

# RACE & CLASS

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migration in late capitalism

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Maghribin migrant workers in France

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applied anthropology = politics

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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

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# RACE & CLASS

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS  
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Volume XVII	Summer 1975	Number 1
Editorial: The corporate face of capital		1
Notes towards a general theory of migration in late capitalism MARIOS NIKOLINAKOS		5
Somalia: towards socialism BASIL DAVIDSON		19
The Maghribin migrant workers in France MAHFOUD BENNOUNE		39
Anthropology = ideology: applied anthropology = politics ANDRE GUNDER FRANK		57
Notes and documents		69
Thoughts after the liberation of Saigon by T.H. 69		
The 'people's cause' in the Caribbean by COLIN PRESCOD	71	
Recollections of resistance by DAVID CLARK	75	
UK Commentary: the Caprino case (77) — A new CRC (78) —		
The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act (79) —		
The Iranian 21 (81) — Imperial Typewriters and the multinationals (81)		
Book reviews		83
<i>The Dialectics of Legal Repression</i> by Isaac D. Balbus (LEE BRIDGES)	83	
<i>Latin American Revolutionary Poetry</i> edited by Robert Marquez (LINTON KWESI JOHNSON)	85	



*Marxism and Imperialism* by V.G. Kiernan (STEPHAN FEUCHTWANG) 87  
*A Seventh Man* by John Berger & Jean Mohr, *The Import of Labour* by Adriana Marshall (A. SIVANANDAN) 89  
*Victory in Vietnam* by Richard West (CHRIS FARLEY) 91  
*Peace in the Middle East?* by Noam Chomsky (DAVID CAPLOE) 92  
*The Background and Employment of Asian Immigrants* by T.C. Jupp & Evelyn Davies (JENNY BOURNE) 94  
*The Creoles of Sierra Leone* by Leo Spitzer (JUSTIN LABINJOH) 95  
*Invisible Poets* by Joan R. Sherman (LINTON KWESI JOHNSON) 97  
*Unilever's World* by CIS (DAVID CLARK) 99  
*Can Africa Survive?* by Basil Davidson (KEN JORDAAN) 101  
*James Baldwin* edited by Kenneth Kinnamon (A. SIVANANDAN) 102  
*Race, Class and Power* by Leo Kuper (ROBIN JENKINS) 104  
*Black Fiction* by Roger Rosenblatt (HAZEL WATERS) 106  
*The West and the Rest of Us* by Chinweizu (DAVID JOHNSON) 107.

Books received

109

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# Editorial

## The corporate face of capital

We give elsewhere an account of four 'isolated' events which taken together form a composite picture of the corporate face of capital (see 'UK commentary', pp. 77-82). More specifically, they show how the State, in completing the formal integration of British capital into the European economic system — or 'community' — has already begun to move *politically* against the 'new' enemies of capital. Apart from the resistance in the ranks of its traditional enemies, the indigenous working class — the upper strata of which it has bribed into acquiescence — European capital is today threatened by the growing militancy of that very section of the working class, the foreign worker, which made the bribe economically viable in the first place. And as this militancy increasingly assumes a class (as opposed to national, ethnic or racial) character, threatening to re-integrate the class as a whole, the discriminatory and divisive apparatus which capital had engendered begins to break down. Faced with the unity of the working class and the support it receives from progressive sections of the population, capital looks to the political mediation of the State. The repression that ensues shows up liberal democracy for the sham that it is.

To put it differently, as capital internationalizes, labour becomes internationalized too, thereby endangering capital.<sup>1</sup> To offset this contradiction, capital defuses the threat of working class internationalism by the direct repressive action of its legal and political arm, the State — thereby contradicting the liberal claims of social democracy. In sum parliamentary democracy as a state form can no longer accommodate the demands of international monopoly capital — nor can the nation state — and

## 2 RACE AND CLASS

must yield to a more repressive international order.

The Caprino case shows in the first place, the readiness of the State to intervene on behalf of capital; in the second, that such intervention cannot, since the defeat of the Industrial Relations Act, be directed against the working class as a whole but only against those rightless sections of the class defined as migrant or foreign; thirdly, that it was precisely in defying that definition by organizing the grossly exploited catering workers as workers (and not as migrant workers or as Italians, Turks, Portuguese, Spaniards et al) that Caprino posed a threat to capital; fourthly, that this threat, in its portents for working class unity and proletarian internationalism, constituted a threat to the State. In the event Caprino was deemed to have acted in a manner 'not conducive to the public good on grounds of national security' and held for deportation.

Both the definition of the migrant worker and the powers to deport him are contained in the Immigration Act of 1971. On the economic level, the Act, by creating a sub class of migrant workers drawn from the reserve pools of labour in Southern Europe and the black Commonwealth, enables capital to *discriminate in order to exploit*. On the political level, the Act, by denying migrant workers the rights available to the indigenous working class, enables the State to *define in order to deport*.

But if the Caprino case is central to an understanding of the crude *political control* that the State is prepared to exercise on behalf of capital, over *migrant labour*, the proposals to grant self-government to black people, by giving comprador blacks a greater say in a reconstituted Community Relations Commission, must be seen as a more refined instrument of *social control* of black *settler labour* — reflecting the corporate face of the State. The rationalization of the nationality laws promised by the Home Secretary is intended to sift the migrants from the settlers — the more easily to monitor them through their respective control mechanisms. The Immigration Act of 1971 had already provided for the rationalization of all immigrant labour, irrespective of its origin, by putting it on a contract basis. Those who are settled here, however, would be integrated into the system through a process of domestic neo-colonialism which, once the 'black bourgeoisie' has come of age, is a far more viable proposition than institutional racism. 'Blacks', the *Guardian* reports the Minister of State at the Home Office as saying, were now 'sufficiently self-confident to speak for themselves. Black self help groups, black



demonstrations, were the manifestations of this.’<sup>2</sup> The blacks were ready for self-government and for aid. Accordingly the Home Office has handed out vast sums of money to black self-help groups to take care of the black homeless, the black unemployed and the black ‘delinquent’. The next step is to set up a national body incorporating the community relations committees to which these groups could be linked by a common loyalty to the same paymaster.

To ‘take care’ of the contract or indentured labourer, however, the government provides statutory assistance by way of sections 3(5) b and 15(3) of the Immigration Act of 1971. Caprino’s was of course the test case. No one had been arraigned on this clause before. The precedent would have ensured the creation of ‘a rightless group of workers under continuous surveillance at work and in their communities . . . the best recipe for creating a scab labour force to be disposed of or kept as the need arises’.<sup>3</sup>

Even so, the allegations against Caprino were so ill-founded and the case against him so ill-advised that the chances of it succeeding would not have warranted the charge – except that it was attempted in the repressive atmosphere of the emergency powers that the government had assumed in the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of November 1974. In that climate of non-protest it was hoped section 3(5)b could be ‘activated’.

It is perhaps that same climate that has allowed the State to create a new crime – ‘conspiracy to trespass’ – and try it out against the twenty-one Iranian students who occupied their embassy in peaceful protest against the murder of nine political prisoners in their country. They too can be threatened with deportation on the provisions of the same Immigration Act, section 3(b) of which provides that a person convicted of an offence (punishable with imprisonment) is liable to deportation on the recommendation of a court. Obviously British capital, which is indebted to the Shah for suppressing the revolutionary movements in the oil rich Gulf States and for bolstering the British economy with substantial loans and investments, requires the State to take whatever political steps are necessary to keep that friendship alive – and the sacrifice of twenty-one democrats at the altar of Iranian fascism is a small price to pay. Sub-imperialism, like imperialism, is the ‘monopoly stage of capital’.

If the migrant worker case, the case of the Iranian 21, the anti-Irish legislation, the attempts to get the black elite to police and



betray their own people to capital are all aspects of the concerted manner in which monopoly capital moves, they are also indicative of the common denominators of struggle between the various sections of the working class, between the oppressed and the exploited, between race and class.

'... If they take us in the morning, they will be coming for you that night.'

A. Sivanandan  
May 1975

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1. See M. Nikolinos, 'Notes Towards a Theory of Migration in Late Capitalism', pp. 5-18.
2. *Guardian* (27 May 1975).
3. Ian Macdonald, 'What the Bill says and what it means', *Race Today* (March 1971), pp. 74-5.
4. To reinterpret J. Baldwin, 'An open letter to Angela Davis', in A. Davis, *If they come in the morning* (London, Orbach and Chambers, 1971), pp. 19-23.

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## Notes towards a general theory of migration in late capitalism\*

### I. THE NEED FOR A THEORY OF MIGRATION

1. It is widely asserted, especially in traditional economics, that there is no need for a special theory to explain the phenomenon of migration. Migration is explained by the law of supply and demand. The varying returns to the factors of production in different areas lead to the mobility of the factors of production, which results in the adjustment of their prices and the development of the economically less-developed areas. This concept is allied to the fundamental ideas of classical and neo-classical economic theory, according to which economic laws create a harmonious world in which everything functions in the best possible manner.

2. But — to remain in the area of 'pure' economics for a moment — the general theory of the factors of production is inadequate to explain the problem of migration. A theory must explain a phenomenon, describe the laws of its development, the validity of its premises and, on the basis of these, enable us to make statements about the possibility of controlling and directing the phenomenon. Gunnar Myrdal has shown that the law of supply and demand at the international level leads in fact to the polarization of development: the centres, into which the factors of

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\*This essay should be seen as a first and incomplete attempt to develop a general theory of migration in late capitalism. I have concentrated on the outlines of this theory, not on the details. The references to other articles of mine are meant to substantiate the ideas outlined here. I present this contribution in the hope that, as a result of the discussion, a theory of migration in late capitalism can be better formulated.

*Race & Class*, XVII, 1(1975).

production move, continue to develop while the areas out of which the factors of production move continue to decline.<sup>1</sup> The experience of the post-war years has further shown that capital is not attracted to those countries with surplus manpower merely by the prospect of low wages and high profits; it also requires security of tenure (political factors) and guaranteed profit (monopoly position). Economic theory on its own leaves unexplained the fact that some countries were unable to go through the same development process which characterized the industrialized countries of today.

3. Economic theory, therefore, is not only ahistorical and abstract, but also one-sided. It does not consider the political factors, which influence economic processes, nor does it take into account the social relationships within the framework of which economic phenomena occur. Finally, it completely overlooks demographic factors and their relationship to given economic conditions. Economic development itself affects the determinants of population, which in turn influence the production function, demand, and employment potential, and, consequently, the entire process of accumulation and growth.

4. Migration is a many-sided phenomenon and can be viewed from different perspectives. It is a movement of population within a country or between countries; it is an individual phenomenon, affecting the lives of entire families; it is a class phenomenon involving the proletarianization of masses of people. The reasons for migration, its mechanics and consequences, are different from the reasons for the movement of capital. In fact — to pursue the thinking of bourgeois economists — each factor of production would require a theory of its own which would then have to be integrated into a general theory of the capitalist system of production.

## II. ELEMENTS OF A THEORY OF MIGRATION

### *(a) The structural problem of late capitalism*

5. Two main factors are responsible for the dimensions of the migratory movement in Western Europe since the Second World War: first, demographic developments, and secondly, the accumulation of capital and the consequent increase in demand for manpower. To deal with the latter first, Europe's post-war



growth was so rapid that the period of reconstruction was all but over by the end of the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> From the beginning of the 1960s a process of growth set in which was marked by technical progress and increased foreign trade. This led to certain structural changes:

(i) Extensive accumulation of capital, caused by technological progress, and characterized by an increasing replacement of labour by capital (automation, etc.) The increase in the organic composition of capital meant of course an increase in the productivity of labour. The accumulation of capital induced by technological progress produced pressures towards the internationalization of capital, an item which had stood on the agenda of Western European capitalism only since the end of the 1960s.

(ii) A precondition for this accumulation of capital was the expansion of the market, which makes possible the utilization of capital. The expansion of the internal market was achieved through wage increases and the reduction of customs duties (EEC), the expansion of the foreign market through increased foreign trade.

(iii) The rise in income resulted in a shifting of demand towards services and an expansion of the services sector in which higher incomes obtained. Native workers at the outset moved increasingly into this sector, partly for economic (higher income), and partly for social (higher social status) reasons.

(iv) The accumulation of capital was accompanied by an increase in demand for qualified workers, recruited from the native labour-force. The structure of the labour market was first altered through a horizontal movement of native workers into the services sector and then by a vertical shifting of the same workers towards highly-qualified, better-paid and socially-valued positions. The resulting gaps in the labour market were filled by the import of foreign workers. Since the process of replacing labour by capital is limited and since a certain percentage of semi-skilled and unskilled workers is also necessary in highly automated firms and other branches of the economy, the import of foreign workers — which as a structural requirement of the late capitalist countries of Western Europe promises to remain a lasting phenomenon — internationalizes the labour market. And the founding of the EEC, aimed at capturing the expansionist tendencies of late capitalism, fulfils the 'internationalization requirement' both of capital and of labour. In the event, however, these tendencies proved stronger than the EEC itself, both in extending the labour market (through the import of non-EEC labour) beyond the borders of the EEC and in transferring

capital not to the emigrant countries\* or within the EEC but to the USA — especially in the last three or four years.

(v) The anarchistic accumulation of capital in Western Europe led, towards the end of the 1960s, to the sharpening of the contradiction between the drive towards maximizing private profit on the one hand and inadequate provision of the necessary infrastructure for the population (in particular for the foreign workers) on the other. The accumulation of capital thus reached the limits of what could be borne by the existing system.

6. The above arguments lead to conclusions which are fundamental to a theory of migration in late capitalism:

(i) The emigrants took on the role of a reserve army, secured the growth and the standard of living in the Western European countries, made possible the realization of capital and saved the system. Without the emigrants, the achieved growth and standard of living could only have been guaranteed by planning mechanisms.<sup>3</sup>

(ii) Capitalism, after the war — when traditional colonial rule was being abandoned — transferred the object of exploitation, labour power, to the metropole itself through the import of foreign workers. Since 'colonial material' could no longer be exploited on the spot, facilities for its exploitation were created in the metropole (internal colonization).

(iii) As long as reserves of labour power existed in the countries of origin and the limits of what could be borne by the system in the metropole had not yet been reached, there was no reason for the export of capital. The export of capital has taken place to a limited extent in recent years to areas in which the profit margin in the metropole was narrow, and to countries which guaranteed a minimal risk and a comparatively high profit — those Southern European and Third World countries in which fascist governments predominate.

(iv) The system in the metropole appears to have run up against certain limits which endanger its existence through potential crises. It can thus save itself only by means of structural changes. These imply a controlled inflow of labour, more export of capital and controlled growth. All of these can only result from the introduction of planning methods, which require at least the partial removal of the traditional bases of the capitalist system

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\*'Emigrant countries' denotes sending countries, 'immigrant countries' denotes receiving countries.



(private property, private initiative). This does not imply, however, the 'removal' of the system itself or the introduction of socialism. All it means is the creation and regulation of mechanisms by the state to serve capital better, especially monopoly capital which most benefits from the processes of concentration and centralization. State capitalism now appears in undisguised form. The state in the service of capital is the only possible means of saving the system. Hence the traditional system of parliamentary democracy becomes outmoded — a child's hat on an adult head.

*(b) Population development and capitalism*

7. A theory of migration must also take into account the supply side of the labour market in the immigrant countries. Migration is a mechanism which is intended to remove the existing disequilibrium between supply and demand in the labour market. But to understand this statement in its proper context and not as an expression of the harmonious functioning of the system (as bourgeois theory would have it), it is necessary to note the following:

(i) Population growth is not governed by autonomous laws, but is a function of social processes and the accumulation of capital itself. It is not simply that technical progress in public health influences the birth and death rates, but, rather, that increasing income due to higher productivity and the achievement of full employment influences the size of families. The fall in the birth rate in industrialized capitalist countries is an aspect of their economic development and the social changes following therefrom. The comparatively high birth rates in many of the emigrant countries can be traced back to their economic backwardness and the deformation of their population development by colonialism.<sup>4</sup>

(ii) The surplus labour in the emigrant countries and the prevailing unemployment there are the results of the low accumulation of capital and allied economic backwardness coupled with their past dependence on imperialism. These countries are not by definition 'poor in material riches' and rich 'in human resources'. They are so because of relationships of dependence enforced by powerful economic interests.

Thus, what the migratory mechanism is designed to achieve is not just the balance between the supply and demand of labour but the perpetuation of the dependency relationship between periphery and centre. Basically, the internationalization of labour through the expansion of migration reflects the inherent thrust of



capitalism towards expansion and internationalization. And population growth is no longer controlled within a national framework, but beyond national borders through the international accumulation of capital.

*(c) The countries of emigration and the international division of labour*

8. If we now examine the supply side further, it becomes apparent that countries of emigration exhibit particular characteristics:

(i) They were all formally or informally dependent on the colonial powers at some point in their history. The structure of their economies and their economic development were determined by this imperialist dependence and their class structures are marked by this dependent relationship.<sup>5</sup> Until the Second World War and for approximately fifteen years afterwards these countries were assigned to the production of agricultural products and raw materials. Their economic development was not autonomous; it served the interests of foreign monopoly capital and the metropolises. They were able to a limited extent to build up a primitive manufacturing industry, which produced consumer goods of low quality for the internal market.

(ii) In the post-war period, formal political independence was followed by a transformation, in the sense that the bourgeois class, if only outwardly, threw its comprador character overboard and established itself as independent. A measure of industrialization was introduced, which nevertheless continued to remain dependent — on foreign capital, on the technology of the metropole, on the division of labour in the metropole. The areas of industrialization were precisely those in which production in the metropole, especially after the 1960s, had become unprofitable and were therefore transferred to the periphery. It is also the case in these countries that, even in the labour-intensive branches of production, capital being capital uses capital-intensive methods, which, of course means unemployment. And as the development of the population in these countries faces the type of accumulation process outlined above, unemployment is perpetuated.

(iii) These countries are ruled almost without exception by dictatorial governments, which permit and secure the above processes. Without these governments the type of development process described here, the ensuing class structure, as well as the expansionist interests of Western European capitalism, would have been impossible.

(iv) The expansionist tendencies of Western European capital as well as the development of a new division of labour between immigrant and emigrant countries are leading to a stronger integration of a number of emigrant countries into the economic system of Western Europe. In these countries (mainly Southern European) which have shown negative demographic developments, the same phenomena and the same mechanisms obtain: dependent industrialization on the one hand, and emigration on the other, produce labour shortages which can only be covered by the import of migrants from even less-developed countries. And since the Western European metropolises must obtain their labour from other countries, new countries are annexed to the migration mechanism and the system of agreements, whereby these reserves are made available to the metropole, is further extended.<sup>6</sup> In the process, the emigrant countries become graded and a basis laid for a sub-imperialism on the part of those emigrant countries which become immigrant countries. Within these countries themselves — Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal — there exist regional imbalances which are in the nature of 'internal colonization'. The cleft between north and south in Italy is the clearest example of this.<sup>7</sup>

*(d) The stabilizing function of migration*

9. The stabilizing function of migration is fulfilled both in the emigrant and in the immigrant countries.<sup>8</sup> Through emigration the governments in the emigrant countries export potential social disturbances, arising from unemployment, and thus avert the overthrow of the existing regimes and of the capitalist system itself. This is the 'buffer-function' of emigration, which secures the political and economic position of the oligarchy and the bourgeois class as a whole in the emigrant countries. This 'buffer-function' serves to stabilize the system in the short run.

10. In the long run the system in the emigrant countries is stabilized by both types of migration, permanent migration — mainly overseas — and migration based on a system of rotation, characteristic of Western Europe in the post-war period. In the first case, the system rids itself of the unemployed once and for all. In the second case, during their stay in the Western European metropolises the emigrants become familiar with the prevailing parliamentary system there, take up the style of living of the native working class and become 'de-revolutionized'. On their return home they are ready to advocate similar relationships in their native land to those which they found in Western Europe.



The semi-feudal, patriarchal, dictatorial or pseudo-parliamentary systems are accordingly 'modernized' after the parliamentary pattern which prevails in Western Europe.

11. At this point the so-called advantages of emigration for the emigrant countries should be taken into account.<sup>9</sup> These, in so far as they exist, must be looked at within the framework of class relationships. The only positive effect of emigration arises from the remittances sent home, but these only serve to lessen the balance of payments deficits and thereby advance the process of development introduced by the oligarchy and the bourgeois class. These remittances further contribute to the increase in imports of consumer goods from those very countries in which the emigrants live and work. What they support, in the final analysis, is capital in the immigrant countries and the development policies of the ruling oligarchy in the emigrant countries.

12. The 'buffer-function' of migration also acts as a stabilizer of the system in the metropole. In times of recession or of structural crisis leading to unemployment, migrant workers through inter-state agreements can be sent home. Their dictatorial home governments are better equipped to deal with the dangers arising from unemployment. Thus a system has been established which keeps the migrants as a reserve army continually in motion, dependent on the respective interests of capital.

*(e) The exploitative character of migration and the system of discrimination*

13. The migratory mechanism of late capitalism in Western Europe is supported by an institutionalized system of discrimination which is anchored in legislation regarding foreigners and in inter-state agreements.<sup>10</sup> The foreign worker can be deported when the trade cycle requires it, he is underprivileged in comparison to the native workers and has no political rights. He is assigned the role of sub-proletariat, which guarantees the working of the system. Discrimination creates a split in the working class. Through it the indigenous workers come to support the system since they are led to believe that discrimination protects their interests against the threat of an alien work-force. The trade unions tolerate such discrimination even if they do not themselves support it. Their attitude stems both from their position in late capitalism in which they function with capital and the state as guardians of order, and also from the short-term conflict of interests that does



exist between native and foreign workers. The discrimination against foreigners in employment, housing and education which is usually understood as a psychological phenomenon is in reality integral to a system of migration engendered by the capitalist process of accumulation.

14. The final reason for discrimination is that it raises the rate of exploitation. Capital succeeds in maximizing surplus value through dividing the working class and granting privileges to a section of it. This can also be proved mathematically.<sup>11</sup>

15. The exploitation which results from migration is realized on three levels: *first*, on the level of the individual immigrant; *secondly*, on a class level: as a sub-proletariat, migrant workers are exploited more intensely than the native proletariat, while at the same time being exploited by the native oligarchy at home; *thirdly*, on the country level, since the emigrant countries are exploited by the immigrant countries in that they provide labour free of infrastructure costs.\*

16. The question of 'integration' can thus be understood as an attempt to remove the contradictions of the system and to ward off the social conflicts which derive from the increasing political awareness of the migrants. A genuine integration would mean at least the removal of the system of discrimination and of the divisions in the working class, as well as guarantees of political rights to migrants.<sup>12</sup> The social, psychological and other handicaps of the foreigners which 'integration' attempts to remove can only be understood within the framework of a political-economic analysis and the exploitative character of migration which bases itself on the system of discrimination.

*(f) The class character of migration and the migrant as an individual*

17. For the majority of the migrants, migration, despite separation from their families, despite the risk of mental illness, despite proletarianization, means an improvement in their living conditions, as well as in those of their dependants. This is only true, however, as long as the boom in the immigrant countries continues. Their fate both as individuals and as a class is determined by the laws of accumulation. Migration for the individual

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\*Exploitation on the country level, though, becomes meaningless within the tendency of capital to internationalize, since it adheres to a form (the state) outdated by economic developments.

may afford (in the short run) a measure of security, but for the class as a whole there is nothing but the insecurity of a proletariat wholly dependent on — and subservient to — the process of accumulation. Nor is this contradicted by their tendency, on their return home, to set up in business for themselves — for their opportunities are limited by the movement into towns of a middle-class peasantry dispossessed and proletarianized by the penetration of capital into native agriculture. The 'rotation of migration', however, ensures that — should his business venture not materialize — the migrant worker would be returned once more to the migratory flow. The short-term independence of the individual migrant cannot, therefore, conceal the class character of migration.

18. Internal migration is exposed to the same laws as international migration. Both result from either the underdevelopment or the mechanization of agriculture on the one hand, and the accumulation of capital and the process of industrialization in the urban centres on the other. Internal migration or urbanization means the proletarianization of the masses, a pre-condition of the accumulation process. International migration is governed by the same laws except that the capital relationship is set within an international framework. International migration is one element in the dependence of the peripheral countries on the metropolises. The Sicilian is just as alienated in Milan as in West Germany.

### III. THE POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE GENERAL THEORY OF MIGRATION

19. The general theory, as it has emerged so far, relates every aspect of the phenomenon of migration to its class character. It also discloses the laws which regulate these phenomena even as it points to their future development. It remains to be examined as a basis for political action. Such political action refers immediately to those who are exploited through migration: the migrant workers. It also refers to all workers, both in the receiving countries and in the countries of origin, who are divided by migration.

20. It follows that the system cannot have any interest in removing the exploitative character of migration. The ruling classes are prepared to humanize the migratory mechanism only in so far as it will enable them to ward off the real or potential social unrest that would endanger the system. Hence it is only through their own struggle that the emigrants could improve their conditions.



Their demand can be no less than complete equality with the indigenous workers, with full political rights. Only in this way can the facilities be created for the removal of discrimination.

21. Some go as far as to regard the migrant worker as the prime agent for the destruction of the capitalist system. But migration is only one aspect of the capital relationship. The abolition of the system means the total removal of the capital relationship. All of those who are held in a position of dependence because of the capital relationship have, objectively, an interest in its removal, i.e. the entire working class. Therefore, to regard the emigrants as a vanguard is to put the cart before the horse, and leads in the end to the widening of the existing split in the working class. The crisis of the capitalist system arises out of the capital relationship, not out of migration.

22. The concrete political implications of the general theory can be briefly outlined as follows:

*For the emigrants:*

- (a) Struggle not only against the oligarchy and the political regimes in their native lands, but also against the ruling class in the immigrant countries.
- (b) The immediate aim of this struggle should be the removal of the system of discrimination and the attainment of political rights.
- (c) Unity with the native working class, because the split brought about by the system of discrimination favours capital and weakens the working class.
- (d) Removal of the *de facto* division of the emigrants in the receiving countries into nationalities, since it is the worker-migrant and not his nationality that interests capital. The division into nationalities weakens the emigrants as a social group.
- (e) Trade union organization of the emigrants within native unions on the basis of their specific interests as a group.
- (f) Political organization of the emigrants at every level (local, national, regional, etc.) — but on the basis of the international character of the phenomenon of migration and the existing tendencies towards internationalization of labour and capital.

