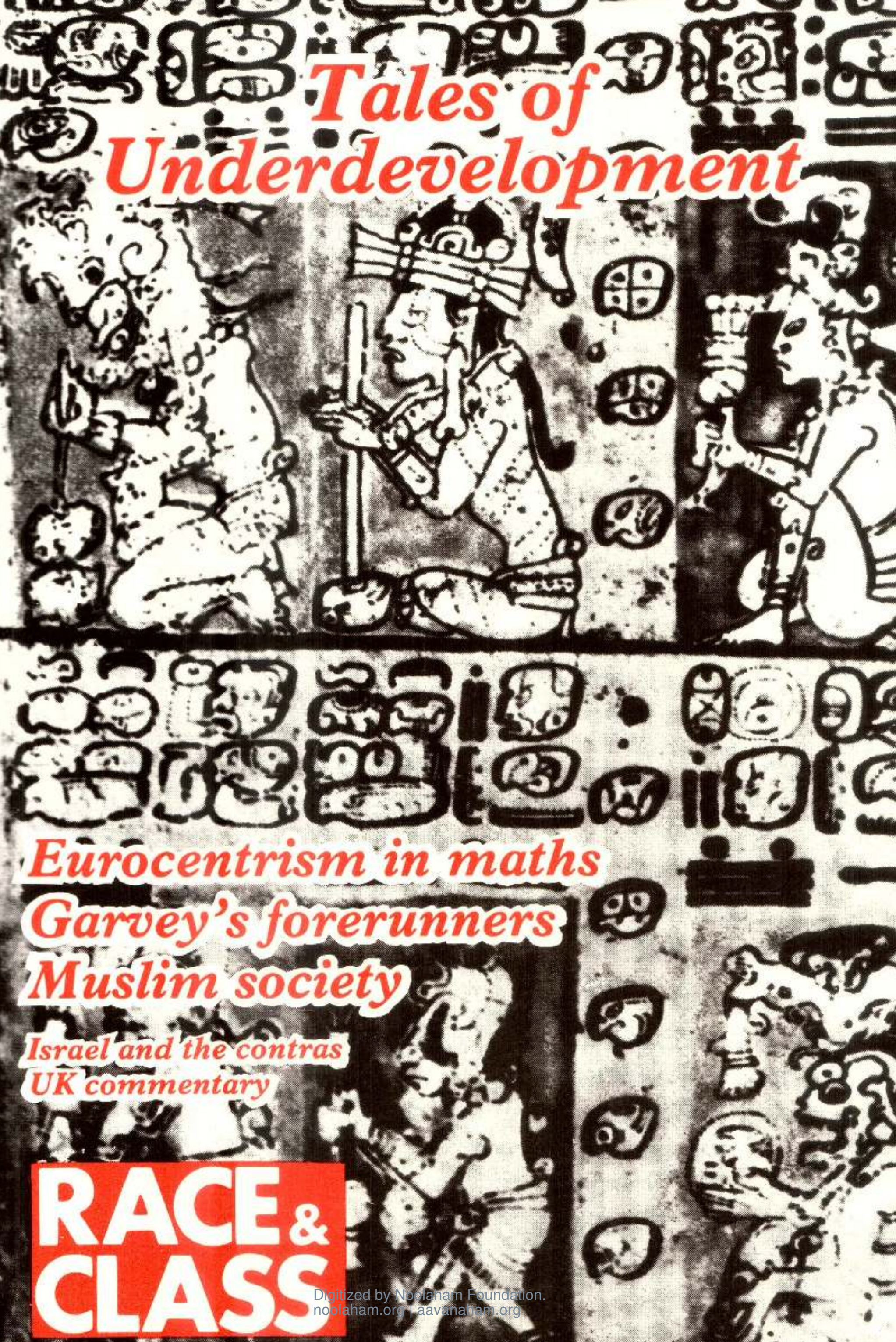

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Samora Moisés Machel
1933 – 1986

Samora Moisés Machel, President of the People's Republic of Mozambique and much-loved leader of the struggle for the complete liberation of southern Africa, was killed in an aircrash on 21 October 1986. The Mozambican plane in which he was travelling home from a meeting of frontline states' leaders fell within the South African frontier not far from Maputo, the Mozambican capital. Whatever the final explanation may turn out to be, Samora died in the struggle against white South African tyranny and aggression, and as a result of that struggle. With him died twenty-five of his Mozambican comrades.

Yet even as we mourn Samora, we see how solid and assured his work as Mozambican president had been. Just as during his leadership of the armed struggle against colonial fascism, his care as president was to conserve a strongly united and collective leadership within FRELIMO.

The son of a peasant lineage-leader of southern Mozambique, Samora has himself said that he was politicised by becoming aware, early in his twenties, of what imperialism was doing in Africa; and it was the murder of Lumumba in 1961 – how many foul killings there have been! – that seems to have been the crucial event in this politicisation. Very early in the liberation struggle he decided that he would be one of its soldiers. He was among the first of the Frelimo volunteers for military training abroad (in Algeria during 1963); and in September 1964 he led one of the armed groups which launched the Mozambican war against fascist Portugal.

A man of enormous energy and love of life, Samora spared nothing of himself. Tough and stubborn as he had need to be, he attracted a boundless loyalty and affection among those who followed him, not least because of his sterling honesty and unfailing sensitivity to human worries. He will always be remembered as an outstanding member of an heroic company, the small company of African revolutionaries who conceived, led and won the struggle for freedom in the colonies of Portugal, and who, having triumphed in that struggle, gave their closest solidarity to comrades in other countries not yet free.

He would have said to us now: *a luta continua*, the struggle continues. He would have added, looking us in the eyes, challenging doubt and denial, and probably with a gale of confident laughter: *a vitória é certa*, victory is sure.

Be with us still, Samora.

BASIL DAVIDSON

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RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL FOR BLACK AND THIRD WORLD LIBERATION

Volume XXVIII | Winter 1987 | Number 3

Tales of underdevelopment
MAURICE BAZIN 1

Foundations of Eurocentrism in mathematics
GEORGE GHEVARUGHESE JOSEPH 13

Garvey's forerunners: Love and Bedward
RUPERT LEWIS 29

Revitalising the Muslim community
ANWAR H. SYED 41

Notes and documents 55

Chile: the costs of failure (Bill Schwarz) 55
Israel and the contras (Jack Colhoun) 61
Lionhearted women: the Sistren Theatre Collective (Elean Thomas) 67
UK commentary: 'The new true anti-racist movement' (John Schaechter) 72
Visas and the British press (Paul Gordon) 76

Book reviews 81

Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression by Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan (Homi K. Bhabha) 81
Touching ground; taking root: theological and political reflections on the Philippine struggle by Ed de la Torre (Kenneth Leech) 84
Anglicans and racism: the Balsall Heath Consultation by Race, Pluralism and Community Group (Paul Grant) 86
The press and political dissent: a question of censorship by Mark Hollingsworth (David Rose) 88

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Anglo American and the rise of modern South Africa by Duncan Innes (Ken Jordaan) 90
Lifetimes under apartheid by Nadine Gordimer and David Goldblatt; *The child is not dead: youth resistance in South Africa 1976-86* compiled by Ann Harries, Roger Diski and Alasdair Brown; *A history of South Africa* by Margaret Holmes, Nigel West and others; *Apartheid: a graphic guide* by Donald Woods and Mike Bostock (Hazel Waters) 92
The roots of crisis in Southern Africa by Ann Seidman; *Consolidated Gold Fields: partner in apartheid* by Counter Information Services; *Apartheid's private army: the rise of right-wing vigilantes in South Africa* by Nicholas Haysom (Busi Chaane) 96
Haiti: family business by Rod Prince (James Ferguson) 99
An insular possession by Timothy Mo (John Newsinger) 101
London Labour Plan by GLC Industry and Employment Branch (Hazel Waters) 103
The racial politics of Militant in Liverpool: the black community's struggle for participation in local politics 1980-86 by the Liverpool Black Caucus (Rashid Mufti) 104

Books received 107

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ISSN 0306 3965

Cover picture from the Dresden codex, one of the few surviving Mayan texts, which includes complex mathematical calculations
Cover design by Hilary Arnott
Typeset by Lithoprint (TU), 26-28 Shacklewell Lane, London E8
Printed by the Russell Press, Gamble Street, Nottingham

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MAURICE BAZIN

Tales of underdevelopment

Introduction

Third World peoples were first made to believe in God, now they have to believe in science: first sanctified, then scientified; first comes Salvation, then Progress; first through spiritual confessors, then through presidents' science advisers. The Third World, however, may also be the only place where the option still exists of accepting or not accepting these 'beliefs'.

The way in which the so-called, self-declared developed world, with its science, through its scientists, with its techniques, through its technicians, with its technology, through its technocrats, meshes with, liberates or enslaves people's lives in the Third World is a vast domain for study. It must not be condensed into reductionist conclusions but, on the contrary, illuminated in multiple ways and observed with all human senses.

Thus we shall not deal with thermodynamic models of the subsistence economy of some anthropologically interesting tribe. Instead, we shall ask ourselves what the role can be of the caste of first world anthropologists, economists and thermodynamicists in the maintenance of the status quo of mere survival of so many Third World people.

The technocratic world focuses on what is quantifiable and wraps

Maurice Bazin is a physicist by training, who has taught teachers in Allende's Chile, and worked in post-revolution Angola. Currently professor of physics at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, he also runs a popular science teaching project which he takes out into the *favelas* of Rio.

