon stepped forward, introduced himself and assured him of his availability for consultation as well as of his right to freely walk and talk. Moreover, Fanon abolished the prevailing distinction between 'native' and European patients and the special privileges the former were denied but the Europeans were granted. In time, he also introduced far-reaching therapeutic innovations including work therapy, psychodrama and patient participation in the governance of wards. He developed a hospital periodical, appropriately called *Notre Journal*, and urged both patients and staff to contribute articles. He experimented with various ward groupings according to the severity and diagnosis of patients, scheduled weekly outings to

beaches and provided in-service training to medical attendants — a group who later proved to be his trusted allies and the most reliable supporters of his bold endeavours.

The initial experiments in integrating European and African patients into a common treatment were unsuccessful. Fanon and Azoulay (1954) explained why these experiments had failed. The European psychiatry and its underlying world view which they initially imposed had benefited only the European patients, as was indicated by a dramatic rise in their rate of discharge. The African patients in contrast became increasingly apathetic and hostile. The authors realised with hindsight that by imposing such therapeutic arrangements they were unwittingly implementing the colonial policy of assimilation and of non-reciprocity between cultures. Fanon subsequently embarked on studies of the indigenous culture and of its healing practices. He wrote his initial reflections on ethno-psychiatry in a 1955 article. This was followed by a 1956 publication, in collaboration with Dr Sanchez, in which the authors compared the European's view of madness to that of the North African Muslim. They explained the deleterious effects of the stigma Europeans associate with madness, compared to the more empathic and humanistic outlook of the North African. An increased appreciation of the African's world view led to the integration of indigenous healing practices in treatment programmes. Fanon hired indigenous storytellers for those who could not read *Notre Journal* and invited traditional healers to help in the treatment of patients. Such studies and practices began to open up new vistas of integrative and responsive treatment for African patients.

But these creative ventures into human psychology and psychotherapy could not be sustained under the repressive assaults of French colonialism. As the armed struggle intensified, the oppressive weight of this social order was being increasingly felt, even within the hospital. Armed police often entered at will, harassing both patients and staff. Modest requests for necessary equipment, staffing and facilities were often ignored. Colonial administrators interfered with admission procedures and treatment, giving special privileges to European patients. The hospital was also becoming the dumping ground for tortured and broken freedom fighters, some of whom were hopelessly disorganised by police brutality and others who were given only a short period of convalescence before the next series of interrogations.

By the summer of 1956, Fanon had secretly committed himself to the struggle for national liberation. His life and work at this stage revealed a rare courage and personal stamina. He provided clandestine services to wounded FLN fighters while publicly conducting his duties as a clinical director at the hospital. But as the intensity of the war increased, the witch-hunt for suspected sympathisers became

almost indiscriminate. A number of doctors and attendants were arrested. When Fanon saw how harshly the government punished workers on strike, he realised the time had come 'when silence becomes dishonest'. He subsequently resigned from his position as clinical director and fully committed himself to the FLN.

His letter of resignation is a moving and principled document of a type rare in psychological literature. It best summarises the revolutionary and humanistic thrust of his social psychiatry. Madness, Fanon said, is one of the means man loses his freedom.

If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the [colonized], permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization ...

One did not have to be a psychologist to divine, beneath the apparent good-nature of the Algerian, behind his stripped humility, a fundamental aspiration to dignity ...

The function of a social structure is to set up institutions to serve man's needs. A society that drives its members to desperate solutions is a non-viable society, a society to be replaced.

It is the duty of the citizen to say this. No professional morality, no class solidarity, no desire to wash the family linen in private, can have a prior claim. No pseudo-national mystification can prevail against the requirement of reason.[34]

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Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea Bissau

Stephanie Urdang

The Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), which led the Guinean people in a successful guerrilla war to overthrow the Portuguese colonialists, did not view the armed struggle as an end in itself. Rather, it was one aspect of their goal, which was to establish a totally new society. Another aspect was the emancipation of women from their dual oppression by colonialism and by patriarchy. This book is an examination of the achievements of the PAIGC since 1974, based on a study of conditions before and after independence. Its conclusions emerge most strongly from interviews with leaders as well as with many of the women and men in the city and in the countryside.

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'Sizwe Bansi is Dead': a study of artistic ambivalence

Man ... Sizwe wants to stay in New Brighton and find a job; passbook says, 'No! Report back.'

Sizwe wants to feed his wife and children; passbook says, 'No. Endorsed out.'

'Sizwe Bansi is Dead', devised by A. Fugard, J. Kani and W. Ntshona (London and Cape Town, 1974)

The findings of the Fagan Report of 1947 were based on the following three premises:

- (i) That the idea of total segregation is completely impracticable.
- (ii) That the rural and urban movement is a natural economic phenomenon engendered by necessity — one which possibly can be regulated but cannot be reversed.
- (iii) That the native population in the urban areas consists not only of native migrant workers, but also of a settled native population.'

Quoted in *Naught for Your Comfort*, T. Huddleston (Glasgow, 1977)

Statistics on one effect of the Pass Laws for the year 1975:

the daily prison population was 99,000, of whom one-third had been goaled under the pass laws; one in every four blacks was arrested every year for technical infringements of laws applicable to blacks only.

South Africa after Soweto, A. Callinicos and J. Rogers,
(London, 1978)

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Race & Class, XXI, 3 (1980)

M.P. Botha, Minister of Defence, addressing the Natal Nationalist Congress, argued that the security of South Africa could be ensured only if 'we can succeed in establishing a strong middle class among the Black and Brown people as well'.

Star International Airmail Weekly (14 August 1976)

The Urban Foundation, formed by a group of businessmen including Harry Oppenheimer, in 1977, stated: 'A prerequisite for achieving our overall objectives should be the adoption of *free enterprise values* by urban blacks.'

Callinicos and Rogers, op. cit. (emphasis added)

'You know what that means? To stand straight in a place of your own? To be your own ... General Foreman, Mr "Baas", Line Supervisor — the lot! I was tall, six foot six and doing my own inspection of the plant.'

'Sizwe Bansi is Dead'

'There is a move towards what might be called the Bantustanisation of the townships, in which the petty bourgeoisie will be given a few political spoils and some economic incentives for running the townships and maintaining the structure of apartheid.'

Callinicos and Rogers, op. cit.

'... a nationalist ideology which ignores the class basis of racism is false'.

Southern Africa: the new politics of revolution, B. Davidson, J. Slovo and A.R. Wilkinson (Harmondsworth, 1976)



In the current corpus of Athol Fugard's work, the trilogy 'Statements', can be described as the political trilogy following the family one. Of the former, 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' has been the most popular component, with enthusiastic receptions in Lagos, London, Accra, Ibadan, Toronto, etc. It is the nature of its popularity that I wish to explore, for in many ways 'The Island' and 'Statements after an arrest under the Immorality Act' confront and explore their political themes with greater depth and penetration, particularly the latter, which as a theatrical experience must be harrowing in its impact on the spectators, whereas, 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' can be experienced at a more superficial level, with an emphasis on entertainment — that is, it can be experienced and responded to in the typical way western urban audiences consume commercial entertainment.

It is always relevant to consider the nature of the audience in relation to their responses: 'Life is not determined by consciousness,

but consciousness by life.' Audiences, like critics and playwrights, confront plays and performances with their world-view, which is a product of the dynamic interaction between actual social relations and private sensibility, the one influencing and influenced by the other. The social characteristics of an audience are useful factors in analysing its responses to the play. In this instance, the audiences whose responses have been recorded in newspaper reviews and in literary journals are: (a) bourgeois liberals within South Africa and outside, e.g. in Britain and North America, and (b) student (i.e. sub-élite) and élite audiences in West Africa.

Apartheid laws and machinery marred and obstructed performances of the play in South Africa. The problematic nature of drama as a functioning art form in a racist police state is highlighted in an interview with Athol Fugard, where he describes how performances of the play to white audiences were stopped by the police, who also interfered with the performance of the play to a coloured audience, because of the participation of two black actors, the performance being threatened with prosecution. It is interesting to note that after these experiences, Athol Fugard registered surprise at the permission given by the South African authorities to take the play to Britain: 'I cannot understand why we were finally given passports, because the work we were doing was intended only for South Africa: and we were *trying to be as courageous as possible in that context, in indicting a social system.*' [1] (Emphasis added.) Perhaps that 'indictment', for all the furore it briefly provoked in South Africa in 1972 and 1973, was less damaging to apartheid officialdom than he assumed. Indeed, statements on racism which ignore its class basis are not in essence radical. The notion that the ruling Nationalist Party of South Africa should move away from discrimination based on race and colour has its advocates within the party itself, hence the divisions between the so-called '*verligtes*' ('enlightened' liberals) and '*verkramptes*' (hard-liners). Consequently, when we read comments such as the following, the limited perspective they express needs amplifying and explaining:

That such highly political plays have been performed in South Africa surprised a British audience which was, at a guess, unanimous in its opposition to the South African government.[2]

This critic, and the British audiences referred to, appear to be, not surprisingly, parochially ignorant of such divisions. Surely, the Oppenheimers, Anton Ruperts and Pik Bothas are representative of a section of white South African 'liberal' opinion; and would they not be sympathetic to the reformist message of the play? It is this section of South African opinion to which Athol Fugard and his co-devisers give artistic expression.



The play, we are told, contains 'indictment'. It is the nature of this indictment and its limitations that I shall attempt to explore, taking as my starting point the final quotation in the preface. It is, too, the nature of the indictment and its limitations, which partly explains the play's international popularity.

- 1 The Pass Laws are shown to be inhuman and absurd; but they are also shown to be entrenched and man it appears can do little or nothing to change social structures that rob him of his humanity and 'manhood'.
- 2 The most vigorous character in the play, the photographer Styles, succeeds in moving from working-class to petty-bourgeois status. Consequently, what he comes to represent is acceptable within the class framework advocated four years after the first performance of the play by M.P. Botha in 1976, and by Harry Oppenheimer and associates in 1977.
- 3 The message of liberal humanitarianism evades and 'ignores' what Joe Slovo refers to as 'the class basis of racism'. Herein lies the answer to Athol Fugard's puzzlement at the granting of permission to perform 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' to audiences outside South Africa, by the authorities of that country.

The strengths and achievements of the play have been widely acclaimed by liberal critics:

The degree of political acuity won by Fugard's use of a dramatic form unconstrained by narrative demands, in which he can write 'into space and silence' without being diverted by the linear, temporal exigencies of episode, is exemplified in 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' (1972).[3]

In his introduction to the 1974 edition of 'Statements', Athol Fugard discusses the function of *silence*, and it becomes, with the South African context in mind, a technique of 'indictment'. Several critics and writers, notably Nadine Gordimer and Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali, have noted that after the post-Sharpeville silence of the 1960s, the 1970s have seen a 'resurrection of black writing', [4] within South Africa, mainly in poetry — a poetry which operates through understatement and irony and what has been aptly termed 'the cryptic mode'. [5] 'Silence' may be thought-provoking, intellectually and emotionally stimulating, or it may signify a failure to make connections, in which case it will serve a negative function. Behind Styles's statement that he wants to be his own 'baas' (quoted in the preface), weighs a heavy silence. As I perceive it, his articulation of his ambition is in no way ironic.

Athol Fugard's choice of a small number of characters and emphasis on actors 'staking' their 'personal truths', derives in part from the influence of Jerzy Grotowski's 'theatre laboratory'.^[6] In both cases, the method is one whereby the characters reveal themselves to the audience. 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' is a play based on the elaboration of personal biography. A small number of case histories, situated in appropriate social contexts, serve as social commentary. The focus on a small number of isolated individuals is appropriate to the liberal conceptual framework. In evaluating this method and its application it is pertinent to ask the following questions:

- (i) What aspects of South African life do the characters in the play represent and how effectively?
- (ii) What are the ideological implications of their responses to society?
- (iii) How do these reveal the playwright's perspective on the issues of class and colour in South Africa?

The preliminary stage directions indicate something of Styles's role in the society. He is a member of the black petty bourgeoisie, a small-scale entrepreneur who owns his business. In the list of services he offers, pride of place is given to 'Reference books', followed by 'Passports' and then 'Weddings; engagements, birthday parties and parties.' 'Reference books' is a euphemistic term designating the notorious documents all African workers are required to carry under the Pass Laws. These booklets must contain a photograph of the bearer. Therefore, Styles in his New Brighton studio is in a position to capitalise on this aspect of apartheid.

Styles has made an adaptation to the system, which also represents his dependence on it, although this aspect of 'personal' and public 'truth' is not probed. Silence weighs heavy. The first performance of the play was on 8 October 1972, in Cape Town, more than a decade after the campaign of passive resistance which culminated in the Sharpeville killings and the declaration of a state of emergency in 1960, and four years before the Soweto uprising. Indeed, from this particular aspect — Styles's fundamental passivity and pragmatism — the play belongs conceptually more to the 1960s than to the 1970s. The Treason Trials of 1958-61 and the Sharpeville Shootings of 1960 belong to a period when organised opposition to apartheid policies was being systematically smashed and the failure of the tactics of passive resistance had weakened morale. The 1960s was also a decade of ruthless censorship systematically imposed, a period when many South African writers were driven to despair and exile. Styles's response makes sense as a passive and pragmatic individual response to the social circumstances he finds himself in. Exploration does not go beyond this point, however. The play satirises the absurdities of the Pass Laws, yet one of the three characters, whose individualistic

entrepreneurial initiative is portrayed in a positive light, paradoxically contributes to the functioning of those very laws. On this issue the playwright is significantly if understandably silent. Styles has learnt to survive as an individual — indeed, individual survival is the play's major theme — but his success story is the exception and not the rule. His studio is 'a strong-room of dreams', his function much of the time to encourage the illusions and self-delusions of the black working class, to provide them with temporary catharsis, emotional escapism and a fantasy world of unrealisable aspirations, all of which serve to maintain a system of economic and racial exploitation:

Styles: That's my man! Look at this, Robert.

(Styles reverses the map hanging behind the table to reveal a gaudy painting of a futuristic city.)