*For the indigenous working class:*

- (a) Recognition of the fact that there exists a system of discrimination against the foreigners, and of its divisive consequences for

the working class as a whole.

(b) Struggle against the system of discrimination and recognition of the specific interests of the emigrants.

(c) Struggle for the political rights of the emigrants and their complete equality with the native workers.

### Note

23. The division between native and foreign workers exists *de facto*. Capital has succeeded in presenting this division to the native working class as being advantageous to it. Such a consciousness prevails among the native workers. Given the identification of the trade unions with the *status quo* it must, I believe, remain debatable how far the objective implications of the general theory of migration for the native working class described above can be subjectively acceptable. Capital has defined immigration as based on the nationality of the worker and in this way distorted the problem and achieved the division. In fact, capital is concerned primarily with labour, which it needs for its expansion, and it makes no difference where it comes from. In this sense there is no competition between native and foreign employees, no more than exists between all the workers in one economy who must compete for work. In the final analysis, there are objectively no interests specific to migrant workers. Their specificity arises out of their national membership and out of their cultural, social and psychological connections, not out of a different economic situation. The problem of foreign workers in the metropole is not an economic, but primarily a political and social problem.

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## Somalia: towards socialism

In offering this brief report on revolutionary changes which began in Somalia during October 1969, and now continue at a quickening pace, I am rather in the position of the Imam Ahmad ibn Fartua who, having completed his very much longer report on the reign of the famous sixteenth-century monarch of Bornu, Mai Idris Alooma, felt sorry at there being so many important matters that he had found no space to mention, but consoled himself with the thought that 'the sensible reader will know that beyond the river lies the sea'. What follows here is only a description of a little of the river of Somali change, in this case a broad river flowing fast, and of a little of the scenery along its banks. But this at least may leave no doubt about where that river is going, or about the vigour of its progress.

Somalia today is in midstream of a major socio-economic transformation: major because it occupies the whole political process in that country now, and major because it embraces the whole of Somali society. This is a fact that may need roundly stating at the outset, since Somalia has received in the British press surprisingly (or not surprisingly?) small attention, and the non-specialized reader has good excuse for knowing little of the subject. True enough, we have heard about the current drought in Somalia, and our government, one is also glad to hear, has pledged itself to give Somalia as much as half a million pounds' worth of aid towards alleviating the consequences of

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BASIL DAVIDSON, writer and historian, has been an involved witness of the anti-colonial struggle for many years.

*Race & Class*, XVII, 1(1975).

drought. But what we have not heard is that even this drought, although it is a great disaster, is itself being made into a central factor in plans for the renewal and reconstruction of Somali society. Nor have we heard, as it appears to me that we might have heard, that there are vital aspects of this revolution, whether in its theory or its practice, which may bear closely on problems of race and class that are very much closer to ourselves in Britain.

At first sight the Somalis may seem to occupy on the African scene a somewhat peripheral position, living as they do beyond the mountains of Ethiopia and behind the *cordon sanitaire* of a neo-colonial Kenya, and being as they largely are a people of stock-raising nomads whose contacts with the outside world have been often small and sometimes altogether absent. But if their position may have been peripheral in the past, it is no longer so today. As a prelude to showing why, I should like to make a small digression.

Over the past century or so — not to speak of still older periods — the historical development of African political ideas can be seen as a continuity of ideological change: along that continuum, a number of recognizable phases of experience can be found to indicate where one ethos, one pattern of ideology, one 'set of ideas', has moved into another. In this process of developing thought a people's life goes on, of course, continues, makes still 'the same music' that is especially and inalienably that people's own; but in such phases of movement into new experience the tone changes, the themes become new themes, the 'meaning', as it were, is no longer what it was before. Each African people, for example, made its own history through centuries of its own development. Next, around the 1880s, there began the full impact of European imperialism and then of a colonial period when Africans ceased to be able to make their own history, save within narrowly constricting limits.

Out of colonialism, after the second world war, there came African nationalism: a new notion of African nationhood (for the idea of nationhood was not in itself a new one) that was modelled on the pattern of the European nation state, or more exactly of the European bourgeois state. And this African nationalism was modelled like this, one may emphasize, not simply because the ideology of the bourgeois nation was the ideology which had been imbibed during the colonial period by the educated élites who now took the lead, but also because



this was the ideology that could best be used, generally at least, to fight the early battles for independence. 'Seek ye first the political kingdom', Nkrumah said: the kingdom that the colonialists understood; and of course he was right, for that was the most promising route, *then*, towards useful ground for political manoeuvre and advance. (This, incidentally, is why all those wise persons of today who allow themselves to sneer at the nationalists of the 1940s and 1950s, because the political kingdom found by those nationalists was only half a kingdom, or less than half, might do well to go back to their history books and think again: or, if one may put it less charitably, begin to think.)

Forty or so colonies in due course became forty or so nations on the model of the bourgeois state, and reformism accordingly ruled the day. (Here and there, as we all know, reformism still rules the day, even if that day is now a sad and sorry one.) These new states were duly equipped with all the signs and symbols of an ostensible independence on the accredited model, including wigs and gowns, parliamentary governments and oppositions, as well as bound volumes of Hansard thoughtfully presented by the Mother of Parliaments (or rather by the House of Commons, the mother's aged daughter) and by the *Palais Bourbon* (another senior parliamentary daughter, though of somewhat more faded charms) so as to make sure that procedure remained altogether proper. Thus equipped, they set forth upon their obedient road to respectability. They took over the inherited colonial structure and situation lock stock and barrel, cosmetics and all, and tinkered with reforms or gestures of reform, conserving procedure according to the Good Books but also making sure, rather more important, that the educated élites should reap the lion's share of gain no matter what miseries might befall the rest of the population. That was the heyday of 'free enterprise', as the beneficiaries of an extremely unfree enterprise liked to call it; and we know what has come of it. As Nanny might have said, it has ended in tears; and Nanny, as a matter of fact, lost no time in saying that. Many lamentations of the highest Nanny-like quality were soon rehearsed, especially in the columns of our national press, at the spectacle of Africans who, although provided with the very best of the Good Books, duly failed to produce the most perfect democracy according to rules and regulations long compiled by Bagehot, Erskine May, de Tocqueville *et hoc genus omne*.

This experience of an awkward and even disastrous alienation lasted for a time and is still, as we also know, quite widely to be seen. Yet something new began to emerge within its interstices, and the music, or at least some underlying themes of the music, began to change. With varying degrees of clarity and emphasis, during the 1960s, men saw that this reformism, this tinkering with the inherited situation, would not do; or else they came to agree with others who had already warned that it would not do. Along the continuum of ideological development there appeared another point or phase of the new movement; and the ideology of reformism began to give way to the ideology of revolution. At least after about 1965 this became a leading trend, seldom dominant as yet, often hard to see, sometimes little more than demagogic camouflage: and still, where genuine, undoubtedly a leading trend. Now was the time when the ideas of socio-economic transformation (as distinct from Utopian dreaming), the ideas that have stemmed from Marx, began to become fully 'naturalized' in Africa; when these ideas began to acquire an African authenticity; when they began to be put to work in the very fabric and substance of African reality. In different countries and different situations, of course, and with differing degrees of understanding and effectiveness: the experience of the national liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies during the 1960s — of the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, of FRELIMO in Mozambique, of MPLA in Angola — no doubt provides the clearest evidence of this development, just as it provides the earliest evidence. So one may briefly summarize. A very long period of pre-colonial development of African ideas: then the alienations of colonial rule and 'neo-colonialist' reformism: then concepts of revolution which intend to restore Africans the command of their own history, but within a framework of ideas and objectives more or less completely new — in a very simplified way, this is how the continuum of political history seems to have moved.

This rather long and, I fear, rather obvious introduction to a report on Somalia may call for an apology. Yet it happens to epitomize the Somali experience and awards that experience its truly central position in the spectrum of African development now. The Somali revolutionaries who came to power in 1969 would not see this introduction as out of place, I think, for their apprehension of reality is emphatically an historical apprehension. They say, for example, that history reveals the





sake, a modern form, and the Somali Youth League became the organ and instrument of a new nationalism, just as other nationalist movements elsewhere, then or later, became the same kind of organ and instrument. And the SYL seems to have had very much the same character as other nationalist movements of the post-1945 period. Its ideas about the future were imprecise, and it was not a structured party. Although some of its leaders were radicals, most were content not only to conduct their struggle within the inherited situation — which of course they had to do in any case — but also to accept that inherited situation as a sufficient framework for the period after independence.

These leaders, or most of them, sought 'the political kingdom' and were to be satisfied with what they found. Before that, however, the Italians were allowed back into Somalia in 1950, as its rulers, by virtue of the award to Italy of a ten-year United Nations 'trusteeship'. The SYL had to be tolerated because it was the only real contender to a political succession which Italy would have to yield in 1960. But the 'trusteeship' regime was naturally not a neutral spectator. As a 'trustee', its object was to arrange matters so that an independent Somalia would be governed by a regime on the 'parliamentary model'; and all pressures that could be brought to bear on the SYL were exercised to that end. Such pressures, as it fell out, were the more constricting and distorting because the Italian 'trusteeship' administration contained quite a few persons of Fascist sympathies and attitudes. These Fascists had fled during the war, or at least had been deprived of any power and influence. But after 1950 they were allowed back to Somalia, or sent back to Somalia, on the grounds that they were among those who had governed 'the natives' before the Fascist defeat of 1941, and had thus become 'experts' in 'native affairs'. Such factors had their weight in helping to reduce the proud nationalism of the early SYL into something much more convenient.

Yet even without that kind of influence, it will be hard to think that an eventual degeneration of the SYL could have been avoided. For the SYL of the late 1950s, like Nkrumah's CPP in Ghana a little earlier, was obliged to prepare for exercising power within the structural and institutional limits opened at that time by the colonialists. These limits were those of the installed system of colonial rule, a system of élitist rule, an autocratic system, even if it was now to be equipped with a



parliament. What actually came about after the SYL took power within that system, in 1960, was a more or less complete degeneration of this nationalist movement, so that the 'neo-colonial' phase of this third period of Somali nationhood, a phase that continued until 1969, came to be marked by a sycophancy, corruption, incompetence and irresponsibility that were more painful and destructive, perhaps, than anywhere else in 'neo-colonial' Africa. There were several reasons for this severe decay apart from the general nature of the 'neo-colonial' posture. Somali revolutionaries speak of these with a careful realism.

One such reason lay in the fact of illiteracy. In the Somali language, this was total; and it was total because the Somali language, though spoken as a first language by almost all the population, possessed no script. It possessed no script for three reasons. The first and most important of these three reasons was that Somalia is a country of devout Muslim loyalty, but all attempts at writing Somali in an Arabic script had failed because Somali is a Cushitic and not a Semitic language and its vowels will not fit an Arabic orthography. Secondly, the British and Italian colonizers were averse to promoting literacy in anything but English or Italian. This did not prevent Somali nationalists, especially under the influence of the early SYL, from continuing with their efforts to devise a script. But these efforts still avoided the adoption of a Latin alphabet, and they generally failed. Thirdly, the 'parliamentary regime' of 1960-9 — and the inverted commas, as we shall see, are altogether necessary — similarly had no interest (though for reasons somewhat different from the reasons of the British and Italians) in promoting literacy in Somali. The parliamentary regime did nothing in that direction. This meant that the 1960s produced a situation in which all literacy continued to be in English or Italian (or, still more marginally, in Arabic); and this in turn meant that membership of the ruling élite was restricted in practice to those, and they were very few, who were literate in foreign languages. That was also the position in some other newly-independent countries. But the restriction in Somalia was generally tighter than elsewhere because of the extremely narrow access to such literacy allowed by the colonial and 'trusteeship' regimes.

On top of this there was the nature of the 'parliamentary model' handed over by the 'trustees'. This model was fashioned

on the reconstructed parliamentary system of an Italy emerging from twenty years of Fascist dictatorship, and, by 1960, a system that was strongly influenced by the modes and tactics of the Christian-Democratic domination which has brought Italy to its present plight. In Somalia it duly reproduced, and quickly, the characteristics of Christian-Democratic rule, whether in a merciless use of parliamentary patronage, in a regular exploitation of 'voting power' for purposes of sectional or personal gain, or in a general atmosphere of devil-take-the-hindmost. Any kind of working democracy was reduced to the machinery of 'parliamentary representation'; and this machinery duly inhibited any process of democratization.

Once in power the SYL became the instrument of its 'bourgeois élite' — the term is really a misnomer, because this élite formed at most a group of aspirants to what one day, far in the future, might eventually grow into a national bourgeoisie — and the 'bourgeois élite' saw to it that its monopoly of power was properly defended. This, too, happened elsewhere, but here again the monopoly was all the more constricting because of the largely nomadic structure of the Somali population. Government became narrowly the government of a small minority of townsmen in towns whose populations were in any case a small minority of the whole people. Outside the towns, and across their vast lands of pastoral grazing, the nomads who form the great majority of the Somali people remained as much the mere 'objects' of government as they had been before.

There was, of course, 'parliamentary representation'. But even when this worked in any representative sense it worked for negative results. The old ways of Somali self-rule, by clans and alliances between clans, were duly adapted into 'parties' representing this or that clan or alliance of clans. Even when such representation was more than a means to personal wealth or influence by the new members of parliament, it increasingly resulted in a parliamentary conflict for sectional advancement. Somalia had acquired nationhood in this third historical period of political development with the rare and happy advantage of possessing a more or less complete ethnic unity, even though a large proportion of Somalis, for reasons beyond their control, had to stay outside the Somali Republic, whether in the Ethiopian empire, in the Northern Frontier Territory awarded to Kenya, or in the small colony of French Somaliland (later re-named, by the French, 'Territory of the Afars and the Issas').



But the parliamentary model could not even reinforce this natural ethnic unity: on the contrary, its mode of operation broke down that unity into a squabbling crowd of 'tribalizing' interest-groups. Thus the model worked, and in truth could only work, for the enhancement of the most destructive aspects of 'class and caste'.

All this belonged to the 1960s. Somalis often say that those were the years of *mussoqmassuq* and of *afminsciar*: of systemic corruption, administrative folly, intrigue, destructive 'rumour-mongering', and the frustration of any kind of general improvement in the everyday life of ordinary people. 'Clan parties' degenerated into 'sub-clan parties', and 'sub-clan parties' degenerated into extended-family 'parties', and extended-family 'parties' degenerated into one-man 'parties'. All this might then be said, and evidently often was said by the beneficiaries of the regime, to prove a high state of 'democracy': after all, as in Italy, 'everyone' could have his say. Didn't this demonstrate the virtues of an 'opposition'? Wasn't this 'opposition' a guarantee of democratic liberty? The truth, perhaps one need hardly add, was really quite the opposite. Many 'parties' did indeed contest elections for the 125-odd seats in parliament — more than seventy of such 'parties', for example, contested the elections of 1968 — but no sooner were elections safely over than all these 'parties', each having duly 'made its pitch', coalesced without the slightest difficulty into a single 'party', and this single 'party', as before, was dominated by the same élite.

It would apparently be wrong to say that the situation at that point had become untenable. The particular élitist leadership might have lost all credit outside the range of its own patronage, but other such situations elsewhere in the 'neo-colonial' world would suggest that very much the same regime could still have been carried forward under another élitist leadership: for example, under that of Somalia's military and/or police commanders. No currents of popular revolution were on the scene. If Somalia's towns were filled with rural refugees from hunger and lack of gainful employment; if the ranks of these urban unemployed were swelled by secondary-school leavers and even more by primary-school leavers; if discontent was wide and widening, and often strong in demonstrations of protest, there was still nothing to show that a practical alternative to the regime of *mussoqmassuq* seemed anywhere on the

scene, or that discontent had crystallized into any organizational form. When Somalia's military finally moved, in October 1969, many were made happy and the soldiers did not have to fire a shot. But these generals and colonels could still have set up a military dictatorship and carried on the old regime under new management. As it was, they did not do this.

On 21 October 1969, they abolished the 'parliamentary regime', banned all parties, and set up a government under the leadership of Muhamad Siad Barre, who then became and has since remained the country's President. The thirteen-point charter which they also issued on that day provided for 'a society based on labour and on the principles of social justice'. This, again, could mean much or little. For a while there were those among the administrative and even among the dispossessed political élite who, it seems, thought that such words would after all mean little. What did these soldiers know about the practicalities of revolution, and what, in any case, could revolution possibly mean in a country so structured as Somalia? And if these generals went 'too far', wouldn't it be simple enough to find others who would give them a dose of their own medicine, and duly turn them out? Soon enough, indeed, the attempt was made. It failed, as did a later attempt of the same kind in 1971.

During 1970 the new regime in fact did little that was new except put down corruption and prepare the ground for departures towards social change. By this time, however, there was talk of socialism, and in January 1971 the new regime came out with a second charter declaring that 'socialism is the only philosophical system which can help to form a society based on labour and the principles of social justice': Somalia henceforward (and indeed since the previous October) accordingly 'adopts scientific socialism as its ambit of reference'. But still there were many among the 'old élites' who thought that this, in practice, need mean no more than the verbal fantasies of 'African socialism' and other such prescriptions. Early in 1971 the regime proceeded to nationalize banks, insurance companies, and various other concerns with foreign money in them; and still it could appear that this might well be no more than a familiar measure of state capitalism, and so, for the bulk of the population, the mixture as before.

Of course, it might have been the mixture as before. There was evidently no objective pressure in the situation that could



have forced this military government into doing more than preside over a somewhat different distribution of the spoils of power. There was no political democracy; there was no trade union structure, and barely the simulacrum of an urban working class; the nomads of the huge rural areas might possess a lively tradition of active self-defence, but available organs for their participation in the *Somali state* were entirely absent. If they disagreed with taxes, they could decamp over the nearest skyline. If they disliked the state's administrative approaches, they could pack up their collapsible huts and disappear into a distance where the state would never find them. But on what the state itself might decide or not decide, far away in the towns, they could have scarcely any influence at all.

Yet by 1972 it had become very clear that the new regime meant to build a new kind of state. Somalia had now entered its fourth historical period of statehood: the period of democratization within a framework of unity among all the segments of the Somali population; the period of mass participation in public affairs; the period of the planned construction of the necessary organizational means. This was seen to imply more than a revolution against the European model, although it certainly implied that. It was also seen to imply a revolution against all those aspects of Somali structure and custom, developed through the pre-colonial centuries and persisting through the colonial and 'neo-colonial' phases, that had long become handicaps, even very serious handicaps, on progress towards egalitarian modernization. Somali revolutionaries date this change from October 1969 because, even though a revolutionary programme was not then introduced, the abolition of the 'parliamentary model' marked the crucial point of change. After October 1969, as these revolutionaries say, the Somalis took charge of their own history once again, and resumed the task of making it.

Since then, but especially since 1971-2, Somalia has been and is now the scene of the working-out of a revolutionary programme. The little that I can say here about this scene will be taken by the reader, I hope, in the sense that 'beyond the river lies the sea'. What has been going on, broadly, is close in essence to the work of the liberation movements in the liberated areas of the Portuguese colonies, or latterly within those countries as a whole. 'We are trying', Agostinho Neto, the president of the MPLA, said in 1970, 'to free and modernise our people by a

dual revolution — against their traditional structures which can no longer serve them, and against colonial rule.<sup>2</sup> In different words the leaders of the PAIGC and FRELIMO proclaimed the same dual objective. In Somalia this dual objective has been pursued and is being pursued under conditions certainly very different from those of the Portuguese colonies: conditions rendered easier, but in other ways also more difficult, by the absence of the sharp and binding pressures of armed struggle. Yet the principles of theory and practice possess a striking identity. These principles appear as those of a consistent application of revolutionary thought to the *real* conditions and formative factors of everyday life; and this is the realism, one finds, that gives them their specific originality.<sup>3</sup>

By March 1975, when these impressions were compiled after a four weeks' visit, the situation had very clearly changed in several decisive ways from that of a few years earlier. The principal way in which it had changed was in the emergence of organs of mass participation. Here one may step aside for a moment to consider the nature of the controlling structure.

Leadership has remained under the control of the military men who followed Siad in October 1969, and who follow him today. They form a supreme revolutionary council and make policy under Siad's vigorous determination. Siad himself may be said to epitomize their development and their point of view. The son of a poor peasant, he received much of his military training in the Soviet Union under the 'parliamentary regime', which had wished to train its soldiers in the West but failed to get the necessary aid and had therefore agreed to train them in the East. Like others, Siad watched with disgust the capers and corruptions of the 'parliamentary regime', whose army commander he became, and by 1966 (three years before the take-over), had reached the point where he was prepared to tell an Italian newspaper — the Communist daily, *Unità* — that a change of regime was obviously necessary. How far he had then reached any programmatic conclusions on the kind of change that was necessary is not clear from published information; but many conversations suggest that it will be accurate to say that he had decided, for himself, that this change must take the form of a principled revolution against the bourgeois model, and that, this being so, the revolution that was necessary would have to be steered by Marxist thought towards an eventual socialism. It is certainly very clear that Siad was never in any doubt about the



difference between that kind of revolution and the variously proffered 'remedies' of 'African socialism', 'Arab socialism' or the like. Having got so far, he looked round for allies and found military commanders who were ready to follow him. But he looked further, and found more allies among left-wing intellectuals who had studied in the East or in the West and had come to comparable conclusions. They were at home with political theory and political history, and a remarkable group of them threw in their lot with Siad's plans as soon as they were asked.

It appears that many discussions then ensued, and that gradually, in 1969 and 1970, a close co-operation between soldiers and intellectuals began to take shape. The essence of their aims, a product of patriotism and Marxism, could evidently be expressed in 'national liberation' with the same meaning used by the PAIGC and its sister-movements: the meaning encapsulated in Neto's concept of the 'dual revolution'. Out of this co-operation between a patriotic but progressive group of soldiers with power, and a similar group of left-wing thinkers from civilian life, there developed a government that was a combination of both.

This government had the power and it also had the ideas. The problem was how to use the first to realize the second. The promoting of 'mass participation' was agreed to be the answer, but how could this be done?

Here again, or so it appeared to me, the situation was very comparable with that of the men and women who began and led the armed struggle for liberation in the Portuguese territories. True enough, those men and women did not start with military power. They had to achieve it, and to achieve it they had first to wage a long struggle on the political front. But once they had begun to achieve military power, and to clear the occupying enemy out of liberated areas, they had to use their liberated areas in such ways that the people living in them became transformed from mere supporters, mere sympathizers, into active participants with a corresponding development and deepening of political consciousness. This was difficult. Perhaps it was the most difficult of all the problems of the PAIGC and its sister-movements. For there lies an enormous gulf between sympathy and participation, and this gulf can be crossed, as all the evidence shows, only by a long and arduous and stubborn and unending work of political

explanation, and then by a similarly difficult and continuous process of enlarging mass participation in small matters to mass participation in large ones. The work was done, as we have now seen, and done so well that the liberation movements grew steadily in numbers of participants until they had passed the point where any force could defeat them.

The Somalis started with a different situation. They had the power. But they had the power without having had to work for it by winning the active participation of ordinary people. All this remained to be done. Yet allowing for this difference they have gone about their problem in the same way. That is to say, they have embarked upon a programme of political action and explanation within the class realities of their own country and people. These realities can be summarized. Within the towns of Somalia there was a small bourgeois or proto-bourgeois group. Part of this, only a small part at the outset, could be won over: several of the left-wing intellectuals, for example, have their family origins in that group. Alongside, in the towns (and in some of the large villages of southern Somalia), there was a much more numerous group which Somali revolutionaries label generally as 'petty bourgeois', although the label would be misleading if interpreted to mean what it means in western Europe. These were the artisans, small shopkeepers and traders, lower ranks of the administrative services, elementary school teachers, and a whole host of persons who belonged, or felt themselves to belong, to that kind of stratum; many soldiers and young officers, many policemen, also belonged to it. Large numbers of this group could be won over with little or no difficulty, for they had felt the pains and injustices of the 'neo-colonial' regime far more severely, perhaps, than any other section of the population. And this winning over of the 'petty bourgeoisie' proved all the easier from the fact that Somali society in many psychological and other senses appears to have a very weak degree of stratification, being heavily influenced by the historical traditions of nomad equality.

As well as this 'petty bourgeoisie', there was also a small but important peasantry: that is, a population of largely self-employed cultivators settled along the banks of Somalia's two rivers, the Juba and Shebelle. They too, or at least most of them, could be regarded as sure allies in a programme designed to produce a society very different from the one that they had lately known. And then, lastly, there were the non-cultivating



nomads, between three-fifths and four-fifths of the population. They too would have to be won over for active participation if revolution was to mean anything real and lasting. But there was also a sense in which they did not have to be won over straight away, and this sense was the one that I have mentioned earlier: for all practical intents and purposes, the nomads (or most of them) were scarcely part of the Somali state.

The first task, in any case, was to provide the means of political explanation, so that a popular consciousness of needs and possibilities could be forged. This meant mass literacy. An efficient Somali script was agreed in 1972, a script that could be easily learned and used. A mass literacy campaign followed during 1973 in all the towns and settled villages, and the evidence suggests that it was enthusiastically received. Just before that, all civil servants had been given three months to acquire proficiency in reading and writing their own language: those who failed were told that they would lose their jobs, and it appears that not many failed. At the same time the government set up a 'public relations office', afterwards renamed the Political Office, and attached to it all the politically-trained cadres they could find. These were not many, as yet, and their work could be little more than a 'stand-in' while new and numerous cadres were found and formed. This work went ahead.