Race & Class, XXVIII, (3) 1987

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intellectual concern in numerically expressed assessments. Human values get diluted into mere technical details. The capacity for a wholeness of vision, which pertains to human beings, is dismantled and reduced to a dispersed set of technicalities. The final result of this process is that the numerical details, by now on their own, take on value, and minute specialised nit-picking ends up substituting for social needs as well as moral values. The depth of the difference between a human interest approach and a techno-clad class interest one can best be exemplified in the case of health. In one world – the case of Cuba, for instance – we find a completely free egalitarian health system which serves the whole population on the basis of what Fidel calls 'one of the correct ideas and convictions we took to the Sierra Maestra'. So Cubans today do not fear falling ill or growing old. This is more than a protection, it is a positive guarantee, a right which exists completely and does not require any evaluation in terms of effectiveness. Of course, a good preventive medicine implies competent doctors, efficient vaccines and capable laboratories. There is no question of being against science or techniques per se. But the question of principle, of a healthy population as a whole, free from menace, is the firm ground upon which all the technical practices are built. In the other, standard world – the case of Brazil, for instance – elite private doctors charge half a monthly minimum wage for an office visit, while babies die, unattended, of simple dehydration in suburban slums. This abject social inequality has already been exposed and denounced in numerous writings, at times even to the point of becoming in itself a lucrative profession for some.

It is important to explore how this situation is maintained, not only materially but psychologically, and what the role of the 'scientific' aspect of our scientific age is in this process. To remain in the realm of public health, we can ask what the consequences are of collecting for analysis the children's stools in a *favela's* elementary school in Rio de Janeiro every semester. The results come back from the authorised laboratory on standardised forms which give the scientific names of the various parasites encountered. Nine children out of ten are infested. What is the purpose of these analyses when one sees the water system being polluted under one's feet? Each third of the *favela* receives water during two days of the week, for two hours per day; the rest of the time there is no pressure in the 25-year-old pipes, which run along trenches used as natural garbage chutes. Who profits from this operation except the private laboratories? But having one's stools analysed is such a ritual in Rio de Janeiro that a popular saying goes: 'He is in his best clothes today: he is having his stools analysed'. Contact with the analysis laboratory has become an important ritual in itself. But, in the end, the availability of intestinal parasites simply opens the way for advanced research in parasitology. Many Brazilian microbiologists have, indeed, built international reputations upon this parasitic wealth.

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We must become aware of how the very abundance of, and apparent familiarity with, highly publicised scientific or technical activities serves to appease the poor, while at the same time satisfying the appetite of experts. Concern about the general suffering among masses of people is replaced by specialised investigations, reductionist technical research projects in which human beings become the mere hosts of interesting protozoans. At times, especially if they are black, preferably if they are poor, and most easily if they live in 'distant' lands, human beings themselves become objects of 'scientific' study. Thus, women of East Africa can appear on the glossy coloured cover of *Nature* – the prestigious international weekly journal of science, edited in London – barefoot, in ragged clothes, carrying huge loads of firewood on their heads and backs, as the objects of a study on 'Energetics of load carrying'(20 February 1986). The piece is highlighted in the news section of the magazine by a long commentary which suggests that: 'It would be interesting to attach accelerometers to the head-loads to find out how steadily they are carried. It would also be interesting to know whether there is anything unusual about the curve of the women's backs.' The writer is a professor of *zoology* at the University of Leeds. The contribution of the editorial staff consists of a sly title: 'Human energetics: making headway in Africa'. They probably think of themselves as 'liberals'; they never hurt anyone, white or black, male or female; they might even apologise ... The article itself is up to standard, with references, a bold-face introduction: 'When travelling in East Africa one is often surprised at the prodigious loads carried by the women of the area. It is not uncommon to see women of the Luo tribe carrying loads equivalent to 70% of their body mass balanced on the top of their heads (Fig. 1) ... ', with tables and diagrams comparing oxygen consumption of Kikuyu women with that of 'unloaded' army recruits. Thus starts the main scientific text: 'Five African women walked on a motorised treadmill at five different speeds ... ' It is signed by five researchers, one of them from the department of *animal* physiology of the University of Nairobi, one from the University of Milan, and three from Harvard ('to whom correspondence should be addressed').

But that is just one small tale. There are many, many others – some past, some present, some a mesh of the two.

Mathematics and the Mayas

In the department of education of an American university, educators specialising in mathematics write the latest textbooks using the New Maths approach. In the department of anthropology, a few buildings away, a promising graduate student is given, as a Master's thesis subject, the study of mathematical symbols used by the Mayas.

The first lot of scholars have been influenced by the school of

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maximum abstraction in mathematical reasoning as expounded by the Bourbaki group in Paris. Their professional activity, immersed as it is in the thinking of this French elite, leads them to offer the New Maths to any age group; while in another wing of the same building their colleagues are refining Piaget's demonstration of the successive stages in children's learning capacity.

Near the town of Merida in the Yucatan peninsula, where airborne tourists land to visit the Maya ruins, a young Mexican schoolteacher, fresh from a Fullbright visit to the same American university, is giving a maths class with the help of a projector and the slides which accompany the New Maths textbook. The slides show circles around family members included in or excluded from some 'ensembles' of people.

When the anthropology student starts his field work, he will be assailed by a swarm of young people offering their services as guides. Some should be sitting in the maths teacher's class; but they choose to try earning their living immediately, instead of looking at colourful audiovisuals to 'get an education'.

By the time the graduate student rediscovers the Mayas' way of counting, reading off dates from astronomical inscriptions carved in stone monuments, the Mexican schoolboy, descendant of the Mayas, will have flunked his maths class and dropped out of school definitively. It is as if history were irresistibly continuing its work of destruction of the living 'natives', while allowing 'civilised' westerners to record their ancestors' cultural successes in notebooks and theses.

The original Mayas' notebooks, the *Codices* – fabricated from a single strip of paper, one palm wide and several metres long, folded accordion-fashion like Chinese books – were almost all burnt by the conquistadores in ceremonies 'aimed at eradicating idolatry ... erasing from memory and finishing the practice of these antique rites'. Only three *Codices* were spared and can be found today in the library of the city of Dresden, in the National Library in Paris and in the Archaeological Museum in Madrid. That initial plunder is still being completed. Today, graduate students continue to feed upon the cultural heritage, taking it home to earn degrees and fill scholarly bookshelves; just as Cortez and his Spanish followers plundered gold to earn titles of nobility and fill the king's coffers.

But even if Maya children never get to know it, their Olmec ancestors did invent, some 300 years before Christ, all the characteristics of the numerical system which we use today. They had developed the idea of giving a different value to a digit in a number depending upon its position. Instead of writing units, tens, hundreds, etc., from right to left as we do today, they positioned them above each other from bottom to top; and instead of using the base 10, they used the base 20. They had also invented the necessary representation of the absence of a digit, the abstract concept of 'zero', representing it with a symbol which

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resembles a shell. That invention is so important that historians consider it a landmark of the passing from mathematics-as-counting technique to mathematics-as-science.

The precision with which the Mayas carried out astronomical observations went hand in hand with their mathematical ability. At the time of their 'discovery' by the Spaniards, they were using a calendar of 365 days with corrections which gave it an error of two-thousandths of a day with respect to the true tropical year. This precision is comparable to that of our present Gregorian calendar. But Cortez still used the Julian calendar, whose error was four times that of the Maya calendar. The Mayas' sense of history led them to be the first people to choose a starting-point for their chronology. This hypothetical start was taken some 5,000 years ago, while the oldest inscription recorded on an astronomical stele corresponds to 17 September, AD320. At that time, western civilisation, represented by the Roman empire, was in decay. It used the Roman way of writing numbers, whose complicated conventions, with their necessary mental calculations simply to read a number, made any reckoning a horrendous enterprise. See how long it takes you to read out the number CMLXXIV. Roman algorithm was used exclusively in Europe until the fifteenth century, and even in the modified form (lower case letters called *chiffres de finance*) led to so many errors that the French Accounting Office, the *Chambre des Comptes*, demanded that all accounting be done with numbers written out longhand.

Europe, however, kept believing that it was the best and should civilise the other people of this earth. By the time of the 'great discoveries', no one stopped to notice that Maya counting was similar to the Arabic method, use of which was now spreading throughout the Iberian peninsula, in response to the growing needs of maritime commerce. The Arabic numerals themselves had reached the Mediterranean coast from distant India, where they had been created in the early centuries of the Christian era. It has been suggested that their appearance was linked to the needs of merchants for doing their accounts. The use of zero may have come from the necessity of balancing income and expenses, and negative numbers from going in the red or simply from contracting debts with usurers. How Arabic numerals were introduced into Portugal, how their use spread at a time (the end of the fifteenth century) when techniques of navigation were improving and commerce was beginning to flourish, has been carefully studied in the context of the emergence of a new social class, the Portuguese bourgeoisie.* As for the

*'It may not be pure chance that the first Portuguese texts in which a high percentage of Arabic numerals appears were written by men engaged in navigation and commerce, like Martin Behaim, Hans Mayr and Valentim Fernandes. It may not be pure chance, again, if the first author born and raised in Portugal who used more Arabic numerals than

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Mayas, we shall probably never be able to reconstruct the social changes within which their practical written counting system was elaborated. So far, all the numerical information found on monuments or in the *Codices* is concerned only with astronomical observations, an activity not so different from that of the Portuguese navigators who struggled to reckon their position at sea through the precise measurement of star positions.