City of the Future! Look at it. Mr Robert Zwelinzima, man about town, future head of Feltex, walking through the City of the Future!

In certain respects, Styles's studio, his 'strong-room of dreams' is analogous in its function to the church in Oswald Mtshali's poem 'An old man in church'. But where Mtshali recognises the pacifying function of religious ritual in relation to the social services it performs, Fugard's presentation of Styles as a guardian of illusions misses out on the political implications of that role. The poem is a brilliant piece of sustained, sharp and controlled irony:

I know an old man,
 who during the week is a machine working at full throttle:
 productivity would stall,
 spoil the master's high profit estimate,
 if on Sunday he did not go to church
 to recharge his spiritual batteries.[7]

Similarly, Styles's photographic services 'recharge' the 'spiritual batteries' of the black urban poor, so that after a brief respite in his retreat, they may return passive and docile to factory, mine and urban slum, their capacity for patient endurance and acceptance renewed by escapist indulgence in fantasy worlds. The playwright's perspective on his subject is limited, because descriptive rather than interpretative, with the areas of description themselves being highly selective. Interest in individual character and personal truth overrides other concerns, such as the need to relate the individual to his class and to understand the nature of his social relations in historical and political perspective.

Styles's responses to apartheid capitalism differ according to his role as wage labourer and petty businessman. As a wage labourer, his relationship with fellow workers is characterised by an intimate camaraderie, whereas the nature of the dialogue, reported and

actual, between entrepreneur and client is manipulative and patronising.



In his role as translator of the general foreman's instructions to the car plant workers, Styles conveys not only the necessary instructions and prescriptions, but demonstrates the contradictions in labour relations and conditions for the automobile factory. Through irony, paradox and carefully-chosen descriptions which highlight the absurdities characteristic of working conditions in the factory, he achieves a skilful and indirect verbal indictment of industrial relations. He begins to articulate the general conditions of wage-labour exploitation, conditions which highlight the international exploitative nature of the multinationals as they seek to maximise profits by investing in those countries offering a plentiful supply of cheap and readily-available labour. In the play, management is shown to be loyally eager to impress the visiting American Ford boss on his inspection tour of the South African subsidiary, that this labour force is more manageable, more malleable than its Afro-American counterpart, or that, in other words, American investment is secure and will continue to yield high profits.*

Styles, in his role as intermediary, comes to the point where he is capable of triggering off potential dissent among his listeners. His role allows him to play a curious verbal power game.

'Styles, tell the boys that when Mr Henry Ford comes into the plant I want them all to look happy. We will slow down the speed of the line so that they can sing and *smile* while they are working.'

Gentlemen, he says that when the door opens and his grandmother walks in *you must see to it that you are wearing a mask of smiles*. Hide your true feelings, brothers. You must sing. The joyous songs of the days of old before we had fools like this one next to me to worry about!... ' (Emphasis added.)

Here, he is not just passively relaying messages, he is using language creatively to provoke his receptive listeners into perceiving the contradictions of their situation (and his). The humour is caustic, sharp, double-edged and to the point. By contrast, his use of language in his role as photographer is flat, dull, cliché-ridden, vague and sentimental.

However, Styles's response to his heightened awareness of the

*Indeed, a good six years after the first production of this play, Henry Ford confidently declared during his visit to South Africa in January 1978 that Ford would 'remain an increasingly constructive force in the industrial life of the country'. He also announced that 8m. dollars would be invested in replacing and modernising its plant in South Africa.[8]

exploitative nature of the multinationals remains fundamentally individual and individualised. Thus the devisers of the play do not explore the potential of the material they have only sketched into space and silence. There remains an evasion of underlying and fundamental issues. Styles does not develop his skills as potential spokesman and intermediary between local white management and black employees. On the contrary, he chooses to withdraw from the situation and to assert his 'manhood'. He chooses personal assertion, not public commitment, in the interests of maintaining the family of which he is the head and chief bread-winner. To succeed in his business, he is forced to change and modify his voice and the nature of his communication with his exploited brothers and sisters. He no longer shares the same aspects of a common economic and social reality with them. Instead of highlighting the contradictions and absurdities of industrial apartheid, he becomes a skilful manipulator of individual sensibilities, a public relations officer retailing acceptance of the status quo. Same talent, different objectives and different effects! Styles encourages in individual clients the expression of sentimentality at the expense of reason and thus he performs a socially mystifying and intellectually soporific function. Styles's 'upward social mobility', new economic status as entrepreneur and sense of personal achievement are marked by a change in his social relations. The implications of these changed social relations are neither recognised nor explored. Styles the photographer still likes to think of himself as some sort of spokesman for 'his people', providing them with a valuable service.

As a character, Styles is static, at times almost grotesque in his antics, like the 'monkeys' he so scathingly refers to in his long monologue at the beginning of the play. There can be no character growth, because Styles the entrepreneur has defined the limits and nature of his social relations and has found himself a niche, albeit not a very cosy one, in the established order. Styles's clients are told to hide their pain, to suppress and submerge their true feelings, to conform to the norms and expectations of society, even when these are directly inimical to their interests.

Contrast this image with the one which emerges from the poems of Siphso Sepamla, published four years later. These are in the main, angry, assertive disclosures of pain. The anger is both private and public, rooted in the historical reality of the Soweto uprisings of 1976. The future is not seen as a closed door but as a door that has to be forced open. Look at the following extracts from 'At the dawn of another day':

it was on that day children
excused the past
deploring the present
their fists clenched full of the future

broader and a more specific social and political reality. Here *silence*, that is the lack of poetic commentary, functions as indictment.

Sipho Sepamla's pain cannot be suppressed. Indeed, his experiences and responses, trigger off the need to articulate pain:

I want to remember these things
 because I had never known such hate before
 I remember the click of my tongue
 my muscles tightening round my chest
 I looked at his covered face
 feeling the crush of pain as he was being felled
 by that bullet[11]

There is here an insistence on the need to recall images of pain; the poet wrestles with words (to paraphrase T.S. Eliot) to discover, to make coherent and to hold on to the reality of his identity.

On the contrary, Styles the photographer/salesman encourages his pliant customers to dream unattainable dreams and 'smile' at the world. And yet we know Styles has been critical of an economic system that makes the factory worker a slave to a machine. The cost of Styles's economic success is a stifling of his nascent political awareness and an attempt to stifle that of others. The 48-year-old municipality worker, holding his Standard Six Certificate, Third Class and dreaming in front of Styles's camera of becoming a 'graduate, self-made', is typical of Styles's customers, in orientation and aspiration. The image of the self-made man pulling himself up by his boot straps is a key concept in the mythology and ideological superstructure of industrial capitalist societies.



The difference between the devious sentimentality of the entrepreneur and the realistic appraisal of the factory worker exposing the hypocrisy of management and foreman can be demonstrated in the use Styles makes of the key word *SMILE* in these two contrasting situations.

(a) Styles's role as interpreter/translator affords him, as I have already argued, the opportunity of exposing the foreman and management to ridicule and this ridicule fulfils two functions. First, it serves to sharpen the self-awareness of Styles and his brothers — an awareness, which in its apprehension of socio-economic realities is demystifying. And secondly, exposing the white foreman to ridicule punctures the official mythology propping up the concept of white superiority. That which is officially sacred is made to look absurd, grotesque. Baas Bradley's linguistic limitations render him temporarily dependent on the man he is used to ordering about. Styles's translations and adaptation of Bradley's instructions implicitly and

skillfully make the point that if the workers 'smile' for the American managing director of the multinational corporation, they are conniving in their own alienation, they are playing the role of 'monkeys', puppets, clowns, formally allotted them. When Styles conveys the message 'you must see to it that you are wearing a *mask of smiles*', he underlines the point that they are performing in false consciousness, a role that is in diametric opposition to the expression of authentic feelings and responses. Like the machines they operate, they are groomed and programmed for inspection. Nor are they rewarded for 'smiling' — they are required to make up for lost time and lost profits, after the rapid departure of the visiting American boss, by the same management which gave the instruction for the productive process to be slowed down. The word '*mask*' signals the fundamental opposition between appearance and reality. Styles is conscious of this dichotomy and exploits his role of interpreter to mediate powerfully and arouse in his brothers a consciousness of their true position. His efforts are so effective that he is taken aback by the assertive and vigorous responses he provokes. But uncertain of his intentions and lacking any clear political direction or objective, he puts a brake on his verbal provocations, which ultimately become only temporary and spontaneous diversions from the normal, work routine. Styles's monologue evokes something of the mounting tensions and potentially explosive nature of tightly controlled and rigid industrial relations. It is significant that on the threshold of political initiative, he draws back, afraid of the forces he is beginning to unleash:

'Gentlemen, he says we must remember, when Mr Ford walks in, that we are South African monkeys, not American monkeys. South African monkeys are much better trained ...'

Before I could finish, a voice was shouting out of the crowd:

'He's talking shit!' I had to be careful! ...'

He withdraws into caution and individual self-interest and leaves factory floor for photographic studio. In the final analysis, the games he plays at the expense of the credibility of the managers of industry have more entertainment than politicising value and, due to his restraint and self-imposed limitations, serve only as a safety valve allowing frustrated workers to let off steam, to release tensions partially and temporarily. Indeed, after the fleeting appearance of the big white boss from the USA, 'It ended up with us working harder that bloody day than ever before.'

In reviewing his situation, Styles determines to seek a more permanent escape from the conditions he has described so well. Chance and lucky coincidence enable him to succeed. But, from a broader perspective, his individual success has to be balanced against the unmentioned failures, against the many who do not succeed in finding a way to escape from the conditions of wage labourers on the factory

floor, from conditions that make men feel they have lost their 'manhood'.

(b) Styles the photographer is continuously asking his customers to smile, and not just at the camera but at the world. 'Smile' is the last word of the play and his parting advice to Robert/Sizwe. The function of Styles's verbal skills has changed. He no longer uses them to distinguish 'mask' from reality. Reality and fantasy are fused in the dream worlds he sells to his customers. As it is demonstrated to us, Styles's commercial success depends on the gullibility, sentimentality and good-natured naivety of his customers. They are all stamped with the same quality of amiable simplicity and exhibit a certain dull docility. Indeed, they belong to a stereotype that has links and affinities with the standard presentation of 'good', i.e. passive black characters in South African fiction of the liberal, Christian humanist tradition. Such characters are humble, passive and stoic. [12] Simplicity and docility can be associated with Sizwe Bansi and his willing and pathetic participation in the fantasy world populated by self-made men and propagated by proprietor Styles. Like Styles, Sizwe directs his energy towards the immediate goal of individual survival, with his responsibilities to wife and children uppermost in his mind. His one angry outburst is made while drunk and is directed against the shallow hypocrisy of the establishment of so-called 'independent homelands'.

MAN (To the audience) I must tell you, friend ... when a car passes or the wind blows up the dust, Ciskeian Independence makes you cough.

I'm telling you, friend ... put a man in a pondok and call that Independence? My good friend, let me tell you ... Ciskeian Independence is shit!

Sizwe's comment is a spontaneous response which offsets and undermines official pronouncements on the subject. But it is an atypical and isolated outburst. Our main impression of Sizwe is of a man who is simple, humble, intellectually limited and politically unaware, a man unaccustomed to asking questions, a man who readily complies with Styles's repeated injunctions to smile at the world. These injunctions and what they conceal, signal Styles's new status and economic position. His social mobility is an example of how capitalism contains and absorbs potential voices of dissent. It is the failure to probe the empty clichés of the photographer Styles, and their political implications, that leaves an uneasy sense of dissatisfaction in the minds of those who seek more from the theatre than entertainment or descriptive narrative that reminds guilty liberal consciences, especially outside South Africa, that the Pass Law system is inhuman, unworkable and absurd.

There emerge two contradictory messages in the play: a cry of outraged human dignity stemming from the indignities of the urban situation confronting Sizwe Bansi (a cry echoed in Styles's earlier

commentary on his work routine at the factory) and a plea for patient endurance on the part of Styles the photographer, a plea which at moments does not escape the charge of complacency. The nature of these contradictions is inevitable, for they are embedded in the liberal position itself. The cries of outrage against the alienating conditions of the South African wage-labour system have to be balanced against the more persistent voices of accommodation. Contradictions also occur *within* the fragmented consciousness of individual characters such as Sizwe and Styles, who contain within themselves different and opposing voices.

Sizwe, in contrast to his customary tone of patient perplexity, does make one direct appeal to the audience for sympathetic understanding of his simple, indeed simplistic, plea: the right to urban employment and identity.

What's happening in this world, good people? Who cares for who in this world? Who wants who?

Who wants me, friend? What's wrong with me? I'm a man. I've got eyes to see. I've got ears to listen when people talk.

I've got a head to think good things. What's wrong with me? (*Starts to tear off his clothes.*) Look at me! I'm a man. I've got legs. I can run with a wheel-barrow full of cement! I'm strong! I'm a man. Look I've got a wife, I've got four children. How many has he made, lady? (*The man sitting next to her.*) Is he a man? What has he got that I haven't ... ?

The questions he puts to the audience are purely emotional appeals to 'man's better nature', a key concept in liberal philosophy, which at this point in the play manifests itself as an undefined existential assumption to be shared by actor and audience. Audiences are 'involved', to the extent that they are asked to 'feel' for the plight of Sizwe and participate in an emotional and abstract ritual of idealised liberal brotherhood.

At this point Sizwe shows himself to be a victim of acute alienation. Underlying the apparent simplicity of the Man's plea can be detected deep psychological malaise. First, Sizwe's or the Man's initial assertion is negative, self-deprecating, almost apologetic. The contrast in tone with Sipho Sepamla's 'At the dawn of another day' again springs to mind. Secondly, he sees himself through the eyes of others. Where the 'I' of Sepamla's poem is self-defining, the 'I' of Sizwe's appeal is defined for him by others. He is implicitly trapped in labels and categories that bear little relation to his experiences and perceptions of the world around him. It is only when he is drunk that a more authentic response surfaces, as I have already noted. There is a rupture between individual sensibility and its expression on the one hand, and societal norms and expectations on the other, where the former represent class interests fundamentally at odds with the latter. Liberal rhetoric and ritual appeals to universal brotherhood can only 'dodge' this issue. Thirdly, not only does

Sizwe laments his degraded status in the eyes of the ruling white bourgeoisie, he also laments, though he does not understand, the state of alienation that reduces black urban workers to fragmented islands of defensive and exclusive material self-interest. The lesson of self-interest, as the best strategy for survival in a ruthless and reified world, is the one that Buntu attempts to teach his unwilling pupil; it is the same lesson that Leah preaches to Xuma in Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy*, and it receives the same instinctively hostile reception.