It went ahead partly by a complex process of political agitation and explanation 'at the base', and partly by the development of new structures of self-rule, both of these being the chief work of the Political Office. Towns and large villages were divided into sectors of self-representation. Each sector was encouraged to build itself an 'orientation centre', providing its own labour but with building materials given free by government. At first these 'centres' — simple but effective outdoor meeting places with a number of rooms for indoor discussions — were little more than local 'clubs' where everyone who wished could come and talk, listen to spoken poetry (a famous art in Somalia), watch outdoor movies, or join in dances and other festivities. Gradually, the centres were given a more directly political role. By 1973 there began to be set in motion a process of local self-rule through an intensive network of local committees at varying 'levels' from regions to districts, to town or village sectors, to sub-sectors, and so on down to the smallest units of settled population. Here again there was a striking parallel with the action committees or village committees brought to life in

the liberated areas of the Portuguese territories.

By early 1975 one could see throughout settled Somalia that this process had gone a long way towards the organization of mass participation. Thousands of Somali men and women who had never before possessed the least right to any part in government were actively using their spare time to discuss their local interests and decide their local problems. Among these thousands were those who could now begin to be seen as the cadres of a revolutionary movement beginning to be capable of self-generation and self-direction. The time need not be far ahead, the leaders of this revolution were now saying, when the organization of a fully-fledged revolutionary party might become possible.

I met a lot of these committees, and talked with them for many hours. Their organization is like this. Each sector — and each sub-sector — has four committees of fifteen members each, one concerned with political work, a second with the affairs of young persons, a third with the affairs of wage-earners and artisans and small traders, and a fourth with the affairs of women. The implications of the last are particularly interesting. For the first time in Somali history, Somali women are now organized to represent their own interests on a basis of developing equality with Somali men. Somali revolutionaries say that the progressive liberation of women is a central and indispensable aspect of their programme, and that their programme cannot succeed without it. And to this end, like others, they use history as an ally. One of the recognized heroes of Somalia, for instance, is the Sayyid Myhamad Abdille who fought the colonialists. But another is Howar Tacco, a woman of the people who was killed in an anti-colonialist demonstration: and killed, as Somali revolutionaries insist (and have shown very clearly in the statue they have raised to her in Mogadishu), by an arrow shot from the bow of a Somali soldier in the service of colonialism. 'The chief enemy', Karl Liebknecht said upon a memorable occasion long ago, 'is in your own country'; and the realism of Somalia's revolutionaries (who have certainly no need of instruction about other kinds of enemy) has apparently no difficulty in agreeing with him.

In 1974 it was decided that the time had come to carry the revolution to the nomads in their distant and widely-scattered multitudes. Opening the gateway that is mass literacy was again their first step. In August it was arranged that the last two



(intermediate) classes of the primary schools and the first three (out of four) classes of the secondary schools would be closed down for the period of a school year; and all their students (with all their teachers) would be asked to spread across the rural areas, and devote seven or eight months to the foundation of nomad literacy. Most agreed, and several tens of thousands of student teachers (with their own teachers to help them) duly climbed on trucks and trekked away to the lands where the nomads live. In countries otherwise structured it might not have worked. But Somalia gained now from 'nomad traditions' that seem to give all Somalis, even most of those long settled in towns, a sense of moral unity and common loyalty that is reinforced, of course, by the fact that all of them, if with some dialectical differences, speak the same language.

So it was that the nomads in their multitudes began last year to learn how to read and write and do simple arithmetic, and, in so learning, began to become an integral part of this new Somali state. And perhaps the best proof of the success of this nomad literacy campaign, and of all that it implies for nomad acceptance of membership in this new state, is to be found not in the manifest ease with which the student-teachers were able to join nomad groups and become temporary members of those groups, fed and sheltered and even cherished by nomad families, nor even in the fat rolls of completed examination papers which began to flow back into the towns at the end of January 1975, but in something else that the student teachers were asked to do. They were asked to do what no other government in Somalia had ever thought that the nomads would permit. They were asked, in due course, to count the numbers of the nomads and to count the numbers of nomad livestock, so that Somali planners could at last possess some fairly accurate statistical data on these crucially important matters. They began to do this in February, and there was every sign (for I left Somalia at that time) that they would succeed. The initial plan was that student census-takers would count people and livestock at all wells and other water-points over a period of fourteen days and nights (the customary watering frequency); but in February it was found necessary, and it was also found possible, to attach census-takers to nomad groups who were on the move because of drought.

The drought of 1974-5 has been described by Siad as a national catastrophe, and even a brief stay in Somalia is enough

to show that the words are well used. Coming after another severe drought in 1969-70 and a lesser drought in 1971, this one is the worst that Somalis can remember. Its consequences are such that large regions of traditional grazing are now little better than desert. Hundreds of thousands of nomads have lost all or most of their livestock, just as they have also lost their grazing grounds. By June it is expected that upwards of a million nomads will be gathered in relief camps or other centres where they can be given food and water.

The Somali revolutionaries have met this fearful challenge in two ways. They have mobilized all possible resources not only for immediate relief, but also as a reinforcement of their effort to give the nomads, whether by literacy campaigns or other such means, a real chance of participation in the state that has now gone to their aid. Beyond that, these revolutionaries have prepared the ground for a major structural change: very large numbers of nomads will be asked to settle along the southern rivers and become cultivators (like others before them), or along the coasts and become fishermen. And because survival for these nomads can point to no other alternative, there is confidence that they will agree, and, in agreeing, once again move towards full membership of their state. The drought is a catastrophe, but the drought can also be made to provide another means of constructive change: a dialectical conclusion that is one more piece of evidence about the nature of this revolution.

A report like this, very much a report from the midst of a political and cultural development still in its early stages, can have no neat conclusion. The next few years, especially the next two or three years, may possibly allow the reaching of such 'conclusions'. Meanwhile, there is what is being done and what is being attempted, a body of experience and effort that emerges from every aspect of Somali life and begins already to acquire its own momentum, just as it also begins to acquire its own influence outside Somalia: not least, perhaps, in Ethiopia next door. But I think that if I had to offer a 'concluding comment' on this body of experience, so briefly sketched in these few pages, it would be in terms of a passage from Thomas Hodgkin's report on the Vietnamese revolution in a previous issue of *Race and Class*.

Hodgkin was writing there of 'the superiority of the ethical ideas of Ho Chi Minh and the party leadership' as being a central



element in Vietnamese revolutionary success. He was commenting on the dialectical transposition by Vietnamese revolutionaries of the old Confucian duties of *trung*, loyalty to the king, and of *hien*, fidelity to the family; and Somali revolutionaries have also made a dialectical transposition of these binding duties. For them, too, in their new morality, their *trung* no longer means loyalty to the clan, but loyalty 'to the country, the nation', while their *hien* no longer means fidelity to the family but fidelity to the people. 'At the same time', continuing Hodgkin's words:

the idea of patriotism (in this sense) is linked with proletarian internationalism, the idea that 'proletarians from all four corners of the world are brothers'. Basically, the two principles cannot conflict, since the true patriot must also be concerned with the promotion of human brotherhood, the construction of an international socialist community . . . 4

It seems to me that Siad's thought, and that of his fellow revolutionaries in Somalia, is similarly rooted in these two principles of revolutionary ethics, and similarly sees in them a pair of duties that are as inseparable from each other as they are indispensable to any true liberation. And from this 'pivotal position of patriotism in the new morality', as from its necessary complement in human brotherhood, it also seems to me that we in our country have much to learn.

#### REFERENCES

1. Quoted from R.W. Andrzejewski and I.M. Lewis, *Somali Poetry* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 74, 78, 76. This collection is distinguished not only by the best English translations that we have of Somali poetry, but also by the fact that the quoted poems are transcribed into an effective Somali script, devised by Andrzejewski at a time when the 'parliamentary regime' of Somalia had no least intention of promoting or adopting a Somali script.
2. Quoted in B. Davidson, *In the Eye of the Storm: Angola's People* (London, 1970), p. 279; (Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 273.
3. This application and its development since 1969 can be seen, so far as documentation is concerned, in a variety of published sources. One of these consists in a collected series of the Mogadishu journal *Stella d'Ottobre*, though this is hard to find even in Mogadishu. Short of that, one can turn to a valuable book by L. Pestalozza, *Somalia : Cronaca della Rivoluzione* (Bari, Dedale Libri, 1973), and indispensable work. An abbreviated but still useful collection of programmatic speeches by President Siad Barre is available in: Muhamad Siad Barre, *My Country and My People* (Mogadishu, June 1974); the Somali Embassy in London no doubt has copies. A new overall survey, extending that of Pestalozza, is very much needed.
4. T. Hodgkin, 'The Vietnamese Revolution and some Lessons', *Race and Class* (Vol.16, no. 3, 1975), pp. 244-5.

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## The Maghribin migrant workers in France

Colonial expansion has been considered by the western bourgeoisie since the age of mercantilism as a precondition both for sustained industrial growth and for the maintenance of social order. In accordance with this policy, the entire Maghrib was conquered by France and transformed into an economic colony for the extraction of raw materials and a market preserve for manufactured products. The most fertile agricultural plains of North Africa were expropriated from the 'native' peasant producers and reallocated to the European settlers. By 1954, the French state had managed to expropriate, under diverse forms, 4,825,000 *hectares*\* of cultivated lands in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia for the benefit of the European settlers.

### THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE COLONIZED MAGHRIB

The pre-colonial Maghribin economy was based, in rural areas, on agricultural activities and animal husbandry, and in the cities, on handicraft industries and trade. With the expropriation of the land from the peasantry, specifically in the Algerian case, and the thrusting of the Maghribin economy without protective tariffs into the international capitalist market, a severe economic crisis set in. In fact, with the introduction of French industrial products, the Maghribin handicraft industries were forced into decline. The

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\*1 *hectare* = 1,000 sq. metres

*Race & Class*, XVII, 1 (1975).

decline of the indigenous economic sector coincided with a tremendous demographic increase.<sup>1</sup> The population of Algeria grew from 3.2 million in 1880 to 9.7 million in 1955. Similar trends occurred in Tunisia and Morocco.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the constant erosion of the economic base of the Maghribin population a twofold process of pauperization and proletarianization through migration set in. Where, for instance, in 1872 an Algerian peasant had at his disposal an average of 83 *ares* of cultivated soil, by 1948 this had fallen to a mere 24 *ares*.<sup>\*</sup> Hence the average annual quantity of grain per head fell from five *quintals*† in 1872, to 4.7 in 1911, 2.8 in 1936, and to less than two in 1951. As a result, the number of small peasant landowners diminished by 20 per cent while that of both permanent and seasonal labourers increased by 29 per cent.<sup>3</sup> Similar changes occurred in Tunisia and Morocco. Furthermore, the forcible removal of the Maghribin peasantry from the fertile agricultural plains to the marginal mountain slopes and semi-arid steppes, followed by a rapid population increase and the destruction of the pre-colonial collective land tenure system, caused the fragmentation of family holdings. This resulted in the generalization of microfundia whereby land holdings became too small to be cultivated even by simple pre-industrial peasant techniques.<sup>4</sup>

In the long run, the impoverished peasants and artisans had no alternative but to sell their labour power to the owners of the means of production in order to eke out a livelihood. For the peasantry proletarianization implied migration either to the colonial agricultural centres or to the cities. The urban population in Algeria grew from half a million in 1880 to 2.5 million in 1955 and 3.6 million in 1964 — with similar trends in Tunisia and Morocco. But in the Maghrib, as elsewhere in the Third World, urbanization was neither preceded nor followed by industrialization. Consequently, an increasing number of pauperized masses were driven by hunger and want across the Mediterranean and into Europe.

#### EARLY MIGRATION TO EUROPE

The emigration of Maghribin workers to western Europe was initiated by some unknown number of Algerians who first appeared in the historical records of France and Belgium after 1871.<sup>5</sup> In 1905 several thousand labourers were reported in the

\*1 *are* = 10 sq. metres

†1 *quintal* = 100 lbs.



coal mines, and in 1911 the French authorities revealed that 3,000 North Africans were working in France. The next year an official inquiry showed the existence of 5,000 migrant workers, among them 1,500 miners.<sup>6</sup> They crossed the Mediterranean in small and isolated groups. The reason for the slow development of this early migration was the administrative restrictions imposed. On the express demand of the *colons* a decree was promulgated in 1876 by the Governor General in Algeria requiring a special travel permit of Algerians going to France. On its abolition, in 1913, the movement of Algerian workers to France increased rapidly. On the eve of the First World War 30,000 North Africans were working in France; among them were many Moroccans employed in the metallurgy of Nantes and the mines of the Pas-de Calais.<sup>7</sup>

The First World War aggravated France's need for manpower. Mobilization, which affected the active working population in particular, led to a drastic decline in the French productive capacity: a solution had to be found to keep the war industries running. Hence the 'colonial reserve army' of pauperized masses was brought to work and the forced recruitment of Algerians was transformed into a 'veritable mobilization, a civil requisition that was made possible by the sovereignty of France over the territory of the colony'.<sup>8</sup> In Tunisia and Morocco, however, the French authorities resorted to voluntary recruitment. Once in France, this colonial manpower came under the direct jurisdiction of the *Conseil de Guerre* which was empowered to try them before military tribunals if they so much as refused to work. They were housed in special compounds where they were also obliged to take their meals. This operation of collective recruitment resulted in the introduction into France of 120,000 Algerians, 35,000 Moroccans, and 18,000 Tunisians.<sup>9</sup> Algeria also provided 173,000 men for the services. In fact, according to Ageron, between 1914 and 1 April 1917 alone a total of 168,678 men who were either drafted or enlisted had been sent to France. By April 1917 2.7 per cent of the Algerian population had been in the French army in France.<sup>10</sup> Tunisia and Morocco also furnished thousands of men for the French war effort.

After the armistice a large number of the mobilized men were sent back home, but many of them remained as labourers to rebuild the war-torn areas. Since France found itself depopulated and economically paralysed, the French government again resorted to the North African colonial manpower to reconstruct its economy. Between 1920 and 1924 120,000 Maghribin workers

were called to France; in 1924 alone 71,028 Algerian and 10,000 Moroccan migrant workers were *imported*. This massive out-migration from the Maghrib frightened the colonial entrepreneurs who up to then had been able to pay starvation wages to workers by maintaining a vast reserve army of lumpen-proletarianized peasants. Their pressure, as always, elicited a positive response from the colonial authorities. Thenceforth a work permit was required before emigrating. But although this brought a decrease in emigration, 71,000 Algerian workers arrived in France in 1929 alone. The 1929 economic crash, however, not only slowed down the tempo of emigration, but also forced the return to the Maghrib of labourers already in Europe. The number of registered Algerian workers fell from 65,000 in 1932 to 32,000 in 1936.<sup>11</sup> The consequences of the crisis were, of course, felt most strongly by the migrant workers, whose socio-economic and legal status was, and still is, so precarious.

The Second World War provoked far-reaching changes in the nature, form and magnitude of the trans-Mediterranean migration. Although the French Minister of Labour had requested, in January 1940, the dispatch of several thousand Algerian workers, the military debacle which resulted in the German occupation of France put a quick end to this request. With the ensuing disorganization of the French economy, 10,000 workers were laid off and repatriated in the early spring of 1940. Later the German military authorities expelled an additional 16,000. During 1943 and 1944 the French colonial authorities prohibited all migration from Algeria. After the liberation of France, however, the French *patronat* resorted again to the North African labour force to reconstruct its ruined industries, communication networks, and housing. In 1947 the Algerians were finally transformed into 'French Moslim' citizens, a new legal status which allowed them to move freely between Algeria and France. By the mid 1950s the number of Algerian workers had reached approximately 400,000.<sup>12</sup>

Ninety per cent of the Maghribin workers came from a peasant background, usually from the most densely populated and therefore the most impoverished rural areas of the Maghrib. Thus, the collective historical experience of the millions of uprooted individuals who worked in the French industrial centres was the culmination of profound socio-economic changes in the peasant communities of origin. And this inevitably led to revolutionary attitudinal changes and class consciousness in the minds of the



majority of the emerging Maghribin proletariat.

The inherent contradictions of French imperialism for their part created the objective conditions that gave rise to novel dynamic social forces which challenged the very foundations of colonialism. The nascent Maghribin proletariat came to the forefront of the anti-colonialist struggle of national liberation, both in France and North Africa, because of the merciless exploitation imposed upon it by the capitalist class. Tunisia and Morocco obtained their formal independence in 1956. But in Algeria, because of the deeply entrenched nature of French colonial interests, an eight-year war of national liberation had to be waged, resulting in the total devastation of the peasant economy. Indeed, the 2,350,000 peasants who survived various military operations were driven by force to the *Centres de Regroupements*, surrounded by barbed wire and mined fortifications. The French scorched earth policy destroyed some 8,000 villages. The livestock of the peasants was confiscated and consumed by the troops.<sup>14</sup> And when in 1962 the imprisoned peasants were released from the camps they had neither tools and draft animals, nor the funds necessary to purchase them. Migration was the only alternative to starvation.

#### POST-INDEPENDENCE MIGRATION

The post-colonial states of the Maghrib have not yet resolved the basic problems created by colonialism, namely economic under-development aggravated by a demographic 'explosion'. By 1966 Algeria's population had reached 12,093,000, Morocco's 12,820,000 and Tunisia's 4,458,000. But the outflow of Maghribin workers to western Europe not only followed its pre-independence course, but showed a dramatic increase after 1962 — reaching in France a figure of over a million by 1973 (around 800,000 of whom came from Algeria).<sup>15</sup>

The primordial causes underlying this emigration are deeply rooted in the colonial socio-economic structures and the phenomenon will not vanish until the sources nourishing the continuation of the dependency-dominance relationships between the former colonies and the 'metropolis' are eradicated. Unfortunately, neo-colonial relations between France and the Maghrib have been maintained and consolidated since independence. In the decade between 1963 and 1972, only Algeria has managed to establish a balance of payments surplus, thanks to its oil revenue. France, however, has maintained its position as the

most important market for Maghribin exports and the primary source of imports.<sup>16</sup>

This current state of affairs is conducive neither to economic development nor to politico-economic independence. The North African countries are still exporting raw materials and labour power in order to import industrial equipment and manufactured consumer goods. Algeria is the only country that has made some real attempts at industrialization, but its path to 'modernization' has favoured a capital intensive and labour-saving developmental approach. This techno-bureaucratic policy has led to increasing external financial indebtedness and technological dependence, and while Algeria has continued to export its unskilled and semi-skilled manpower, it has been importing foreign technicians, engineers, doctors and teaching personnel. In a word, Algerian industrialization is not generating employment for the Algerian deruralized masses.

No North African state has up to the present carried out a thorough land reform in favour of the peasantry. In the case of Tunisia and Morocco the autochthonous landlords managed to buy a large number of hectares from the former *colons*. The new Tunisian ruling class disastrously failed to organize cooperatives in the countryside. In Morocco, the only state programmes designed to improve agricultural production were conceived by the new bureaucracy to benefit the comprador macrofundia owners. 'Socialist Algeria' did not really undertake any land reform until 1971. The experience of self-management on colonial farms abandoned by the settlers was nipped in the bud by the post-independence petty bourgeois bureaucracy who finally opted for state capitalism rather than develop, rectify and perfect worker 'autogestion'. In short, the new ruling classes in the Maghrib have so far failed to resolve the basic problems facing their people: underdevelopment, neo-colonial dependency, social inequality, obscurantism, despotism and the enslavement of women. Migration has been viewed by the French and North African governments as the only safety valve for the prosperity of the metropolitan bourgeoisie and the stability of its satellite regimes in the Maghrib.

#### THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE MAGHRIBIN WORKERS IN FRANCE

Since the French authorities require employers to hire North African migrant workers only in industrial sectors where there is a



native manpower deficit, these workers are automatically relegated to the dirtiest, most painful and risky occupational positions. The migrant workers, and especially the North Africans, are concentrated in certain basic industries: construction, metallurgy, chemicals, rubber and asbestos, and generally industries with unhealthy working conditions. According to the 1968 French Census 35.6 per cent of the foreign male migrant workers are employed in building and public works; 13.5 per cent in mechanical and electrical engineering; 9.2 per cent in agriculture, fishery, and forestry; and 8.1 per cent in commerce.<sup>17</sup> The most salient factor in these statistics is the concentration in the construction sector. The French working class has abandoned this industrial sector because of the hard working conditions, the necessity of moving around, the high rate of fatal accidents, low wages and low social status. The second distinctive characteristic is the difference in occupational patterns of various immigrant nationalities, for example, 58 per cent of the Portuguese, 41 per cent of the Italians, 37 per cent of the Algerians, and 34 per cent of the Spaniards are in construction, in contrast with only 26 per cent of the Moroccans and 13 per cent of the Poles.<sup>18</sup> Of the female workers, 29 per cent are employed in domestic services: 25.6 per cent of the Algerian women, 38.5 per cent of the Moroccan women and 19.3 per cent of the Tunisian women.

Compared to other migrant populations and to the French, the average rate of activity of the Maghribin population is among the highest. In fact, 52.5 per cent of the total Algerian population living in France is active: 70.2 per cent of the males and only 4.8 per cent of the females. Of this active population, 97.9 per cent of the men and 94.6 per cent of women, that is, a grand total of 97.6 per cent of this working population, are wage labourers. The Algerian labouring masses are essentially located in two principal regions: 43.7 per cent in Paris and its environs, 18.1 per cent in the Rhone-Alpes areas; the rest are scattered in eastern and northern France. The Tunisian and Moroccan migrants are similarly concentrated in the major industrial regions of France.<sup>19</sup>

Although the North African migrant workers have become an indispensable labour force in the basic French economic production, their socio-economic status, even compared with other other migrant nationalities, is the lowest. Their subordinate position was strikingly demonstrated in a government survey on the status of industrial and commercial workers in 1967 — which indicates a functional stratification of the migrant labourers along

nationality lines. Except for the Portuguese, all Europeans — Italians, Poles, Spaniards — enjoyed a higher socio-economic position: over 6 per cent of the total were non-manual worker employees, in addition to a high proportion of skilled manual workers. The Portuguese, though having very few non-manual workers, were represented by a fair portion of skilled workers. By contrast the Maghribin semi-skilled and unskilled workers constituted 87.2 per cent of the Algerian, 81.4 per cent of the Moroccan, and 70.3 per cent of the Tunisian labour force.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the qualitative differentiation between the occupational patterns of the migrant workers and the French workers and between the various national groups of the former, reflect quantitative differentials in wages and social status. This differential access to socio-economic positions is determined by historical factors, underdevelopment of the Maghrib, and by an official policy of the French government which enables employers to divide not only the alien workers from the native proletariat, but also the migrant labourers among themselves. This hierarchy of the the various ethnic groups along socio-economic lines corresponds to the actual degree of hostility expressed by the French population towards each of them. The Italians are the most favourably considered, the Spanish and Portuguese are more or less tolerated, 'while there is very strong prejudice towards North Africans, in particular towards Algerians'.<sup>21</sup> In a public opinion poll of the *Institut Français d'Opinion Publique* 62 per cent of the sample replied that there were too many North Africans in France, while 27 per cent found that there were too many Spaniards, although at the time the number of southern European workers far exceeded that of the Maghribins. A poll of French workers found that 71 per cent thought that there were too many North Africans and 50 per cent thought that there were too many Spaniards and Portuguese.

These surveys reveal that in addition to the objective hierarchy, there is also a division along lines of nationality. The hostile attitudes of the French workers appear to stem from the objective socio-economic positions assigned to the various nationalities of migrant workers. The gradations of hostility directed against these different groups are probably determined by historical and cultural factors. The Italians appear to be acceptable because they are assimilable; the Spaniards are fairly acceptable, and the Portuguese are unacceptable because they are socially backward. The North Africans are rejected on the grounds that they are not



only socially and economically 'underdeveloped', but also that they are culturally too different and consequently unassimilable. The 'colonial fact' appears to override all others.

#### POLITICO-ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF IMMIGRATION

Because of the French demographic stagnation, and its 'economic expansion' in the 1960s, the *patronat* turned to its neo-colonial reserve army to replace its shrinking native semi-skilled and unskilled labour force. As M. Massenet, the director of population in the Ministry of Labour, declared on television in 1968, 'with an active French population of 40 per cent, how could we ensure in France the standard of living of the population; ensure the retirement of the elderly, the charges of the students; ensure the social investments for children, without immigration'. Thus, the import of a labour force to 'ensure' the welfare of the French population became a vital economic necessity.

In addition to these socio-economic factors, some geo-political considerations came into play. By practising a *laissez-faire* immigration policy, the French leaders intended to pacify the social contradictions inherent in a class society. As early as 1963 Prime Minister Pompidou declared that immigration would allow France to 'create a détente in the labour market and resist any social pressure'<sup>22</sup> that could be exerted by the French proletariat. The deployment of migrant labour forces was of utmost strategic importance to resolve the manpower shortage, to subvert actual or potential class strife, and to exert pressure on wages so that the owners of the means of production could continue to extort exorbitant surplus value. This strategy resulted in the further worsening of working conditions in the principal productive sectors where the migrant workers were employed. Since the French workers were either given supervisory positions or transferred to more remunerative occupations possessing a higher social status, the struggle for the improvement of working conditions in the sectors of production reserved for migrant workers ceased to preoccupy the French unions. Given the racist and chauvinistic aura permeating their new industrial establishments, the migrant labourers, either ignorant of labour legislation or merely terrorized by the constant threat of deportation, often resigned themselves to perform equal work with the French workers even though they were being paid unequal wages. Deprived of basic civil rights and in most cases illiterate and

lacking class or political consciousness, the migrant workers could not expose themselves alone to the wrath of their employers and their 'law enforcement' agencies. Despite the fact that they constitute the most productive elements within the French society, they are the most exploited segment of the proletariat in Europe.