Thus the Mayas, on the scale of world history, were the only people able to count in a 'modern' way for approximately a thousand years. But official schooling today is not capable of drawing on this heritage. On the contrary, Mexican educators and self-proclaimed nationalist ministers impose upon the native population a foreign fashion invented by Parisian petty-bourgeois intellectuals who channelled their existential ardours into mathematical exercises. The alienation of the masses is not a passive process in this neo-colonial era.

Postscript
As I talked with teachers and schoolchildren in the elementary school at the foot of the *favela* of Salgueiro, in Rio de Janeiro, about the contamination of the water system in this hillside slum, my attention was drawn to a series of coloured paper sheets tacked on the wall of the classroom. Within a large circle drawn with a black magic marker, a cluster of woollen daisies was neatly glued to the paper. Each sheet displayed a fixed number of daisies – one, two, three, etc., up to nine – and the corresponding digit written below the circled bunch. Repeated at the top of each sheet was a common title, heavily written in round script: *'O conjunto de'*, which means 'The ensemble of'. This was all the evidence that mathematics was being taught in that school; and evidence it was.

The thread of cotton: from India to Brazil

The builders of empires in the colonial era did not cultivate any special respect for technology. For them, it served as just one more tool in the arsenal of domination and expansion. Like any tool, it could be modified, adapted or even discarded to satisfy the final goal: profit. The social organisation under which things are produced by people's labour, what Marx called 'the mode of production', determines which technological tools will be judged 'useful' and, beyond immediate needs, which innovation is worthwhile and which style of science

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Luso-Roman numbers was Duarte Pacheco Pereira, a nobleman in the king's service, but whose life style and profession as navigator and sea-faring technician, link him to those activities which put in motion the emerging bourgeoisie.' (Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho, in *Bulletin des Études Portugaises* (XX, Paris, 1958)).

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should be pursued.

For the vigorous European capitalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, 'valuable' innovations were those which brought easier and larger profits to the private owners of the means of production. Steamers were improved in speed to avoid losses of perishable merchandises brought in from the colonies. But no one was thinking at the time of mechanising the picking of cotton or the loading of bananas into the huge white boats; black people's labour was then the cheapest means available for performing those tasks. Longshoremen's unions had not emerged in African or West Indian harbours. Colonial agriculture was single-crop and single-aim oriented. There was no particular interest in learning from local practices or respecting local techniques. Those were investigated only when surprisingly succcessful in the eyes of European observers, and then immediately appropriated. Thus, when the correspondent of the British Royal Society in Bombay in the eighteenth century was instructed to study how ice was manufactured and Madras mortar prepared, his report gave an enthusiastic description of an Indian technique to waterproof the hulls of boats. England needed badly to use all technical means to maintain its rule of the seas and be able to prevent the French from setting foot on the Indian coast.

All forms of organised production and industrialisation pre-existing in the conquered countries had to be either integrated into the growing needs of the empires or eliminated to make way for the expansion of central interests. The artisans' looms of the coast of West Africa fell into disuse under the pressure of cheap calico cloth from Manchester. This process continues unchanged today in countries satisfied with neocolonial economies: the highly advertised exotic colourfulness of Ghana's and other countries' market-places is mainly due to the abundance of printed cloth imported from England and brightly decorated with the effigies of the heroes of Africa's independence, from Lumumba to Sekou Touré. The logic of imperial commerce leads to boosting sales by inundating the market with smiling portraits of its most vocal enemies, reducing them, by the same token, to mere flattened out displays.

In countries with a flourishing industry, like India, the production units were forcibly dismantled. In the sixteenth century, there were silk workshops in Delhi employing close to a thousand weavers. But British merchants used all possible means to dismantle all textile industries and foster the export of raw material, especially cotton, to British mills. At the same time, the British encouraged the most ruthless exploitation of workers in the rural areas of India, favouring the largest landlords and keeping the mode of production feudal in character. As the dictionary teaches us 'calico cloth' referred 'originally to cotton cloth of any kind imported first in 1631 from India and the East' but 'also, later, any of

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various cotton stuffs of European make'. For the dictionary each situation is separate; what happened historically between the time of the 'cloth imported from India' and the 'stuffs of European make' is of no interest and can be hushed over with a mere 'also'. The workings of imperialism only become visible when we insist on looking at the dynamics behind the etymology of that word 'calico' in the socio-economic context of its usage. Cotton cloth was worn in the Indus valley some 3,000 years before Christ. Calicut was the first Indian port reached by Vasco de Gama after sailing around Africa in 1498. He brought back to Lisbon these *'calicoes'* or *'pintados'*, painted by hand within designs printed with wood blocks. From then on, the Portuguese and the Spanish kept the monopoly of trade in these fabrics, which remained very expensive in Europe, until the powerful British East India Company took the commerce over forcefully in the early seventeenth century. It was not till almost the end of the eighteenth century that England, soon followed by the countries of continental Europe and the United States, started to manufacture calico cloth in that ruthless mode of concentrated production characterised as the 'industrial revolution'. Competition from Indian products was eliminated by the establishment of high import taxes in most of these countries. By then, the maximisation of profits dictated that slaves be transported from Africa to the American South, there to produce the raw cotton to be transported to English mills and re-exported as 'stuffs of European origin'. By the time of the American civil war, the slaves of the Confederate South furnished 85 per cent of the cotton supplied to the Lancashire textile industry. That extreme dependence led to a 'cotton famine' in the 1860s in Lancashire as the ports of the confederacy were blockaded by the North. But twenty years later, the sweatshops of Manchester were back in full operation and 82 per cent of the international trade in cotton fabrics again passed through Lancashire. When mills were finally installed in the colonised cotton-producing countries, it was in the form of British-owned factories. But this process of expansion and domination, totally controlled from England, is referred to as 'the foundation of the Indian mill industry in Bombay around 1850', by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica.** Similarly, what her Majesty's *Encyclopaedia* calls 'the development of extensive cotton industries' before the First World War in Brazil means the establishment of a British monopoly on the sale of cotton thread by the Machine Cottons Company. How this process worked at knocking out any national potential for local capitalist

*By the early 1900s, the whole Indian coast was quietly humming away under British control. The famous 11th edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the glossary of the British Empire's achievements of 1910, brought up to date the historical relevance of Calicut: 'the town has a cotton-mill, and tile, coffee and oil works. A detachment of European troops is generally stationed here to overawe the fanatical Maplahs.'

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development is well exemplified by describing how the Machine Cottons Company vanquished its only Brazilian competitor.

At the beginning of this century, a politician-entrepreneur from the north of Brazil, having made money from the export of cow skins and having feuded with local governors, established himself in the state of Alagoas, inland from the city of Maceio on the north-eastern coast. The place was called Paulo Afonso Waterfall; the man, who was already known as a 'colonel',* planned to modernise the region, using the waterfall to bring electricity, building a cotton thread mill and operating it with the unemployed local workforce. Between 1911 and 1914, Colonel Delmiro Gouveia completed his plan, and the thread factory, *Fabrica da Pedra*, was opened in June 1914. Its products were all the more easily commercialised in Brazil and beyond, since the First World War cut off commerce with Europe for three years. The British trust, Machine Cottons, which had enjoyed the monopoly of thread sales in Latin America, was unable to supply its clients. The local capitalist could thus establish himself firmly on the continent: his Agro-Fabril Estrella spools took over the whole Brazilian market and were exported to all neighbouring countries, from Chile to the Caribbean, including to some British possessions.

But when the war ended and the sea routes became safe for commerce again, Machine Cottons demanded its Latin American market back. Representatives came from England to negotiate with Delmiro Gouveia. The nationalist colonel felt strong enough to resist every offer; selling his mill, associating himself with the English trust or defining zones of influence for each company to operate separately. So the trust started its offensive: it registered the trade name of Gouveia's products in Argentina before he could do it himself; thus, it reconquered the market to the south. To the north, its agents sabotaged the shipping of Brazilian thread. Then came dumping at prices impossible to match, and a final offer from Machine Cottons: it would help Agro-Fabril to become a stockholding company and Delmiro Gouveia would keep 49 per cent of the shares. He refused; pressures from dumping increased but the Brazilian government remained deaf to his plea to institute protective import taxes. In May 1917 the colonel wrote his will. In October he was shot and killed at his home by unidentified persons. A month later the police produced two men, who bore the marks of mistreatment on their faces; eventually they confessed the crime. Fifty years later a writer investigated the events, discovered the police records, the first declarations of the accused and their denial of any responsibility, and the testimony of those who were with them a hundred kilometres away on the day of the crime. By the time proof of their innocence was

*The rural equivalent of a 'captain of industry'.

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established, in the 1970s, they had died in jail – though one had escaped twice, just long enough to shout his innocence and be recaptured. Who killed Colonel Delmiro Gouveia remains unresolved. But a man who looked after the geese around the colonel's house as a boy and was his chauffeur at the time of his assassination said, when interviewed for a documentary film: 'Delmiro's death, let me tell you as an ignorant man who does not know how to read, almost can't sign his name; one more big commercial jealousy ... Jealousy must have come from high commerce. He was a man who tried and built a thread mill in this dry north-east. You know, there are many trusts. There is still one in Brazil which owns the thread industry. They take advantage of our national politics – and you know that politics leads to many things. There could have arisen a suggestion from these trusts. Because there exists only one company in Brazil today, and it is not even Brazilian ... We advance suppositions. We can't swear to what we did not see.' By 1930 the British trust finally succeeded in buying the mill at Paulo Afonso Waterfall. The building was torn down and the machinery was thrown into the river.