Behind Sizwe's appeals and the dialogue that follows, we find a thinly-veiled indictment of the Pass System. But there is more at stake: Sizwe and Buntu are less than 'man', not simply because of their colour but because of their class. The problem of alienation is not simply a problem of colour. Replacing Baas Bradley and other 'bigger bosses' by black counterparts would not change the real face of capitalism.

In the closing lines of the play, Robert/Sizwe is asked to smile. Styles is in his position behind the camera, but the audience is left feeling uneasy about 'Robert Zwelinzima's precarious urban future and the long-term outcome of the false identity game Buntu persuades him to play. Styles's final message to Robert carried more than a literal meaning; for here 'smile' involves the adoption of a mask and identification with it. It also means accepting a split personality, torn between a public image and a suppressed private reality with which it is inevitably at odds. The devisers of the play have themselves exercised caution in the focus they give to the situations and characters they have chosen to sketch on to the silence of the stage. However, this may paradoxically explain the acclaim with which middle-class audiences in the West, and indeed elsewhere, have received the play. At times, the laughter is a little too light, the smiles a little too thin; for ultimately neither laughter nor smiles are adequate even if ambivalent responses to the painful realities of a strife-torn land.

The play belongs to a liberal tradition which is both international and national.



By way of conclusion, I wish to focus on certain ideological affinities 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' shares with two earlier South African novels, namely Alan Paton's *Cry the beloved country* and Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy*. The perspective of these writers is that of the liberal visionary. (In this respect it is misleading to argue that *Mine Boy* is a proletarian novel whose plot displays a marxist perspective on life,[13] just as it is misleading to discuss 'Sizwe Bansi is Dead' as though it carried a politically radical message.)

1 The humanitarian impulse is uppermost in the characters presented sympathetically to audience or reader. Characters like the Reverend

Stephen Kumalo, Xuma, and Sizwe Bansi constantly appeal to the better side of human nature — an existential assumption never defined or contextually specified.

2 The message of the liberal visionary writer is reformist, often at odds with the reality described. It is a message which papers over cracks which in reality threaten the whole edifice. The vision of society, in this kind of literature, is static and pessimistic with regard to material conditions and progress. Appeals are made to the emotions at the expense of reason. Such appeals gloss over hard social realities by a dubious process of sublimation and idealisation. Pessimism with regard to material progress is offset by directing readers' and audiences' attention to spiritual or material fantasy worlds, in which problems miraculously disappear.

3 To carry the reformist message, everyman figures and ostensibly universal types are frequently used. Thus, Sizwe Bansi is referred to as 'the Man' and Xuma as 'the man' who comes 'from the north'. [14] The Reverend Stephen Kumalo is, par excellence, the suffering Christian pilgrim and a direct descendant of John Bunyan's allegorical hero. The novel, however, is not allegorical but borrows from the later traditions of social realism. Social contexts, periods and places are all to a limited extent particularised and specified, though they lack the vivid situational immediacy that characterises the work of such writers as Alex La Guma. The reformist message produces a tension of modes and methods in the three works cited for comparison.

4 Great emphasis is attached to the importance of individual morality. Characters held up for our approval are usually those who accommodate themselves, in one way or another, to a status quo inherently inimical to their material interests.

Thus we meet the paradox of the cult of the individual given literary expression in contexts clearly inimical to individual self-fulfilment. Ndotsheni (Natal), Claremont (Johannesburg), Malay Camp (Johannesburg) and New Brighton (Port Elizabeth) are shown to be environments, in which the practice of a privatised or minority code of liberal ethics becomes problematic to say the least. The treatment of Ndotsheni in Alan Paton's *Cry the beloved country* is an interesting example of the failure of the liberal position to connect the superstructure to the social and economic bases of society. Stephen Kumalo's moral code, romantic pastoral attachment to the land and the 'tribe' and his repeated lament over the rural exodus to the towns are typical of the ahistorical notion that individual moral precept can change social conditions and that morals make men, rather than men morals. Kumalo's, and by extension the author's moral vision, ignore: (a) the historical background of the area. In Natal 'the use by the settlers of state power to force the African peasantry to become workers', [15] by depriving them of their land

and liberty, had led to the Bambata Rebellion of 1906, in which 'some 4,000 Africans and 25 whites were killed in the fighting'. [16] (b) that the commercial success of John Jarvis and his kind depends on the continuing exploitation and expropriation of rural black labour, deprived of their ancestral farm lands and forced into either a rural or an urban wage labour system. Thus, Stephen Kumalo's moral injunctions have no historical or practical validity, except perhaps in heaven.

Kumalo, Xuma and Sizwe Bansi are models for the moral message their creators use them to convey. They are long-suffering, passive and accommodating by nature. At the same time, they often exhibit feelings of helpless moral anguish and intense loneliness. The authors' literary pursuit of the cult of the individual tends to isolate characters from group experience. We see little of Xuma in his work situation, more attention being given to the romantic love theme. Sizwe and Xuma do assert the right to urban identity and residence, a position Alan Paton would appear to shy away from in *Cry the beloved country*. Nevertheless, Xuma offers himself as a sacrificial lamb to the legal and penal machinery of a system he has labelled unjust. Motivated by personal loyalty to his white liberal brother, he contemplates an act of futile heroism that can serve no social function. Ironically, considerations of colour override those of class. True sacrifice, argues Kihika, the freedom fighter in Ngugi's *A grain of wheat*, should have a practical objective and impact.

It is interesting to note that Athol Fugard has linked his political and artistic position and his responses to that position with those of Alan Paton, who, par excellence, represents South African liberalism:

I think I can go on producing plays under segregation (mixed audiences are not allowed) even admitting some non-whites to private readings. But eventually I may have to take a stand like Paton's (i.e. a certain degree of political commitment). We are in a corner. And all we can do is dodge here and push there. And under it all there's a backwash of guilt. [17]

No matter how well or effectively it is presented, the liberal position tends to be negative in its impact. It is a position caught in the web of its own contradictions. As a response to the South African situation it remains inadequate, characterised by 'dodges' and evasions. Kumalo performs a salvage operation for members of his family lost in urban iniquity and tries to hold family and 'tribe' together in a Christian, pastoral vision, which is blind to past and present realities. Xuma, like some latterday Don Quixote, dedicates his life to a personal crusade waged in the name of universal brotherly love. Sizwe/Robert smiles at a world that robs him of his 'manhood', and Styles asserts his manhood at the price of serving a system whose inhumanity he once deplored.

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Fighting Tory racism

We reprint below an interview with Race & Class editor A. Sivanandan, carried out by the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism for the anti-fascist monthly Searchlight, on the eve of new Conservative party proposals to impose further immigration control and to revise nationality law.

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism: Do you see Tory policy on immigration as differing greatly from Labour's?

A. Sivanandan: In their origins, no: they were equally racist. In their intent, no: the policies were geared to getting cheap labour from the colonies and ex-colonies at a time when Britain was desperate for manpower. In their philosophy, no: they both contributed to the view that fewer numbers make for better race relations. What the Immigration Acts from 1962 to 1971 signify is the decreasing need for immigrant settler labour and a recourse to contract labour, preferably from southern Europe. With the enforcement of the 1971 Immigration Act primary immigration from the so-called New Commonwealth had virtually ceased. Labour was content to leave it at that and to deal with the problems thrown up by racist immigration policies and racism in general. The 1976 Race Relations Act signified a willingness on the part of the Labour Party to dismantle institutional racism. The Tories however have continued to insist on further restrictions on dependants joining their families. The numbers involved are insignificant, the hardship inflicted on black people gratuitous, the harm done to race relations immeasurable.

CARF: The difference is on race relations rather than immigration policy, then?

AS: No, the divergence is on both counts. What the Labour Party is saying is that we have stopped primary immigration with the 1971 Act, now let's get on with the business of improving race relations, if only because it is causing social dislocation and political discontent. The Tory Party however is carrying the philosophy of fewer numbers making for better race relations to its logical conclusion: that is, no blacks, no race relations problem. Hence its immigration policy and its race relations policy are of a piece. The overriding purpose of both is to reduce the number of black people in this country. That reduction, the Tories see, can only be effected by inducing black settlers to go back home: that is through a policy of induced repatriation — in effect laying off black labour in its country of origin — returning the reserve armies of labour to their reserves — just as the South Africans do with theirs.

CARF: How do you mean that race relations policy and immigration policy are of a piece, and, secondly, what do you mean by induced repatriation?

AS: As I have said, Tory immigration policy is geared to keeping dependants (fiancés, children over a certain age, parents) out. For an ordinary black working-class man, the purpose of his coming here to work from the Caribbean or the Indian subcontinent is to make a better life for his family and his dependants. He undergoes great hardship just in order to get his family down here and support his extended family back home. Now a Tory government is telling him (in its pre-election pronouncements) you cannot bring your parents, grandparents, children over 18, unless you can prove urgent compassionate grounds. If you came after January 1973, you will have no right to bring in anyone at all. The message is clearly that unproductive additions to working-class black families are unwanted. If you want family life, 'go home'.

Similarly with the Tory race relations policy. Where Labour was beginning to dismantle racism, the Tories have served to entrench it, if only negatively. They have promised to repeal the incitement provision of the Race Relations Act, to do away with policies of positive discrimination (not that there are any), to review the whole Race Relations Act. They have made cuts in Commission for Racial Equality funds, necessitating cuts in local organisations. Cuts in urban aid, cuts in Manpower Services, and so forth, the disbanding of other social, welfare and employment services catering in the main for the black unemployed — all these are on the cards, all these will affect the black communities.

But this has to be seen not just on the level of Tory race relations policy but on the level of Tory racial philosophy — all that 'swamping-of-the-British-culture' stuff, all that bogus British nationalism, the philosophy they stole from the National Front (NF) and the votes they

stole in the process, forcing the NF into more overt and rabid forms of racism and fascism. (Incidentally, that, I think, was the basic reason for the recent conflict within the NF hierarchy: whether they should go on in the old way now overtaken by the Tories, or whether they should become more profoundly national socialist.)

CARF: And induced repatriation?

AS: I have already implied what this means in my foregoing remarks. Enoch Powell illustrated it well on a recent TV programme when, parrying the question as to whether he was in favour of compulsory repatriation, he replied that paying pensions to black workers in their countries of origin would be an inducement for them to go home. But at the moment it is not this type of inducement that is the most obvious, but rather the negative inducements — the inducements not to stay. First, in the racial climate engendered by Tory philosophy, which raises the threshold of racial intolerance: racialism is no longer just respectable but sanctified; to be truly British is to be truly racialist. Secondly, in the institutionalised racist policies of local authorities. Slough Council has repatriated homeless families rather than rehousing them, Hillingdon Council has refused to house homeless 'immigrant' families arriving in their borough, and so on.

CARF: Where does the new nationality legislation fit into all this?

AS: I do not know what concrete form the nationality laws will take, but it is quite possible that at some time the Tories will come round to Enoch Powell's view that citizenship should relate not just to one's country of birth but even to one's mother's country of birth — which of course would apply to the majority of black settlers in this country. (Already Whitelaw's statement on 29 October 1979 about fiancés and husbands makes a distinction between the rights of those women born here and those born overseas but resident here.) But broadly the purpose of nationality laws vis-à-vis black people (as of immigration acts) is to bring in and get rid of labour as and when the government chooses. The 1948 Nationality Act, for instance, by affording British 'subject' status to all the Colonial and Commonwealth citizens, made sure Britain could lay its hands on all the workers it could get, settler or otherwise. Equally, the new nationality laws would want to get rid of all the workers Britain no longer needs.

CARF: How does institutional racism, both at the point of entry (instructions to immigration officers, etc.) and within the country itself, affect the black community now?

AS: On the one hand, there is the effect of immigration procedures which tend to weaken the community — people are detained in Harmondsworth and not allowed to enter, people are picked off the streets and from their homes and held as illegal immigrants in prison

with no recourse to the courts for months on end, people are arbitrarily deported — and the wives and children waiting to come to join heads of households here face a barrage of obstacles. Immigration law (backed up by the ‘goondas’ of the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit with its special squads and computers) serves to make whole communities apprehensive (everyone is an illegal immigrant unless he can prove otherwise), requires that people remain on good behaviour, keep out of trouble, political and otherwise. These laws serve to sap a community’s strength, prevent it becoming strong. On the other hand, where the community has become strong, self-reliant, to a degree organised, it is subjected to the naked force of the state — through the police, the courts, the local authority. Take the case of Southall. The local authority allows the fascists to hold an anti-black meeting in the heart of the black community; to protect the meeting the police mount a massive, aggressive operation directed against the people of Southall, in which they make over 340 arrests. The courts carry on the offensive — convicting on flimsy police evidence, imposing heavy penalties. On the day of the demonstration a black community centre, Peoples Unite, is vandalised by police who occupy it for a few days and wreck, systematically, the premises and equipment. After it’s been made unfit for habitation, the local council steps in and demolishes the building.

With this Tory administration there is only the stick (no carrot). There is only one function for the state in relation to black people — and that function is to persuade, induce, black people, one way or another, to ‘go back home’. There is no longer a race relations policy in Britain but merely a repatriation policy — and both internal repression and immigration legislation are geared to it — both internal and external control if you like.

CARF: You seem to imply that the function of racism has changed?

AS: That is absolutely right. The function of racism in the earlier period when Britain needed black labour, was to rationalise and justify exploitation on the basis of colour. The function of racism today, when Britain no longer needs that labour and is anxious to be rid of it, is to rationalise and justify repatriation. Racism, in other words, is no longer a rationale for exploitation but a rationale for repatriation. And unless we make that distinction we will not be able to develop the correct lines of struggle against racism.