The French small-scale and archaic enterprises would not have been able to survive the tight competition imposed upon them by large industrial firms without this alien labour force. Through systematic discriminatory employment practices, financial fraud, starvation wages and all sorts of manipulations such as the constant shifts and rotations of migrant workers, these petty entrepreneurs successfully evaded wage claims, pay rises and promotions. As a result, the owners of these firms managed to squeeze enough surplus labour to compete with the highly concentrated and 'rationalized', 'modern' firms. The larger firms for their part came to base their whole short-run and long-run industrial planning on an alien work force whose forced obedience yielded profits without the risk of social unrest or class war. Besides, emigration from the former French colonies played a stabilizing role in freezing social struggle there. Political pressure stimulated by unemployment, itself a consequence of economic neo-colonialism, was lifted by the emigration of pauperized masses. At the same time, the shortage of native manpower, a vulnerable economic weakness, has been astutely turned into a powerful political mechanism that permits the French ruling class to channel, through migration, the frustrations and energies of the migrant workers, in such a way as to reinforce its neo-colonial relations with the Maghrib.

The import of a predominantly male alien labour force from these Third World countries is not accompanied by any serious attempt to create an adequate social infrastructure, housing facilities, medical care and other necessary services. Besides, a migrant worker does not cost the host society anything prior to his entry into its labour market: the charges of his upbringing and basic education have already been paid by the exporting society, and his fitness for work is certified by a French doctor even before he leaves the Maghrib. Indeed, according to the French demographer, Alfred Sauvy, 'the total cost for the country of a young man to the age of 18, that is, to the level of simple qualification, amounts to 9 or 10 years of work'.<sup>23</sup> Thus, one of the major benefits of immigration for the receiving country lies in



the fact that all the basic social costs up to the working age have been assumed by the countries of emigration.

But as soon as migrant labourers start working in France they are compelled to pay full social security on an equal footing with the French workers, even though they receive in return unequal benefits. It has been calculated that a migrant worker leaves behind him up to 20 per cent of his wage in social security.<sup>24</sup> All North African migrant workers whose dependants are left in the Maghrib receive only 60 per cent or less of their family allowance. 'Many lose even the benefit of this allowance either due to sheer ignorance or because they are rebuked by tedious administrative difficulties.'<sup>25</sup> The profits derived from the utilization of the Maghribin labourers are enormous. In 1966 a French civil servant, Yves Chaigneau, put the Algerian workers' contribution to French economic production at a figure of 2.3-3.5 billion old francs. Deducting the wages paid to these workers, and the social benefits and aid given at that time to Algeria by France, he was able to determine that the balance of profit made by the French capitalists amounted to no less than 1.5 billion old francs per year.<sup>26</sup>

In sum, contemporary migration as a political and economic strategy allows the French bourgeoisie to 'use' the migrant workers as an efficient means to increase the rate of profit, to pacify the fundamental social contradictions inherent in a capitalist society, and to reinforce its neo-colonial hold on the formerly colonized societies. The 'nationalist' regimes have found an outlet for their redundant manpower and the French *patronat* is provided with a reserve army which is imported only under the express condition that its finished products will be ensured of the neo-colonial market outlets. Once in France, the Maghribin workers are subjected to merciless exploitation, discrimination and humiliation. Their mere presence threatens a large segment of the French proletariat to the extent that the 'foreigners' appear 'to come here to take our bread'. Thus, these transplanted workers see themselves sinking into a hostile environment. All the costs of this politico-economic containment policy are paid in migrant workers' sweat, blood, health, and mental and material misery.

#### THE CAUSE AND FUNCTION OF RACISM

The emergence of racism itself as a sociological phenomenon was brought about by colonialism. Its primary function is aimed at the reduction of the non-capitalist peoples to a subhuman species so

that their subjugation and systematic exploitation become not only justified but desirable. Racism as an ideology is the offspring of colonialist practices. The armies of the western bourgeoisie overseas resorted to wars of extermination because in the

tropical countries [they] wanted cheap labour and markets and slaves; in temperate countries they wanted the land to occupy as settlers . . . . The natives were regarded as outside the pale of humanity, without religion, law, or morals. Bounties were placed on their heads and they could be freely kidnapped and massacred. They had no redress but to strike back and so to bring upon themselves merciless reprisals. Even these presently became impossible and the native remnants were herded onto reserves or became hopeless slaves in the mines or on the plantations. Those natives were alone fortunate who lived in countries that could not readily be exploited by Europe's traders or settled by her colonists.<sup>27</sup>

The proclamation of 'white' superiority over the colonized masses had been formulated during the age of colonialism to rationalize the dispossession of the Third World. As Ashley Montagu put it, 'indeed, even if the idea of "race" had not already been available, the imperialists would have been forced to invent it. It was the most useful ideological instrument of all, even more valuable than the machine gun.'<sup>28</sup>

Prior to 1945 the currents of migration emanated from Europe to the colonies. The colonial societies that were erected on the ruins of the colonized peoples' social systems gave rise to, stimulated, and provided an ideal milieu for the dissemination and application of racial theorizings. With the reversal of the migratory patterns in the post Second World War period and an increasing number of pauperized masses being attracted to the European cities, in which racist mythologies were already deeply rooted, racial discrimination and hostility began to develop to the point where racism became as overtly expressed as in the former colonies themselves.

On decolonization, the repatriated settlers brought the virus of racism to the metropolitan country. In fact, the more violent the conflict of decolonization (e.g., Algeria), the more virulent the racism and xenophobia directed against immigrants from that colony. Racism as a sociological phenomenon, however, is a by-product of capitalist praxis — and its prevalence in France predates the arrival of the deracinated proletarians.

The entire life of the Maghribin workers, due undoubtedly to their historical experience of French colonialism and their determined resistance to it, is marked and profoundly affected by



racism: discriminated against in housing, scorned in public transport and other public places, despised by petty officialdom, brutalized by the police. The result of this generalized prejudice against them plays a determinant role in maintaining their subordinate position. Systematic social discrimination entails unequal opportunity, preventing any discriminated against ethnic group from ameliorating its standard of living. '“The Algerians are dirty and they like to be crowded together”'; on the faith of which no French landlord would rent to them. It follows that the Algerians find only uncomfortable lodgings which are degraded and in too small a number. They consequently must live in overcrowded conditions. The Algerians are therefore effectively dirty and they actually live in overcrowded conditions.' <sup>29</sup> Thus in a racist environment, through a circular process of reasoning, the victim of discrimination is driven into a cul-de-sac.

In 1970 the French journalist, Jean Lacouture, published a series of articles devoted to the manifestation of racism in France and other European countries.<sup>30</sup> A wave of letters to the editor ensued. One started by warning against 'the invasion [of France] by races of inferior men, such as the niggers or Berbers' and 'the dangerous admixture with the white superior races of Europe which has established the entire "civilization"'.<sup>31</sup> Another correspondent concluded by stressing that there is an 'increasing number of niggers and Arabs whose sole contact with the French is repulsive, niggers that do not have a human shape; North African negroids that carry on their faces all the stigma of degenerate races, unassimilable multitudes which constitute a mortal peril for France'.<sup>32</sup> The Arab labourers in France are thus targets of discrimination and racial abuse. To the increasing racist hysteria and violence, the migrant workers in general, and the North African labourers in particular, have responded by class struggle, despite the constant deportations of their alleged leaders by Marcellin, the French interior minister, who declared that 'expulsions are motivated by the crimes' committed by the foreign workers because they

did not respect political neutrality . . . . These figures [according to him about one per thousand were deported in 1972] demonstrate that France despite protests and criticisms remains the best country where foreigners are provided with the most liberal welcoming conditions [sic]. This said, I shall continue to expel all foreigners who disturb the public order.<sup>33</sup>

The next day, 7 June 1973, the Parisian daily newspaper *L'Aurore*

lauded M. Marcellin's policy of systematic deportation.

### 'THEY HAVE BEGUN TO FIGHT'

On 19 January 1971, in a factory in Lyon, a Maghribin worker was smashed to pieces by the chain of a worn-out machine in the workshop. This defective mechanism was supposed to have been removed for safety reasons a long time before this accident had occurred. The chain of the machine was so weak that it had broken. On the specific order of the management, the chain was hidden and replaced by a new one in order to avoid their responsibility for this fatal accident. The workers were threatened that if any one of them dared to give the investigators a different version to that of the management, they would be fired. However, when the police showed up in the factory a worker defied the management, not only giving the true explanation of the cause of his companion's death, but also showing the investigators the location of the broken chain. In protest against their working conditions the Maghribin workers struck for six hours. A second strike was organized on 9 February 1972. It lasted twenty-two days and shook the whole working-class movement and the French *patronat*. Thereafter, the migrant workers 'have begun to fight for their rights — striking for better wages and working conditions, protesting scandalous rent for rotten quarters'.<sup>34</sup>

In 1973 the combativeness of the migrant workers increased in proportion to the aggression directed against them by fascist groups.

One of the most dramatic expressions of this new militancy was the long and effective strike started in the spring of 1973 by some 370 assembly line workers . . . [mostly Algerians] at the Renault automobile plant outside Paris. The main demand was 'equal pay for equal work'. The workers were protesting not only ruthless working conditions, but also the fact that they were getting paid substantially less than the French workers doing similar tasks.

This started as a spontaneous wildcat strike which was immediately joined by 12,000 semi-skilled workers, 9,000 of them migrants. It was supervised by an ad hoc 'struggle committee' of labourers. This confrontation with the French ruling class resulted in a partial victory for the Renault workers.

But its real significance lay in the fact that it showed the immigrants finally emerging from their long political passivity and isolation. This new activism has also been demonstrated in struggles in many slum tenements . . .



immigrant workers have organized rent strikes, refusing to pay the exorbitant rents demanded for tiny unheated, overcrowded rooms, or else banding together to fight arbitrary evictions. Many of these actions have been successful in at least extracting small concessions or thwarting outrageous cases of discrimination.

In opposition to the ongoing struggle for survival organized spontaneously by the Maghribin workers and others, a neo-fascist movement called *Ordre Nouveau*, whose leaders 'boast their support for the Nazis during World War II', mounted a vicious racist campaign. But despite this, Marcellin allowed a provocative meeting to be held by the *Ordre Nouveau* in Paris on 21 June 1973. Actually, the authorization of this meeting was in violation of the letter and spirit of a new French law against 'racist propaganda' passed in Parliament in 1972. The *Ligue Communiste* mounted a counter-demonstration against the racist hysterics of the *Ordre Nouveau*. This resulted in the dissolution of the *Ligue Communiste* by the French government and the imprisonment of its leader, Alain Krivine. Despite the anti-racist propaganda law, racist newspapers such as *Minute* still continued to publish, without legal repercussions, denunciations against:

the waves of syphilis-bearing, rape-prone undesirables. On June 23 — just two days after the *Ordre Nouveau* rally — shots were fired from speeding cars into several Algerian cafes in the Paris suburbs. On July 3, in Vitry . . . three racists murdered a Portuguese worker, then attacked an Algerian. In the southern resort city of Nice, on August 2, two Algerian workers were badly wounded in a fight with the owner of the building in which they lived. Racial violence erupted in the city of Toulon, where the municipal council declared a 'state of emergency' on August 10.

The widespread animosity against the migrant workers degenerated into barbarous acts of violence and murder after 25 August 1973, when a mentally disturbed Algerian labourer, whose brain had been damaged earlier as a result of a fight with some French fascists, killed a bus driver in Marseilles. This event triggered the French reactionary press into launching an hysterical campaign against Third World migrant workers in general and the Algerian workers in particular, because of the latter's significant role in the struggle for the improvement of the alien labourers' working and living conditions. The major southern French newspaper, *Le Meridional*, led the anti-Algerian crusade in the following terms: 'we have had enough of Algerian thieves, Algerian thugs, Algerian braggarts, Algerian trouble-makers, Algerian syphilitics, Algerian rapists, Algerian pimps, Algerian lunatics,

Algerian killers.' The committee for the Defence of Marseilles was set up by the local members of the *Ordre Nouveau* to foment criminal acts against the North African labourers, and to denounce the 'brown threat'. 'The Algerian [who killed the bus driver] was nearly lynched, and the local press used the tragedy to whip up anti-Algerian fury throughout the region, where many former *colons* live and memories of the Algerian war are vivid.' This isolated crime provided the French fascist groups with a pretext for action. From 26 August to 29 September 1973 twelve Algerian workers were assassinated. On 14 December a bomb was put in the Algerian Consulate in Marseilles in the room where workers wait while their identification cards and various other papers are processed. It killed four people and wounded a hundred. As a direct result, the Algerian government decided to cut off the flow of the 25,000 annual contingent of emigrant workers to France. (This was not the only time that the fascists organized mass murder: in 1971, when Algeria nationalized French oil interests, twenty-one migrant workers were killed throughout France.) The French police have never made a single arrest in connection with these crimes.

At any rate, the North African workers responded to the 1973 racist hysteria against them by taking steps to defend themselves. The Movement of Arab Workers succeeded in organizing many strikes and massive street demonstrations throughout the industrial centres of France in Autumn 1973 and after. The Movement is a clandestine pan-Maghribin organization that has spread quickly among the North African workers because it represents their aspirations. In protest against the assassinations, it organized a nation-wide strike and demonstration.

[This] day was highlighted by a meeting of thousands of Arab workers in front of the Paris mosque, following a massive walkout of immigrants from the construction sites and factories in the Paris area. For the first time, production was halted at the Citroen plant when Arab workers there, joined by other immigrants, put down their tools and marched out en masse. Cafes and restaurants in Arab neighbourhoods were closed for the day.

The growing racist hostility against the Arab migrant workers in France forced many of them to envisage a return home should employment be made available. An Algerian worker, the father of five children, who has been working in eastern France since 1962, wrote a letter to the personnel director of an Algerian state industrial organization, on 3 September 1973, requesting a job as an aid-mechanic. His letter revealed both the eagerness of these



migrant workers to return home and their psychological stress in France. 'We are fortifying the hand that is oppressing us', the worker concluded. But the director, replying two months later, turned down the request on the grounds that 'in order to be reintegrated into our factory you must possess the following qualifications: a certificate of primary education, and a certificate of professional training in general mechanics.' In a word, 'no employment'.

In the final analysis, it is the North African societies that must change along revolutionary lines whereby not only the collectivization of the means of production, but also of labour power itself, will be carried out. The remnants of colonial structures must be destroyed and replaced by genuinely egalitarian socio-economic structures that would guarantee a popular participatory democracy as well as channel, in a meaningful way, the energies of the masses for the construction of just societies in the Maghrib.

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## **Anthropology = ideology applied anthropology = politics\***

Anthropology: Plus ça change, plus ça reste le même.  
(French saying)

Applied Anthropology: Changes must be introduced  
to keep things as they are.

(*The Leopard*)

Maurice Freedman's essay is presented to us by Sol Tax as 'a remarkable cooperative achievement; its breadth and high quality make it worthy of the fullest attention; and its significance for anthropology also requires critical discussion.' Yes and no, with certain reservations! The essay exhibits breadth — and shallowness. Its occasional high quality insights are swamped and negated by a morass of confused irrelevancies. The construction of the argument falls on sophistry of false disjunctions and identities. Its significance lies in the real problems — the function and future of anthropology and anthropological ideology — which in the essay are conspicuous by their absence or avoidance. It is remarkable indeed that international cooperation leads to such embarrassing results. That is why the essay requires critical discussion.

The whole of the 'co-ordinates' and 'opposite attractions' of

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\*This paper is a comment on Maurice Freedman's 'Social and Cultural Anthropology', written for the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chicago, September 1973, at the invitation of its President, Sol Tax.

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the first two main chapters (A and B), which reappear in later ones as well, rest on, or more precisely fall with, a series of false disjunctions and a few false identities to boot.

The oppositions between description and theory, science and art, comparison and particularism, structure and history, and evolutionism and functionalism rest on an un- indeed anti-scientific sophistry that is the author's figleaf for the total misunderstanding and mystification of evolution and history. 'We may well wonder whether . . . the category of history has any great relevance to anthropology,' Freedman writes (p.27). No wonder he wonders, if history is what Freedman claims. We may rescue him from his doubt and say that it certainly has no relevance at all, if history is no more than 'given to the particular, the descriptive, and the humanistic . . . when its opposite is structure' (pp. 27-9), if 'not all historical writing (*pace* some theorists) is diachronic and concerned with change' while much of it 'is a synchrony set back in time' (p. 97). It would be difficult to select a set of terms more erroneously opposite of concrete history and real historical writing, whose very essence is the diachronical interaction between the structure of change and the change of structure, which determine the descriptive particular, and which takes place throughout time, past, present and future in combined and uneven development.

It is only Freedman's total theoretical obfuscation and ideological negation of history and evolution that permit him to counterpose history to structure and the latter to evolution-(ism) and function(alism) (pp.27-31), or to pose such absurd disjunctions as 'in the long view [of the evolutionist vision], there is beautiful order; in the short, a recalcitrant variety' (p. 88), while identifying contemporary evolutionism and functionalism (that is seeking to attach some of the merited prestige of the former to the also merited growing disrepute of the latter) through 'indications of their common heritage' (p. 30), as though common origins could not lead to a diverse and even opposing present and future, as they have through all natural evolution and social history. Thus Freedman falls prey to and perpetuates the anti-scientific ideology of a 'Radcliffe-Brown, the arch-priest of anthropological structural-functionalism' (p. 30), who persuaded generations that history is irrelevant to his reactionary pseudo-structure, and pseudo-function, and that of 'the "structure" of structuralism, a doctrine [sic!] which, ramifying in the kingdom of knowledge, has a branch in anthro-



pology to which the name of Lévi-Strauss is attached' (p. 28) 'in such a manner that time becomes irrelevant because neutral' (p. 30); because, in fact as Lévi-Strauss himself emphasizes but Freedman and others like to forget, that structuralism only deals with the structure of models and never of concrete — that is, historical — reality. No wonder that time is irrelevant and that Freedman wonders if history is relevant if by act of ideological definition 'history' is vacated of all real content and reality is left out of account! And that from someone who himself dares to tell us what it is all about, when he warns: 'Above all, there is a danger in those reduced and impoverished schemes of research which, for example, operate with simple notions of social class and class exploitation or, as in some forms of neo-Marxism, with equally rudimentary concepts of power and dominance' (p. 155). We may be thankful, indeed, to Mr Freedman and his colleagues for this warning, and the 'impoverished schemes' such as the co-ordinates of opposite attractions, and 'rudimentary concepts', such as that of 'history' marshalled to back up this warning.

Moreover, Mr Freedman's 'Co-ordinates of study in time and space' also disregard, and thereby falsify, history in another important regard. In questioning and disregarding the relevance of history they disregard the intimate relation between the history of the world and the history of anthropology itself. They disregard that, 'much of classical sociology arose within the context of a debate — first with eighteenth-century thought, the Enlightenment, and later with its true heir in the nineteenth century, Karl Marx',<sup>2</sup> and that 'it has been said that anthropology developed entirely independently of Marxism. More correctly, 20th-century anthropology developed entirely in reaction to Marxism'.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Freedman and Co. and the anthropology they review further disregard — i.e., regard as 'irrelevant' — not only history, but also materialism. They regard it to be 'irrelevant' that their sociology and anthropology began as and continued to be an *ideological* response to historical, materialism.

It may therefore be appropriate to review this ideological function of anthropology. Freedman himself offers us some insights and cues for such a review, which his own ideological position or limitations apparently inhibit him from pursuing to the reader's advantage:

All anthropological theory changes with the world in which it is practised, but the response of applied anthropology in particular is more noticeable. . . . There is one point upon which nearly all anthropologists are agreed: applied anthropology is more like politics than engineering. It does not rest upon a secure and precise theory . . . (p. 111).

Agreed. But the political nature of applied anthropology is not so much a function of the insecurity or imprecision of its base, as it is a function of anthropology's application and function itself. And the anthropological theory on which it rests, all the more so but not exclusively in view of its insecurity and imprecision, is more ideology than science. But this extension of his argument, Freedman will not make (or perhaps even accompany). Nor does he, despite devoting a section to applied anthropology, apply his insight to say whose or what politics is so applied by or through anthropology. Moreover, the time and space co-ordinates of Mr Feedman do not show how or why anthropology changes — or remains the same — in the world in which it is practised:

It is often said, and with some justice, that anthropologists working in colonial societies in the old days were blind to the total political and social environment within which they conducted their studies of small communities or of tribes. In independent states they are not likely to make the bias . . . is now being corrected (p. 113).

Changed political circumstances have reduced the Japanese interest in Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia, China (including Taiwan), and Micronesia, to the ethnography of which countries important contributions were once made. Since the Second World War a younger generation has begun to concern itself with other areas (South-East Asia, India, Africa, Latin America, and the Arctic region), but their number is tiny, and the greatest scholarly investment has been made in studies of Japan itself. . . . [Here] we have an example of how a lack of interest in the exotic hampers a national anthropology in the performance of its role in world scholarship. The politics of China's situation leaves the future of its anthropology in doubt (pp. 149-50).

Exotic interests in the performance of its role in world scholarship, indeed. Here we have an exotic example of how anthropological ideology inhibits perception and analysis of the ideology of anthropology and its political determinants and functions in the quite un-exotic performance of its role in 'world scholarship'.

In this context we may therefore briefly propose a review in turn of the subjects of anthropological study, of anthropology



as a subject of study, and of Mr Freedman's essay as a study of anthropology, emphasizing the ideological content, purpose and function of anthropology, theoretical and applied, classical and up to date.

Freedman himself lists and reviews the 'classical' subjects of a century of anthropological study: 1. kinship and marriage. 2. politics and government, 3. law in the context of social control, 4. economics, 5. religion and ritual, 6. visual art, 7. music, 8. literature, 9. technology. Items 5 to 8 might easily be recognized to be substantially ideology or vehicles for its expression under other names; while items 1 to 3 could be recognized as institutions, rules, and measures of what Freedman does not like to call 'power and dominance', which are importantly supported by and give expression to that ideology. Yet for Mr Freedman this elementary concept appears to be even less than rudimentary. The word appears only once (p. 113) in his 163 pages of text. Admittedly, therein Mr Freedman's review is true to much of the anthropological profession itself, for whom the denotation of its subject of study, let alone of anthropology itself, as ideology, is one of the greatest taboos (for instance, in the cumulative index of Volumes 1 to 10 of *Current Anthropology*, the word 'ideology' appears only four times — the same number as blood type groups, and Marcus Goldstein's review of 'Anthropological Research, Action, and Education in Modern Nations: With Special Reference to the USA'<sup>4</sup> with international CA treatment is not among them. Even in such a critical review of anthropology as Robert Murphy's *The Dialectics of Social Life*,<sup>5</sup> the 'item' ideology does not appear in the quite detailed index at all). Yet most of the anthropologists concerned have been writing ideological prose (some without knowing it and others more literally aware), and doubly so; they have been writing *about* ideology in so far as they divorced these items from their 'irrelevant' historical and economic context; and they have been *writing ideology* in as much as they did so. Mr Freedman also writes true to this ideological tradition.

Anthropology's traditional old bias for antiquarianism and the exotic of the old days has been the subject of increasing recent analysis,<sup>6</sup> and Mr Freedman himself observes that it has left 'often unfortunate connotations' (p. 151) in Africa. But to call it a 'mistake' is a mistake; and to call the biased anthropologists 'blind' is an exaggeration. The author of A

*Black Byzantium*, S.F. Nadel, for instance, saw clearly enough to write of

the application of anthropology to problems of colonial policy . . . . While certain anthropologists would remain aloof from these practical questions, others consider it their right and duty to 'apply' anthropology in practice. I count myself among the latter. . . . It has been said that modern anthropology is destined to be of great assistance to colonial governments in providing the knowledge of the social structure of native groups upon which a sound and harmonious Native Administration, as envisaged in Indirect Rule, should be built. Let me say that I for one firmly believe in the possibility of such cooperation between anthropologists and administrator. . . . At the end of the talk a number of West African students in the audience violently attacked me, all my fellow workers in the field, and indeed the whole of anthropology. They accused us of playing into the hands of reactionary administrators and of lending the sanctions of science to a policy meant to 'keep the African down' . . . . 'Pure,' value free anthropology is an illusion .<sup>7</sup>

So much for the 'blindness' of African Systems of Kinships and Marriage and African Political Systems, or for that matter the erstwhile exotic interests and important contributions of Japanese anthropology in the Japanese colonies before the Second World War deprived the Japanese simultaneously of their colonies and their exotic interests. Oh, these unfortunate connotations!

Beyond these, the 'mistake' of value free illusions has had other connotations that Mr Freedman and Co. perhaps regard as more fortunate. Beyond the direct application of anthropological theory through indirect rule of those exotic natives, there has been its indirect application to the direct rule of the imperialists. The same anthropology has lent the sanction of 'science' to the strengthening and propagation of an ideology of imperialism, to justify the rule itself, both to the rulers and the ruled, as well as to third parties. The anthropological interest in those exotic natives lent scientific sanction to Kipling's literary tenet that the East is East and the West is West, and never the twain shall meet — except through the white man's burden. And the arch-priests of 'British' anthropology who so generously contributed to the assumption of this burden through the performance of their role in world scholarship were predominantly from the British Dominions themselves!

Now, as British structural-functionalism has become



increasingly disfunctional, and as Marxism has re-emerged with sufficient vigour — especially in France — to merit a sound of alarm from Freedman, the name attached to anthropological structuralism in France, Lévi-Strauss, has been resurrected and trumpeted to the four winds. Its ideological function? Freedman himself suggests it: to make time, history, materialism, indeed all concrete reality, irrelevant. In the United States, which lacked substantial colonies other than internal ones, imperial policy was known as the 'open door'. Have exotic needlecase patterns of Boaz (oh, those Exotic Eskimos and Indians), Ruth Benedict's patterns of culture (even those of the themselves quite exotic Japanese of the chrysanthemum and sword), and the growing-up patterns of Margaret Mead (oh, those Samoans who can jump straight from the stone age to the nuclear age, and almost painlessly to boot) been playing any the less into the hands of reactionaries? Margaret Mead's attempt to apply her positivist anthropological cultural relativism in the American Anthropological Association itself to justify the application of the cultural relative formula 'one anthropologist vs. ten guerrillas' in exotic Indochina proved unacceptable to that august body during the Thailand scandal,<sup>8</sup> but the function of the theoretical patterns of Mead's cultural ideology, and that of her teachers and students, has proved much more culturally resistant both in the profession and among the public at large.