The space age, biogass and the colonel's horses

In the north of Brazil, very near the equator, is the state of Maranhão, its sleepy capital city, São Luis, and the neighbouring municipality of Alcântara, a half-destroyed relic of a sixteenth-century French settlement. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the municipality of Alcântara received 25,000 black slaves from Bissau and Angola as the Portuguese created 100 estates which supplied the whole state of Maranhão with food and clothing. The nineteenth century saw the decline of this agricultural oligarchy. Today, 'development' is officially trumpeted via 'tourism', an industrial 'superport' (for Alcoa's manufacturing and exporting of aluminium, alumina and bauxite) and a 'Space Launching Base'.

Meanwhile, the municipality has shrunk to 18,000 inhabitants. The half-ruined town palaces of the former estate-owners are only mentioned in guide books and UNESCO meetings as examples of the 'historical and artistic patrimony of humanity'. The local population survives from subsistence agriculture and fishing. The tourists enjoy fresh shrimps and buy pieces of folk art which display African traits. Infant mortality is up to the standard levels of the Brazilian north-east (between 80 and 160 per 1,000, depending on whom you consult). The trade winds hesitate in this zone of quasi-calmness so feared by the early navigators; beaches are excellent and the use of solar radiation screening lotions is recommended to avoid burns.

For the other Brazil – the seventh country in the world by Gross National Product, the fifth exporter of armaments – Alcântara is simply

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very near the equator and thus a logical place for satellite launching. Furthermore, for the military establishment, whose twenty-year long dictatorship defended western values against communism, a space centre could also harbour missiles aimed at a northern enemy. In 1980 the state of Maranhão handed over 50,000 hectares (40 per cent of the municipality) to the Air Force 'in the public interest', thereby authorising the disappropriation of the area. Some 2,000 families are affected, roughly half of the population of the municipality. Where they might be resettled and how much land they will be entitled to till 'depends upon further studies', according to an Air Force document.

The Air Force colonel commanding the base met with local groups and trade unions several times to present to them what he calls 'the most ambitious scientific project elaborated for a developing country'. The present missile launching base, part of a military complex created by the US Army during the Second World War near the city of Natal, is becoming too small. From the Alcântara base meteorological and communication satellites will be launched. Finally, the Air Force colonel promised that 'the municipality of Alcântara will return to its past splendour, not only because of its historical riches, but as a city of the Space Age'. Here appear the grandiose technological promises which justify bulldozing the interests of local people. It was in the name of another facet of this new age, the nuclear age, that the Brazilian government signed, in the early 1970s, a multi-billion dollar nuclear agreement with West Germany, from which nothing but a corresponding increase in the external debt resulted.

In 1985, the future base was still open country. Military personnel amounted to some 100 men and the commanding officer, while waiting to take care of missiles, spent his time raising thirty-four horses in an ecological way: a biodigestor recycled the manure from the horses and the energy produced served to illuminate the stables area at night!

When the base gets built there will be an influx of construction workers, just as happened in the 1970s during the building of the French launching base of Kuoru in 'French' Guiana, a few degrees latitude to the north. Ten thousand Brazilian workers were imported officially, then sent back upon completion of the construction phase. But, as people in the Amazon region learnt of work opportunities in Guiana, clandestine emigration started on a large scale. The failure of the Brazilian government's megalomaniac project of *'agrovillas'* along the transamazonian highway created potential temporary proletarians out of desperate potential peasants. They entered French Guiana illegally, crossing rivers at night in perilously overloaded boats. Some obtained work and were housed by the French in barrack-like dormitories. They tried to maintain some communication with and send some money to the families which stayed behind as migration widows, living in shacks of dried earth and bamboo. This whole process is ready to be repeated in the case of the Alcântara base.

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Tomorrow, 'Brazilian' communication satellites launched from Alcântara will bring live to Brazilian TV screens images of important events occurring in the United States, from car races to football matches. The residues of this 'progress' will remain unseen: the thousands of families dispersed away from their home settlements, the thousands of constantly migrating labour hands, at times peasants, at times unskilled workers, awaiting news of the opening of a new chapter of global technological advancement. Thus, technology is being transferred; but in whose interests?

At the same time, the base commanders thrive like parasites upon their technological host. Their values are copied from what they see in weekly picture magazines of western leaders' taste. Thus, they develop a taste for horses and not for people, imitating the last military president of Brazil, General Figueiredo, who declared that he 'preferred the smell of horses to the smell of the populace', and reminiscent of the photographs of Ronald Reagan cavalcading in his Californian ranch. As with the barbarian hordes who invaded Europe in its early history, 'no grass would grow again where their horses had passed'. As the base commander of Alcântara replied to a villager who told him how hard it would be for her to move to leave room for the new base: 'We are the stones and you are the egg. If we enter in conflict, it will be the egg that will end up broken.' The military mind had to draw its images from a battle in which the inanimate world of military hardware wins over an embryo of life. Though such a one, we may be sure, would be set on saving embryos (and against abortion) when it comes to siding with the Pope in Rome in His Holiness' battle against the Theology of Liberation.

The Philippines

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GEORGE GHEVARUGHESE JOSEPH

Foundations of Eurocentrism in mathematics

There exists a widespread Eurocentric bias in the production, dissemination and evaluation of scientific knowledge. And this is in part a result of the way many perceive the development of science over the ages. For many Third World societies, still in the grip of an intellectual dependence promoted by European dominance during the past two or three centuries, the indigenous scientific base which may have been innovative and self-sufficient during precolonial times is neglected or often treated with a contempt that it does not deserve. An understanding of the dynamics of precolonial science and technology in these societies and an identification of the nature of the base on which the superstructure rested are essential in formulating a strategy of meaningful adaptation of the indigenous forms that remain to present-day scientific and technological requirements.

Now an important area of concern for anti-racists is the manner in which European scholarship has represented the past and potentialities of non-white societies with respect to their achievement and capabilities in promoting science and technology. The progress of Europe and its cultural dependencies* during the last 400 years is perceived by many as inextricably – and even causally – linked with the rapid growth of

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* The term 'cultural dependencies' is used here to describe those countries — notably the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — which are mainly inhabited by populations of European origin and share similar historical and cultural roots as Europe. For the sake of brevity, the term 'Europe' is used hereafter to include these areas as well.

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science and technology. So that in the minds of many, scientific progress becomes a uniquely European phenomenon, to be emulated only by following the European path of social and scientific development.

Such a misrepresentation of the history and cultures of societies outside the European tradition raises a number of issues which are worth exploring. First, there are certain implications for the nature of the relationship between knowledge and power which was indicated at the beginning of this article. Second, there is the issue of who 'makes' science and technology. In a material and non-elitist sense, people from all continents have contributed to the growth of knowledge in general and of science in particular. Third, if one is imprisoned within the ethnocentricity of a particular place/time location, then non-European reality may only impinge marginally either as an unchanging residual experience to be contrasted with the dynamism and creativity of Europe, or as a rationale for the creation of disciplines congealed in subjects such as development studies, anthropology, Orientalism, Sinology and Indology. These subjects then serve as the basis from which theories of social development and history can be developed.

The shaky foundations of these 'adjunct' disciplines are being increasingly exposed by scholars, mainly from those countries which provide the 'raw materials' of these disciplines. In a recent contribution to *Race & Class*,[1] Edward Said points to a number of examples of 'subversive' analyses, inspired by similar impulses as his seminal anti-Orientalism critique,[2] which are aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the existing Eurocentric paradigmatic norms. For example, the growing movement towards promoting a form of indigenous anthropology which sees its primary task as questioning, redefining and, if necessary, rejecting particular concepts which grew out of colonial experience in western anthropology is well examined in Fahim.[3] In a similar vein, I propose to show that the standard treatment of the history of non-European mathematics is a product of a historiographical bias (conscious or otherwise) in the selection and interpretation of facts which, as a consequence, results in ignoring, devaluing or distorting contributions arising outside European mathematical traditions.*

* A concise and meaningful definition of mathematics is virtually impossible. In the context of this article, the following aspects of the subject are particularly relevant. Mathematics can be looked at as an international language, with a particular kind of logical structure. It contains a body of knowledge relating to number and space. It prescribes a set of methods for obtaining conclusions about the physical world. And it is an intellectual activity using both intuition and imagination to arrive at proofs and conclusions which may carry a high sense of aesthetic satisfaction for the creator.

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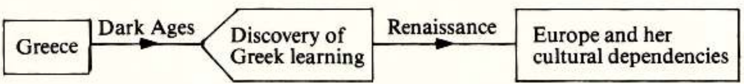
The historical development of mathematical knowledge

Most histories of mathematics which were to become standards for later work were written in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. During that period two contrasting developments were taking place which would have an impact both on the content and the balance of the books produced on both sides of the Atlantic. On the one hand, exciting discoveries of ancient mathematics written on papyri in Egypt and clay tablets in Mesopotamia, dating back to the second millenium BC, had pushed back the origins of written mathematical records by at least 1,500 years.

But a far stronger counter-influence was the political climate of the day, when the same period saw the culmination of European domination in the shape of a 'Scramble for Africa' and the final subjugation of Asia by imperialist powers. As an adjunct to imperial domination arose the ideology of racism and white superiority which spread over a wide range of social and economic activities, including the writing of histories of science. These histories emphasised the unique role of Europe as providing the soil and spirit for scientific discovery. The contributions of the colonised were ignored or devalued as part of the rationale for subjugation and dominance. And the developments in mathematics before the Greeks – notably in Egypt and Mesopotamia – suffered a similar fate, being dismissed as of little importance to the future of the subject.