CARF: What then are the implications for the anti-racist, anti-fascist struggle?

AS: The fight against racism is not something new, not for black people. We have been fighting it all the time. It does not suddenly appear in an immigration act or a nationality law or a virginity test — though judging from white reaction, it is at these times that it

suddenly appears. It is with us all the time, in fact, if not in law. The proposed nationality law, for instance, is not something new but a registration, a legitimisation, of trends and tendencies already in force. Racism is with us all the time. But it keeps changing its contours, its size, its intensity, in terms of changes (economic, social, political) in the larger society. And I am talking of racism here, institutionalised discrimination, the authorised, official version — not of racialism (prejudice) or of ordinary everyday common or garden discrimination. We have learnt to cope with that. I am speaking of state racism and our need to understand its changing facets and functions if we are going to fight it effectively.

We need, further, to relate these changes not to the political parties, that is too simple, but to the differing sections of capital — in order to play one against the other. Callaghan and Heath, for instance, have much more in common with each other than either has with Thatcher. They represent modern capitalism, monopoly capitalism, the capitalism of multinational companies; Thatcher represents archaic private enterprise capitalism. The former is more pragmatic about its racist policies, modifying them when the economic gain they yield is not worth the social dislocation and political discontent they incur. But racism is not just a matter of pragmatism for Thatcherite conservatism — it is ideology, belief in a superior race, in a superior culture. Thatcher's 'swamping our culture' speech was for her (not necessarily for everybody in her government) the expression of a genuine belief, of sincere racism.

I think it is important to understand these distinctions if we are going to fight racism effectively. We have got to find out who our enemies are and who our allies — and at what point in time and in what circumstances — while still retaining the autonomy of struggle in our hands, black hands, in the hands of those who directly experience oppression and exploitation and know the size and shape and feel of it. It is we who must conceptualise and determine the lines of our struggle. For us to have the experience and 'hand over' its interpretation, theoretical and practical, to someone else (however well-meaning and militant and able) is to subordinate our struggle to some other struggle, to compromise it. On the other hand, we can't go it alone — after all there's only two million of us here — nor should we, because, in the final analysis, the struggle against racism has to be a struggle against class domination. Black people must fight racism and through it class — because they have a double burden, a two-fold task — they are oppressed in their race and exploited in their class. Race struggle without class struggle leads to cultural nationalism; class struggle without race struggle leads to economism. The black struggle is a struggle about the quality of life, not merely the standard of life; and, in that, it brings to the working-class struggle the politics, the passion, the comradeship and the idealism — and the

ideology — which the labour aristocracy has systematically denuded the white working class of.

Doesn't it strike you as strange that we have never had a mass movement in this country against racism? The Anti-Nazi League (ANL) in a sense was the closest we ever got to it — but then theirs was a movement against fascism and only incidentally racism. So that when Thatcherite Tories moved in and stole the National Front's clothes, the ANL was denuded of its purpose. Perhaps they are now re-thinking themselves. Perhaps they now see that we have got to fight racism — on the ground, in the communities, on the streets, in the homes, in the factories, in the offices, in police stations, in the courts, in the trade unions — wherever it raises its head — and therefore fascism. Because in this country now racism is the breeding ground of fascism.

And the time is right. For Tory politics and policy — the politics of the stick, the policy of a thousand cuts — do at least throw up quite clearly the common denominators of black and white struggle, of class struggle, a struggle waged on the basis of a unity that is forged from the base up, the black sub-proletariat up.

CARF: But don't you think that the recession and the cuts are going to increase white working-class antagonism towards black people?

AS: Yes, they would tend to. Working-class unity is not going to spring up ready-made from Tory policies. We have got to work at it. But the conditions are right. When everybody is losing their job, it is pointless to say that the blacks are taking it from you. When the SPG is used against the black community today and the white community tomorrow, the basis for unity and the need for it becomes obvious. The Tories show us quite clearly, in our everyday life, in our everyday experience, that our differences are insignificant compared to the things that unite us. What was only an abstract theory about capital being the common enemy of all the working class is today a tangible, palpable fact. And that gives us purpose and space to organise a mass movement — against racism and therefore for the class.

We must seize the time.

1 November 1979

Book reviews

Paul Robeson Speaks: writings, speeches, interviews, 1918-1974

Edited, with introduction and notes, by PHILIP S. FONER
(Quartet Books, London 1978). 623pp. £9.50.

In a remote village in the north of Ceylon many years ago, a group of boys, playing truant from school, crowded into the village bakery to look at their first wireless. The owner twiddled the knobs with a flourish, showing his audience how he could bring the world to his doorstep. And suddenly he stopped — at an English song — though he understood not a word. A man was singing what sounded like a song of his people that sounded so much like their own — and he sang as though the big heart of the radio itself would break. And they all fell silent, as though in prayer.

I was one of those boys. The man's name escaped me then, but I was to stumble across it some years later in an essay by Alexander Woolcott called 'Colossal Bronze'. And I knew it was him, not just because Woolcott was describing a great singer ('the finest musical instrument wrought by nature in our time'), but because he was trying to connect the singing to some other quality in the man from which that singing sprang, and which we had all fallen silent to that day in the bakery — a sort of universality that connected us to him and was 'coeval with Adam and the redwood trees of California'. 'By what he does, thinks and is,' wrote Woolcott, 'by his unassailable dignity and his serene incorruptible simplicity, Paul Robeson strikes me as having been made out of the original stuff of the world ... He is a fresh act, a fresh gesture, a fresh effort of creation.' It was a description that might have been considered extravagant had it not been measured out to the measure of the man himself.

But not since then — and Woolcott was writing in the 1930s when Robeson's life was barely half-way old, his endeavours but half-fulfilled — has anyone captured the size of the man as Philip Foner has done in this monumental work. And he does it not with fabulous language or metaphor, but with a meticulously researched, carefully documented, clinical presentation of Robeson through his own speeches, writings and interviews. In fact, Foner does not present Robeson so much as allow Robeson to present himself. Even in the introductory essay, where editors are wont to fly the flag of their disposition, Foner does not intrude his opinions. Instead, he gives us findings, from the evidence in his book. It is indeed Robeson who speaks, no other, and no one can henceforth say that there is another Robeson. Robeson stands defined. This is the definitive Robeson — not least because, if it is Robeson who speaks, it is Foner who, with scholarly precision and infinite care, provides the notes and references that place Robeson firmly in the politics and history of our time.

Long before black was officially beautiful, Robeson was celebrating the pride of his race and the cultures of his peoples. Long before the Civil Rights movement had taken root or the Black Power movement begun, Robeson was leading the battle against Negro second-class citizenship, challenging repressive laws, protesting the injustices of the courts, demonstrating on behalf of black activists and calling for boycotts, pickets and mass mobilisation. And civil rights did not mean just black civil rights, but civil rights per se. So he took on the McCarthyite HUAC and virtually asked them to get stuffed.

Even before the era of de-colonisation had taken off, Robeson was demanding freedom for the colonies. As co-founder and chairman of the Council of African Affairs (1937-1955) he agitated for African liberation, mounted a vitriolic campaign against Malan and South Africa's 'foul creed' and revived interest in African art and culture. (It is little wonder then that Nkrumah should have offered him the chair in drama and music in the university of free Ghana.)

In the early 1930s Robeson was inveighing against anti-semitism and Hitler. In 1938 he was in Spain denouncing fascism. In the 1940s he condemned American arms supplies to the Dutch in Indonesia and to the French in Indo-China. In 1950 he came out against the Korean war. In 1954, long before the anti-war movement, he likened Ho Chi Minh to Toussaint L'Ouverture as the liberator of his people and demanded that the 'imperialists be stopped in their tracks'. At the height of the cold war, he urged detente and peace. In the heart of monopoly capital he preached socialism.

But nowhere in the annals of American history, black or white, up to the writing of this book, has Robeson been acknowledged as a political activist. Even the black political movements of the 1960s, though acknowledging their debt to Martin Luther King and Malcolm X,

have failed to see Robeson as the forerunner of them all. (That he was still alive at the time, though in comparative retirement, makes that neglect even sadder.)

Most writers have been content to write of Robeson as a singer or an actor. (He was also a Phi Beta Kappa scholar, a lawyer and an All-American footballer.) But song, for Robeson, and in particular folk song, was what connected him to his own sharecropper origins and the ordinary peoples of the world — and committed him to their struggles. The song for him was the singer, the artist his art — but singer or artist, he was nothing without the people. For ‘when as a singer I walk on to the platform, to sing back to the people the songs they themselves have created, I can feel a great unity, not only as a person, but as an artist who is one with his audience’. And it is that unity, that wholeness, that Robeson brought to his politics too, so that even song became merely an instrument in the battle, art his weapon. They would ban him from the concert hall and stage, but he could still sing his politics; they would take away his passport, but he could still reach out to audiences across the world — over the telephone. They could not imprison his voice, and when they did, betwixt times, he wrote — column after militant column in his *Freedom* newspaper. But that did not mean he considered himself a writer, for that too was but an instrument in the struggle.

The purpose of life for Robeson was to be free. But he himself could not be free till all men were free, and that, in concrete terms meant the oppressed and the exploited. So he put his own freedom on the line — for them and, therefore, himself. He was as basic as that, and as universal — ‘a man and a half’ as Ossie Davis put it.

Institute of Race Relations

A. SIVANANDAN

Minority Families in Britain: support and stress

Edited by VERITY SAIFULLAH KHAN. (London, Macmillan, 1979). 203pp. Paper £4.95.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the drive to change policy-oriented race relations research, and in fact to transform the sociology of race relations in Britain, was focussed in the struggle of the Institute of Race Relations. That struggle, supported by a cross-section of young academics, was spearheaded by a paper (presented to the British Sociological Association) which denounced IRR’s policy-oriented research and especially *Colour and Citizenship* as ‘ideological’ and not ‘scientific’. Researchers, it said, should not spy on the black community in order to inform on it to policy makers. The work of the Institute since then has held out that the proper study of race relations is racism. But, despite the struggle and the alternatives that

sprang from it, this book, and indeed the whole 'Studies in Ethnicity' series, hearken back to the themes and approaches of the 1960s — though this time under the guise of cultural pluralism.

The product of a 1976 Conference on Transcultural Psychiatry, the book proposes to outline the 'support and stress experienced by members of ethnic minorities and workers in the statutory services in Britain alike'. The contributions by the new ethnic 'experts', are uneven in quality and disparate in approach. What unites them is their policy-oriented purpose: to improve 'communication and cooperation between researchers and practitioners in the field'. On another level the pieces are united by the authors' commitment to some kind of cultural analysis of black people vis-à-vis the social services. But here the similarities cease: the pieces differ drastically in style, in methodology and in political grasp, and contributors contradict one another over fundamental premises.

Khan, the editor, expresses the view in her introduction that this book should go further than merely producing a series of 'backgrounds' on different ethnic groups. And yet 'backgrounds' and nothing more is precisely what Oakley serves up in his chapter on the Cypriots. (Little wonder since this is based on the research for his PhD thesis, already published in part by the 'old IRR' in *New Backgrounds* in 1968.) The 'background' itself is sadly inert, despite the author's attempts to elevate the trite and obvious into sociologese, and the 'insights' banal. On kinship and the migration process he writes, 'letters provide for a continuous and very rapid exchange of information ... Visiting is a regular feature of communication between the two communities and passenger statistics testify to its scale.' Khan hopes that this book will get away from reinforcing 'the notion of minorities as "problems" in need of special help from the caring and educational agencies'. But Roger Ballard, looking at 'Ethnic Minorities and the Social Services', runs straight into that trap. He shamelessly admits to examining 'the problem which the presence of relatively permanent ethnic collectivities pose for practitioners'. Weinreich, on the other hand (in 'Ethnicity and Adolescent Identity Crisis') condemns such an approach: 'the "social problem" is within the indigenous community not the minority' and "'culture conflict" and "identity conflict" when applied to the consequences of contact between different cultures ... falsely stigmatise whole groups of people as "social problems"'. Unfortunately Weinreich, despite some important insights, offers nothing more than a critique. And the dauntingly complicated language ('their contra-value systems are assumed to be aligned with their contrasts associated with their underlying bipolar constructs') and complex statistics hardly meet Khan's criteria that contributions should be simple and accessible to 'practitioners'. It is only Philip Rack, psychiatrist and sole practitioner in the group, who, in his down to earth and unpretentious

study of Asians and the psychiatric services, shows how the minorities themselves can reveal shortcomings or distortions in the indigenous culture.

Without exception all the contributors use a pluralist/culturalist frame of reference — but with variations. Geoffrey Driver sets out to examine 'West Indian adolescents and their teachers', only to demonstrate (inadvertently) how a crude cultural interpretation of black people serves the cause of racist stereotyping. According to him, a teacher who may be confident in the 'management role' of a 'normal classroom' 'may find that he is less skilled in the presence of an ethnic minority with distinctive behaviour unknown to him'. Such behaviour could be detected in the 'reflexive gestures and postures', patois, etc., of West Indian pupils. 'The clicking of lips', for instance, 'or pouting them and plucking them with a finger are examples of derogatory expressions which many teachers failed to interpret.' Apparently, the problems teachers have with black pupils have little to do with things like the teachers' own racialism or an irrelevant curriculum, but with 'their lack of competence in the cultural repertoire of West Indian pupils' — and the answer is to 'develop their cultural skills'.

Esther Goody and Christine Muir Groothues, who like Khan are anthropologists, produce a highly technical account of the 'degree of jointness and segregation of marital roles in 20 West African couples'. Their 'fieldwork', including an examination of banking habits, baby-bathing practices, decision-making (as between husband and wife) and other trivia, all analysed into percentages, tables and scatter diagrams, makes for hilarious reading. Khan, in her own contribution on Mirpuris in Bradford, while serving up findings only a little less trite than those of Goody et al, manages to keep a clinical distance from her subjects by dressing up the commonplace in academic garb: 'the social stress experienced by Pakistani migrants in Britain derives from three main "arenas"; the traditional culture and emigration area; the migration process; and settlement in the new environment and society.' Wouldn't you know?