Enough. Lest, like Marvin Harris,<sup>9</sup> we be accused of beating a dead horse from those bad old days, whose 'mistakes' anthropologists are no longer likely to make, we may turn to modern up-to-date-ness, as Freedman calls it, or to the up-to-date-ness of the 'modernization' theory of acculturation and diffusion. For Mr Freedman, the exotic interests of those no doubt themselves exotic Japanese have shifted to domestic problems and — what a coincidence! — increasingly to those exotic areas of the world from which they must draw their raw materials and into which they are now pushing their investments and sales (the government-financed Institute of Developing Economies in Tokyo reflects the area specialization Freedman mentions). And among those still more exotic Chinese, Freedman sees anthropology to be conditioned by the political situation. So in these exotic oriental countries anthropology changes in accord with such quite worldly — one might say historical materialist — changes in the situation. But if 'all anthropology changes with

the world in which it is practised', what does anthropology in the un-exotic western imperialist countries change with? Mr Freedman does not say. But some others do, for instance, the anthropologist Charles Wagley, writing under the sponsorship of the US Social Science Research Council:

Latin America has also been neglected by our scholars who in the end must provide the basic data for academic and public consumption. As much as Africa, Latin America has been in many ways a 'dark continent'. The situation is now changing. There is new public interest in Latin America and Africa and Asia stimulated by a realization of its importance to our own national interests. The National Defense Education Act supports the study. . . . Private foundations have supported research.<sup>10</sup>

How exotic an interest of anthropology and social science in 'the performance of their role in world scholarship'! In the 'political situation' of neo-colonialism, as distinct from the colonialism of the old days, power is increasingly wielded through the 'modernizing', 'national' bourgeoisie of the 'new' countries. No wonder that Freedman observes and applauds that:

the old bias in anthropology towards the study of the rural and powerless is now being corrected, and work is undertaken on elites and politicians as well as those they lead. Leadership and power in the Third World rest with social groups that are at once indigenous and in a number of cases alienated from those over which they preside. The models they adopt for economic development are sometimes borrowed wholesale from inappropriate contexts . . . (p. 113).

God forbid that we 'operate with simple notions of social class and class exploitation'. Now those once exotic natives, or at least the 'elites and politicians' which 'preside' over them, are adopting bourgeois models of 'modernization', including, no doubt, the impoverished schemes offered by Freedman and Co. And anthropologists are hurrying to study the process of 'diffusion', 'acculturation' and 'modernization' while it lasts. What makes Mr Freedman think that neo-colonial anthropology is not likely to make the 'mistakes' that colonial anthropology made?<sup>11</sup>

To what extent have anthropologists in the neo-colonial, mis-named third world freed themselves and anthropology from this heritage? The very self-appraisal of Warman et al and the programme of the Barbados symposium, which Freedman cites (pp. 115, 118) suggest, as other evidence in the 'field' confirms,



that progress in this direction has been less than good, and that in 'new', that is neo-colonial, countries anthropology and anthropologists are not all as innocent as Freedman would like to make them out to be. The piper payer still calls the tune, and 'indigenous' neo-colonial anthropology still needs to be de-(neo) colonialized.<sup>12</sup> And 'indigenous' applied anthropology remains the instrument of neo- and internal-colonial 'indigenous' 'community development' policy designed to 'integrate' those lost tribes and communities more efficiently into the class exploitation, the analysis of which — not to say struggle against — Freedman warns us of. Here too applied anthropology is political, but not because of its admittedly impoverished theoretical base.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the disjunction between the 'classical' anthropology of the old days and the 'new' one of up-to-date-ness which Mr Freedman makes (chapter 1 and elsewhere) is also about as spurious as his 'theoretical' disjunctions.

Finally, Freedman wishes to prophesy the future of anthropology; and, he adds, to prophesy is in some measure to dictate. Perhaps. But on what basis does he prophesy, to what end does he dictate?

In a few years it [anthropology] may need to incorporate more grandiose schemes for remedying the world's ills and internationalizing its peoples. . . . That is to say, there is just perceptible the beginning of a trend to try to make of anthropology a healer of the large-scale ills that particularly strike the sensibilities of the young: war, racialism, environmental pollution, poverty, sexual inequality (pp. 117-8).

True to Freedman and Co.'s ideological form, the 'simple notions of social class and class exploitation or, as in some forms of neo-Marxism, [the] equally rudimentary concepts of power and dominance', not to mention imperialism and neo-colonialism, against which Mr Freedman warned us on page 115, are conspicuous by their absence in his list of 'large-scale ills' of the world two pages later. What is it that Mr Freedman wishes to dictate through his prophecy? Answer: that anthropology assume part of the ideological task of stilling or numbing the sensibilities of the young, and if it cannot achieve so much, that it at least ideologically re-direct their sensibilities from those dangerous rudimentary Marxist concepts and their contents to those he lists by offering grandiose schemes for internationalizing peoples! Good Luck!

But if 'all anthropology changes with the world in which it is

practised' and if 'the politics of . . . [the] situation leaves the future of its anthropology in doubt' not only in China, but, scientifically instead of ideologically speaking, in all the world, both prophecy and dictation of the future will require less impoverished schemes and less rudimentary concepts than the crystal ball employed by Mr Freedman. We would have to inquire, instead, what the historical, if not the evolutionary, process is and what it holds in store for the world and its several parts. For that task, of course, Mr Freedman's rudimentary concept of history is more than impoverished. We would have to inquire into the historical process of capital accumulation in the world as a whole and in the various parts, exotic and not, that capitalist development has incorporated into that process. Then we might find, perhaps, that since the late 1960s the world has been in the throes of a crisis of accumulation analogous to that of 1873-95, which ushered in the classical imperialist colonialism that anthropologists then did so much to defend, and analogous to that of the 1930s which ushered in the era of neo-imperialist neo-colonialism, which anthropologists have been so intent to disguise, and which is likely to undergo profound structural changes in the wake of this capital and capitalist crisis. This crisis may engender a capitalist world economic depression and political crisis of which the 'dollar' or 'financial' crisis is only the incipient monetary reflection and of which Nixon's talks with Brezhnev and Mao are only the incipient international political manifestations of the new multipolarity cum re-enforcement of economic bloc politics, as in previous major depressions. We might find that the imperialist countries are destined by this economic crisis to pass through successive phases, from 1 to n, of attempts to raise again the rate of profit and real investment (which have fallen in all of them since 1966) by weakening union power or militancy, increasing unemployment and depressing the wage rate, first through social democratic 'openings to the left', and when these fail, through refurbished and neo-fascist remedies reminiscent of the 1930s, while at the same time pressing for sub-imperialist and militarist regimes and neo-fascist policies, economic blocs and 'Honduras-Salvador', 'India-Pakistan' type wars in the neo-colonial world, whose super-exploitation is similarly destined to improve the falling rate of profit in the imperialist world.

In such a depression generated acceleration in the transformation of the international and national division of labour and



the concomitant political struggle between neo-fascism/corporatism, neo-social democracy and new socialist revolution, what new ideological roles if any will the contending forces assign to anthropology and what political ones to applied anthropology? That is the question.

Of course, both neo-fascist and neo-social democratic forces, nationally and internationally, will wish to harness anthropology and anthropologists, along with others, to the tasks of ideologically mystifying the young and also themselves, just as in the old days. To this end, Mr Freedman and Co., in a remarkable show of international cooperation, have already shown us an early sample of the goods to be delivered.

But will anthropology be assigned, and will anthropologists assume specific new ideological functions in the imperialist and neo-colonial countries? What new analogues may we expect to the white man's burden of the old days and to the cultural relativism of more recent ones? What scientific sanctification and ideological justification for neo-fascist or social democratic corporatism in the imperialist and neo-colonialist countries? What domestic political application of anthropology to help replace defunct incomes policies and reduced welfare payments by new versions of CCC camps, *Eintopfgerichte*, *Kraft durch Freude* and other programmes for the young, ethnic, racial, foreign and domestic migrant, and ghetto dweller unemployed in a new holy 'war against poverty' in industrialized capitalist countries? What scientific sanctification for 'zero-growth' environmentalism to depress wages in the industrialized and to control industrialization in the underdeveloping countries? What new jingoist covers for international economic blocs and wars? What scientific sanction and ideological justification to extend capitalist development through the advance of 'green' revolution instead of 'red'? And what anthropological ideology and political application of anthropology may the revolutionary forces expect and deliver? Or will such a world political crisis render anthropology and anthropologists, not so much too much of a non-functional luxury, as too little of a functional utility to preserve?

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## To be an Arab in Israel

by FOUZI EL-ASMAR

A personal testament of the humiliation and political oppression involved in the Zionist colonization of Palestine. But Fouzi el-Asmar, poet and activist, struggling for equality in his own land, still believes that 'revolutionary love' can bring about an egalitarian state where Jews and Arabs can live together.

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# Notes and documents

## Thoughts after the liberation of Saigon

A great revolution has accomplished itself in Vietnam. The revolution which began in August 1945 has finally brought about the liberation of the entire Vietnamese nation after thirty years of terrible and difficult struggle. What is particularly terrible is that this generation of war — the millions of dead, the hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in the gaols of the old Saigon administration, the innumerable divided families, the destruction of vast areas of good rice land and its reduction to the state of a pock-marked moonscape by American bombing, the turning of whole provinces into scrapheaps of twisted metal, the defoliation of forests, the killing and maiming of children with anti-personnel bombs — this huge accumulation of miseries, continuing year after year, was totally unnecessary, the consequence of imperialist intervention on an increasingly ferocious and crazy scale.

After the twelve days that shook the world (though few of us knew at the time how much our world was being shaken), from 14 to 25 August 1945, Vietnam was indeed liberated — from eighty years of French colonial rule and five years of Japanese military occupation — liberated in its entirety, from the Chinese frontier to the Mekong delta. It was the British, as Tom Driberg has recently reminded us (*New Statesman*, 11 April 1975), who took the lead in the restoration of Western imperialism. Hardly three weeks after the revolution in Saigon, ten days after Ho Chi Minh had read the Declaration of Independence in Hanoi, a battalion of Gurkhas — ‘Indian soldiers astonishingly loyal to the British Empire, even when it came to defending the white man’s position in the East’, as the American Buttinger puts it — arrived in Saigon on 12 September 1945, with the first company of French troops, followed next day by General Douglas Gracey. It was Gracey who refused to negotiate with the Provisional Executive Committee headed by Tran Van Giau (that most brilliant and learned of Vietnamese historians, now living in Hanoi, writing a history of Vietnamese political thought) — ‘They came to see me . . . and I promptly kicked them out’ — rearmed the French, brought

in the Japanese, and carried out the coup against the Saigon revolutionary government which led to the beginning of the war of national liberation on 24 September 1945 – the war that continued for the next thirty years, until the final liberation of Saigon on 30 April 1975.

If one may go rather further back in history, behind the great August 1945 revolution, Saigon had endured eighty-six years of colonial rule since the French originally occupied the city, on 17 February 1849. And before that it had experienced seventy-one years of rule by the reactionary Nguyen dynasty – Nguyen Anh's forces having driven out the revolutionary Tay Son government on the 7 September 1788. So, apart from that bare month of government by the Provisional Executive Committee, from 25 August to 23 September 1945, Saigon has been either under counter-revolutionary, colonial or neo-colonial rule of a particularly brutal and repressive kind for the past 187 years.

And how have the British media handled this tremendous moment of liberation? How much have they told us about what it has meant to the mass of the people – about the celebrations, the rejoicings, the fireworks, the reunions of families, the freeing of prisoners – the marvellous *Fidelio* themes – and the families no longer there to be reunited, the prisoners no longer alive to be freed? How much have they told us about the whole historical process, the way in which the 1975 revolution was brought about – the part played by local uprisings, by mutinies in the armed forces of the Thieu government, the establishment of new revolutionary institutions in Saigon and throughout the liberated South, the actions and decisions of the PRG, the NLF,\* the Third Force, the organizations of the people? Not much, to be honest. But then their categories are unsuited, often, to serious explanation – 'North' and 'South', 'Communists' and 'loyalists', the liberation of a province or a city referred to as its 'loss' or 'fall' – so strong is our tendency to identify ourselves with the imperialists. So we hear much about the 'refugees'. Speculation about possible blood-baths (that ancient weapon in the armoury of imperialist propaganda) – What will they do with all those armaments? – How has American credibility been affected? – What will happen to Dr Kissinger? – How our correspondent got away.

What has gone wrong with us. Why do we no longer try seriously to understand the liberation movements of oppressed nations? We were more capable, surely, of understanding the liberation of Italy in the time of Garibaldi, and the liberation of Yugoslavia in the time of Tito? We were not then absorbed in the fate of the collaborators or the implications for Austro-Hungarian or Nazi policy. So what has gone wrong? Is it simply that in our decaying imperialism concern for historical truth decays too?

T.H.

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\*PRG – Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam; NLF – South Vietnamese Front for National Liberation.



## The 'people's cause' in the Caribbean

Current Caribbean news headlines reflect the continuing relevance of long lived issues — the politics of violence, guns and the 'gun court' in Jamaica; the much prolonged state of emergency in Trinidad; accusations of the growth of 'fascism' in Guyana. But there is a feeling that despite the familiarity of these items, something momentous is about to happen. The air of expectancy is due partly to wishful thinking, and partly to a sensing of new forces abroad in Caribbean politics.

A prime example of the fundamental upheavals generating the news headlines can be found in the story of Desmond Trotter in Dominica. Trotter is in prison awaiting an appeal decision on a death sentence for murdering a white tourist. All the evidence against him appears to be manufactured, and is likely to have been, in order to remove him from a leadership position in a movement of urban unemployed and rural workers. Membership of the movement is symbolized by the wearing of 'dread locks' — uncombed, uncut, knotted locks of hair, the antithesis of European cosmetic 'beauty' — first sported by the RasTafarians in Jamaica. The 'dreads' have been part of a back-to-the-land squatters movement. The Dominican ruling class has responded to this threat to its capitalist agrarian export economy by outlawing the wearing of 'dread locks' or consorting with 'dreads' and by attempting to frame and discredit Desmond Trotter and Roy Mason as murderers.

'Dreads' as a movement in Dominica represent the realization that all the big plan projects there, and indeed in the Caribbean, are not primarily defined by the interests of the mass of people, who, as a consequence, must invent their 'livelihood'. Without steady work, or wages, they must find a means of surviving. It is perplexing to think of how the mass of the Caribbean people eat, meet, smile and enjoy life, despite exploitation, oppression, desperation and indignity. No one really knows the entire wealth of means whereby these people pursue and obtain their 'livelihood', but it is on the basis principally of their 'invention' that there has been, so far, relative social and political calm in the Caribbean, and *not* primarily the guns, brutality and manipulation of the repressive parts of the state (and less formal terrorism). And it is on the basis of this same 'invention' of 'livelihood' by the masses that they reproduce the labour power that is exploited in the limited 'growth' economic activity of the Caribbean area.

### *Dreads, Rasta and populism*

It is no mere coincidence that the 'dreads' in Dominica derive from the 'Rasta' tradition of Jamaica. RasTafarianism arguably represents one of the few predominantly Caribbean-invented ideologies. Further, and most importantly, it is not an elite-defined ideology, as have been the popularized nationalisms; or a middle-class ideology, as has been the liberal-democratic people's party politics sham. 'Rasta' is an oppressed class ideology, the

property of the oppressed masses of the Caribbean. Let us not be too confused by the negative paradoxes of the emergence of RasTafarianism — its back to Africa/religious elements; its possibly naive attachment to the exploiting aristocracy of Selassie in Ethiopia; its fair share of mal-practising, even if well-intentioned, preachers and prophets. If we think about it, there was no other way for an oppressed ideology to emerge. On the positive side 'Rastas' foresaw the concerns of 'black power', both its cultural and political variety. They foresaw the need for the masses to organize 'livelihood' on the fringes and margins of Babylon's major enterprises, which first threatened to crush the masses and then eventually destroy themselves. In either case, the people are left to fend for themselves and build their own livelihood'. And even as it is still not understood, 'Rastas' foresaw the need for a kind of living that included not just the importance of physical and material well-being, but also the vital significance of spiritual well-being. Bob Marley writes and sings, 'Let I'es is I'es in I'es is black/In I'es is red in I'es is dread.'

But oppressed ideologies are and must be subverted by the ruling classes in defence of their privileges. The response of Jamaica's ruling classes to RasTafarians provides a revealing example of the ad hoc sophistication of neo-colonial politics in the Caribbean. In the early days, the state characterized them and treated them as madmen and criminals. In its first panic it institutionalized, brutalized and murdered them. But then it studied them, cleansed the 'rasta' public image and, with university cultural reports, attempted to incorporate and woo them. Selassie was invited to Jamaica. 'Reggae' became acceptable music. Michael Manley became 'Joshua the rod', high brother of 'the brethren'. If all this has not succeeded in subverting the emergence of the ideology, it has at least diverted its development. Very much the same policy of co-option of elements of 'black power' ideology resulted in the diversion of its most revolutionary implications — the ruling classes and their state forces have always been quick to understand the disruptive and consciousness raising potential of these and other oppressed class ideologies, and to act accordingly. Even so, the relevance of these ideologies to the Caribbean peoples persists, hence the role of 'dreads' in Dominica in 1975, and of 'black power' in Trinidad in 1970.

### *'New imperialism' and Caribbean politics*

There was a time when it was a simple matter to serve the combined interests of the national ruling classes, the oppressed classes and the nation simultaneously. Movements of nationalism, movements of independence, movements against imperialism, movements for Caribbean federation, all demonstrated this unity of interests. And for a while it may have looked as though the recent politics of the Caribbean, as dominated by the regimes of Manley, Burnham and Williams, could continue to subvert the ideology of populist nationalism to serve their interests and ambitions. This was so as long as it was unclear that the relations of world imperialism were changing rather significantly.

Briefly (and at great risk to clarity), within the capitalist dominated world



system there has been a shift in relations and practices which yields, among other things, an increasing tendency to (a) relinquishing of direct ownership and control of all major profit-making production processes, by the dominant capitalist classes at the 'centre' of the world system; and (b) more efficient exploitation of specific, key production sectors by dominant monopoly-capitalist technology, within the total economies of the 'periphery'. More and more these 'new imperialist' practices have resulted in greater political and economic 'independence' *intra-nationally* for the ruling classes of peripheral capitalist social formations. Of course this 'independence' is always subject to the constraints of the capitalist world system. But even so it signifies the possibility of a 'new' politics for the leading regimes in the Caribbean.

In the first place, this 'new imperialism' defines a more complex function for the neo-colonial 'state', as discussed recently by Hamza Alavi and John Saul at the broad theoretical level. But with regard to the politicians and ruling classes specifically, the new situation allows them a great opportunity (a) to provide greater patronage and more 'jobs for the boys', hence the expanding middle classes; (b) to 'ground', as Walter Rodney showed them, and mediate between the classes as if they were 'brothers'; and (c) to talk more flashily and crassly about bringing 'socialism' without revolution. But with this the ruling classes now find themselves exposed, showing their hands (full of rip-offs, riches and betrayals) as never before. A space has been granted them to become not just servants to capitalism (petit bourgeois/compradors), but capitalists in their own right, certainly within their own nations — and possibly, using the 'Opec-model', on the international scene. This is not such a sudden turn of events. The Caribbean ruling classes have been aware of these possibilities for some time, and have muscled and jostled each other for position in the 1960's 'federation' false starts. And a decade later, if Williams' barely disguised criticisms of Manley's recent dealings with the Venezuelan ruling classes indicate anything, it is clear that our leaders and ruling classes are prepared to knife each other in the back for a fast buck, even if in the long run they may be risking new sub-imperialist dominance by the 'big' Latin American capitalists.

### *Organization and leadership for socialism in the Caribbean*

It is no surprise to find that the repression of the masses has increased in these new times. Repression is in the defence of newly-won and expanding middle-class privileges and ruling-class property, in the face of pressing demands and rapidly increasing consciousness of the masses. A broad look at the politics of the Caribbean during the last ten years will show up multiplying incidents of rebellions and repressions; mass movements and murders; street fighting and states of emergency; in Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, Grenada, Bermuda, Dominica, French Guyane, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Anguilla, Guadeloupe, Surinam. The masses — the people obliged to 'scrunt' on the margins of these societies in order to pursue their 'livelihood' — are making demands that are less and less compatible with well-to-do middle

class and ruling class 'careers', since these 'careers' appear to entail continued oppression and 'marginalization' of the masses. If the masses are to survive on the margins, they must 'invent' more positively to return to the land, as 'squatters' if necessary, or, not to put too fine a point on it, they will starve. They must 'invent' alternative production relations centrally relevant to their everyday needs, for example, women's work in house, home, head, bosom and field will have to be re-appreciated for its real worth to oppressed 'livelihood'. Where and when these moves are made they will call forth more and more informal and overt state terrorism, as the politics of the masses can no longer be comfortably contained within bourgeois party manifestos. The politics implied can only be anti-imperialist/nationalist, anti-national bourgeoisie/populist and anti-capitalist/socialist.

There is a dilemma though. Until now, in Caribbean history, the national ruling or upper classes have always played a key role in 'leading' the 'people's cause', even while serving their own elite interests. The shift in imperialist relations argued in this *essay* suggests that the Caribbean ruling classes are no longer available as 'leaders' of the 'people's cause' — the people must now lead themselves. The popular politics of Dominica, Trinidad and Jamaica reflect this new 'moment' (see, for example, the New Beginning Movement analysis of Trinidad), but it is sensed intuitively, and in most of the islands there is as yet no convincingly structured or 'theorized' response on the part of the masses or those organically identifying with the masses. 'Spontaneity' is not enough. 'Latent organizational potential within the traditions of the masses' can remain dormant, or, once emerged, be put back to sleep again. As the New Beginning Movement has underlined, bourgeois party forms have betrayed; trade unionism is suspect; orthodox Marxist-Leninist 'vanguards' *can* be elitist and oppressive — but this does not logically suggest *no organization* as argued by New Beginning. On the contrary, it indicates the need for the invention of new forms of organization, strategy and tactics, informed by sound theory and analysis of the situation of the people *vis-a-vis* their exploiters and oppressors.

But it should be clear that to talk of socialism in the Caribbean is no small matter. What are the resources of land, labour, market, trade, defence that are to be the basis of socialist production? The Caribbean inherits real relations of dependence within the international division of labour; 'false' nationalisms of language and colonialism; and an unfortunate geographical dispersion. Aimé Césaire could almost despair when he described the Caribbean as,

Islands that are scars upon the water  
islands that are evidence of wounds  
crumbed islands  
formless islands

islands that are waste paper torn up and strewn upon  
the water  
islands that are broken blades driven into the flaming  
sword of the sun



For the people, against these odds, the pursuit of their history is a very long road, doubtless with many 'leanings to one side' or another. Most immediately much will turn on what happens in the Latin American social formations. The 'Caricom' and 'Carifta' common market ideas indicate the realization by the ruling classes that the islands are too small and limited in themselves to be the basis of much expanded productivity. Any transition to socialism must involve arriving at a mechanism for economic survival cut off from dominance within the capitalist world system. The specific experience of Cuba has demonstrated the general Caribbean problem, and the relevance of Latin America as the most immediately viable bloc within which to establish an independent economic system. This concern for a sub-imperialist, *relatively independent* common market system, is, by the way, the most promising issue to be manipulated by the Caribbean ruling classes as a demonstration that they can still initiate processes and programmes which will contribute to growth and development for all the people of the Caribbean. It is the argument of this essay, though, that the people are already realizing the bankrupt 'skank' of these political manoeuvres.

Once upon a time 'independence' was a good enough slogan. Once upon a time 'black power' was a useful band-wagon. Today the only relevant ambition for the Caribbean people is a socialism related to their particular social formations, and the most immediate task is to analyse that situation more clearly, and to find a form of organization that is relevant to pursuing the 'people's cause'.

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Colin Prescod

## Recollections of resistance

### *Udham Singh and the IWA*

The news that South American revolutionaries had assassinated a CIA intelligence officer recently probably came as no surprise to those who have followed the interrogation techniques of the secret police in American puppet states. But it has been generally forgotten in Britain that colonial people have, in the past, occasionally brought the struggle to the peace and quiet of London.

In 1909, a 25-year-old Indian student, Madar Lal Dinghra, spent some months practising his marksmanship in a shooting booth in Tottenham Court Road. On the 1 July he went to a concert at the Imperial Institute and shot dead Sir William Hutt Curzon Wyllie, KCIE, political aide-de-camp to the Secretary of State for India. He was hanged on 17 August of that same year.

Perhaps of more significance was the action of Udham Singh, one of the founder members of the Indian Workers' Association in Great Britain. Singh was an engineer who lived in Mornington Crescent in London. An activist in the electricians' union and delegate to the local trades council, he formed the

IWA in Coventry in 1938 together with a handful of colleagues. He called it the IWA to distinguish it from the predominantly middle-class India League, but the Association soon withered away through lack of interest among the handful of Indians then working in Britain.

Singh then bought an old Smith and Wesson revolver from a soldier in a pub. On 13 March 1940, armed both with the revolver and a knife, he attended a meeting, at the Caxton Hall in Westminster, called by the Royal Central Asian Society and the East India Association, a select gathering of those members of the ruling class with interests in India. In the chair was the Marquess of Zetland, Secretary of State for India and architect of the notorious Emergency Provisions of the Government of India Act.

Also on the platform that night were Lord Lamington, a 79-year-old former Governor of the Punjab, Sir Louis Dane, one-time Under Secretary to the Government of the Punjab, and Sir Michael Francis O'Dwyer, another ex-Governor of the Punjab. They were there to hear a lecture from Sir Percy Sykes, a distinguished Orientalist. The British Government, perturbed by the continuing independence struggle which the Indian people were waging despite the war in Europe, had extended the Emergency Provisions to cover two-thirds of the country — particularly in Madras, Bombay, Berar, Bihar, Orissa, the United Provinces and the rebellious North West Frontier, the area about which Sir Percy gave his lecture.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer had been Governor of the Punjab in 1919 when Brigadier General Dyer had taken on an unarmed demonstration of workers and peasants protesting against British rule in Amritsar. The soldiers had fired 1,650 rounds into the crowd and stopped only when they ran out of ammunition. By that time, between six and seven hundred had been killed and over a thousand wounded. Amongst the dead was Udham Singh's brother.