Figure 1 presents a 'classical' Eurocentric view of how mathematics developed over the ages. This development is seen as taking place in two areas separated by a period of inactivity lasting for a thousand years – Greece (from about 600 BC to 300 AD) and post-Renaissance Europe from the fifteenth century to the present day. The intervening period of inactivity constituted the 'Dark Ages' – a convenient label which was both an expression of post-Renaissance prejudices about its immediate past and of the intellectual self-confidence of those who saw themselves as the true inheritors of the 'Greek miracle' which was supposed to have sprung up spontaneously from the Ionian soil 2,000 years earlier.

Figure 1: *The 'classical' Eurocentric approach*



Two passages, one by a well-known historian of mathematics writing at the turn of the century and the second by a contemporary writer whose books are still widely referred to on both sides of the Atlantic, show how impervious is Eurocentric scholarship to new evidence and sources.

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> The history of mathematics cannot with certainty be traced back to any school or period before that of the Ionian Greeks.[4]

> [Mathematics] finally secured a firm grip on life in the highly congenial soil of Greece and waxed strongly for a short period . . . With the decline of Greek civilisation, the plant remained dormant for a thousand years . . . when the plant was transported to Europe proper and once more imbedded in fertile soil.[5]

The first statement is a fair summary of what was generally known at the turn of this century, except for the intriguing omission of early Indian mathematics contained in the *Sulbasutras* (c800-c500 BC), translated by Thibaut between 1874 and 1877, which were at least contemporaneous with the earliest known Greek mathematics. The second statement ignores a substantial body of research evidence pointing to significant development in mathematics in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and pre-Columbian America. Mathematics is perceived as an exclusive product of white men and European civilisations. And that is the central message of the Eurocentric trajectory described in Figure 1.

But this comforting rationale for an imperialist/racist ideology of dominance became increasingly untenable for a number of reasons. First, there was the fulsome acknowledgment by the ancient Greeks themselves of the intellectual debt they owed to the Egyptians and Babylonians. There are scattered references from Plato (c380 BC) to Plutarch (c100 AD) to the early knowledge acquired from the Egyptians in various fields, including astronomy, mathematics and surveying, with a number of commentators considering the priests of Memphis as founders of science. Both Thales (cd 546 BC), the legendary founder of Greek mathematics, and Pythagoras (cd 500 BC), one of the earliest and greatest of Greek mathematicians, were reported to have travelled widely in Egypt and Babylonia and learnt much of their mathematics from these areas. Some sources even credit Pythagoras with having travelled as far as India in search of knowledge, which may explain some of the close parallels between Indian and Pythagorean philosophy and geometry.*

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* These parallels are found in the following areas: (a) a belief in transmigration of souls; (b) the theory of five elements constituting matter; (c) the reasons for prohibiting consumption of beans; (d) the structure of the religio-philosophical character of the Pythagorean fraternity which shared certain similarities with Buddhist monasteries; and (e) the contents of the mystical speculations of the Pythagorean school which bears a remarkable resemblance to *Upanishads*. The statement of the Pythagorean theorem in geometry is found in *Sulbasutras* (the oldest extant documents containing Indian geometry). According to Greek tradition, Pythagoras, Thales, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus and others undertook journeys to the East to study philosophy and science. While it is far fetched to assume that all these individuals reached India, there is a strong historical possibility that some of them became aware of Indian thought and science through Persia.

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A second reason why the trajectory described in Figure 1 is untenable arose from the findings of the combined efforts of archaeologists, translators and interpreters who unearthed evidence of a high level of mathematics practised in Mesopotamia and to a lesser extent in Egypt from the beginning of the second millenium BC, which provided further confirmation of Greek reports on the nature of such mathematics. In particular, the Babylonian mathematicians had invented a place value number system, understood (but not proved) the so-called Pythagorean theorem* and evolved an iterative method of solving quadratic equations which would only be improved upon in the sixteenth century AD.

Third, the significance of the Arab contribution to the development of European intellectual life could no longer be ignored. The course of European cultural history and the history of European thought are inseparably tied up with the achievement of Arab scholars during the Middle Ages (or the Dark Ages as they came to be known by post-Renaissance Europe) on account of their seminal contributions in mathematics, natural sciences, medicine and philosophy. In particular, we owe to the Arabs in the field of mathematics the bringing together of the technique of measurement, evolved from its Egyptian and Babylonian roots to its final form in the hands of Greeks and Alexandrians, with the remarkable instrument of computation (our number system), which originated in India, and finally supplementing these strands with a systematic and consistent language of calculation which came to be known by its Arabic name, algebra. A grudging acknowledgment of this debt by certain books contrasts sharply with a general neglect when it came to recognising other Arab contributions. **

Fourth, there was some recognition that in talking about the Greek contribution one should separate the classical period of Greek civilisation (i.e., from the sixth century to the third century BC) from the post-

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* The statement and demonstration of the so-called Pythagorean theorem is found in varying degrees of detail all over the world. A variety of evidence is at present available on the widespread practical use of the theorem among the Babylonians (c1800-1600 BC). The Chinese provided a proof of the theorem in their oldest extant mathematical text entitled *Chou Pei* (500 BC). As mentioned earlier, the *Sulbasutras* (c600-800 BC) contained the earliest known general proof of the theorem. It is also worth noting that even though the theorem is universally associated with the name of Pythagoras, there is no evidence that Pythagoras had either stated or proved the theorem. The earliest Greek proof, which is still to be found in school geometry texts, was given by Euclid (c300 BC).

** The unacknowledged debt to Arab science includes: (a) an earlier description of pulmonary circulation of the blood by Ibn al-Nafis, usually attributed to Harvey; (b) the first known statement of the principle of the refraction of light by Ibn al-Haytham, usually attributed to Newton; (c) the first known statement of the law of gravity by al-Khazin, again attributed to Newton; (d) the first clear statement of the theory of evolution by Ibn Miskawayh, usually attributed to Darwin; and (e) the first explanation of the rationale underlying the 'scientific method' which is found in the works of Ibn Sina, Ibn al-Haytham and al-Biruni but usually credited to Bacon.

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Alexandrian dynasties (i.e., from the third century BC to the third century AD). In early Eurocentric scholarship, the Greeks of the ancient world were perceived as ethnically homogeneous and originating from areas which were mainly within the geographical boundaries of present-day Greece. It was part of the Eurocentric mythology that from the mainland of Europe had emerged a group of people who had created out of virtually nothing the most impressive of all civilisations of ancient times. And from that civilisation had sprung not only the cherished institutions of the present-day western culture but also the mainspring of modern science and technology. The reality is, however, more complex and problematic.

Before the appearance of Alexander (356-323 BC), the term 'Greek' did encompass a number of independent city states, often at war with one another, but exhibiting close ethnic and cultural bonds, and above all sharing a common language – whose alphabet was borrowed from the Phoenicians of North Africa. The conquests of Alexander changed the situation dramatically, for at his death his Empire was divided among his generals who established separate dynasties. The two notable dynasties from the point of view of mathematics were the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt and the Selucid dynasty, which encompassed the earlier site of Mesopotamian civilisation. The most famous centre of learning and trade became Alexandria in Egypt, established in 332 BC and named after the conqueror. From its foundation, one of its most striking features was its cosmopolitanism – part Egyptian, part Greek with a liberal sprinkling of Jews, Persians and Phoenicians, and even attracting scholars and traders from as far away as India. A lively contact was maintained with the Selucid dynasty. It thus became the meeting-place for ideas and different traditions, and over the period the character of Greek mathematics changed mainly as a result of the continuing cross-fertilisation between different mathematical traditions, notably the algebraic and empirical traditions of Babylonia and Egypt interacting with the geometric and anti-empirical traditions of classical Greece. And from this mixture came some of the greatest mathematicians of antiquity – notably Euclid, Archimedes, Apollonius and Diophantus. It is, therefore, misleading to speak of Alexandrian mathematics as Greek, except in so far as the term indicates that Greek cultural traditions served as the main inspiration and the Greek language as the medium of instruction and writing in Alexandria. In that sense, the use of the term 'Greek' is closely analogous to the use of the term 'Arab' to describe a civilisation which encompassed a number of ethnic and religious groups, but all of whom were imbued with the Arab culture and language.

Figure 2 describes a 'modified' Eurocentric trajectory which takes a limited account of the contributions made by other cultural areas to the development of mathematical knowledge. There is some awareness of

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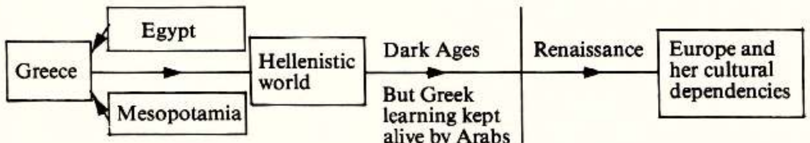
Figure 2: *The 'modified' Eurocentric trajectory*



the existence of mathematics before the Greeks and their debt to these earlier mathematical traditions in Babylonia and Egypt. But this awareness is likely to be tempered with a dismissive rejection of their importance compared to Greek mathematics – '[the]scrawling of children just learning to write as opposed to great literature'.[6]

The differences in character of the Greek contribution before and after Alexander are recognised to a limited extent in Figure 2 by a chronological separation of Greece from the Hellenistic world (where the Ptolemaic and Selucid dynasties were the crucial instrument of mathematical creation for that period). There is also a recognition of the Arabs, but merely as custodians of Greek learning during the so-called Dark Ages in Europe. * Their role as transmitters and creators of knowledge is ignored. So are the contributions of other civilisations – notably those of China and India – which are perceived as borrowers from Greek sources, as having made only minor contributions or as having an insignificant role in mainstream mathematical developments (i.e., developments culminating in European dominance). ** More recently, histories of mathematics carry separate chapters, serving as 'residual' dumps, entitled 'Oriental' mathematics or 'Indian/Chinese' mathematics, which are of marginal relevance to the mainstream themes pursued in these books.[8] This marginalisation of non-European mathematics is reflected in the nature of the scholarship that characterises the treatment of these subjects in successive text books. An 'openness' to more recent research findings, especially in the case of Indian and Chinese mathematics, is sadly missing. As a consequence, paraphrases of the contents of earlier texts or quotes from individuals whose scholarship or impartiality have been seriously questioned are reproduced in each succeeding generation of textbooks. ***

* In a review article Nisbet has pointed out how the myth of a renaissance occurring in Europe between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has persisted, in spite of overwhelming evidence to indicate that there was continuous intellectual development taking place in Europe from the twelfth century.[7]

** Chinese, Mayan or Japanese mathematics are often ignored on the grounds that they fall outside the main line of mathematical development that culminated in the European advance of the subject.