Roger Ballard, after a bad start defining blacks as the problem (see above), seems to bethink himself. 'The maintenance of ethnic distinctiveness', he discovers, 'is the outcome of the strength of childhood socialisation, of interaction with peers and of a reaction to hostility and misunderstanding from the majority.' He goes on to acknowledge that it is because racialism exists in the wider society that 'members of the younger generation [blacks] are utilising their ethnic resources both to resist pressures put upon them by the majority and to challenge the unequal position in which they find themselves'. But it is left to Catherine Ballard, in her chapter on 'Second-generation South Asians', to give the notion a habitation and a name: 'reactive ethnicity'. For 'their Asian-ness ...' (or West

Indian-ness one would assume) 'is their ultimate security' against 'racism'.

What clearly emerges from this book is that the issues which were thrown up in the critique of IRR's policy-oriented research of the 1960s are merely being side-stepped by this 'new generation' of researchers. For the old school, by and large, the minorities were the problem; for the new school the minorities have problems — the problem of being minorities, which of course can be overcome by their minority/cultural strengths. Hence the 'new radicals' take upon themselves the business of speaking up for, strengthening and even translating (for white practitioners, of course) the cultures of minorities, and in the event salve their consciences by becoming the cheerleaders of black cultural resistance.

But such an approach ignores institutional, state racism, and the racial dynamics that living in Britain — working in the lowest jobs and living in the worst conditions — means to black people. Khan even goes so far as to deny any class (let alone racial) inequalities in Britain. For her, 'all members of the society are subject to the same political and economic troubles. They have access to the same media coverage, education and medical services...' Most of the authors will only acknowledge 'ethnicity' as something abstracted from material conditions. And even those who acknowledge 'racism' (they really mean racialism) in British society, submerge it in cultural explanations and cultural solutions. As a philosophy for 'practitioners' cultural pluralism is a more dangerous prescription than the old integrationist one, for it releases them from an examination of their own racialism and the racism of the institutions they represent, the institutions which in large measure determine black people's life chances.

To put it differently, cultural pluralism, the framework, and multiculturalism, the solution, deal with neither (institutional) racism or class questions. 'Reactive ethnicity', or cultural resistance, can only be a resistance to racialism in British society. Racialism is not about power but about cultural superiority. Racism is not about cultural superiority but about power, economic power; and the resistance to racism must in the final analysis be political resistance, expressed perhaps in cultural forms — as when 5,000 Asians sat down before the police station in Southall and demanded the release of the youths arrested in the demonstration against Gurdip Singh Chaggar's murder.

Institute of Race Relations

JENNY BOURNE

Corporate Imperialism: Conflict and Expropriation: transnational corporations and economic nationalism in the Third World

By NORMAN GIRVAN (New York and London, Monthly Review Press, 1978). 241pp. £3.50.

The problems of poverty and imperialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America have been examined with increasing clarity and sophistication by committed scholars who have developed the theoretical approach usually referred to as 'dependency theory'. One of the most impressive is the West Indian economist Norman Girvan. Girvan's work has concentrated largely on mineral export industries and, in that sphere, he is perhaps the most important writer of recent years. Monthly Review Press has performed a very useful service in issuing this collection of his essays, written between 1970 and 1975, published previously in scattered and less accessible form.

Girvan considers the growing significance of transnational corporations as a characteristic feature of twentieth-century capital accumulation, a logical extension of the Leninist view of imperialism. As minerals play a greater and greater part in the technical requirements of advanced capitalist production and simultaneously become scarcer and more expensive to uncover and process in the USA, Japan and western Europe, mineral production in other parts of the world has become more decisive. On balance, Third World resource industries have tended to play a *less* important role quantitatively in overall supply in recent years. Much of the reason for this is political: the transnational corporations infinitely prefer to operate in a climate that is 'safe' for their interests. This is why 80 per cent of base mineral exploration since the Second World War has taken place in Canada, Australia, South Africa and the USA, the traditional lands of European settler expansionism.

For this reason, Third World mining is all the *more* strategically important. It develops largely when and where the transnational corporations see little alternative for meeting their own requirements. In the context of the 1970s, the relationship between the more forward of Third World governments, the transnational corporations and the western governments that back the corporations has been one of inherent instability and constant tension, a point recognised even by the apologists of the corporations.

Despite considerable technological potential to act as a developmental catalyst, the mineral industries have been an overwhelmingly negative force in Third World economies, a major component in the development of underdevelopment. Corporation strategies have been concerned exclusively with their own acquisition of raw materials and accumulation of capital. There is little or no integration with the national economy of the host country. Instead, mining operations are integrated into complex corporate operations centred

in western headquarters. For this reason, profit calculations for the specific branch of production in a single Third World country are not meaningful, according to Girvan. The 'buyer' of the minerals is often a subsidiary of the same giant as the 'seller'. Most value added in the productive process, not to speak of the production of finished goods for consumption, goes on in the West, unless transport costs create a counter-balancing force in the profit calculations of the corporation.

Girvan explores this situation and the emergent confrontation over the natural resources of Third World countries in six chapters. The first is an historical and analytical overview. The next three are case studies on Chilean copper, Caribbean bauxite in general and the nationalisation of an ALCAN bauxite subsidiary in Guyana. The last has a special fascination, because Girvan was part of the team negotiating for the Guyanese government. The final two chapters are policy-oriented: a succinct essay preparing the ground 'towards a mineral policy for the Third World' and a practical exposition of the politics of expropriation directed towards those in the position in which Girvan found himself in Guyana.

Expropriation is a particularly loaded issue. Nothing is more crucial for corporations and their backers in western governments than to prevent expropriation without compensation. The World Bank, for instance, refuses to give loans to countries that have shown the temerity to engage in such an exercise. In Girvan's view, it was to establish this principle, rather than in response to any specific lobbying by Kennecott and Anaconda, that the USA threw its weight behind the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile. Girvan provides an articulate moral and practical defence of the necessity for expropriation with a minimum of compensation.

A crucial aspect of Girvan's perspective, though, is the stress he lays on the insufficiency of expropriation in turning the conditions of dependency in poor capitalist economies around. In the case of Caribbean bauxite, the burden of nationalisation was shifted easily by the corporations on to consumers while Caribbean dependence on bauxite exports and imports of food and machinery from the West has *intensified*. Over the past thirty years, governments in capitalist countries, including those in the Third World, have greatly increased their revenues from mineral operations. This has generated national income but heightened dependency, creating 'rentier states'. As an example, Girvan proposes Latin America's leading oil producer, Venezuela. This tendency is taken to extremes in very small states such as Guyana, Surinam, Gabon, Kuwait, Brunei, the United Arab Emirates and so on. The real answer can only lie in a disengagement from an economy primarily organised to serve the needs of the industrial West's corporations. 'What is required is not regulation of the system but rather its subversion.' In other words, Girvan suggests the limitations of producers' cartels such as OPEC and the International

Bauxite Association and of nationalisation outside the framework of social revolution in Third World countries.

Girvan writes with a fine blend of humour, seriousness and clarity of exposition that should make him comprehensible to a wide audience as well as theoretically pivotal to a specialised one. A short review can only begin to convey the richness of the analysis.

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BILL FREUND

Popular Disturbances in Scotland, 1780-1815.

By KENNETH J. LOGUE (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1979). 278pp.
Cloth £8.00

Whoever invents false revolutionary legends for the people, or amuses them with lyrical tales, is not less guilty than a geographer who draws up misleading maps for navigators.[1]

But does this mean that reliable maps come from scientific purity — neat classifications, evident numeracy, dispassionate analysis — with, perhaps, the occasional indication of sympathy for or solidarity with one side or the other? This is the fashionable academic vein which Logue adopts. How useful is it?

It should not be difficult to grasp the relevance of Logue's theme. Popular disturbances bring to light the culture and ideology of the people as they move from pre-industrial to industrial society, from pre-capitalist to capitalist society, from 'moral economy' to market economy, from local consciousness to class consciousness. Even in the world that capitalism has made, variants on that transition are still taking place.

His account also offers insight into how the state limits, contains and domesticates the people when they stray from subordination. We need to understand the long history of policing in the 'developed' world and the marks it has left as well as the new forms it can take.

Logue's plot and sub-plot would, then, be useful — if only he could keep to them. In the main, though, the methodology is in control. 'Science' keeps breaking in and plot and sub-plot disappear. Thus Logue cuts up the activity of the people and arranges the pieces under a number of headings chapter by chapter — 'meal mobs', 'the Clearances', 'riots' (three kinds), 'disturbances' (two kinds and one miscellaneous category), the 'crowd' — but he cannot put their struggles together again. He tries, he tries, but, again and again, analysis enters in and drives synthesis out.

Where synthesis holds the stage for a moment, Logue follows E.P. Thompson.[2] Popular disturbances are seen as the assertion of

traditional rights and customs, the 'moral economy', rather than as a mindless response to stimuli of deprivation and oppression. The larger pattern appears: the shift from the 'moral economy' of the traditional communities to the first glimmerings in Scotland of class consciousness as a reaction to the dictates of the market economy. Thus the periodic 'meal mobs' represented not only a response to shortage, high prices and hunger but also a moral and practical reaction to changes in the control of grain.

It is only occasionally, however, that such actions and reactions are allowed to tell the people's tale and that the disturbances, riots and other incidents are allowed to relate to larger patterns. Elsewhere, the action and the narrative are cut up and parcelled out with labels affixed, while legend is silently liquidated. With continual shuffling and shifts, incessant motion here and there and back in time and space, human continuities rarely appear.

Of the many fleeting faces in the crowd recorded in the legal documents that are his chief source for this study, he takes the opportunity to rescue only one. Grizel Chisholm joins the 'meal mob' in Inverness in February 1776 to feed herself and her children while her husband is away from home. The local grain is to be exported. She tries to get the grain from the ship, is prevented by the authorities, joins with the crowd in stone-throwing. She is seized by members of the local Volunteer Company, a para-military police force, and 'after having been struck several times and bruised by them' is carried off to prison. Logue presents this as a moment of class-consciousness.

If she had not previously been aware of being in a subordinate relationship to the local authorities of Inverness, she was now ... in discovering that not everyone held the same views about the moral economy, people were made aware, sometimes forcibly, that those who hold contrary views had the power to enforce that view against theirs.

He contrasts her plight with that of Lord Dundonald writing to the Local Advocate to complain about the local workers:

They are Enemies of Subordination. So prevalent is the levelling Spirit that few of the labourers or Tradesmen will doff their Scots Bonnets or shew any Mark of Respect to those of the Higher Class. A Spirit like this is not soon altered.

And Logue finishes the book with an indication of where his sympathies lie: 'Men like Dundonald could call upon military assistance if things got too bad, while people like Grizel Chisholm had only their fellows to assist them'. An individual's plight, a moment of sympathy, and the book is at an end.

Throughout his account Logue has failed to grasp the character and significance of what he has assembled and arranged. He misses, for

example, both the character of the repression and the significance of the Scottish 'Spirit [that] is not soon altered'. This can be seen in his treatment of the Tranent riot, one of a widespread series of popular riots against the Militia Act of 1797, in which the military 'ran amok, venting their frustrations on the dispersing crowd'. This was an incident even more terrible than the action of the SPG in Southall in April 1979, but for an account that really conveys the character of this militia riot we need a less 'scientific' work, Thomas Johnston's *The History of the Working Classes in Scotland* (1920, republished in 1974):

the Cinque Ports Cavalry, well plied with drink, enjoyed a massacre of men and women, shooting, spearing, slashing and riding down a populace armed only with stones; the troops attacked innocent non-rioters travelling quietly on the highway, and killed men among the cornfields as if they had been partridges ...

Not 'scientific' but vivid, just.

The strangest omission of all from this dismembered social landscape is Scots identity. Logue quotes, for example, but does not comment on two remarks made at the Tranent riot. At one point he reports that the crowd had damned the Cinque Ports Cavalry 'for a parcel of English Buggers'. At another he reports: 'A labourer was busy spreading lime in a field when some soldiers rode up, "damned him for a Scots Bigger" and were about to blow his brains out ...'. Neither here nor anywhere else does he discuss the possible implications of this Scots-English hostility. The culture and identity of the Scots, Highlanders and Lowlanders, rural and urban, are hardly to be seen.

If history is to be of use, it has to be able to show how culture adapts, resists and reacts. The history we need is both analytic and synthetic, scientific and passionate. As we make that history we develop accurate maps for navigators, amuse ourselves with lyrical tales, celebrate and realise true legends of the people.

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White Britain and Black Ireland

By RICHARD LEBOW (Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1976, and London, Eurospan, 1979). 152pp. Cloth £8.50.

Professor Lebow's thesis is a simple one. And it is to his credit that he has put it across in a simple, readable way. To anyone at all familiar with the inbuilt bias of the British media in its coverage of 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland, it rings a familiar bell. One has a sense of déjà vu when reading what *The Times*, *Punch*, etc., thought of the Irish in the middle of the last century. For example, can this really be *The Times* of 1846? Could it not be Mason or Atkins one hundred and thirty years later talking of criminalisation, special courts and SAS operations?

If crimes are un-English, and English means for detecting and punishing them fail, why should not an un-English power be exercised in districts where violence and murder stalk unavenged and unchecked?

Such glimpses at Victorian ideology entice the reader to believe that, if history has stood still, it is in Britain — not, as some contemporary British observers conclude, in Ireland. And there is the problem, for history, even imperial history, does not remain unchanged. And it is when Lebow goes beyond description to explanation that his analysis becomes not merely simple, but simplistic. But first, his thesis.

When the English first invaded Ireland in the twelfth century, they justified this act of colonial expansion by pointing to the barbarity and paganism of the Irish. Their aggression was justified in paternalistic terms. Thus, a stereotype of the Irish as shiftless, lazy drunkards prone to violence quickly emerged and convinced the English that they were right, after all, to invade Ireland. The stereotype thus confirmed affected the perception of English politicians and administrators. Locked in a 'perceptual prison', they saw what they wanted to see.