As the Caxton Hall meeting drew to a close, Singh walked up to the platform and emptied his revolver into the distinguished speakers. Because he was using .44 ammunition in a .45 gun, not all of the bullets worked, but six found their mark. The Marquess of Zetland was grazed (two dud bullets were later found in his coat lining), another bullet grazed Sir Louis Dane's arm, and a third went through Lord Lamington's hand.

The meeting was in turmoil. Sir Percy leaped on Udham Singh and, together with members of the audience, held him until the police arrived. Lying on the hallowed floor of the Caxton Hall, the life blood pumping out on to the wooden staging, was the body of Sir Michael, killed by bullets in the heart and lungs.

The murder caused an uproar in a Britain already beset by the problems of the war. From India came a message from Gandhi that 'such acts have been proved to be injurious to the causes for which they are committed', while in Brixton Prison, Udham Singh went on a 42-day hunger strike. Sir Michael left £32,707 in his will, and a memorial committee was set up for him by his old friends Field Marshal Sir Claud Jacob, and Major General Sir Alfred Knox MP.

Convinced that the majority of Indian people supported the British at their



time of trouble in Europe, the Marquess of Zetland nevertheless had recovered sufficiently by 19 April to go into the House of Lords and announce the extension of the Emergency Provisions in India, an 'act no-one regrets more than me'. To give some idea of the importance the Government attached to the Udham Singh business, the Commissioner of Police, Sir Philip Game, took charge of the case himself.

There is a certain amount of confusion about the progress of the trial and Singh's statement. According to the police sergeant who took it down at the time of his arrest he said, 'I'm dying for my country. Is Zetland dead? He ought to be. I put two into him. Only one dead, eh? I thought I could get more. I must have been too slow, there were a lot of womans about.' But in court, reporters of the time quoted him as saying that he had only gone to the Caxton Hall to make a protest and scare people. A member of the audience had knocked his hand while he was holding the gun. Whichever way it was — and the 42 days of hunger striking couldn't have helped his clarity — the verdict was clear.

His own counsel had told the jury that 'probably in no other country in the world at this critical hour would such a vehement opponent of "imperialism" arraigned on such a murder charge be offered so calm and full a trial by a court of the Empire he denounced'. After an hour and 35 minutes, the jury found him guilty of murder. It was 4 June, the day that the new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, announced the 'miracle of deliverance' at Dunkirk. That day too, eight miners were injured and two died in a north country pit explosion, but production was not affected.

Mr Justice Atkinson retired and put on his black hat before pronouncing sentence. But he had difficulty in making himself heard because Udham Singh kept spitting at him and denouncing British imperialism in India.

Thirty-five years ago, they hanged him in Pentonville jail. When Indian workers re-formed their Association in Coventry in 1953, it was not just a political ideal they were honouring in calling it the Indian Workers' Association, but the memory of Udham Singh, executed on 25 June 1940.

David Clark

## UK commentary

### *The Caprino case*

On 18th December 1974 Franco Caprino, an Italian worker, was arrested in Notting Hill and taken to Pentonville prison after being served a Deportation Order. He was never formally charged with a specific offence, nor did he have the normal right of appeal. For the first time the Home Secretary was using the power of deportation given to him under the 1971 Immigration Act, Section 3(5)b — which provides that a non-patrial shall be liable to deporta-

tion from the United Kingdom if the Home Secretary deems his deportation to be conducive to the public good, and that, under section 15(3), 'a person shall not be entitled to appeal against a deportation order against him if the ground of the decision was that his deportation is conducive to the public good as being in the interest of national security or of the relations between the United Kingdom and any other country or for other reasons of a political nature'.

The fact that Caprino was ultimately released one month later was no thanks to the press who tried to couple his name with Dolours Price (serving 20 years for the Old Bailey bombing). Caprino's undesirability seems to have been based on the fact that he had been active in organizing his fellow workers in the catering industry. Foreign workers, particularly those from the underdeveloped areas of Southern Europe, are used to fill the unwanted, poorly-paid jobs in the service industries. The contract labour system for aliens — all those covered by the 1971 Act — means that workers are dependent upon their employers for the renewal of their one-year permits and unable to move around at will in the labour market. This provides the industry with a highly vulnerable and potentially docile workforce — the easier to exploit. They are shackled politically, having to be of good conduct; and they provide a scab labour force, to be imported and exported according to the needs of the capital.

The fact that the Home Secretary's powers were first tested on Caprino, an Italian, and not on a Commonwealth non-patrial, a black, is because the state has been increasingly using 'foreign' rather than 'black' labour. The intake of blacks under the 1971 Act is very small and the use of foreign workers more necessary to capital. Hence Caprino's activities were of crucial importance. But this does not mean that blacks do not fall within the purview of the same clauses. Certainly those politically-militant blacks (without British citizenship — for what that's worth) who refuse to be part of the neo-colonial solution in their own communities could easily find themselves on the same 'change' as was Caprino.

Caprino's release must in some part be due to the indefatigable efforts of Mary Dines, of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and the Franco Caprino Support Committee. The British labour movement appears, on this occasion at least, to have seen through the divisive tactics of the state. Faced with the increasing mobilization and agitation of a large section of the working class, the Home Secretary withdrew the charges. But that is only the beginning. The fight is now on to remove the Immigration Act 1971 from the statute books.

### *A new CRC*

On 17-19 January 1975 the Community Relations Commission organized a large two-day residential conference in the Bloomsbury Hotel called 'Black People in Britain: The Way Forward'. The all-black participants were hand



picked; whites, having set it up, 'observed'. Among other things the conference called for more money from government for black projects and discussed setting up an all-black organization with government funds. A few weeks later (in February) two papers were produced by the ASTMS Community Relations Group — the trade union for community relations officers. The group welcomed the Government's intention to strengthen legislation against racial discrimination and went on to call for the 'statutory provision of significant resources to autonomous local bodies with the aims of promoting the interests of deprived ethnic minorities and with a structure appropriate to that aim in which representatives of such minorities exercise effective control' — viz a National Council for Racial Equality. The paper on the restructuring of the community relations service states that the existing local structure tends to keep out 'the more radical organizations. This in turn leads to a lack of rapport between the community relations council and important parts of the local black community'. In other words, the aim is to co-opt as far as possible all black 'tendencies' into one national body. But the paper goes on to say that there is at present no body of 'national standing' and, rather than wait for it to emerge, the Government should grant-aid such a body.

It will be recalled that government action in the community relations/race relations field has always been linked directly to repressive immigration legislation. The Home Office is presently moving towards a new nationality act, which will be designed to refine both the contract labour system and the provisions for repatriation and deportation without trial (contained in the 1971 Act), while rectifying certain anomalies, such as patriality and the right of entry nominally held out to dependants and East African Asians.

### *The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act*

The continuing conflict in Northern Ireland in which the British Army has been substantially engaged for several years is the only civil war in the advanced capitalist world. This fact in itself, however, is located in the long history of British imperialism in Ireland. In 1971 when the IRA extended their activities to the British mainland with the bombing campaign, the police and the Special Branch (who have had a special responsibility for monitoring Irish activities since their formation) stepped up their harassment of the Irish community as a whole. In particular, the politically-active Irish were harassed, detained, searched and interrogated. This was not the first occasion on which the IRA had embarked on such a campaign in Britain. In 1939 a brief but devastating IRA bombing campaign was countered by the passing of the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Act, allowing the police to detain suspected bombers for periods up to seven days and giving the Home Secretary powers of deportation based on 'evidence' supplied by the police. Thus in 1972, when the Home Office drew up contingency plans for a similar Bill at the request of Tory Home Secretary Robert Carr,

the draft drew heavily on the 1939 Act.

The draft Bill was not utilized until, in the public outcry following the Birmingham bombing in November 1974, Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins introduced — and parliament passed in one day — the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Temporary Provisions). Although the Act was very similar to that of 1939, it differed in one important respect. While the latter Act was limited throughout to activities connected with 'Irish affairs', the 1974 Act has a section referring to the 'commission, preparation, or instigation of acts of terrorism' and is potentially applicable to *any* suspected terrorist.

The Act contains three Parts. Part I makes the IRA (both wings) an illegal organization and provides for up to five years in jail. Part II gives the Home Secretary powers to issue Exclusion Orders to remove from Britain those thought by the police and the Special Branch to be engaged in acts of terrorism. The procedure laid down for issuing Exclusion Orders and the right of appeal to an 'adviser' (whose 'advice' the Home Secretary may ignore) is similar to Schedule 2 of the Immigration Act 1971. The most widely-used section is Part III which extends the powers of the police to search, arrest and detain people suspected of an offence. Arrests can be made without a warrant and search warrants for houses can be issued by a police Inspector (not a magistrate as is usual). Detention in a police cell without charges being brought, normally 24 hours, is extended to 48 hours, and on the issuing of a Detention Order by the Home Secretary a person can be detained for a further five days for interrogation. Finally, the Act has to be renewed by parliament every six months — which it duly did in May 1975. (The 1939 Act was renewed annually for fifteen years before it was removed from the statute book.)

In the first four months of the Act's operation, between November 1974 and April 1975, three people were charged under Part I, two subsequently having the charges against them dropped; forty-five Exclusion Orders were issued and only five of the eleven appeals were successful; 489 people were detained under the Act at police stations, but only 16 of these were later charged with criminal offences. The predominant use of Part III of the Act — to search, arrest and detain — has, in effect, been to extend the intelligence-gathering of the police and the Special Branch rather than to catch 'terrorists'.

The effects of the Act can be simply summarized. First, police powers in Britain have historically been far wider in practice than in theory and this new law merely legitimizes past practices. Secondly, the use of Exclusion Orders allows the repatriation of politically-active Irish people against whom the state has insufficient evidence to bring before a court of law (in this respect it is analogous to the use of internment in Northern Ireland). Lastly, it serves to further limit, and isolate, the political activities of Irish organizations in Britain whose immediate aim is to gain working-class support for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland.

#### *Note*

The use of this Act and the activation of the special powers of deportation of the Home



Secretary under the 1971 Immigration Act are part of a series of measures being taken throughout Europe. The tendency has been to take 'crimes' of a class nature and treat them as crimes related to terrorism, thereby by-passing the democratic processes of normal courts — as evidenced in recent Italian and German legislation.

### *The Iranian 21*

On 29 April 1975 twenty-one Iranian students were charged with 'conspiracy to trespass' after a peaceful sit-in in *their* Embassy. They were protesting over the murder of nine political prisoners in Iran earlier this year. Though the 21 were freed on bail of £250 each at Bow Street Magistrates Court, many have had their passports taken, travel restrictions have been placed on them and they have to report to the police every day.\*

The arrest of the 21 on the charge of 'conspiracy to trespass' has very important implications. This is a new offence created by judges in the House of Lords in the case of *Kamara v DPP* 1973 3WLR 198 where they held that conspiracy to trespass is in certain circumstances a criminal offence, even though trespass by one person in identical circumstances would not be such an offence. The creation of this new 'conspiracy' makes it possible for the British authorities to deal with the dissident students and any others like them much more harshly than ever before. There is no limit to the sentence — so the authorities have far more flexibility. The charge is serious enough to merit a big show in the Old Bailey. And students can be recommended for deportation at the end of the case, if they are found guilty. In this case the 21 could face imprisonment or death if returned to Iran.

### *Imperial Typewriters and the multinationals*

In 1910 the top one hundred manufacturing firms in Britain controlled 15 per cent of manufacturing output. By 1950 they controlled 20 per cent. By 1970 they had leaped forward to 46 per cent and by 1980 they will almost certainly control 66 per cent. The thrust to monopoly is becoming overwhelming. Effectively all the top hundred firms are multinationals — i.e., each trades 'internationally' *between* its different national subsidiaries. They are their *own* main market and thus avoid the market mechanism underlying Keynesian international trade models. They can inflate their own import prices artificially and thus reduce their declared profits and tax paid. This also raises artificially the 'value' of British imports. Thus the government will have less resources for social expenditure *and* an adverse balance of payments. By understating *real* profits, the multinationals also weaken trade union wage bargaining power, and by arbitrarily switching manufacturing to cheaper work forces, they can play havoc with regional employment policies. They can also arrange the timing of their multinational transactions to maximize

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\* Bail was later raised to £500 each, and the date of the Iranian 21's next appearance in court set for 16 July 1975.

their cash benefit, e.g., at a time of currency devaluation. There is an overwhelming case for monitoring and controlling the performance of multinational companies, which is what the National Enterprise Board (1972) was all about. As the implications of Labour policy were spelled out, the majority of the Labour Cabinet looked distinctly unwilling to rock the capitalist boat.

Litton Industries is a major US multinational company, listed forty-sixth in size of US-owned companies and with world sales of £1,000 million in 1973. In 1966 it took over Imperial Typewriters in Britain, and by other means acquired 30 per cent of world typewriter production. On 17 January this year it announced the closure of its two British factories, in Hull and Leicester. Its recruitment policies had always been distinctive: in Leicester Imperial was based substantially on immigrants, in Hull on women. (In Frankfurt it is based on immigrant women — cheaper yet!) At Leicester the workers accepted the *fait accompli*, moving to other jobs or on to the dole. The combination of reactionary trade union leadership and the respect in which private property is held by many Ugandan Asian petty-entrepreneurs-turned-factory-workers was no basis for factory occupation. But in Hull the workers have fought for months for their jobs, urging government aid and/or the establishment of a co-operative. (See *Why Imperial Typewriters Must Not Close*, Institute for workers' Control, Nottingham, 20p.) As we go to press, it is unclear whether this struggle can be maintained after the ending of earnings-related unemployment benefit, and with *male* unemployment in Hull at 11 per cent the outlook is harsh. Nevertheless, this is the first sit-in with solid *regional* official union backing, which is an enormous step forward as unemployment nationally surges ahead. What the Hull workers need is a Planning Agreement. Nothing less will stop multinationals. It is because they haven't got control of their capital that they cannot make their non-electric typewriters. And if British industry cannot produce even simple manual typewriters, the outlook for any manufacturing is bleak indeed.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

From 30 June 1975 the Angola Solidarity Committee will be  
c/o Gifford, 6 Bowden Street, London SE11

The Mozambique Information Centre will be at  
Top floor, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2  
[CFMAG is closing down on 30 June 1975.]



# Book reviews

## The Dialectics of Legal Repression

By ISAAC D. BALBUS (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1973).  
xvi + 269 pp.

We are concerned here with the sociology of law. There can be no sociology of law properly so called without a corresponding theory of the State, and as Poulantzas tells us,<sup>1</sup> such a theory must comprehend at one and the same time the repressive role of the State and its ideological functions, its need for legitimacy. In the law we have a set of institutions which, in liberal capitalist societies, serve both repressive and ideological functions (order and justice), and it is incumbent on any sociologist of law that he should deal in a dialectical fashion with both.

Isaac Balbus is one of the very few writers who has attempted to carry out empirical research from such a perspective. The opening chapter of *The Dialectics of Legal Repression* could easily stand on its own as an excellent introductory essay on the role of the law and legal institutions in the functioning of the liberal capitalist State. Balbus contends that legal institutions (the police, prosecutors, the courts and judges, prisons) face a three-fold contradiction between the political system's demand for order, the law's demand for legitimacy in the form of 'legality' or due process, and their own internal demands for organizational maintenance. In his empirical work, Balbus sets out to examine how these contradictions were 'managed' under the extreme conditions which arose out of the black urban riots in the United States in the mid 1960s.

He shows how in three cities (Detroit, Los Angeles and Chicago) the demand for order asserted itself over the need for legitimacy and organizational maintenance in the period while the 'riots' were actually taking place. Legal functionaries at every level gave way to the need to 'get them off the streets' and to 'keep them off the streets'. The police made mass arrests, prosecutors laid charges (often of a serious nature) without proper evidence, judges refused bail or set it so high as to ensure that it could not be met, and the prisons were crammed to overflowing. In short, a system of preventative detention was instituted with little or no resistance from the guardians of the

law. On the other hand, once the rioting had subsided the organizational maintenance interests of the various institutions took precedence. Bail was reduced or waived in order to clear the prisons, lesser charges were pressed and defendants convinced (often by their own lawyers) to enter guilty pleas and thus avoid lengthy trials, and significantly lighter sentences were handed out in order to prevent impossible demands being placed on the prison system in the long term. The pattern was remarkably similar in all three cities, despite differences in their political structures and the institutional links between political authorities and the legal system.

But Balbus contends that legitimacy, in the form of 'legality' and due process still asserted an influence on this situation:

Thus during the early stages of the legal process — the period during which the revolts were in progress — the response calculus of court authorities tended to approach the calculus of pure force . . . . Yet even during this period the abandonment of formal rationality was not a total one. Although the police and military response was often brutal and led to considerable destruction of life, there was no wholesale slaughter of the riot participants. Martial law was *not* declared, and *some* concern for the legality of the arrests was exhibited. Thus, although normal prosecution gate-keeping was largely abandoned, arrestees *were* prosecuted rather than simply detained without charges, and standard charges were employed in an effort to assimilate the riot activity under the general rubric of pre-defined, formally proscribed acts. Although bail was set at higher levels than normally, bail *was* set, and the Writ of Habeas Corpus was not formally revoked. Finally, in all three cities a concerted effort was undertaken on the part of the court authorities to adhere to normal statutory deadlines . . . . Such is the peculiar nature of repression in the liberal state: even the very effort of the sovereign to preserve its life is subject to rules which dictate the manner in which this effort may be accomplished.

Balbus attributes the very limited influence which 'legality' or formal rationality had on the situation to two factors, institutional racism and false consciousness on the part of the rioters and their defence lawyers:

Given the fact that the 'rioters' were black, the interest of court authorities — as well as the defence community — in formal rationality was simply not as manifest as it would otherwise have been, with the result that the court authorities had somewhat more 'leeway' than they otherwise would have had to pursue their interest in order and organisational maintenance . . . . Given that blacks are considered by many, including court authorities, to be 'animals' and that their violent behaviour was viewed by many as a confirmation of their animality, flagrant violations of formal rationality were far less delegitimizing than they would have been had they been committed against whites . . . .

Even if we grant the impact of racism, it remains true that black defendants, along with their spokesmen and attorneys, could have rendered the task of court authorities far more difficult than it turned out to be. Had civil rights leaders demanded amnesty, had the defendants themselves refused to 'co-operate', and had their attorneys refused to play by the ordinary rules of the co-operative criminal court game, court authorities would probably have been unable to achieve a favourable balance among their interest in order, formal rationality, and organisational maintenance. One crucial reason why court authorities *were* able to achieve such a balance, in other words, was precisely that *they encountered no sustained effort to prevent them from doing so* on the part of the 'rioters' and/or their political and legal spokesmen.

Clearly one cannot ignore the influence of such principles as 'legality' and due process on the working of legal institutions in liberal capitalist societies,



for 'ideology can be embodied, in the strong sense, in *institutions*, institutions which then, by the very process of institutionalization, belong to the system of the State whilst depending principally on the ideological level'.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, it is important to distinguish between *instrumental* and *symbolic* adherence to 'legality' and due process at the *different levels* of the legal system. Following both Marx and Weber, Balbus points out that formal legal rationality is necessary for capitalist development because it enables the capitalists to calculate their interests *vis-à-vis* one another and in relation to the working class. But Maureen Cain has noted in a recent paper 'that for capitalism to flourish full rationality was necessary only in the area of rich man's law; discretionary justice for the poor . . . proved no hindrance to its flowering and was also cheap'.<sup>3</sup> In other words, at this second level of the legal system, encompassing at least the lower criminal courts, formal legal rationality serves no instrumental purpose, although it might be desirable to adhere to it symbolically for ideological reasons. But it is exactly because this adherence is symbolic (i.e., non-institutionalized), even at normal times, that it can so easily be dispensed with in crisis situations. (Of course, riots are only one form of crisis which capitalism may encounter.)

The fact that Isaac Balbus' book should touch off thoughts along these lines is an indication of its value; indeed, one can think of no other work in the so-called 'sociology of law' that would have led one in this direction.

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### Latin American Revolutionary Poetry

Edited with an Introduction by ROBERT MARQUEZ (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1975). 505 pp, £6.90

Revolution means change and *Latin American Revolutionary Poetry* is a bilingual anthology that mirrors change as well as being a part of the very process of the change that it mirrors. The thirty poets, from seventeen countries, whose works are represented in this volume are all deeply aware of the upheavals of Latin American societies and are as deeply committed to social and political change. Some, like Roque Dalton (El Salvador) and Otto Rene Castilla (Guatemala) are activists; others, like Javier Heraud of Peru, took up the gun and gave their life for change. And it is not only commitment

that these poets share; they also share a common historical experience, a common culture, a common language, and, with the exception of Cuba, a common socio-political situation — characterized by coup d'états, military take-overs, American imperialism, neocolonialism, assassinations, corruption, torture, guerrilla warfare, in short, a situation of revolutionary struggle. And it is this struggle which has had the most profound effect on Latin American poetry: 'there were suddenly new demands on the writer to interpret Latin American culture and reality and to be ethically as well as artistically consistent.'

Revolutionary poetry in Latin America represents the process of change in its response to change. There was the earlier poetry of the classical European tradition on the one hand, and the international movement of artistic rebellion against what was felt to be an old, sterile and inadequate mode on the other hand. The rebels of the 1920s and 1930s were 'the imposing figures of Cesar Vallejo, Pablo Neruda, and, still more recently, Nicanor Parra'. By the 1950s there was a new movement of poetry which arose as a direct reaction to the poetic mode of Neruda which had become preponderant in Latin America. This was the 'anti-poetry' of Nicanor Parra. At present the two most recent poetic modes are that of 'anti-poetry' and 'conversational poetry', the latter being the most represented in Robert Marquez's anthology. The unifying element of these two poetic modes is their realism. But whereas 'anti-poetry' is dry, void of emotional content and impact, prosaic, and intellectualistic —

'The particularly arbitrary nature of every linguistic system'

forces one to speak with a closed mouth  
and never to say anything one does not have to say  
Words are things or they are no more than messages  
but, of course, the antinovel is also a shit

— 'conversational' poetry is more intimate; rich of experience and carries an almost existential sense of time, place, mood:

Several men stood looking at the other body:  
behind the peasants' sweaty armpits  
the corpse  
without a jawbone  
the smell of warm blood and Andina beer  
only four front teeth/gold teeth  
a shred of tongue  
coming from the throat

Ivan Silen, the 'neosurrealist' poet who 'belongs to the new generation of militantly anti-imperialist Puerto Rican poets', speaks of poetry and the revolution; of their relationship to each other:

I am going to write a poem  
(though I haven't got red ink)  
I am going to write a poem of steel  
with the feel of a factory,  
metal,  
a gun



The revolution is a poem and the role of the poet is to record and echo its reality; to sing its song with the 'feel of a factory/metal/a gun'.

The implacable commitment to struggle, the revolutionary fervour with which the dream is fought for, with the blood and the might of man, and the life that is given, makes the revolution, is the writing of the poem. So 'everyone should have his weapon/ so, when the time comes, he can defend/ more than life, life's song'. The nightingale cries 'with furious vengeance'. The nightingale is the oppressed of Latin America and its cry is also the cry of the people's poet singing a song of 'armed love'.

Everyone should have his weapon  
any weapon, even a thing  
as light and innocent as this  
poem in which the people sing  
a simple song of love.  
But of armed love.

*Latin American Revolutionary Poetry*, says Robert Marquez in his introduction, 'presents the work of three different groups of poets who together represent a certain aesthetic, thematic, ethical and even "generational" continuity'. However, Nicalus Guillen, like Neruda and Vallejo, a towering influence on Latin American poets, is represented in the anthology whilst the latter two are omitted. This seems strange, for the three poets must surely belong to the same generational period. The modest aim of the anthologist is 'to expose the reader to a small range of contemporary Latin American poetry written in the context of the broad struggle for national liberation'. This Robert Marquez more than does. He shows the poet and his poetry in the midst of social upheavals, and their mutual interaction, where the quest of the poet is for a situation wherein he is able to sing the song of the Cuban poet:

I can say cane,  
I can say mountain,  
I can say city,  
I can say army,  
army say,  
now mine forever and yours, ours  
and the vast splendor of  
the sunbeam, the star, the flower.

University of London

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

### Marxism and Imperialism

By V.G. KIERNAN (London, Edward Arnold, 1974). 260 pp. £2.75.

History is analysis of a social situation, and the tendencies and processes within it. It is indispensable to any political strategy, and both history and strategy are dependent upon correct and correctable theory. V.G. Kiernan is

a historian. But any book on Marxism and imperialism, both of them theoretical terms, must arouse expectations of some theoretical treatment of the Marxist theory of imperialism. The expectation is all the more demanding because the importance of the theory of imperialism cannot be overestimated. It is crucial for any analysis of contemporary Britain and for any strategy in the struggle against capitalism and its racism.

Surprisingly few advances of the theory have been achieved since Lenin capped Kautsky, Hobson, Hilferding, Luxemburg and Bukharin in 1916. A review of these authors' works on imperialism constitutes the longest and the only new study in this collection — the rest being gathered together from the *Socialist Register*, *New Left Review* and an Indian celebration of the 150th anniversary of Marx's birth. Since 1916 Lenin has been used in concrete analysis and political strategy by socialist leaders of national liberation movements in Africa, Asia and South America. But the theoretical lessons in their strategic and agitational writings have not been drawn into as general a theory of imperialism as that described in Lenin's own polemic booklet. Such concepts as those of cultural and psychological imperialism (Fanon) developed in resistance to French rule, and the strategic appraisals of peasantry and bourgeoisie conceived in the Chinese revolutionary struggle have been picked up in the centres of empire and used in isolation from any encompassing theoretical object. Intellectuals of the centres of resistance to imperialism have meanwhile produced notable analyses of their own countries (e.g., Laclau in South America), which have gone a good deal further theoretically.