*** One individual who is frequently quoted by historians as an authority on Indian mathematics is G.R. Kaye, who was in the service of the Raj at the turn of this century. His interpretations, both with regard to dating certain mathematical documents (notably *Sulbasutras* and the *Bakhshali Manuscript*) which he generally tended to put much later

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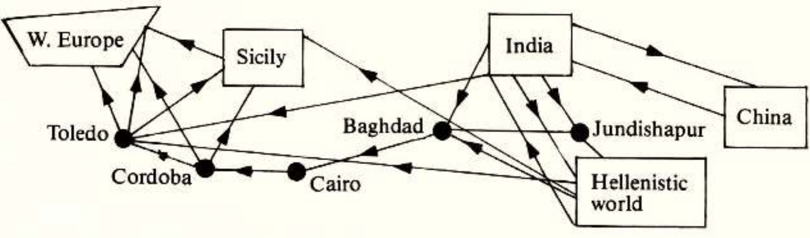
Figure 2, therefore, remains a flawed representation of how mathematics developed over time. It encompasses a series of biases and remains impervious to new evidence and arguments. With minor modifications, it presents the model to which most books on the history of mathematics conform. While I propose in the next section to explore the nature and sources of the biases that such a representation reflects, it should be noted that similar Europe-centred bias exists in other disciplines as well. For example, diffusion theories in anthropology and social geography indicate that 'civilisation' spreads from the centre (i.e. 'greater' Europe) to the periphery (i.e. the rest of the world). Again, theories of modernisation or evolutionary schemes developed within the framework of certain brands of marxism are characterised by a similar type of Eurocentrism. In all such conceptual schemes, the development of Europe is seen to serve as a precedent for the way in which Third World societies will develop in the future – a trajectory whose spirit is not dissimilar to the one suggested in Figure 2.

Figure 3 offers an alternative trajectory of mathematical development, but concentrates mainly on filling in the details for the period represented by the arrow labelled 'Dark Ages' in Figures 1 and 2. The role of the Arabs is crucial here. Mathematical knowledge which originated in India, China and the Hellenistic world was sought out by Arab scholars and then translated, refined, synthesised and augmented at different centres of learning, starting with Jundishapur in South-east Persia and then moving to Baghdad, Cairo and, finally, to Toledo and Cordoba in Spain. Considerable resources were made available to the scholars through the benevolent patronage of the Caliphs of Abbasid (i.e., the rulers of the eastern Arab empire with its capital at Baghdad) and Ummayid (i.e., the rulers of the western Arab empire with its capital first at Damascus, then moving to Cairo and finally to Cordoba).

Figure 3: *An alternative trajectory (from 8th to 15th century)*



than other scholars, usually on fairly flimsy grounds, as well as his tendency to attribute anything significant in Indian mathematics to a Greek origin, have been criticised by notable scholars of ancient Indian mathematics,[9] without apparently making much impression on those who continue to write histories of mathematics in Europe and her cultural dependencies.

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The Abbasid Caliphs, notably al-Mansur (754-775 AD), Harun al-Rashid (786-806 AD) and al-Mamun (813-833 AD), were in the forefront of promoting the study of astronomy and mathematics in Baghdad. Indian scientists were invited to settle in Baghdad. At the closure of Plato's Academy in 529 AD by the Roman Emperor Justinian to placate Christian bigotry, many of its scholars found refuge in Jundishapur in Persia, which a century later became part of the Arab world. Greek manuscripts from the Byzantine Empire, the translations of the Syriac schools of Antioch and Damascus and the remains of the Alexandrian library in the hands of the Nestorian Christians at Edessa were all sought out eagerly by Arab scholars, aided and abetted by the rulers who had control over or access to men and materials from the Byzantine Empire, Persia, Egypt, Syria and places as far east as India and China. Caliph al-Mansur built at Baghdad a *Bait al-Hikma* (translated as House of Wisdom) which contained a large library to stock the manuscripts that had been collected from various sources, an observatory which became a meeting-place of Indian, Chinese, Hellenistic and Babylonian astronomical traditions, and a university where scientific research continued apace. A notable member of this institution, Mohamed ibn-Musa al-Khwarizmi (c825 AD), wrote two books which were of crucial importance to the future development of mathematics. One of the books, the Arabic text of which is extant, is entitled *Hisab al-djabr wa-al Muqabala* (which may be translated as the 'science of reduction and cancellation' or, probably, 'science of equations') which introduced the word *al-djabr* (or algebra) for the first time. His second book, of which only a Latin translation is extant, is called *Algorithmi de numero Indorum*. It explained the Indian system of numeration, and was based on the work of Brahmagupta (c628 AD), an Indian mathematician-astronomer, entitled *Brahmasputa Siddhanta*. While al-Khwarizmi was at pains to point out the Indian origin of the numeration system, subsequent translations of the book attributed not only the book but the numerals to the author. Hence, in Europe any scheme using these numerals came to be known as an algorism or later algorithm (i.e., a corruption of the name al-Khwarizmi) and the numerals became Arabic numerals.

Other great Arab mathematicians continued the work begun by al-Khwarizmi, and they included Thabit ibn-Qurra (826-901), Abu-Kamil (c900), Abul-Wefa (940-998), Ibn al-Haytham (c965-1039), al-Biruni (973-1048), Omar Khayyam (c1050-1122), better known in the West as a poet and hedonist, and Nasir Eddin al-Tusi (1201-1274). The last named mathematician was no longer in the service of Arab rulers; he was an astronomer to the Mongol, Hulagu Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan. His contributions to non-Euclidean geometry, which formed the starting-point of the work of Saccheri of Italy five centuries later, show that Arab geometry had truly come of age after being tied initially to the apron strings of Hellenistic geometry.

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Figure 3 highlights the importance of two areas of southern Europe in the transmission of mathematical knowledge to western Europe. Spain and Sicily were the nearest points of contact with Arab science and had been under Arab hegemony, with Cordoba succeeding Cairo as the capital and centre of learning of the Ummayid caliphate during the ninth and tenth centuries. Scholars from different parts of western Europe congregated in Cordoba and Toledo in search of both ancient and contemporary knowledge. As an illustration of this great thirst for knowledge, it is reported that Gherardo of Cremona (c1114-1187) went to Toledo, after its recapture by the Christians, in search of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, an astronomical work of great importance produced in Alexandria during the second century AD. He was so taken by the intellectual activity there that he remained for a period of twenty years, during which he was reported to have copied or translated eighty manuscripts of Arab mathematics or Greek classics, which he then proceeded to take back to his homeland. Gherardo was one of a number of European scholars, including Plato of Tivoli, Adelard of Bath and Robert of Chester, who flocked to Spain in search of knowledge.

There are two additional features of mathematical knowledge that Figure 3 serves to highlight. First, it is not generally recognised that practically all topics taught in school mathematics today are directly derived from the work of mathematicians originating outside western Europe before the twelfth century AD. The failure to recognise this fact is partly a function of the heavily Euro-centred nature of school curricula and partly due to the unwarranted neglect of the history (and particularly non-Eurocentric history) of mathematics in a typical mathematician's education. Second, Figure 3 shows the one-way traffic of mathematical knowledge into western Europe up to the fifteenth century. Thus the Arab mathematical renaissance between the eighth and twelfth centuries shaped and determined the pace of developments in the subject for the next five hundred years.

The anatomy of Eurocentric bias

The Eurocentric historiography of mathematics exhibits certain features which may explain the biases that result. First, there is a general disinclination to locate mathematics in a materialistic base and thus link its development with economic, political and cultural changes. Second, there is a tendency to perceive mathematical pursuits as confined to an elite, a select few who possess the requisite qualities or gifts denied to the vast majority of humanity. This is a view prevalent even today in the classroom and thus determines what is taught and who benefits from learning mathematics. Third, there is a widespread acceptance of the view that mathematical discovery can only follow from a rigorous application of a form of deductive axiomatic logic, which is perceived

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as a unique product of Greek mathematics. As a consequence, 'intuitive' or empirical methods are dismissed as of little relevance in mathematics. Finally, the presentation of mathematical results must conform to the formal and didactic style following the pattern set by the Greeks over 2,000 years ago. And, as a corollary, the validation of new additions to mathematical knowledge can only be undertaken by a small, self-selecting coterie whose control over the acquisition and dissemination of such knowledge through journals has a highly Eurocentric character today.