By the nineteenth century this stereotype was threatened by the liberalisation that took place within England. How could English politicians and administrators engage in increasing reforms in England and increasing repression in Ireland? There existed, to use Festinger's concept, 'cognitive dissonance' at this point, and the English could only lessen this dissonance by believing even more firmly in the stereotype. Such belief was functional in the short run, but dysfunctional in the long run. Ireland, like any other colony, could only have been successfully kept in one of two ways; through either naked and unmitigated coercion, or a policy of integration into the imperial structure. English politicians fell between two stools and thus allowed a protest movement, in the form of Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Movement (for the repeal of the Act of Union of 1800), to

develop in Ireland without allowing it a way to merge into British political life. Furthermore, trapped as they were within their perceptual prison, the politicians and administrators could not see that their failure to respond to demands for reform led to the growth of a movement for independence. In short, by failing to abandon their stereotype of the Irish, the English themselves contributed to the decolonisation process which set in from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

That is the argument, simple and plausible as far as it goes. As an argument it rests solely on two concepts from social psychology, 'stereotype' and 'cognitive dissonance'. Yet these two concepts are made to carry a lot of weight. Although Lebow looks at a very narrow range of data — 'primarily ... elite opinion in both Britain and Ireland' around the 1840s concerning one British colony — the lesson is drawn out and said to be applicable to all colonies at all times; perceptual prisons contribute to decolonisation.

So, amazingly, despite the subject matter of the book, the end product is a remarkably ahistorical analysis. For all its uniqueness the history of Ireland is forced (along with Algeria, America, etc.) into a three-stage model of colonisation/decolonisation, what Lebow calls 'a paradigm of colonial history'. Specifically, as regards the relationship between Britain and Ireland, two failures result. First, the history of Ireland has to be seriously distorted to fit the model. And secondly, real differences within British society in the mid-nineteenth century must be ignored.

A number of examples of the first failure could be given, but perhaps the most glaring is Lebow's application to early nineteenth-century Ireland of this general statement regarding decolonisation:

Certainly some natives had to be taught to read and had to be exposed to the techniques of Western society, but those Western powers that professed democratic values at home encouraged such development far beyond the mere requirements of administration in the colony ... This proved to be a tremendous impetus to the development of national movements, for it increased the size of the cadres that would organise the movements.

Now, while this may be a fair conclusion regarding Britain and some of her other colonies, it is certainly *not* the case as regards Ireland at this period (nor, for that matter, for Lebow's native America a few generations earlier). In 1798, the rebellion that caused the imposition of the Act of Union, an Act which Lebow regards as a watershed in the process of Irish decolonisation, was led by the United Irishmen, the descendants of settlers — Protestant and middle class — not by native Catholic peasantry. And although Daniel O'Connell, an educated native, looms large in the middle of the nineteenth century, he looms too large in Lebow's account. For to concentrate on him is

to give scant attention to the revolutionaries of the nineteenth century — the Young Irelanders and the Fenians — many of whom, again, were descendants of settlers.

The second failure is a telling one also, for the simplicity of Lebow's thesis again does not do justice to history. It was not merely that the administrators and politicians of early and mid-Victorian England were reformers at home and repressors abroad. They could be both in both places. Charles Booth, for example, had no difficulty urging reforms for the respectable poor and deportation to labour colonies for the disreputable poor. For Booth, reform and repression were not as contradictory as one might expect. And if such ambivalence could be present within one bourgeois reformer, how much more likely were there to be discrepancies between different classes within Victorian England as regards both reform and repression in England and Ireland? But the views of different classes are not presented here. Instead, we have a presentation 'concerned primarily with elite opinion', and a theory that can include under its mantle Daniel O'Connell, Albert Memmi, James Baldwin, and Leopold Senghor!

The viewing of the relationship between Britain and Ireland in racial terms is not a new one. But such a model has severe limitations. It is useful as a metaphor, but if one believes it to be more than that, history must be distorted.

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BILL ROLSTON

Marxism and the Metropolis

Edited by WILLIAM K. TABB and LARRY SAWERS (New York, Oxford University Press, 1978). 376pp. Cloth £8.25, paper £4.25.

On reading these essays, first presented to a conference on 'Marx and the Megalopolis' in New York in 1975, one is struck — not for the first time — by the marked contrast between contemporary European and American marxist writings on the city. Certainly, in comparison with so much of the recent output of Manuel Castells and the European school of marxist urban sociology, these American essays are refreshingly straightforward in their application of class analysis to the processes of capitalist urban development. Nor is this difference merely a question of style, although there is much to be said for the clarity and lack of jargon with which these essays have been written.

As the editors point out, many of the contributors to this volume have come to marxism relatively late, and not as a matter of academic tradition or intellectual curiosity, but rather on the more pragmatic ground that conventional social science, with its notions of political pluralism, urban ecology and market economy, is simply

incapable of explaining the current crises of the American city. This in itself lends a certain sense of urgency and commitment to many of these essays. One of the best pieces here, by Green and Hunter, carefully documents the class interests behind the opposition to bussing in Boston in 1974, and another by Tabb analyses with equal clarity the background to the New York City fiscal crisis of the same year. Both of these essays illustrate well the way in which a marxist analysis can be employed to inform local struggles, without at the same time diverting attention from more immediate issues. For example, Green and Hunter conclude their essay by noting that, whatever the material bases of opposition to bussing or the weaknesses of the particular bussing plan imposed on Boston by the courts:

the issue in Boston today is racism. It is not only the racism of capitalist job and housing markets and the hypocritical racism of suburban liberals who control the state government, but it is also the well-organized racism of the Boston School Committee and its petit-bourgeois and working-class supporters... Because these [white] neighborhoods suffer from high unemployment, poor housing and lousy schooling, it has been tempting for liberal journalists and leftist groups alike to explain away white working-class racism as a product of 'lower-class frustration', 'backlash' or 'manipulation' of various kinds. But it is wrong to explain racism away by romanticizing the ethnic pride and community solidarity of neighborhoods like South Boston (which in fact contain real divisions), or by resorting to a conspiracy theory that explains racism as a frustrated response to a ruling-class plot in the form of bussing.

At another level, there is a sense in which American capitalism and the American city, having developed in a relatively unencumbered and insular fashion, actually demand a more basic, direct form of marxist analysis. Just as the patterns of urban development and degradation under early industrial capitalism were so starkly portrayed to Engels in nineteenth century Manchester, the American city of the twentieth century reveals the basic contradictions of urban life under later stages of capitalist development. In the opening essay of this book, Gordan shows how the historical growth of American cities has in fact precisely reflected the various phases of development under mercantile, industrial and monopoly capitalism. In a similar vein, Ashton traces the clear class lines along which American suburban development has taken place, while Markussen demonstrates how the peculiarly fragmented structure of American urban government has evolved as a means of channelling and containing class conflict. Indeed, all of these essays point out that the processes of suburbanisation and decentralisation have served to reinforce status and ethnic divisions within the American working class and

thereby to enhance capital's control over its workforce. Gordan draws upon the testimony of American businessmen before the US Industrial Commission of 1900 and 1902 to indicate that, during this period, suburban relocation of industry was directly influenced by the need to combat the growing unionisation of central city workers. Or, as the vice-president of the American Trust Co. put it (quoted by Mollenkopf in his essay on urban renewal in the 50s and 60s):

Labor developments in the last decade may well be the chief contributory factor in speeding regional dispersion of industry ... Generally, large aggregations of labor in one big [central city] plant are more subject to outside disrupting influences, and have less happy relations with management, than in smaller [suburban] plants.

There is thus a certain blatant character to American capitalism (and its spokesmen) which makes the job of the marxist analyst that much easier. But this is not to imply that these American writers are in any sense unsophisticated in their appreciation of the complexities of contemporary capitalist urban development. Stone in his essay on the contradictions of housing finance under the mortgage system and Hill in his analysis of the growing financial crisis of central city governments both display a well-developed understanding of the (increasingly fragile) reproductive role of the state in modern capitalism. Indeed, Hill's essay, taken together with Tabb's piece on New York, are highly instructive of the present situation throughout the capitalist world of state attacks on the collective benefits and welfare of the urban working classes.

Without doubt, the pattern of urban development in Europe has been more messy, shaped as it has been by various historical, cultural and physical constraints. Equally, the European capitalist state, with its much greater control over and involvement in urban affairs, presents a much more complex field of analysis. Still, there is on this side of the Atlantic a fatal tendency among marxists to compound the complexities of the real world by the very nature of the overly-abstract theories which they employ and, in the process, to alienate themselves from the everyday struggles against racism and poverty taking place in our cities. This is a luxury which we can ill afford at a time when the state itself, under the sway of monetarism, is reverting to a cruder, more primitive role of direct repression, and we would do well to follow the lead of these American writers in adopting a simpler, more committed form of analysis in our response to these developments.

University of Birmingham

LEE BRIDGES

Positive Image: towards a multiracial curriculum

By ROBERT JEFFCOATE (London, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1979). 124pp. £1.95.

Positive Image is anything but. The apparent simplicity and directness of the writing, the apparent willingness to grapple with basic and difficult issues, mask a dangerous and slippery confusion at the book's core.

There is no doubt of the author's good intentions. He declares himself at the outset to be an advocate of child centredness 'unashamedly within the much-maligned tradition of middle-class white liberalism'. He is a concerned teacher, with the welfare of all the children in his classes at heart. He is editor and co-author of the (as yet unpublished) Schools Council Project on Curriculum Research. He advocates that the *content* of the curriculum should 'reflect the multiracialness of Britain and the world and draw significantly on the experiences of British and racial minorities overseas'. It should present to the children as accurate a picture as possible of the world. Such a curriculum should, however, not (as an emphasis on black studies might) exclude the white child. 'It is absolutely crucial that the themes which constitute a curriculum's organising principle should speak equally to all children, alienating no one and offering each something to relate to or compare with his or her own experience.' The classroom must be a forum where all the children's views and attitudes are explored, and not only those acceptable to the teacher. Not to do so leads many teachers to believe that the children in their schools and classrooms are colour blind, free of prejudice. He asserts that who teaches what, where, and to whom is inevitably a political question.

And yet his self-confessed liberalism has its own in-built contradictions which, in this book, he fails to resolve and which negate or contradict the common sense of some of the points he has to make. His own concern stems from his original belief that 'British society suffers from an endemic malaise, racism, which has acquired the status of a cultural norm ... schools have a clear duty ... to make a concerted response by promoting racial self-respect and interracial understanding.' While still claiming this understanding of racism as the basis of his current work, he declares that his position has now changed. 'It is arrogant and presumptuous ... for schools to stipulate as a curriculum target that children should respect other races and cultures. Implicitly it is to treat children as objects who need something doing to them.' So the teacher is let off the hook, the children left to the mercy of all those interests and pressures which do treat them as objects, do 'do something' to them, without any counter-balance, any attempt to inform their opinions rather than pass on information.

Some remarkable inconsistencies arise from his attempt to have it both ways. In one place, 'black youth culture' is characterised as a 'vigorous response to bitter experiences of white racism' and 'fiercely anti-white or separatist stances' are 'understandable if regrettable'. But elsewhere, 'anti-white attitudes are as much racism as anti-black attitudes ... and they have equally to be combated in school'. And how does this combat tally with the philosophy that 'children's attitudes and opinions are their own affair'?

Ultimately Jeffcoate becomes a neutralist, an observer of the children's attitudes, content it seems to have them aired in the classroom environment, believing in the value of this for its own sake, and not concerned with any further challenge of them. One anecdote he cites is revealing.

The fifth year and I had been watching the ITV programme on sex roles ... At the end Barry ... took charge of the discussion, relegating me to a back seat, because he had been angered by what he saw as the programme's bias. He challenged any girl to say she was dissatisfied with her lot. None did. What those who spoke up had to say reflected a model of future happiness lifted wholesale and uncritically from precisely the sources the programme had been attacking.

Surely, not to stimulate any further challenge to the received opinions the children parroted, to allow one strong-minded and (as described elsewhere, authoritarian) boy of right-wing views to dominate the discussion is not to extend the children's capacity to understand and evaluate their own experience, but to leave them ensconced in bias. Jeffcoate would reject as authoritarian any further input from the teacher; children must determine their own views. And of course they must, but if the teacher is genuinely concerned with the further development of the children in his class, he should raise matters of justice, matters of principle. In its philosophy the state school (and we know how vastly different is the practice) is committed to egalitarianism. Concerned teachers like Mr Jeffcoate are committed to equality of opportunity and equality of treatment. Is it then authoritarian to pursue these principles because some pupils will reject them?

More perhaps than anything the book reveals the racism and reaction within the teaching profession — though this is constantly muted by the author's desperate anxiety not to characterise the majority of teachers as racist, despite the evidence of racist attitudes and statements and the effect these have on black children, because to do so is 'counterproductive'. Yet he still reveals some horrors.

Three black boys were cast, very much against their will, in a first-year production of a play about Columbus as 'natives' of the

Caribbean whose role was to stand on the stage, receive gifts from Columbus and say nothing. Predictably, when performed before the school this moment in the play evoked laughter ... When the boys heard the production was to be that day, one of them ran home. He was subsequently fetched and caned — so hard that, in his own words ... 'it near broke my little finger and it went purple and bad'.

And the punch-line to all this? 'The teachers involved were, incidentally, amongst the kindest and most dedicated I have known.'

Institute of Race Relations

HAZEL WATERS

Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific

By ALEXANDER MAMAK, AHMED ALI and others (Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1979). 144pp. £10.95.

'Tell us ...', a guide in the People's Republic of China asked a study group of Papua New Guineans and white ex-patriates encouragingly during a 1976 tour, 'about your war of liberation against Australia.' This question, which, on account of its underlying historical pre-conceptions, invoked only bemusement and temporary confusion among the group, also raises an important political consideration. How, precisely, is evidence of resistance to colonial rule to be analysed and interpreted in charting the advancement of the colonised towards self-determination and social reconstruction? In this regard, *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* is welcome for its insistence that 'radicalising forms of action' among colonised peoples are an integral rather than an aberrant facet of colonial history. The book's central theme is to demonstrate that 'rebellion is ... instrumental and purposive. It mobilises support, establishes collective identity and attains goals, and should be considered as normal political behaviour' within an oppressive social framework.