But in Britain, the realism of academic socialists unwilling to break completely away from the categories of official statistics and the truths of professional humanities have added only information and cavils with Lenin and Marxist theory. Socialist activists meanwhile have been content to update the classical theory of Lenin and Luxemburg without advancing it more than to note the two consequences of continuing concentration and centralization of capital: namely, the state's increasing economic involvement, including the so-called war economy, and the emergence of multinational economies. Only in the last seven years in Britain, with the resurgence of study groups in Marxist theory, has the groundwork been laid for a renewal of Marxist-Leninist theory. But Kiernan is one of the old school. His strength is stylishly written history, such as *Lords of Human Kind*, his study of imperial ideology.

*Marxism and Imperialism* is a collection of equally stylish studies, this time reviewing theories and histories of imperialism. They are reviewed as opinions, judged as positions close or far from socialism, a grand opinion itself. The idea of scientific socialism is absent. Materialist theory is opinion, mission, doctrine, never the means of correct knowledge:

the scheme of salvation that he [Lenin] inherited from Marx depended on the revolutionary mission of the working class. He was capable of invoking the spirit of class loyalty in passionately idealistic or ethical terms, but as a good materialist he must attach it to economics, and he was not always circumspect enough when it came to reconciling the two.

Thus Kiernan's own points, on the force of nationalism and on the political



archaism of imperial ruling classes (their strong aristocratic, military and rentier elements) are made as reminders of the passions and complications of 'real' history, as distinct from theory. How much we need a theoretically advanced analysis of British imperialism, and how we will not find it in this book, can be appreciated after reading the last study, on 'India and the Labour Party'. Labour imperialism is explained as muddle-headed reverence for Parliament. Labour's cotton-wooling of socialist ideals in order to get on with the job of ruling is wittily described. But we are no nearer an explanation in this, or in the other studies which make up the book, of the ideological and political hold reformism has over the British working class.

City University

STEPHAN FEUCHTWANG

### **A Seventh Man: a book of images and words about the experience of migrant workers in Europe**

By JOHN BERGER & JEAN MOHR with the collaboration of SVEN BLOMBERG (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1975). 238pp. £1

### **The Import of Labour**

By ADRIANA MARSHALL (Rotterdam, Rotterdam University Press, 1973). 176pp. £8.50. Guilders 49.50

For capital to grow men must become things — units of labour, replaceable, disposable, stockpiled for use at capital's will and favour. Europe's migrant workers are such units. That they are is what capital has made of them — first in their countries, now in its own. Their condition tells of capital, capital predicates their condition. Their very existence is evocative of the system that ordains it. The connection is vivid, inescapable, the relationship is locked in. To look at migrant labour is to look at the full face of capital. In the act of reifying man, capital itself becomes personified, recognizable.

And yet the literature on the subject has failed to apprehend that reality in its totality and starkness. The best of it clarifies the connection between capital and migrant labour, between capitalist accumulation and a reserve army distinguished by race, nationality and religion, between neo-colonialism, under-development and monopoly capital. But somehow they seem removed from the scene, from existence — abstractions (albeit marxist), theories with the living reality beaten out of them. You see the wood but not the trees, the system but not the worker. He becomes rarefied — a unit, this time, of analysis.

Ms Marshall's is such a work, made worse by the fact that it is a research piece written, presumably, for academic ends and therefore tends like all such works to be narrow, heavy-footed and boring. Basically what she sets out to deal with is the dynamic of capitalist accumulation and the function therein of the reserve army of labour — with special reference to the Netherlands. Such analysis is doubtless invaluable for an understanding of the workings of the

modern capital, the corporate state, etc. But because the author tries to explain everything in terms of economics or, rather, refuses — as beyond her purview — to explain anything which is not economics, the theory explicates nothing so much as itself. But economic theory on its own, as Nikolinakos points out elsewhere in this journal, 'is not only ahistorical and abstract but also one-sided. It does not consider the political factors which influence economic processes, nor does it take into account the social relationships within the framework of which economic phenomena occur.' Ms Marshall in forcing her evidence into a matrix of pure economics fails to comprehend capital as a total system, let alone bring it alive through the lives of the migrant workers. There is, as Heilbroner would say, a certain 'rigor' in the analysis 'but, alas, also *mortis*'. Which is particularly self-defeating since the relevance of marxian economics, unlike the neo-classical, is essentially social.

And it is that understanding that pervades the whole of Berger's book on migrant labour: But it is there not as a tool of analysis so much as a state of consciousness. And it is this quality which enables Berger simultaneously to illumine and illuminate the life of the migrant worker and the politics of existence. Marxism for him is not only a comprehending system of thought — if it is, it is no more than common sense — but a way of seeing, feeling, of be-ing and becoming. And it is this totality — the totality of marxism — that in-forms his whole work — so that you not only see and hear and come to know the migrant worker — you become him — and in that becoming you have an experience of capital so palpable and profound that it lies thereafter like an incubus on the brain.

But words cannot convey that experience

... Words strain  
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,  
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,  
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,  
Will not stay still ... (Eliot)

Photographs and diagrams cannot convey it. Poetry alone cannot convey it. Theory certainly cannot. And so Berger with the help of his associates uses them all. 'We needed political analysis and poetry. We needed to quote economists and to write fiction. Above all we needed photographs.' He needed, that is, to burst the bounds of technique to rescue his subject from being fixated in the flat face of a book — to give him a physical dimension and reality — to bring him alive, so that through him, we would be 'brought face to face with the fundamental nature of our present societies and their histories'.

If that is how the book is made, this is how Berger writes it (though it loses something in my telling of it). He tells a story, makes it evocative with pictures and sets it in history — the immediate history of the individual, the larger history of his society and the encompassing, almost unseen, history of a rapacious economic and political system. And he does it all at once, as in a theatre — but not as in a theatre — as in life — but as in life lived in a capitalist society.

Capital assails us in all our senses and at once and to fight it we must



comprehend it in all our senses — and at once — and for that we must evolve new techniques of communication. Berger has begun.

Institute of Race Relations

A. SIVANANDAN

## Victory in Vietnam

By RICHARD WEST (London, Private Eye/Andre Deutsch, 1974). 196pp. £3.25.

'War', von Clausewitz taught, 'is nothing more than the continuation of politics by other means.' Not so, says Richard West: war is a department of showbiz. The 'Vietnam' of which West writes is Saigon and the limited outposts of the Saigon regime before and after the Paris accords and the departure of (uniformed) Americans. Most of Vietnam he has not visited at all — not the Republic of the north, nor the vast areas of the south which Saigon could never hold. This makes his references to 'the Vietnamese' ambiguous. West's 'victory', likewise, is not the achievement of unconditional surrender in April 1975, but a private solution: 'victory belongs to those who can survive and still laugh.' It is not even clear *for* whom West has written his memoir: there's not much joy here for either the Vietnamese people or his own bank manager. Nevertheless, West believes he's on the side of the angels: he has upset Kingsley Amis, disparages Bernard Levin and even got himself banned from entry to Saigon in 1972.

From this promising start he has produced a thoroughly trivial book, more fornication than liberation, and almost totally lacking in the sort of documentation which might effectively chronicle the last days of a corrupt dictatorship. Even within his limited territory he had the opportunity to write an enduring study of 'news management' under the Joint US Public Affairs Office and under Thieu. Instead he seems to have wandered aimlessly, sampling the corruption of the press corps. He has learnt little except how to regurgitate parts of an important book (*The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, by Alfred W. McCoy). His publishers proclaim him a 'specialist' on Vietnam, but his specialization is distinctive: 'The Soviet Union', writes West, 'was one of the first countries to rat on Sihanouk after his fall [sic] and one of the first [sic] to rat on Lon Nol when he in turn seemed to be losing three years later.' In reality the Soviet Union clung to recognition of the Lon Nol dictatorship until his final days and was one of the last to recognize Sihanouk — only days before the total liberation of Cambodia. Elsewhere West writes of '... earnest U.S. officials. Their work was performed under various titles — USAID, redevelopment, pacification, reconstruction — but always its aim was to help the peasants to help themselves ...' (sic). And finally: 'It is a cheap country to live in, except for the Vietnamese.' (sick)

London

CHRIS FARLEY

## Peace in the Middle East?

By NOAM CHOMSKY (London, Fontana/Collins, 1975). 187pp. 60p.

Unlike his widely-read Vietnam essays, Chomsky has had difficulty finding mainstream outlets for his Middle East articles — most of which appeared during the years 1972-4 in such modest journals as *Holy Cross Quarterly* or *Liberation*. Even so they produced much controversy and evoked heated denunciations of Chomsky by Zionists and their liberal supporters. Thus, the book's publication by well-known publishers on both sides of the Atlantic (Random House in the US) is a hopeful vindication that a rational discourse on the Middle East may yet be possible.

Chomsky weaves the following major themes: (i) the core of the 'Arab-Israeli conflict' is the national conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians; (ii) socialist Zionism was a vital and humane stream of pre-State Zionism, and was in fact responsible for 'the egalitarian ideals and libertarian social structures of the Yishuv' (the pre-State Jewish community in Palestine); (iii) right-wing Zionists (Revisionists) were fundamentally antithetical to the spirit of Zionism, and had been 'forced out of the Zionist movement because of their advocacy of a Jewish state' — yet because of 'external factors . . . their position was officially adopted years later in the wake of the holocaust'; and (iv) there were significant resonances within the Palestinian Arab community away from nationalism and towards co-operation with left-wing Zionist elements.

These arguments constitute the bases for Chomsky's call for a socialist binationalist solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He hopes that 'the national struggle [could] be transcended by a movement for social reconstruction of a revitalized Arab-Jewish left'. He claims that 'the primary and most crucial difficulty is the absence of a common program. There is, or should be, a common goal: the creation of a democratic, free, socialist society.' Chomsky calls for a binational socialist state, the position held by the Zionist left before the 1947 partition — and one which Chomsky finds 'was correct then, and remains so today'.

The chief problem with this line of argument is that it is essentially ahistorical; abstract and lacking in specificity; and, ultimately, confuses moral criticism with political analysis. While Chomsky's primary point about the centrality of the Palestinians is correct, the rest of his contentions are open to question.

He fails to deal with several crucial issues raised by those central assertions. Why, for example, did socialist Zionism, which had succeeded in expelling the Revisionists from the Zionist circle, cave in to Revisionist ideology on the most important point in Zionist history — the question of partition and statehood? If the concept of socialist binationalism was so solidly rooted in Zionist ideology, why did its advocates collapse so easily? What was it that led the Zionist movement to adopt a position considered heretical only a few years before?

Chomsky says: 'The concept of the Jewish state is not so deeply rooted in



the history of the Jewish settlement of Palestine, as one might be led to believe.' Then why has the statist position become the Zionist orthodoxy, carrying along even the descendants of the left-wing Zionism Chomsky still finds so attractive?

It is not enough simply to list some important events, cite 'the Holocaust' or 'external factors' and leave it at that. If Zionism originally had the progressive character Chomsky ascribes to it, then it is difficult to understand how it could take so reactionary a turn so quickly and with so little struggle from its progressive mainstream. If we are to understand how the State of Israel has become what it is today — a state Chomsky rightly finds objectionable, both in its internal racialism and external collaboration with imperialism — then we need to know why, given certain ideological assumptions, the Zionist movement made the historical choices it did. Such an explanation is nowhere to be found.

Chomsky seems to accept the basic sincerity of proclaimed left-wing Zionist attitudes towards the Palestinians, as if the statement of a common programme is tantamount to its creation, that affirming cooperation with Arabs is the same as actually working with them. Certainly the slogans and speeches he so liberally quotes did come from socialist Zionists. Yet Chomsky seems to forget that there was no place for Arabs within the party structure of Hashomer Hatzair and later Mapam — that Arabs had to form their own section of Mapam, separate from their erstwhile Jewish comrades.

He also ignores the leading role these same parties and individuals took in the expropriation of the Palestinian peasantry for the sake of establishing the kibbutzim — an institution Chomsky describes as 'not simply a form of settlement, but a way of life, the *raison d'être* of Zionism'. Agreed, there are certain attractive features in the internal organization of the kibbutz, but Chomsky fails to discuss adequately its post-1967 development into a capitalist employer of conquered Arab labour. Besides, can he overlook the fact that the overtures of cooperation and goodwill came from a movement whose social base and ideological centrepiece — the kibbutzim — is built on land literally stolen from the native population?

The final difficulty lies in Chomsky's advocacy of a binational socialist solution. Few would disagree with him when he says that 'national conflicts . . . rarely serve the interests of those who are slaughtering or threatening one another'. And there is no doubt that a socialist binational state is the correct moral position — in so far as the establishment of such a state would, in principle, be the best of all possible solutions. Unfortunately, the problem is that the political conditions necessary for its creation are nonexistent in the current situation. They were already dubious before partition, and with the hardening and institutionalization of the divisions between the two communities into separate and antagonistic political cultures — in fact, separate and antagonistic peoples — whatever social basis for cooperation that may once have existed has since been destroyed.

Communal relations are so hostile in Palestine/Eretz Yisrael that a socialist binational state must be considered a political impossibility. Feelings between

Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs have been so poisoned — first, by the Zionist establishment's expropriation and systematically inhuman treatment of the Palestinians, and then by its manipulation of the ensuing popular guilt and fear inside Israel — that living *together* in peace is inconceivable, at least for the immediate future.

The task for a socialist, then, lies not in decrying the shortsightedness of peoples engaged in a national struggle. Rather it lies in the analysis of why the Israeli/Palestinian conflict remains so powerful, and what tensions within it can be exploited towards socialist ends. Ultimately, the socialist binational state Chomsky favours will be a realistic political goal. But to advocate it under present conditions and seek legitimacy for it in an embittering past is to indulge in make-believe — not analysis.

Chomsky's moral and intellectual integrity, however, remains outstanding. He is at his best in the book's last essay, where he skilfully exposes the inner contradictions and moral blindness which afflict America's self-proclaimed 'democratic socialists' (notably *Dissent* biggies Irving Howe and Michael Walzer) when their eyes turn to the Middle East. Because of this integrity, if for no other reason, Chomsky's is a voice that will always be heard.

Transnational Institute, Amsterdam

DAVID CAPLOE

## The Background and Employment of Asian Immigrants: A Manual for Preparing Short Courses, Talks and Discussions

By T.C. JUPP and EVELYN DAVIES (London, Runnymede Trust, 1975). 177 pp. £9.

Liberalism in race relations has always meant making allowances for black people. This is *the* kit for making allowances — have kit, will make allowances.

These materials are designed to assist in adjusting to one aspect of the employment of Asian immigrants, that is, the need for information and training among indigenous management, people such as supervisory, training and personnel staff . . . they have the clearest need for an opportunity to acquire an overall factual picture, to clear away ill-founded prejudice, and to analyse and discuss their experience in a positive way.

The manual explains the culture and language problems of Asians to management, indirectly exhorting it to a more liberal understanding of the Asian workforce. On one level it appears to demonstrate the dangers of stereotyping — sedulously explaining the different backgrounds and way of life of each group; on another it replaces one stereotype (the superficial) with another (the historical). Hindus, for instance, because the 'Respect for those in authority, of younger people for older, [is] part of their thinking', could be regarded by 'the English worker (or West Indian worker) as being over humble or "creeping"'. Like the 'creeping' Hindus at Imperial Typewriters? Or Mansfield Hosiery?

Within its stated design the manual is thorough, sophisticated, adaptable and well-documented (though any kit on race is in itself a doubtful tool since



information is always refracted through the teacher). But to produce such a document at a time when the economy does not need black labour anyway, and when Asian workers have shown in strike after strike their ability to fight for themselves, the kit is irrelevant both in time and purpose. Management discriminates in order to exploit; discrimination needs a rationale of its own; cultural differences and language 'problems' furnish the alibis.

There is no direct mention anywhere in this lengthy and expensive manual of the racism encountered by Asian workers in British society, even though the most thorough-going empiricist cannot but acknowledge it influences relations on the shop floor. That is not to say that either the authors or the Runnymede Trust would deny the existence of racism. They would probably argue that in order to 'sell' to management, one must persuade it in terms it understands — and what management understands is higher productivity and higher profits. Perhaps in boom times management could be won over by arguments about a more contented workforce, lower rate of labour turnover, a greater use of human potential. But in today's economic crisis the advice that the race pack holds out even for management is unrewarding.

Better to inform Asian workers in their struggle against management than to waste money on such outmoded diplomacy.

Institute of Race Relations

JENNY BOURNE

### **The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870-1945**

By LEO SPITZER (University of Wisconsin Press, 1974). 221 pp. \$15 Cloth, \$4.25 Paper.

This book is at once stimulating and sad — a hard realism that is so human. It is an excellent socio-historical documentation of a people's illusions about their identity that can be described simply as false consciousness. There is something autistic about illusion which is depressing and which makes the deluded easily exploitable. The deluded dreams dreams that are unrealistic, except to himself; he imitates imitation, taking it for reality and he apes the ape reifying its virtues. The Creoles of Sierra Leone dreamt about becoming black Englishmen; they imitated the white philanthropists' culture, accent and decorum; they aped the colonizer's dress, fashion and life-style — all at a time when racism was at its height. The author points out sadly, that: 'The greater the individual's success in achieving a style of living which . . . approximated that of the white residents in Sierra Leone, the higher his status within the Creole Community.' And among the upper class Creoles, social life by the second half of the nineteenth century was: 'a self-conscious imitation of Victorian England. The governor and his lady were the focal points of Freetown high society and a person could gain most prestige by being invited to a dinner or a monthly "At Home".'

Perhaps all this should not be surprising given the history and social

composition of this West African society. In 1708, about four hundred 'black poor' were transported to Sierra Leone from Britain. But inadequate shelter and the hostility of the indigenous population made life miserable for them. The Sierra Leone company was then chartered with the 'noble' aim of dumping ex-slaves into this corner of the world, but with the 'higher' aim of experimenting with creating 'black Englishmen'.

So, in 1792 over a thousand Nova Scotians arrived in Sierra Leone. Eight years later over five hundred Maroons from the Caribbean joined them. But the fourth and largest group settled there were the so-called 'liberated Africans' who had been snatched from slave ships by British patrols. These were of heterogeneous ethnic backgrounds 'speaking a Babel of Languages'. The prejudice against them, as well as against the indigenous inhabitants, by the two groups of ex-slaves was so harsh they were soon relegated to the bottom of the social ladder. However, through hard work and shrewd business dealings, the 'liberated Africans' rapidly surpassed both the Nova Scotians and the Maroons in wealth and material possessions — 'evidence that Europeanization was more useful for purposes of status definition than for economic success'.

More significant was the emergence of a syncretic culture. For the term 'Creole' had come to describe not just a new generation, but a way of life whose chief characteristics included European dress, European names, Anglicized social manners, fluency in English, adoption of Christian religion and status symbols. Creoles internalized Europeanism so much that, for example, Queen Victoria was known locally as 'We Mammy' (our mother). The educated ones even identified with the aims of British imperialism, so that when General Gordon died in Khartoum, they were genuinely saddened for him, but not for the Mahdi, a fellow African. But racism soon got to the Creoles. Paternalist attitudes became more overt and Creoles were made to feel like parodies of Britons rather than their equals. The 'noble savage' stereotype, as the author remarks, was replaced in the latter half of the nineteenth century by the 'image of an ape-like Blackman in top hat and dark suit'. The Creoles for their part could accept 'togetherness with reserve' but not physical and/or cultural separation. The Age of Black Pride was still to come.

The value of this book is that what it depicts is not just a story of a people at a particular time and place, but the complex nature of existence and development of exploited peoples everywhere. No colonized individual, however removed, has not been involved in complicated international economic relationships with the attendant cultural diffusion. In attempting to develop himself and to make existence meaningful, he strives for status. But in this process he internalizes phoney values, and as a consequence is caught in an illusory status structure which has been created partly for and partly by him.

Spitzer's major fault, however, is that he underplays *racism* as a set of beliefs and as a system of exploitation. He states quite surprisingly that white 'Britons were certainly cultural chauvinists, they were not racists' — a



ridiculous apology for exploitation, uneducated too. For theories of race and of black inferiority had been in existence long before the Sierra Leone 'experiment', and most Caucasians believed them. Philanthropy, to take up Spitzer's point, is not necessarily a sign that a people are not racist, it is often a conscious 'corrective' to a grave mistake. Spitzer is led to this error because he does not place his otherwise brilliant analysis into a wider historico-geographical context. The white man would continue to 'help' the blackman only so long as the latter did not constitute a social threat or attempt to break the chain of bondage. White attitudes changed in Sierra Leone in the latter half of the nineteenth century precisely because black armed struggle against colonization was inflicting intolerable burdens on the oppressor. In West Africa there were increasing casualties among British troops in their 'pacification' exploits. The troops' defeat in the hands of the Ashantis engendered more hatred of the Africans and brought racism to the surface. In Sierra Leone itself, the northern chiefs who had previously acquiesced in colonization were now resisting it. They used every excuse to proclaim their independence — as when in 1898 they refused to pay the Hut tax. The brilliant general, Bai Bureh, ruler of the Kasseh kingdom, led the Temne army against the British. The African fighters held the initiative over the British for the first four months and were not finally defeated until six months after. The Mende in the south followed the northern example, three months later.<sup>1</sup> No 'cultural chauvinist' could ever be happy in such circumstances.

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JUSTIN LABINJOH

#### REFERENCES

1. See Michael Crowder (ed.), *West African Resistance: the military response to colonial occupation* (London, 1971), which should be read in conjunction with Spitzer's book.

#### Invisible Poets

By JOAN R. SHERMAN (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1974). 270pp. \$10.

That nineteenth-century Afro-American poets have remained virtually invisible is the contention of Joan R. Sherman. Thus the task that she sets herself in *Invisible Poets* is to 'render these Afro-Americans and their poetry visible, to strip myth and misinformation from their lives, and offer the most accurate biographies and bibliographies obtainable after a century of neglect, and to assess all their poetry objectively'. This she largely achieves within the scholastic tradition without being too pedantic. Data was collected from the works of sixty-one poets, of which twenty-four were chosen for 'intensive study', and another thirty-six for brief mention.

By far the most interesting part of the book is the introductory essay, which puts the poets and their poetry into social and historical contexts,

essential for an understanding of the minds of these poets, and also the style, form, content and posture of their poetry. Some of these formerly invisible poets, even when placed into historical context, should have remained invisible; their contribution to Afro-American literature is worse than nil: it is negative. Much of what they wrote was nothing more than the pathetic pleas of putrid minds, of soulless niggers. Joan Sherman's book beautifully illustrates the extent to which some black Americans had been colonized, christianized and acculturized by the nineteenth century. The poetry of the 'invisible poets' was no different in style or tone from white American poetry. They wrote sonnets in praise of Milton, Longfellow, Byron and Shakespeare. It was not until the twentieth century that we even begin to speak of 'black poetry' in America. The handful of Afro-American poets who wrote dialect verse, wrote in the minstrel tradition, 'to be safe, to escape from oppressive realities, to earn money and recognition, to assuage guilt, to nourish what was often a genuine affection for bygone simple rural joys'.

On reading *Invisible Poets* the thing that struck me most about their poetry was its instrumentality, both negative and positive. These poets were either slaves, ex-slaves, or born out of bondage after emancipation. By modern black American standards many of them were 'uncle toms', and Malcolm would have certainly dubbed many of them 'house niggers'. For Joan Sherman they were mostly 'upward-bound niggers' whose life styles were based on a 'climbing toward middle-class security and integration'. Poetry for many of these poets was a means to achieving recognition from white America and social status from their own peer group. Some of them were firsts: George Moses Horton was the first southern black man to publish a volume of poetry in America, and the first slave to protest his bondage in verse; George Boyer Vashon was 'the first black graduate of Oberlin college and first black lawyer in the state of New York'; Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was the first black woman to publish a short story; John Menard was the first black congressman although he never actually served; and James Edwin Cambell published the first volume of dialect verse.

Afro-American poetry of the nineteenth century was also instrumental in, and more positively so, an instrument of, social criticism and political protest. Nearly all the poets studied in *Invisible Poets* who wrote before emancipation sung the ante-bellum song, and demanded freedom, justice, liberty, and equality in the American republican spirit. The protest poetry of this period should be seen as a part and a reflection of the era of the abolitionists. Joan Sherman writes:

The militant poetry belongs to an era dominated by protest organizations, abolitionist literature, and eloquent orators. From pulpits and podiums, in petitions and calls, at meetings of the Free Negro Convention movement and a multitude of black and interracial societies, Afro-Americans clamoured for freedom and equality.

However, the author keenly observes that an analysis of the poetry of the 'invisible poets' shows that:



as the verse (and prose literature) shifts during the century from militant race protest, to justification of the race as 'white', to romanticization of folkways and plantation experience, a diminution of blackness occurs, for the poetry loses soul. These shifts in literary posture perfectly parallel the simultaneous whitewashing of the race, its movement from a militant to an upward-bound and down-home life style in response to societal pressures.

Joan Sherman has certainly achieved her objective of rendering visible the invisible Afro-American poets of the nineteenth century. She has also provided invaluable information, in the form of a bibliographical essay, for those interested in pursuing further research into nineteenth-century Afro-American literature. *Invisible Poets* is a most relevant socio-historical document and as such is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature that constitutes black American history.

University of London

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

## Unilever's World

CIS Anti Report No. 11 (London, 1975). 103 pp. £1.00

Got up early and had a bath. Washed in Lifebuoy soap, shampooed hair with Sunsilk, shaved with Erasmic, cleaned teeth with Pepsodent and washed round bath with Vim. Breakfast from a cornflakes packet packaged by Thames Board Mills, bacon sold by Wall's, eggs from chickens fed on BOCM feed and cups of Liptons tea.

Checked a final demand from Blackfriars Insurance in the morning post, popped some clothes into Omo to soak, flushed some Domestos down the loo and hurried out to the shops. Bought some Birds Eye frozen food, a couple of Vesta dried curries and some Batchelor's soup. Next door to Mac Fisheries for a turkey from Midland Poultry Growers, some John West salmon and some Wall's ice cream.