As an illustration of how the features listed above can create Eurocentric bias, let us examine the status ascribed to mathematical pursuits which do not conform to the criteria mentioned in the last paragraph, notably in Egypt and Mesopotamia before the emergence of Greek mathematics.

A commonly expressed view is that, before the Greeks, there was no mathematics in the sense of the characteristic intellectual activity which goes under that name today. The argument goes: pre-Greek mathematics had neither a well-defined concept of 'proof' nor any perception of the need for proof. Where the Egyptians or Mesopotamians were involved in activities which could be described as 'mathematics', these activities were purely utilitarian, such as the construction of calendars, parcelling out land, administration of harvests, organisation of public works (e.g., irrigation or flood control) or collection of taxes. Empirical rules were devised to help undertake these activities, but there is no evidence of any overt concern with abstractions and proofs which form the core of mathematics. In any case, the argument continues, the only evidence that we have to assess the mathematics of these two civilisations amounts to little more than the exercises that schoolchildren of today are expected to work out, which merely involve the application of certain rules or procedures; they are hardly 'proofs' of results which have universal application.

A response to this critique of pre-Greek mathematics may take two forms. The first relates to the validity of the above characterisation of Egyptian or Mesopotamian mathematics. The second raises broader questions about the nature and functions of mathematics.

The word 'proof' has different meanings, depending on its context and the state of development of the subject. To suggest that because existing documentary evidence does not exhibit the deductive axiomatic logical inference characteristic of much of modern mathematics, these cultures did not have a concept of proof, would be misleading. Generalisations about the area of a circle and the volume of a truncated pyramid are found in Egyptian mathematics. Checking the correctness of a division by a subsequent multiplication or verifying the solutions of different types of equation by the method of substitution are found in Babylonian mathematics. A method in common use in Europe until

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about a hundred years ago for solving linear equations is generally known as the method of false position.* This method was in common use to solve practical problems such as determining the potency of beer or obtaining optimal feed mixtures for cattle and poultry in Egyptian and Babylonian mathematics. As Gillings has argued,[10] Egyptian 'proofs' are rigorous without being symbolic, so that typical values of a variable are used and generalisation to any other values is immediate. Or again, generalisations of the methods used in solving algebraic problems contained in the Ahmes papyrus (c1650 BC) and the Moscow papyrus (c1850 BC), two of the most important mathematical documents from Egypt, involve applications of the same procedure to one example after another. To illustrate, consider one of the 'lesson texts' dating back to the time of the first Babylonian dynasty of Hammurabi (c1700 BC), translated and interpreted by Neugebauer.[11] For the sake of simplicity, I have converted the quantities expressed in base 60 (i.e., sexagesimal) system to our base 10 (i.e., decimal system).

Problem
Length (us), width (sag). I have multiplied length and breadth, thus obtaining the area. Then I added to the area the excess of length over width:183 (was the result). Then I have added length and width:27. Required (to obtain) length, width and area.

Solution
Given 27 and 183, the Sums
Result 15 length, 12 width, 180 area

Method
One follows this method: [step 1] $27 + 183 = 210$; $2 + 27 = 29$
Take one half of 29 and square it: [step 2] $(14.5)^2 = 210.25$
Subtract 210 from the result: [step 3] $210.25 - 210 = 0.25$
Take square root of 0.25: [step 4] Square root of $0.25 = 0.5$
Then, Length $= 14.5 + 0.5 = 15$
Breadth $= (14.5 - 0.5) - 2 = 12$
Area $= 15 \times 12 = 180$

Present-day method
Let length (us) = x and width (sag) = y. Then the problem is solved by evaluating the following two equations;

$$xy + x - y = 183$$
$$x + y = 27 \qquad (1)$$

Now define a new variable y' such that $y' = y + 2$
Then (1) can be rewritten as:

$$xy' = 27 + 183 = 210$$
$$x + y' = 2 + 27 = 29 \qquad (2)$$

(*Note*: The transformation from (1) to (2) is indicated by Step 1)

* To solve for x in the equation $x + x/5 = 24$, the method of false position involves arguing that if $x = 5$, then $x + x/5$ will equal 6. So to obtain the required 24, we need to multiply 6 by 4. Or the correct x value is 20.

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The general system of equations of which (2) is a particular case may be expressed thus;

$$xy' = P$$
$$x + y' = s$$

So that the solution is:

$$x = \tfrac{1}{2}s + w$$
$$y' = \tfrac{1}{2}s - w \qquad (3)$$

where

$$w = \text{Square root of } [(\tfrac{1}{2}s)^2 - P]$$

Substitution of $P = 210$, $s = 29$ gives $w = 0.5$, which can then be used to evaluate $x = 15$, $y = y' - 2 = 12$ and area $= 180$

What the Babylonian method involved was the application step by step of the general formula, expressed in modern algebraic symbolism, given in (3) to numbers. The Sumerian symbols *us* and *sag*, for length and width respectively, serve the same purpose as our algebraic symbols x and y. And instead of providing a formula for the solutions of this type of problem, the Babylonians gave one example after another, just as an elementary school textbook may do today to ensure that the method is correctly applied. Such a demonstration may very well be as effective as 'formal' proofs in problems of this nature. This problem is also indicative of the level of sophistication reached by Babylonian mathematics. To dismiss such work as 'scrawlings of children just learning to write'[12] is more a reflection of the author's prejudices than an objective assessment of the real quality of such mathematics.

A further criticism levelled against Egyptian and Babylonian mathematics is that their mathematics was more a practical tool than an intellectual pursuit. This criticism is symptomatic of a widespread attitude, again originating with the Greeks,* that mathematics devoid of an utilitarian bent is in some sense a nobler or better mathematics. This attitude has even percolated right across the mathematics curriculum in schools and colleges.** As a consequence, there is both a sense of remoteness and irrelevance associated with the subject among many who study it, and an ingrained elitism among those who teach it. This elitism is translated at a classroom level into a view, often implicit and not spoken, that real mathematics as opposed to 'doing sums' is an activity suited for a select few – which when extended provides the broader argument that mathematics is a unique product of European

* An important distinction running right across Greek thought was between *Arithmetica*, the study of the properties of pure numbers, and *Logistica*, the use of numbers in practical applications. The cultivation of the latter discipline was to be left to the slaves. A legend has it that when Euclid (c300 BC) was asked what was to be gained from studying geometry, he told his slave to toss a coin at the inquirer.

** There is, however, a discernible movement towards 'utilitarian' mathematics in the modern classroom. So the tide may be turning.

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culture. Thus, elitism in the classroom is ultimately linked to the form of intellectual racism which I have described as Eurocentrism.

Countering Eurocentrism in the classroom

The foregoing analysis illustrates the need to confront and then counter Eurocentrism in mathematics. A commonly expressed view of the educational establishment in this country is that while a correction of the Eurocentric bias in history may be a worthwhile exercise, it has little relevance to mathematical activities within the classroom. I have stated elsewhere why I think this is a misconceived view and how an unbiased historical perspective can enrich the quality of mathematical activity in the classroom as well as provide a valuable input into anti-racist education generally.[13] It would be useful to restate these arguments in the context of the themes explored here.

First, mathematics is shown to have flourished all over the world, with its internal logic providing a point of convergence for different mathematical traditions, without being constrained by geography, gender* or race. Yet within this unity there is an interesting diversity which could serve to entertain and educate at the same time. By bringing to the attention of the students differences in the language and structure of counting systems found across the world, by showing how different calendars and eras operate or by examining different spatial relations contained in, say, traditional African designs, Indian *rangoli* patterns and Islamic art, they could serve both as useful examples of applied mathematics as well as increase their awareness of cultural diversity.**

Second, a historical approach may, if handled carefully, provide a useful materialistic perspective in evaluating contributions made by different societies. The implied myth of the 'Greek' miracle in explaining the origins of mathematics will give way to a more balanced assessment of the nature of early mathematical accomplishments. Thus, the Ishango bone, found on a fishing site by the banks of Lake Edward in Zaire dating back about 8,000 years, was first thought of as a permanent numerical record of unknown objects. A closer study of the notches on it revealed that it may have been a six-month calendar of the

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* The contributions of women mathematicians have also been neglected in standard histories, except for the occasional mention of Hypatia (c.d.415) whose cruel death at the hands of a Christian mob is taken by some to represent the end of Alexandrian mathematics.[14]

** It is not my intention here to enter into the controversy regarding the precise meaning of culture. The relationship between a people who possess a culture and the culture itself is highly complex and very germane to the point under discussion. The term 'culture' is used here in an anthropological sense to describe a collection of customs, rituals, beliefs, tools, mores, etc., possessed by a group of people who may be related to one another by factors such as a common language, geographical contiguity or class.

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phases of the moon.* Similarly, an Amerindian *quipi* found in Peru was first thought of as an art object consisting of an intricate pattern of woven knots. But it was later recognised that the artefact contained the record of a whole population census taken about 2,000 years ago, where the knots of varying sizes stood for different numerical magnitudes and different colour coding used to show characteristics such as sex and age. In a predominantly pastoral or simple agricultural economy such ingenious devices were invented to satisfy the main mathematical requirement – the recording and preservation of such information as was required to keep track of the passage of time or predict seasons for planting seeds or the coming of rains. But as societies evolved mathematical demands became more varied and sophisticated, leading, for example, to the discovery of the place value notation by Babylonians (c2000 BC) for more complex computations and the eventual adoption 3,000 years later, when mechanical contrivances such as the abacus or rod numerals were no longer sufficient, of our number system (developed by the Indians about 2,000 years ago), when written calculations became absolutely essential for trade and commerce. Both the Babylonian invention and the Indian numerals were momentous discoveries at the time, but are taken for granted today.