Case studies, juxtaposed rather than organically linked, of the Bougainville mine-workers' strike of 1975, the Suva-Rewa strike of Indian workers in 1920, the Maasina Rule Movement in the Solomons during the 1940s, the Parihaka Rebellion in New Zealand during the 1880s and the Gurindji occupation of Wattie Creek, Northern Australia in 1967 are here presented for scrutiny by a team of three historians, two anthropologists and a geographer. These reveal an entire spectrum of resistance tactics, ranging from organised and sometimes violent political and millenarian risings to 'the silent, less overt and more subtle forms of protest', incorporated in 'work bans, token strikes, un-co-operativeness, desertion and absenteeism'. Overall, the writers stress the gradual development of industrial

organisation and action, while examining the complicated interplay of race, class and ethnic divisions within the context of the increasing urbanisation and stratification of national labour forces.

Here the ambitious theoretical aims of the study — to reveal the ‘structural bases of group inequality’ — are purportedly fleshed out in live action replays of dramatic conflict situations. The marriage of theory and empiricism is in many instances, however, less than harmonious, for either one or the other consideration tends to be ignored as the attention of the text wanders from conceptualisation to historical reconstruction. Race, class and ethnicity are each intrinsically difficult relationships to juggle with and although the study promises to give ‘equal theoretical emphasis’ to all three, the authors find it well nigh impossible to do so, within the framework of the ‘single crucial events’ they have chosen to study. Race and class are nowhere well defined as objective criteria. Where precision is demanded, instead elision often occurs among such concepts as social categories, sets of attitudes and patterns of consciousness. Confusion and ambiguity frequently result. The authors eventually conclude that their focus is ‘primarily marxist’, while at the same time admitting that race rather than class is their ‘overriding concept’. Such an apparent paradox might have been avoided if original marxist writings had been more rigorously explored and the marxian ‘tradition’ defined and demonstrated, rather than being merely assumed or invoked. Work by Marx and Engels upon colonialism in general, as well as their more specific writings upon Ireland and India, might have been fruitfully examined. Lenin’s positive evaluations of struggles for national self-determination, insofar as they undermine the reproduction of monopoly capitalism, receive no attention and, as the book is respectfully dedicated to ‘the proud and confident peoples of the South Pacific, who for hundreds of years have confronted their challengers with defiance and dignity’, it could be expected that Mao’s strategic writings on people’s war might here find some place. Yet this is not the case.

The hazily formulated term ‘race class’ which is ambitiously promoted to suggest that race and class are ‘theoretically related ... multi-dimensional concepts’ seems more declaratory than explained. One is tempted to ask whether ‘race class’ is really ‘caste’ by another name. Yet it is with the category ‘ethnicity’ that the authors experience the most trouble. Usually it is overlooked, but where its ‘ambiguous role’ is mentioned, it is tacked on, rather haphazardly with ‘varying significance at either end’ of a race-class continuum. Perhaps if the authors were more prepared to allow that conflict does not merely *begin* upon ‘contact with westerners’, but, based upon ethnic and tribal allegiances, territorial claims, blood feuds and the like, precedes ‘the entry of Europeans’, the persistence and

re-emergence of ethnic struggle in post-colonial environments would not seem so mysterious. Aboriginal life in Australia was not just 'safe and happy'; it was also marked by inter-tribal warfare. Hence, new forms of conflict which western intrusion engendered were grafted upon the old, so that processes of collaboration, often based upon long-standing ethnic rivalries, became at least as significant as those of resistance.

The study is further marred by an occasionally cavalier attitude to empirical data which is both irritating and disconcerting. Middleton repeats the old saw that the Tasmanians were 'completely exterminated', ignoring the survival of the Cape Barren Islanders in their thousands today, while also appearing to believe that the 67,000 mainland Aborigines extant in 1900 were largely to be found 'in the north-western tropical areas', a sparsely populated, arid region of the continent. Indeed, in its survey of various colonial situations, the study lacks the precision which detailed primary research could bring, and generalities occasionally descend to the banal. 'Independence has not ushered in Utopia [in Fiji]', we are informed, 'Many of the problems ... continue needing an urgent solution in a fast-moving age ... history shows that it takes time.' Surprisingly, the role of official violence is often underplayed, as when we are told of a Fijian crowd being dispersed 'without incident' by a baton charge! More significantly, institutional forms of repression, such as the Australian reserve systems receive no mention. The courage and resilience of today's Aboriginal opposition to uranium mining or to the policies of the Queensland state government cannot be appreciated without due consideration of the enormous odds against which they fight. On the other hand, wish-fulfilling references to an Aboriginal or Maori 'national liberation movement' seem overblown and misleading.

Yet such qualifications as these do less than justice to the book's strengths in its chosen concerns. The recounting of little known strikes and protest movements is both revealing and stimulating. Important issues such as the paucity of organised workers' movements in 'plural' societies, the role of ethnicity in hindering working-class solidarity and exacerbating conflict in a racially heterogeneous workforce and the absolute necessity of structural change in altering the self-perceived and objective class positions of various racial groups are perceptively handled. Mamak and Bedford's work on the Bougainville Copper Strike is particularly useful in its depth and range of original documentation.

In its attempt to provide fresh historical and comparative data, *Race Class and Rebellion in the South Pacific* suggests many approaches for future research away from the traditional preoccupations of colonial historiography. Yet much of this book's documentation

seems too sparse, and much of its terminology too ideologically contorted for its arguments to be more than suggestive and exhortatory.

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RAYMOND EVANS and
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The Political Economy of Health

By LESLEY DOYAL with IMOGEN PENNELL (London, Pluto Press, 1979). 360pp. £4.95

In recent years a marxist analysis of medicine has begun to emerge, concentrating on such questions as the basic inequality of the distribution of health care, both here and in the Third World, the role of the drug companies, and the possibility of socialising existing medical care systems. The strength of this book is that, in bringing together a number of separate debates (on, for example, medicine in the Third World, the capitalist development of medicine, medicine and the control of women's sexuality and reproduction), it enlarges our understanding of specific issues, as well as enabling us to see their inter-relationships. *The Political Economy of Health* goes beyond questions of medical care per se to address the prior, and probably more important, issue of the social production of health and illness. What is it about the way our societies are organised that makes us sick, or even kills us?

The effect, on health and illness, of the changing needs of capital is here traced historically, with particular emphasis on the British experience. As the authors show, from the early to the mid-nineteenth century, there was no economic necessity to improve the condition of the largely unskilled and plentiful workforce that manned those early factories. But by the end of the nineteenth century and from the beginning of the twentieth, changes in technology 'made possible an intensification of the labour process, but required a fitter and more reliable workforce'. Today, the health of the labour force is in the care of the National Health Service, predominantly a curative rather than a preventative system. Doyal and Pennell's analysis of the NHS, both as a hard-fought-for development in social welfare, and as a buttress to help 'ensure the stability of British capitalism in the post-war period' goes further and deeper than previous discussions of the subject. Attention has not hitherto been focussed on the relationship of the NHS as a *system* to patterns of health and illness. And these patterns, as the authors show, reflect the wider social and economic organisation of society.

Of special interest to readers of *Race & Class* will be the discussion of 'the development of underdevelopment' in the Third World. In East Africa, for example, with the establishment and consolidation of

colonial rule, the health of the indigenous people suffered, not only through the spread of disease brought in by the white man, but also through the introduction of cash cropping, plantations and migrant labour, which supplanted the indigenous pattern of the production of a variety of crops for home consumption. Hence, there was a marked increase in disease and malnutrition, especially among migrant labourers. The colonial response was to concentrate on preserving the health of the Europeans by setting aside specific quarters for them, separate from the Africans and Asians (which also facilitated the concentration of available health funds on the whites). If an epidemic occurred, a further 'cordon sanitaire' around African and Asian quarters physically guaranteed the good health of the Europeans.

This colonial pattern of health and medical care for a minority — not now white necessarily, but mostly middle class and urban based — continues today. Two recent developments are however particularly dangerous to the health of people in the Third World and specifically to women. These are population control programmes and the role of multinational pharmaceutical companies within these programmes.

According to the international aid and development organisations, a serious drawback for the Third World is the 'population explosion'. In dealing with this 'explosion' the agencies have concentrated on the use of 'rational' arguments to convince women to use birth-control methods. Little attention has been paid either to the wider economic and social implications, or to the possible harmful effects of contraceptives on the health of women in the Third World. Under the auspices of birth-control programmes, women have been used by the multinational drug companies as guinea pigs for testing new drugs prior to their being sold in the West, or have been given contraceptives which have already been banned in western countries. So the Third World becomes a vast market for peddling these products, free of the safety controls that operate in the West.

What Doyal and Pennell have produced is, precisely, a political economy of health. For those already engaged in struggles around questions of health and medical care, the documentation here will help sharpen those struggles. For those who have not previously thought on, or connected these issues, the book stands as a convincing argument that the question of health and illness is everywhere a political question, the fight for better health a political struggle.

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GEOFF HUNT

An Act of Genocide: Indonesia's Invasion of East Timor.

By ARNOLD KOHEN and JOHN TAYLOR (TAPOL (UK) Campaign, 8a Treport St, London, SW18 2BP, October 1979). 133pp. £1.75

In his foreword to *An Act of Genocide* Noam Chomsky compares the

present situation in East Timor with that in Kampuchea. The comparison is striking and worth pursuing. In the case of East Timor, the Indonesian regime has relentlessly, since 1975, attempted to deny this former Portuguese colony's right to self-determination, to remove a government and exterminate a movement (FRETILIN) with a mass popular base built upon solid social and economic policies developed prior to the Indonesian invasion, and to annex and 'integrate' East Timor into the barbarism of the 'New Order' of the Indonesian generals. The violations of 'human rights', the 'atrocities', the war strategies embarked upon in East Timor by the Indonesian government can, and have been, thoroughly substantiated. In simple terms, as the title of the book indicates, the Indonesian regime has pursued a policy of genocide: at least one quarter of the population has been killed and thousands more have died as a result of the need to 'exterminate' FRETILIN's base. Recent reports — from journalists, from refugees, from so-called 'relief' workers — affirm that the grossness of the 'human' problem exceeds all other examples, including Kampuchea. And yet, not a whimper from the 'liberal' press and no interest mustered from the 'relief' agencies. The vacuousness of the 'human rights' crusade, the 'politics' of the international relief game are starkly revealed in any discussion of East Timor.

Kohen and Taylor's book provides a systematic introduction to the events preceding the Indonesian invasion, focussing on the emergence of the national liberation movement, FRETILIN, the bases for its mass support in its literacy and health programmes, its agricultural and distributive cooperativisation, and its political objectives in the struggles against colonialism, racism and sexism. The text documents the complicity and acquiescence of the Australian and Portuguese governments in Indonesia's attempts to undermine East Timor's moves toward independence. It analyses the effects of the Indonesian invasion, most notably the saturation bombing of villages and crops in FRETILIN-held areas, and the military, economic and diplomatic support generously rendered to the Indonesians by the United States, Britain, France, West Germany and the Netherlands, which ensures the perpetuation of this war. It also documents (although other references must be pursued on this) the continuation of the FRETILIN-led resistance — a resistance that stands, in my view, as one of the major accomplishments in the history of national liberation movements. The emphasis of the book is upon the urgency of the humanitarian situation, and this should not be minimised, but at the same time it must be made clear that FRETILIN continues to fight and the war continues: any demands for relief must be coupled with the recognition of the viability of FRETILIN.

Two critical comments: first, the fact that US advisers assisted the Indonesian military in their 'search-and-destroy' missions against Fretilin areas is raised, but, despite being promised, is not developed.

This was actually verified before the publication of the book, and it is rather surprising that the relevant documentation is not provided. Secondly, hardly anything is said about the various support movements which exist in most countries of western Europe and the US. Otherwise, the analysis is, as Chomsky states, 'measured and carefully documented'.

London

ANNA ROSSA

The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry

By COLIN BUNDY (London, Heinemann, 1979). 276pp. Paper £3.90

In 1869 a small community of black peasants on a mission station in the Ciskei region, South Africa, sent £46 in cash 'for the Lancashire Cotton Relief Fund'. This donation, to help the distressed workers of the 'mother country', did not evoke any surprise at the time. Indeed, it was regarded as a natural, unremarkable transaction.

Today, a little more than a century later, the African inhabitants of that same Ciskei region are in the grip of poverty and starvation. Unable to raise enough food to maintain their families at a bare subsistence level, they are forced to sell their labour power, as migrants, to the 'white' industrial areas — at wage rates so low that their elementary needs cannot be met.

This dramatic shift in the fortunes of the South African peasantry, from one of relative affluence to grinding poverty, is analysed by Colin Bundy in a well-written and richly-documented book, which repays serious study. It is a brilliant application of the theory of underdevelopment.

During the period of mercantile capitalism, which lasted in South Africa up to 1870 or so, the links of the African peasants with the colonial structure and the world economy were tenuous, at both political and economic levels. For precisely this reason peasant production expanded, supplying both black and white with food-stuffs from autarkic regions: from those which had not yet been deeply penetrated by capitalism and colonial rule.

Then came the mining revolution in the last third of the nineteenth century. It demanded not only more land for rising capitalist agriculture, but abundant black labour. These imperatives led to the forcible incorporation of the black peasant areas into the colonial and world capitalist economy. The upshot was the rapid underdevelopment of the peasantry, and finally, its dissolution as a class. Colin Bundy brilliantly traces the processes of land expropriation and 'native taxation', of unequal exchange and proletarianisation, which induced its disintegration.

Yet the rulers did not throw open all the land to free competition.

For economic and political reasons 13 per cent of the land — the 'native reserves', now called the Bantustans — was set aside exclusively for African occupation. There alone they can exercise permanent residential and land 'rights'.