A normal day? Normal enough except that no one had shown me before that it revolved around Unilever, the ninth largest company in the world. IBM, Standard Oil and General Motors have become if not exactly household words then at least part of the currency of informed discussion on international questions. But Unilever is different. It deliberately maintains a low profile for itself, preferring to work through hundreds of subsidiary companies and brand names. Although its products form a basic part of our lives, we are most unlikely to know just what they are because of the company's policy of concentrating on each individual product and its associated trade name.

Starting at the end of the nineteenth century with a relatively moderate stake in household soaps, the company has grown and grown and grown. It has integrated backwards towards suppliers, forwards towards retail outlets. It has its own transport, sales, packaging, research and financial back up. Where it sees a market for an associated product, it exploits it and if it can't

see the market, it creates it. It hires and fires workers like symbols in a giant management game, rapaciously travels across continents dealing with this fascist government here, that state-capitalist one there. Resources are shifted across national boundaries in the shape of raw materials, finished goods, managements fees and finally that all important item: profit.

Nothing matters in the pursuit of profit of course. Employment, super exploitation, health and safety, environmental considerations, none of these mean a thing. If there is a government regulation the only problem is how to get round it, who to bribe to get under it. If there is an active workers' organization, no matter, the only question is how to confuse and defuse it. If there is consumer resistance, it's a simple question of what sort of advertising will overcome it.

CIS have already established an enviable reputation for carefully researched and punchily written documentation on some of the murkier byways of capital, and their new pamphlet on Unilever is one of their best. It is jam-packed with high quality information which will be useful to workers in Britain and abroad attempting to deal with this enormous employer — and that is its main value. It is also useful to outsiders attempting to grapple with the problems of production and distribution in the new society, to those who need the details of a particular section of the company's operations the better to organize resistance.

The pamphlet is based on good investigatory work and occasional polemics. No bad thing the polemics, but while detailed histories, case studies, examinations of company activities in Africa, East Asia or the closure of the Wall's food processing plant in Willesden are of tremendous value, it is time that we stopped simply attacking the multinationals just for being multinational and got down to the difficult political questions of how to deal with them. This the pamphlet does not do beyond a few lines on the need to build federated workers' organizations between the various sections of the company's operations.

Of course the trades unions, the national social democratic governments and the rest of the paraphernalia of social control have not come to terms with a strategy for dealing with exploitation on the scale that a Unilever does it. CIS is big enough and well enough respected for a lot more discussion in its pages on the forms of resistance that have already been tried and some comment on their validity. We get little of this beyond sad tales of how shop stewards have allowed themselves to become involved in implementing management's rationalization plans.

That is a friendly criticism: CIS have produced a first-rate pamphlet which aids our understanding of what is going on, but assists only marginally in the debate on what is to be done about it.

London

DAVID CLARK



## Can Africa Survive? Arguments against Growth without Development

By BASIL DAVIDSON (London, Heinemann, 1975). 207 pp. £2.80

The picture is familiar enough. Increased production alongside falling living standards, rising exports but greater foreign indebtedness, more imports of manufactured goods, given the failure to industrialize, even imports of traditionally home-grown foods to cope with starvation and famine. Such, in brief, is the African crisis. Basil Davidson addresses himself to these intractable problems in the African states. He brings his massive knowledge of pre-colonial, colonial and neo-colonial Africa to bear on the subject. From the plateau of rather well-known factual accounts he often rises to the summits of eloquent analysis.

What went wrong after the African states became independent? Economic growth there certainly is, but no development. Wealth continues to be transferred to the western countries, leaving the African countries more impoverished. This development of underdevelopment — the phrase is Gunder Frank's — is at the root of recurring economic crises, of right-wing military coups, of the resultant closer dependence on imperialism.

With political independence the main aims of colonialism had already been achieved, their continued promotion assured. The ex-colonies became intertwined with the world capitalist markets, their institutions, resources and economies adapted to serve the metropolitan centres as primary producers, as agrarian appendages. The political withdrawal of the 'mother country' internationalized these dependent relations, throwing them into sharper focus.

Davidson instances the unfavourable terms of trade between Africa and the West, terms which signify the unequal exchange of labour values, the sharpening of the exploitative nexus. Foreign 'aid' simply quickens the tempo of this trend: it enables the lending country to tighten its grip on the African economy, to gain further access to the resources and markets of the African state. The vicious circle of poverty continues. There is no industrial take-off.

In a book which sets out to be 'deliberately, naturally, and acutely contentious' the author, it seems to me, discusses the solutions to Africa's problems in terms which are too general. True enough, he writes of the need for 'a radical break from the inherited situation, whether traditionalist or colonialist'; of people having to regain command of their own history, in Cabral's memorable phrase; of their active participation in all decision-making so that they may change both themselves and their environment and thereby achieve material, human and cultural development. In short, a revolution 'at the base', a renovation of the social fabric. True also, he rejects reformist nationalism as he does the notion that in this period of late capitalism African states can model themselves on European nations. He sees the need for a non-capitalist path of development, for socialist solutions.

All the same, the problem of the transition to socialism — a matter of

fierce controversy, to be sure — needs to be brought to debate. For together with the study of imperialism, it is, after all, the most important subject confronting revolutionaries.

We may take it as read that, generally speaking, pre-colonial societies, having had no links with predatory capitalism, could achieve viable because autonomous development; that post-capitalist nations have the capacity for autarky (as distinct from autarchy), to industrialize, because they had freed themselves from imperialist investments, from unequal exchange.

Contrary to the fallacies of bourgeois economics, the underdeveloped countries do yield a social surplus product which could be used for industrial development. Often, indeed, this surplus is a higher proportion of the gross national product than in the advanced countries. Even so, this surplus is lost to productive investment because it is drained off mainly by foreign firms, partly consumed by those social strata who underpin the neo-colonial arrangements: landlords and usurers, merchants and the lumpenbourgeoisie, the state bureaucracy, against whom, one recalls, Frantz Fanon inveighed in such passionate terms. What is more, there is a huge potential surplus product represented by labour that is idle or underemployed.

To break with imperialism, to eliminate the African parasitic classes, to generate a surplus for industrial investment from a self-sufficient agricultural sector, given the agrarian bias of the African economies — these, then, are the principal strands of which authentic socialist policies are woven. China had to choose this long and arduous march towards socialist accumulation, eschewing foreign investments and 'aid'. An independent Mozambique may either regard her subservient economic ties with South Africa as inextricable ones or boldly usher in a new phase of the revolution along these lines.

Basil Davidson will no doubt contribute to this aspect of Africa's problems when he returns to the subject.

London

KEN JORDAAN

### James Baldwin: a collection of critical essays

Edited by KENNETH KINNAMON (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1974). 169pp. Paper \$2.45

We try to forget Baldwin or, rather, we try to remember him as the author of the searing *Fire Next Time* or of that superbly documentary novel, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. We even remember him marching with the King that God forgot, we remember him bear witness to the travail of his people, our people, their resistance and rebellion. We see him taking conscience of himself in his history and wanting to change it.

But when the fight for rights was over — for the vote and property and a place in the American sun — opening up the road ahead for the long and protracted and deathly struggle against capital and the state, against exploitation on a world scale, against death-dealing imperialism, Baldwin was



not there. He was writing in Paris and London and Istanbul, or rapping pointlessly with Margaret Mead and her ilk, or making an arse of himself on BBC television — returning endlessly to the themes of love and redemption and the life interior: 'if we are going to change history . . . we have got to change ourselves because we are history'. True he rallied — momentarily — to the cause of Angela Davis, but without the faintest notion of what the larger issues were all about — an innocent abroad, from another country, another world, the world of the writer qua writer.

Baldwin himself had declared very early on in his career that he was a writer first and a black who happened to be American, after. But because what he wrote about — his condition and therefore that of his people — was of historical moment, he was caught up in the vortex of racial struggle. But as that phase yielded to class war Baldwin remained stranded on the shores of another time. His writings became insubstantial, devoid of content, of historical moment. All that was left was his craft.

Kinnamon's collection of essays is designed to provide a literary assessment of Baldwin. They have been culled mostly from American journals ranging over a period of time — from Langston Hughes in 1956 to De Mott in 1972. They examine Baldwin's skills as a writer rather more than the substance of his writings, or the substance only in terms of the form. 'To function as a voice of outrage month after month for a decade or more strains heart and mind, and rhetoric as well; the consequence is a writing style ever on the edge of being winded by too many summonses to intensity' (De Mott). Or 'his colour is his metaphor . . .' (Newman).

In fact, though, his colour is his stock-in-trade. Baldwin's obsession is with himself, and with America and race only when that country's history is being acted out in him. And when that history is in racial crisis, no one portrays its paroxysms better than Baldwin — and that by writing about himself, his pain, his despair, his quest for love and acceptance. At that point the objective condition and the subjective become one, identical, and Baldwin bears witness to that history as no one can. What Mailer attempts Baldwin is.

Kinnamon's own assessment of Baldwin as 'victim, witness and prophet' is therefore a truer judgement. But only Cleaver in his 'Notes on a Native Son' makes a social, even political, assessment of Baldwin — and inevitably he summons up the revolutionary spectre of Richard Wright, whom Baldwin bitched about in *Nobody knows my name*, to beat Baldwin with. Nearly all the other contributors attempt to locate Baldwin in the bourgeois literary constellation of Henry James, Hart Crane and Hemingway.

The point, however, is not whether Baldwin is a consummate craftsman or not — that he is — or whether he has words or not — that he has — but whether he is a writer who happens to be black or a black man who happens to be a writer. The one seeks to liberate himself through his people, the other to liberate his people through him. The one is a professional, a mercenary on hire to his people, the other is a soldier in the people's army.

## Race, Class and Power

By LEO KUPER (London, Duckworth, 1974). 345 pp. £4.95

Leo Kuper's latest book consists of eight previously published articles and three new pieces. They are grouped together under two headings — ideologies and revolutionary change. Kuper is a life-long pacifist and makes no apologies for his personal commitment to non-violent change. These essays are, in their different ways, a search for empirical justification for a moral position. There is nothing wrong in that and it is to Kuper's credit that he is open about his moral predispositions. However, this is not a book about ethics. And Kuper sets out to vindicate his position by reference to racial conflict and polarization in Zanzibar, Rwanda, Algeria and South Africa. He writes from what he considers to be the increasingly embattled position of liberals in the field of race relations and bravely argues that there is a greater need now than ever before for the reintroduction of liberal values in approaches to race relations. Kuper questions the cost, in terms of suffering, of revolutions in Rwanda, Zanzibar and Algeria and asks whether there is an alternative method of producing revolutionary change. He puts forward a neo-Durkheimian view of evolutionary change, involving increasing contact, harmonious inter-relationships and the progressive withering away of racial inequalities, as a more viable and humane model for progress in situations of racial conflict than the models put forward by the violent theorists of decolonization and by Marxists.

The first part of the book deals with the relationship between racial structures and the ideologies that arise in such situations, and more specifically, with ideologies of violence amongst oppressed groups. The argument is strangely ethereal and seems to me to place far too much emphasis on ideology as a determinant of social events. It is certainly the case that small groups of violent revolutionaries have managed to rapidly transform social situations through terrorism — and not necessarily for the better. The fact remains, however, that it is not these small groups that determine the change that takes place. They are only catalysts, and catalysts only have an effect if the right mixture of ingredients is there in the first place. In Cuba, a small band of violent revolutionaries triggered off a social revolution that quickly gained mass popular support and the downfall of the old regime. In Kenya, a similarly small band of violent revolutionaries succeeded only in further brutalizing the British colonial regime. Presumably the difference has to be explained in terms of social structures, not ideologies. Ideologies may arise out of particular social conditions, but they are also extraordinarily supple in certain circumstances, and can change very rapidly. A theory of ideology has to be based on an analysis much deeper than Kuper's relatively superficial sketch of a number of different societies. His approach is not theoretical, and as a result, it takes immediate appearances as the essential subject matter for discussion. This is a very serious weakness that runs throughout the book.

The second part of the book is about power and political change in racially



divided societies. It purports to be a critique of Marxist theories which presume that racial conflicts can be explained in terms of class struggle. Unfortunately, Kuper has not bothered to refer to any Marxist theories that might be relevant to his subject and apparently relies on Dahrendorf for his understanding of Marx. Now Marx wrote a lot about colonialism, and Marxists have been writing increasingly on pluralist and racially divided societies. I refer to writers like Emmanuel, Frank, Arrighi, Saul, Poulantzas and many others. None of them gets a mention by Kuper, yet he maintains that 'thinking on revolutionary change in race relations is dominated by Marxist theory'. The truth of the matter is rather the opposite. Most Marxists who have tried to come to grips with pluralist situations have either descended into vulgar economism (like Cox) or have ended up with a vague liberalism (like Baran and Sweezy). I write from experience, because spasmodically over the past nine years I have been engaged in research on communal conflict in Northern Ireland and Belgium. That experience has led me to realize that the principal economic contradictions of a society may be very heavily cloaked by an ethnic or language conflict, which in turn, can only be unravelled and understood by examining its relationship to the economic contradictions. Further, that the principal contradiction at any point of time may not be the basic one between bourgeoisie and proletariat but may well turn out to be a conflict between sections of the bourgeoisie, as is the case in Northern Ireland, or Belgium or, for that matter, probably South Africa as well.

Because Kuper does not base his analysis on theory, he ends up confusing theory and empirical reality. The Marxist concept of class is complex and difficult, and can only be understood in the theoretical context within which it was developed. It is not an empirical fact, like race. Race is literally skin deep. It might well be the organizing basis for subjective beliefs within a society but anyone who tries to give a theoretical explanation of the structure of a society simply in terms of racial differences and conflicts is being unforgivably superficial. Marxists might not have produced much enlightenment in the field of race relations but they are at least coming to grips with the extremely difficult epistemological problems of producing a theoretical understanding of pluralist societies.

Some Marxists have tried to 'exorcise the problem by the conception that race and class coincide', according to Kuper. He refers explicitly to the South African Communist Party which always hoped that racial conflict might be transcended through class struggle. The trouble with the South African Communist Party is that it has never come up with an adequate analysis of South African society on which it could base its political practice. Kuper has included his review of the Simons' book on 'Class and Colour in South Africa' in the present book. It is a thought-provoking review and many of Kuper's criticisms are well justified. He is absolutely correct to say that they have not sufficiently analysed the implications of racial pluralism. The way forward, however, is not a return to Durkheim but a more thorough-going attempt to understand the very complex relations and transformations between the

economic base, the political structure and the racist ideologies of a plural society. In this endeavour, it seems to me that Marxists will have to put aside their theories of pure capitalist formations and come to grips with the analysis of capitalist economic formations which have not undergone thorough bourgeois revolutions and where the bourgeoisie maintains political power by stealth or compromise with political formations from a previous era. Unfortunately a review is no place to expand this argument.

Canning Town CDP

ROBIN JENKINS

## Black Fiction

By ROGER ROSENBLATT (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1974). 211 pp. £4.25.

Mr Rosenblatt's book is an analysis of the themes, symbolism and content of black American fiction. The only justification for any work of literary interpretation is that it should enhance and deepen the ordinary reader's own experience of the literature, and not — like so much parasitic thesis-mongering that passes off as criticism — exclude and mystify him. *Black Fiction* does the former. It is a genuine appreciation of the subject, and finely written. Incidentally, the designers and makers of the book have done ample justice to Mr Rosenblatt, since the book is a pleasure to look at and a pleasure to read.

What Mr Rosenblatt does is to draw out — particularly in the works of Johnson, McKay, Toomer, Wright, Hughes and Ellison — the elements common to black writing, the external conditions that limit the sphere of action in which the characters can move, the white man's world that attempts to contain, suppress and eliminate the black, and the internal dynamic and energy of the black world in its survival struggle. The only way that Bigger Thomas (in Richard Wright's *Native Son*), squeezed in the vice of a society that lauds individual freedom and stresses the limitless possibilities of human achievement, can even register his presence in that society is through the murder of a white girl. That puts him beyond the pale — beyond the pale of the black ghetto (whose rigorously defined boundaries shrink to the size of one ice-covered roof as the police hunt him down), and beyond the pale of white society as a force elemental and unintelligible, to be reckoned and dealt with.

The struggle of the black hero throughout the literature is the struggle to achieve himself in and despite of an insane, distorted world that defines him as less than human, limits his personality to a certain aggregate of characteristics and in doing so betrays the madness of its own definitions of 'civilization' and 'humanity'. 'Everyone of these works has been borne of the same central question: how do black people live in this country?' What he achieves, he achieves on the way — a struggle which in opposition to such overwhelming odds, with the weight of the whole superstructure of society



attempting to keep him pinned down, must nearly always end in defeat or stalemate — death in the electric chair for Bigger Thomas, the anonymity of the army for Bob Jones (Chester Himes, *If He Hollers*), and two types of invisibility for the Invisible Man (*Ralph Ellison, The Invisible Man*) and the Ex-Colored Man (J.W. Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*).

Characters in black fiction in order to gain salvation, are rewarded for virtue by damnation . . . assert their presence by disappearing . . . are emancipated so that they may be enslaved, behave savagely in order to be considered civilized . . . hate in order to love . . . refuse education in order to learn, and murder in order to create. For every manifestation of inversion and reversal which occurs, however, there is also the awareness of how their lives, given the proper circumstances, ought to look turned around and right side up . . . The contest which results, between the desire to function within a sane and sensible set of standards, and the impossibility of achieving it, is the basic contest of the literature.

At times, the illustration of a particular point seems strained and overloaded, for example, juxtaposing Bigger Thomas' name with that of the doubting Apostle, Thomas, in an attempt to show Bigger as his own creator, and his own follower. For the most part, though, the argument is rooted much more firmly and convincingly in the texture of the novels, and is perceptive and well worked out — as in the close analysis of the very particular use of humour in some writing, 'as an instrument of perception, as a way of looking critically at a reality which is not funny. The seriousness of the reality is in fact made clearer by a humorous perspective . . . For the characters who use it, it is a way of surviving within, not beating, the cyclical system. . .'

To read *Black Fiction* is a satisfying experience, and one which has impelled this reader at least, to rediscover the literature for herself.

Institute of Race Relations

HAZEL WATERS

### **The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers and the African Exile**

By CHINWEIZU (New York, Random House, 1975). 520 pp. \$15.00 Cloth. \$4.95 Paper.

White predators, black slavers, and the African elite: focusing on these central themes, Chinweizu examines the assault on the third world countries — expedition by expedition, treaty by treaty, shot by shot.

This history of exploitation and domination of third world countries and their economy not only provides a critique of the relationship between the West and the rest of us for the past 500 or so years, but it cites some of the strategies for an effective change in that relationship.

The author charts the history of western expansion, beginning with the Portuguese in 1415, lured to Africa by tales of Prestor John and his Christian kingdom laden with gold and spices. Prestor John was not there but the gold and spices were — and the myth brought reason and 'justice' to the plunder

that ensued. The Portuguese empire was soon to stretch from Lisbon to Africa to the Americas.

The Spanish were quick to follow; going west to circumvent the Papal Bulls which granted Portugal a monopoly of trade to the East — and Portuguese resistance. Not so much interested in religious kingdoms as they were in gold and spices, the Spanish too were to establish an imperial nest-egg in the American mainlands of Mexico, Peru and southern US.

But this monopoly of pillage and plunder was to be short-lived, for other European nations began, in the words of the Nahuatl text, to 'crave gold like hungry swine' and demanded a share in, if not all, the loot. Spain and Portugal were forced to yield.

Africa and other third world countries, through wars and treaties, soon became a giant monopoly board for European nations, the victors being able to wheel and deal in land and people as they saw fit.

The losers, regardless of who 'won', were the African nations or tribes. The indigenous people were forced to work on foreign plantations as well as the mines and plantations in their own countries — all for the economic benefit of European nations. The European nations respected neither the sovereignty nor the freedom of African kingdoms and were quick to destroy the nation or chief who stood in the way of their expansion.

Aided and abetted by an elite of African chiefs who, like all comprador classes, were ready to sell their people for a mess of pottage, the Europeans were able to carry out an even swifter campaign of slavery and exploitation.

It was that same preparation of an African elite for 'self government', the author shows, that made it technically possible to grant African independence. They were ready for it now. Quite ready. It was no longer necessary to hang around Africa wasting manpower and wealth on bureaucracies and armies when there were native stooges to do the work for their neo-colonial masters. All that was necessary was to treat them as equals and bestow economic aid on them. The contempt that this class merits comes through in the examples that Chinweizu gives of its members' continuing complicity.

In the last analysis, the issue of the book is one not so much of racism as of imperialism and powerlessness. 'We suffered indignities under colonialism not because of our colour but because we had become a powerless and a conquered people.'

Groundhogs cannot bargain with elephants; popguns cannot deal with cannons.

Michigan State University

DAVID JOHNSON



# Books received

This listing does not preclude subsequent publication of reviews.

- African Farmers in Rhodesia: old and new peasant communities in Karangaland.* By A.K.H. Weinrich (Sister Mary Aquina O.P.). London, O.U.P. for International African Institute, 1975. Cloth £6.80
- Angola: secret government documents on counter-subversion.* By Caroline Reuver-Cohen & William Jerman. Rome, IDOC, 1974. Paper \$4.00
- Beyond the sociology of development: economy and society in Latin America and Africa.* Edited by Ivar Oxaal, Tony Barnett, David Booth. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975. Cloth £6.95. Paper £3.95
- Black migration: movement north 1900-1920.* By Florette Henri. New York, Anchor/Doubleday
- Black on black.* By Chester Himes. London, Michael Joseph, 1975. Cloth £4.00
- Blacks in Film.* By Jim Pines. London, Studio Vista, 1975. Cloth £3.95
- Blood in my eye.* By George Jackson. London, Penguin, 1975. Paper 50p
- Child Labour in Hong Kong.* By Robin Porter. Nottingham, The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for the Hong Kong Research Project and The Spokesman, 1975. Paper 35p
- China's African Revolution.* By Alan Hutchison. London, Hutchinson, 1975. Cloth £5.00
- Class, culture and the curriculum.* By Denis Lawton. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975. Cloth £3.00. Paper £1.25
- The Corporations and the State: essays in the theory of capitalism and imperialism.* By James O'Connor. New York, Harper & Row, 1974. Paper \$4.95
- La crise de l'imperialisme.* By Samir Amin, Alexandre Faure, Mahmoud Hussein & Gustave Massiah. Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1975. Paper 22F
- Dependence and Transformation: the economics of the transition to socialism.* By Clive Thomas. New York & London, Monthly Review Press, 1975. Cloth £4.95
- Exporting Workers — The Turkish case.* By S. Paine. London, Cambridge University Press, 1974. Cloth £4.50. Paper £2.25
- Freedom and Labour: mobilization and political control on the Zambian copperbelt.* By Peter Harris-Jones, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1975. Cloth £6.50
- The Fight for Zimbabwe: the armed conflict in Southern Rhodesia since UDI.* By Kees Maxey. London, Rex Collings, 1975. Paper 95p
- Ghetto Revolts: the politics of violence in American cities.* By Joe R. Feagin and Harlon Hahn. London, Collier-Macmillan, 1973. Cloth £4.50
- Guatemala.* Edited by Susanne Jonas and David Tobis. New York, NACLA, 1974. Paper \$5.00
- The Gulf.* By Derek Walcott. London, Jonathan Cape, 1975. Paper 95p
- Hacks, Blacks and Cons.* By Leo Carroll. Farnborough, Lexington Books, 1974. Cloth £8.55

- Is Massa Day dead?* Edited by Orde Coombs. New York, Anchor/Doubleday, 1974. Paper \$2.95
- The Lessons of Chile.* Edited by John Gittings. Nottingham, Spokesman Books and the Transnational Institute, 1975. Paper 75p
- Look forward not back: aborigines in metropolitan Brisbane 1965-1966.* By Hazel M. Smith and Ellen H. Biddle. Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1975. Cloth \$A8.95
- The Mass Psychology of Fascism.* By Wilhelm Reich. London, Souvenir Press (Educational & Academic), 1972. Cloth £3.50
- The New Assault on Equality: IQ and social stratification.* Edited by Alan Gartner, Colin Greer & Frank Riessman. New York, Harper & Row, 1974. Paper \$1.95
- Police and the Black Community.* By Robert F. Wintersmith. Farnborough, Lexington Books, 1974. Cloth £6.15
- The Politics of Violence: the new urban blacks and the Watts Riot.* By David O. Seers and John B. McConahay. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1973. Paper £3.30
- Portuguese colonialism in Africa: the end of an era.* By Eduardo de Sousa Ferreira. Paris, Unesco Press, 1974. Paper
- Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans: studies in history and society.* Edited by Adalberto Lopez and James Petras. Cambridge (Mass), Schenkman, 1974.
- The Race Concept.* By Michael Banton and Jonathan Harwood. Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1975. Cloth £4.50
- Racism and Black Resistance in Britain.* By Robert Moore. London, Pluto Press, 1975. Paper 75p
- The Red Paper on Scotland.* Edited by Gordon Brown. Edinburgh, EUSPB, 1975. Paper £1.60
- Return to the Source: selected speeches of Amilcar Cabral.* Edited by Africa Information Service. London, Monthly Review Press, 1973. Paper 75p
- The Rhodesian Problem: a documentary record 1923-1973.* By Elaine Windrich. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975. Cloth £5.95
- Sex Bias in School Leadership.* By Jacqueline Parker. Illinois, Integrated Education Associates, 1975. Paper \$2.25
- Slavery, Race and the American Revolution.* By Duncan J. MacLeod. London, Cambridge University Press, 1974. Cloth £5.50. Paper £2.25
- South Africa in Africa.* By Sam. C. Nolutshungu. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1975. Cloth £6.50
- Southern Africa: end of Empire.* By Peter Janke. London, Institute for the Study of Conflict, (Conflict Studies no. 52), 1974. Paper
- Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America.* By James Kohl and John Litt. Cambridge (Mass.), MIT Press, 1974. Cloth £6.25
- Where Soldiers Fear to Tread.* By Ranulph Fiennes. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975. Cloth £3.50
- White Migration to Southern Africa.* By Anti Apartheid et al. Geneva, Centre Europe-Tiers Monde, 1975. Paper



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