The reasons for this caveat need not be discussed here: this journal has carried a few contributions on this subject; and Bundy discusses it fully. Suffice it to reproduce two quotations given by the author to help clarify the issue.

In reply to those local authorities who advocated the wholesale eviction of the Africans from the land, Sir Godfrey Lagden, Sir Alfred Milner's Commissioner for Native Affairs, at the turn of the century, said:

This would throw him out of the country ... A man cannot go with his wife and children and his goods and chattels on to the labour market. He must have a dumping ground. Every rabbit has a warren where he can live and burrow and breed, and every native must have a warren too.

A commentator formulates as follows the relationship between the Reserves and the interests of different employer groups:

The mines want healthy and vigorous workers who would have to have higher wages to attend to their own health and diet. It is therefore cheaper to give them hospitals, balanced diets, and even games and cinemas upon a collective and dictated basis ... The vast spaces available in South Africa are a fine substitute for doles and unemployment relief as well as 'married quarters'. They serve as a sponge that absorbs, and returns when required, the reserve army of African labour. Tribal tenure is a guarantee that the land will never be properly worked and will never really belong to the natives. Cheap labour must have a cheap breeding place, and so it is furnished to the Africans at their own expense.

The rulers retained exiguous areas for African subsistence farming. They thereby kept the shadow of a peasantry.

London

KEN JORDAAN

Birds of Passage: migrant labor and industrial societies

By MICHAEL J. PIORE (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1979). 229pp. \$14.95.

Although there has been a fairly large quantity of writing on labour migration across national boundaries in contemporary advanced capitalism, few competent observers would give this material a high grade for political economic analysis. Indeed, little of the economic

portion of this literature even attempts analysis. By and large we have descriptions of the economic aspects of immigration that are devoid of theoretical explanation. Essentially we are told what is happening, rather than why it is happening. To the extent that explanatory concepts have been employed, they have tended to be of a self-interest or corporate interest variety in the traditionally oriented works, and of an economicist variety in the radical ones.

Michael Piore's *Birds of Passage* marks a significant break with this pattern. Here is a book that makes a start on the task of grounding an understanding of immigration within the particular economic relationships of advanced capitalism. Although the work is iconoclastic, it is not meant as a radical document. Indeed, its roots are in the well-established, but today neglected, tradition of American institutionalist economics, which fortunately has been able to maintain a certain influence in labour market studies. It is refreshing, but not totally startling, to find a Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology maintain this tradition. Institutionalism takes politically and socially structured relationships as having economic impact on their own terms without having to go through neo-classical economics' theoretical sieve that reduces them to the format of individualised utilities which are calculated in terms of market place trade-offs. Along this line Piore does not hold that orthodox theory is wrong; rather, 'the contention is simply that conventional theory is irrelevant to the problem being considered'. Concretely, he rejects income as the key variable for measuring the labour market behaviour in this case.

One can better understand migration by ignoring income differentials and recognizing instead that people are rooted in a social context in ways that commodities are not; migrant behavior can be better understood in terms of the specific attributes of the jobs available to migrants and the meaning attached to these jobs in the social context in which work is performed.

Briefly, Piore's explanation runs as follows: the key factor in generating the migrations is the demand for labour and recruitment by employers, although after a while the labour flows develop a certain inertial momentum of their own. Under advanced capitalism this demand is increasingly focussed upon a set of jobs that the indigent labour force shuns. Large-scale, capital-intensive, rationalised production creates a dualism in the labour market with a primary set of jobs that are regular, high paying and secure. This sector is complemented by a secondary set of jobs that are irregular, low paying, often hazardous and insecure, which are generally located in smaller firms. One should add to Piore's list of secondary sector jobs ones in large firms which demand absolute control over the workers' time and movements — automobile assembly being the clearest example.

(In previous writing Piore has played an important role in developing this theory of labour market segmentation.) The indigenous workforce, on the basis of trade union power, political influence and national solidarity, tends to reserve the primary sector jobs to itself, and, when needed, even create employment under these preferred conditions. Immigrants are required to fill the gaps in the secondary sectors. While he gives consideration to the importance of maintaining relative wage differentials and status hierarchies, especially in times of general labour shortage, as possible explanations for the migrants' lowly position, Piore holds that a dual labour market specifies more about the concrete organisation of production today. Although he does not employ the term advanced capitalism, that is exactly what he is discussing.

A great strength of this analysis is that it provides an underlying interpretation of the post-second World War labour migrations that are as diverse as the movement to Britain from the Indian subcontinent, to Germany from Turkey, and to the urban areas of the United States of black people from the rural South. Further, there are significant clues on how to distinguish this movement from earlier internal and international migrations. Throughout its history capitalism has required tremendous migrations to build its working class. In advanced capitalism certain groups of migrants, set off by nationality or racial designation, have a more explicit and distinctively inferior definition, both in terms of the organisation of the work process and in terms of the political processes mediated through the state. Piore makes hints at the multifold role of the state in defining a permanent second-class status for contemporary migrant workers, but unfortunately he fails to develop this point.

To explain the permanency of second-class status, the text places great stress on cultural aspects in the migrants' perspective that their jobs are temporary and instrumental to resettlement in their homelands with financial security. Correspondingly, it slights the operation of politically-reinforced barriers that maintain an especially subordinated sector of the working class which is necessary to the smooth operation of the total political economy. This emphasis facilitates the presentation of Piore's liberal policy recommendations which constitute the weakest part of his book. He calls for clearer management objectives in the disposition of a temporary workforce so as to mitigate social dislocation for the migrants and disruption within the host countries. Actually, his recommendations sound a lot like the policies of the West German government, and they have not proved more successful than those of other nations. When it comes to policy issues, Piore retreats from the most important aspects of his conclusions. To facilitate the generation of liberal recommendations, he treats the deployment of immigrant workers largely as a matter of business strategy, rather than as an inherent contradiction of

advanced capitalism, necessary to the definition of both the indigenous bourgeoisie and the indigenous working class. In the long run, the probing of this contradiction will produce more fruitful political consequences than the fashioning of management techniques to ameliorate its more unseemly manifestations.

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Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925-1937

By WILLIAM H. HARRIS. (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1978). 252pp.

In the years between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the Second World War, the American working class staked its claim to being probably the most combative working class in history. The involvement of black workers in the struggles of these years, though significant, was hampered by their limited participation in the trade union movement and their consequent availability for use as scab labour. The low level of trade union membership amongst black workers was not, however, of their own doing; rather it was a result of the racist exclusion exercised by the predominantly craft unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Prior to the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) in 1935, only the Mineworkers Union (UMW) and the Industrial Workers of the World (the 'Wobblies') made any serious attempt at egalitarian organisation across racial boundaries.

For black workers who sought the solidarity of trade unionism, the choice was essentially twofold. Either they could allow themselves to be constituted as 'auxiliary' locals (branches) of AFL unions and suffer exclusion from the governing processes of 'their' union, or they could organise autonomously as all-black unions having a number of locals of their own. At various times throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century, black workers chose the route of autonomous trade unionism, in the docks and in the hotel and catering trades in particular. On each occasion, however, their efforts were obliterated by the membership poaching — and subsequent formation of auxiliary locals — of the white unions. Only in 1925, when a trade union was formed among the porters who worked on the Pullman Company's sleeping cars, did an autonomous black union come into existence which was to prove not only viable, not only the first black union to force a full 'international' charter from the AFL, but probably the most important black working-class organisation of the first half of the century, save perhaps the Garveyite Universal Negro Improvement Association.

In *Keeping the Faith*, William Harris has charted the struggles of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) from its formation through to the pinnacle of its success, its recognition by Pullman and the signing of its first wages and conditions contract in 1937. Harris has produced a meticulous, but empiricist history which concentrates not so much on the everyday struggles of sleeping car porters and the activities of the rank and file within the union as on the (key) role of its President and General Organiser, A. Philip Randolph and, to a lesser extent, of his most important lieutenant, Milton P. Webster.

In its struggle for recognition, the BSCP was confronted in various ways by four more or less powerful opponents: the Pullman Company as one of the most reactionary elements of American monopoly capital, the state in the guise of the Mediation Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission, the black press who consistently attacked the BSCP for supposedly threatening the jobs of porters and Randolph for his alleged bolshevik sympathies, and the AFL which effectively obstructed the progress of the BSCP by recommending against strike action (in 1928) and by denying an international charter until recognition by Pullman had been secured.

Harris documents the way in which the BSCP was initially checked, but eventually overcame (or put to effective use) these various opponents, and in the process he shows how the contrasting, but complementary styles of Randolph and Webster were essential to the success of the BSCP as a labour union in the context of a Keynesian state and the 'New Deal' legislation which it introduced. Webster was the great organiser who put his faith in rank and file struggle, whereas Randolph was the respectable front-man (a respectability endangered on occasion, however, by his membership of the Socialist Party) who worked by mobilising bourgeois liberal opinion and by utilising the essentially incorporationist industrial relations laws of the New Deal era. In the end it was Randolph's mobilisation of (white) liberal opinion that pressured the state into using the Wagner Act against Pullman and thus secured the abolition of Pullman's company union and the recognition of the BSCP.

Harris is particularly good in those areas where he goes beyond Brailsford Brazeal's earlier account (1947) of the rise of the BSCP — namely the complex triangular relationship between the BSCP (mainly Randolph), the Federal Government, and Pullman, as well as his discussion of the relationship between the BSCP and the AFL. Harris shows clearly that the AFL was, if anything, at best a hindrance and at worst an opponent of the BSCP struggle against Pullman, but unfortunately he does not shed light on the question of why Randolph and the BSCP persisted in their efforts to become a full 'international' affiliate of the racist AFL, when for many — including John Lewis of the UMW — the infinitely more egalitarian CIO was the logical forum for the talents of the BSCP leadership.

It seems possible that one reason for BSCP persistence with the AFL was that an affiliation with the more radical (and socialist) CIO would have damaged Randolph's standing with white and black bourgeois opinion and hence his personal ambition as a black political 'leader'. In the event, the BSCP, despite its location in a rapidly declining industry, became perhaps *the* symbol of black struggle in the inter-war years, and hence provided an ideal platform from which Randolph was able to vault to the position of pre-eminent black spokesperson of his generation.

William Harris has produced a well-documented account of the activities of the leaders of one of the more important — but little known (even amongst blacks) black American organisations of this century. It is a pity, however, that the book is written in a relatively bland, uncommitted style, unworthy of its subject-matter, but not untypical of much academic historiography. What is perhaps a more significant absence from Harris' book, however, is that he provides no theoretical insight into the relationship between black and white workers, or between trade unions and the state in those crucial decades (for class struggle and capitalism) between the two world wars, when on the face of it, the BSCP would have provided an excellent vehicle around which such analyses could have been constructed.

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JEFF HENDERSON

Medicine and Slavery: the diseases and health care of blacks in antebellum Virginia

By TODD L. SAVITT (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1978). 332 pages.

There is growing acceptance of the fact that disease and death are not random biological events but reflect the social and economic conditions in which the individuals concerned live and die. So far, however, there have been few attempts to examine the patterns of morbidity and mortality characteristic of different historical epochs. Therefore I looked forward to reading *Medicine and Slavery* in the hope that it would provide part of the basis for developing this new historical materialist understanding of human health and illness. Slavery is, after all, a social institution involving misery and oppression of such an extreme kind, that one could expect the relationships between the social and the biological to be easily demonstrable. In the event, I came away with a certain amount of empirical data that could be used in a critical way, but with no greater theoretical understanding either of the processes by which slavery produced characteristic patterns of illness or of the reasons why a particular form of medical care emerged in response to those problems.

Todd Savitt is a doctor turned historian whose intention was to use the most recent medical knowledge combined with a detailed study of primary sources, to provide a more 'scientific' analysis of the relationship between medicine, health and slavery. His book deals with the state of health (or rather, ill-health) of slaves and free blacks in Virginia before the Civil War, as well as giving a description of both the 'official' medical care they received and also (very briefly) the kind of healing provided within the slave community. Inevitably, given the subject matter of the book, and the depth of his research, Savitt does produce much interesting information, so that *Medicine and Slavery* can be used as a sourcebook by those wishing to pursue this aspect of slavery in more detail. In the final analysis, however, it stands as a monument to the absurdity of any attempt to do 'unbiased', 'objective' history.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this point is to give one or two examples of the positions that Savitt takes in his self-appointed role of 'detached observer'. In talking about women slaves, for instance, he states in all seriousness that 'some servants took advantage of their masters by complaining falsely of female indispositions'. Later he makes the bald statement that 'Virginia's black women played an important role in the development of caesarian section', telling us without comment in the next paragraph that only one of the six women concerned actually survived! When discussing the chronic health problems caused by malaria, he reveals without a trace of irony that 'unfortunately for the slave owner, harvest time for many crops coincided with the period of greatest activity for the anopheles mosquito'. Similarly, after describing how many slaves lost toes, feet and even legs because of gangrene caused by frostbite, he informs us that 'the condition was a serious one especially for slave owners who stood to lose the labor of valuable workers'.

Thus, in trying to avoid either socio-economic analysis or any moral or political judgement whatever, Todd Savitt has produced a seriously flawed book. Indeed, unfortunately, it is sometimes impossible to take it at all seriously.

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LESLEY DOYAL

Books received

This listing does not preclude subsequent publication of reviews.

- Africa undermined: a history of the mining companies and the underdevelopment of Africa.* By G. Lanning with M. Mueller. London, Penguin Books, 1980. Paper £3.50.
- Asian patients in hospital and at home.* By Alix Henley. London, King's Fund Publishing Office, 1979. Cloth £5.50.
- Big steel: black politics and corporate power in Gary, Indiana.* By Edward Greer. New York, Monthly Review, 1979. Cloth £9.
- Black film as genre.* By Thomas Cripps. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1979.
- Brick Lane 1978: the case for the defence.* A Tower Hamlets Trades Council, Hackney Legal Action group publication. Paper 70p.
- Broken images: essays on Chinese culture and politics.* By Simon Leys. London, Allison and Busby, 1979. Paper £3.50.
- Call me not a man.* By Mtutuzeli Matshoba. Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1979. Paper £2.25.
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