Finally, if we accept the principle that teaching should be tailored to children's experience of the social and physical environment in which they live, mathematics should also draw on these experiences, which would include in contemporary Britain the presence of different ethnic minorities with their own mathematical heritage. Drawing on the mathematical traditions of these groups, indicating that these cultures are recognised and valued, would also help to counter the entrenched historical devaluation of them. Again, by promoting such an approach, mathematics is brought into contact with a wide range of disciplines, including art and design, history and social studies, which it conventionally ignores. Such a holistic approach would serve to augment, rather than fragment, a child's understanding and imagination.

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I would like to acknowledge Burjor Avari's help and thank him for his useful criticism.

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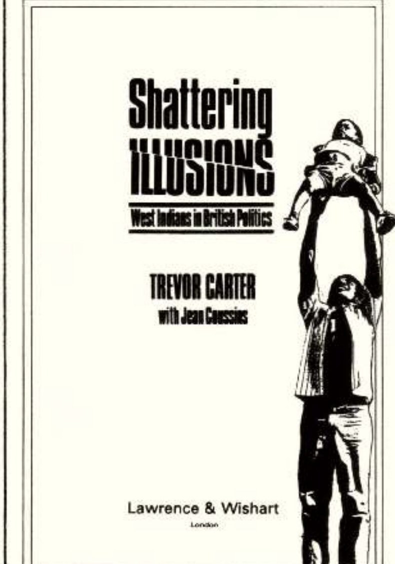

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RUPERT LEWIS

Garvey's forerunners: Love and Bedward*

Robert Love's influence

Marcus Garvey was born twenty-two years after the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion. The conditions which spawned that rebellion and its several hundred peasant martyrs still continued. But the fighting spirit of the people had taken a beating after the suppression of the rebellion. British imperialism was, at the end of the nineteenth century, in its heyday. After the 1880s, the partitioning of Africa among the capitalist powers of Europe had been completed and Britain had secured a huge slice of the continental 'cake'. It was this experience which led the anti-colonial fighter, Dr Robert Love, to write: 'Africa has been the carcass upon which the vultures of Europe have descended and which they have sought to partition among themselves, without any regard whatever for the rights of the Africans.'[1]

Garvey was later to acknowledge that 'much of my early education in race consciousness is from Dr Love. One cannot read his *Jamaica Advocate* without getting race consciousness ... if Dr Love was alive and in robust health, you would not be attacking me, you would be attacking him ... '[2]

Discussion of Love's work in Jamaica is important to show that anti-colonial politics was alive and that black spokesmen such as Love set an

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*A chapter from *Marcus Garvey: anti-colonial champion* to be published by Karia Press, BCM Karia, London WC1N 3XX, UK.

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example for Garvey. There is a direct line in post-emancipation black political struggle from George William Gordon and Paul Bogle, to Bedward, the evangelical leader, and to the secular spokesman, Dr Robert Love. This, of course, reflects the progressive movement in Jamaican politics which Garvey's work continued.

Love was born in Nassau, the Bahamas, in 1835, and died in Jamaica in 1914. As a young man, he emigrated to the United States where he studied for the Episcopalian priesthood and worked as a clergyman in the South. Love then turned to medicine and by the end of the 1870s he had completed his course at the University of Buffalo. He then travelled to Haiti in 1880, where he was employed by the Haitian government as an army doctor, before settling in Jamaica in 1889. Love emerged as the most prominent radical figure in Jamaican politics at the turn of the century and his activities were often the subject for memos and despatches from concerned colonial officials to the British Colonial Secretary.

Love is best remembered for his militant journalism in the *Jamaica Advocate* (1894-1905), which was a tribune anticipating Garvey's American and Jamaican periodicals. Love was also involved with the Jamaica Cooperative Association (1897), and the People's Convention (1898). At the first conference of the People's Convention, a discussion was held on the 'Distribution of land to the peasantry'. The chairman of the People's Convention was Alexander Dixon, who in 1899 won a seat to the Legislative Council.

Love himself had been a main organiser for black representation in the colonial legislature, which was dominated by white planters, merchants and colonial officials. In an editorial published in the *Advocate* in 1895, Love listed several black men whom he said should put themselves up for election, including Alexander Dixon. Love argued: 'And these black men can no longer hide themselves without being guilty of treason to the best interests of their race and to the hopes which the race have a right to entertain them.'[3] Furthermore, he pointed out:

> Let no Negro allow any man to deceive him by saying that there is no class feeling against him. That is a falsehood. He must, therefore, work out for himself and have nothing to do with that man ... Let the Negroes look around them in their own parish, for a representative Negro, gather around him, help him, and send him to the Legislative Council ...[4]

This was also Garvey's perspective, not only for Jamaica but for the English-speaking Caribbean which was then under colonial rule. In Love's writing, as well as in Garvey's, 'race consciousness' is used in its positive sense. 'Race consciousness' was an anti-colonial concept. It asserted the humanity of a race of people, regardless of class, whom capitalism oppressed and exploited and branded inferior. In this context, racial oppression and class exploitation stemmed from the

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same source. Therefore, race consciousness in Love and in Garvey was very often both the national cry of a people and also a class cry, but the latter was not the cry of one class, but of several classes linked by a common yoke of suffering.

Love's electoral struggles were bitterly opposed by whites and mulattoes. Most of the black population was disenfranchised. But Love obviously intended to make use of certain limited reforms that had been introduced in 1895. In that year, the number of elected members was raised from nine to fourteen and the franchise had been extended by lowering the property qualifications and removing the literacy restriction. Voter registration consequently rose from 2,000 in 1884 to 43,266 in 1894-5.[5] As a result, Love was elected to the Kingston City Council in 1898 and to the Legislative Council in 1906. In these bodies he continued to defend the oppressed colonial population.

Love was an advocate of land reform. He agitated for the distribution of Crown lands to the landless peasantry on terms which would bring their possession within the reach of all.[6] He called for the abolition of certain land-holding taxes which severely affected the peasantry, and also for a stop to the heavily subsidised importation of East Indian labour, introduced largely to depress wages and to coerce black labour into accepting the conditions of plantation toil. As one scholar has written: 'many whites believed that the plantation was a vital agency for civilising the black masses and ought to be kept alive irrespective of economic considerations.[7] This was, of course, a racial justification for the plantation system. In the *Jamaica Advocate*, the plantation system was described as a profit-making institution that kept the labourers 'dependent, poor, ignorant, unclean, contemptible and miserable'.[8]

Love's newspaper also served the migrant labourers in South and Central America, exposing the injustices meted out to them, which in several cases were particularly outrageous. Love's work, therefore, naturally brought him into conflict with the planters and the colonial rulers in Kingston and in London.

Love concerned himself with all aspects of colonial life. In the *Advocate* he exposed police brutality, called for the appointment of black school inspectors and generally the integration of qualified blacks into the colonial bureaucracy. He also discussed health, education and the question of black women and their role in society. About black women, Love wrote, 'the destiny of the Negro Race depends upon the elevation of the women of the race', and added that 'the conditions in which the black people of B.W.I [British West Indies] are found today is due to the fact that no effort has been made to lift the black woman up and to put her on the plane that woman ought to occupy in society'.[9] Of course, the conditions of black people were due to more profound social, economic and political reasons, but the fact of Love's attention to the role of black women in the struggle is itself an achievement. He

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lectured in a rural town on 'Phyllis Wheatley, the African poetess'. This was done in aid of the contemplated establishment of a high school for girls to be named after Phyllis Wheatley. Love was well known for his public lectures.

Of significance was his series on the Haitian revolution and Toussaint L'Ouverture, which were published in the *Advocate* between July and September, 1898, and which created wide public discussion. The Haitian revolution evoked the same response at that time as the Cuban revolution did and continues to do among imperial interests and the local ruling classes. And to mark the centenary of the Haitian revolution, Love warned Haitians against imperialism's several facets: 'Keep clear of United States greed and avoid German brutality.'[10]

In 1896, he suggested that a public memorial be put up to mark the memory of George William Gordon. Love made this suggestion thirty-one years after Gordon's execution for his links with the 1865 peasant revolt led by Paul Bogle. This at a time when one of the major assumptions of the colonial political system was that the revolt of 1865 could be repeated. The law enforcement agencies, especially the local constabulary force (established 1866-1867) and the courts acted on this assumption.[11]

Pan-Africanism

Love's influence on Garvey must be seen not only as an introduction to early nationalist politics in Jamaica but also to the Pan-Africanist ideas articulated by Afro-West Indians, Afro-American and African intellectuals. In a very real sense, Love was a DuBois-type intellectual. In his writings there are references to the works of Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Phyllis Wheatley, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Alexander Crummell, John E. Bruce, H. Sylvester-Williams, J. Albert Thorne, Frederick Douglass, Edward Blyden and J. Casely Hayford. In fact, it was the partnership of Dr Love and H. Sylvester-Williams which launched a Pan-African Association in Jamaica in April 1901.

The establishment of such an organisation was a consequence of the Pan-African Conference held in London, on 23-25 July 1900, which was attended by twenty-four delegates from the Caribbean, the United States and Africa. H. Sylvester-Williams, a Trinidad-born barrister (who was George Padmore's uncle), became the organising secretary of the Pan-African Conference and was mainly responsible for convening the meeting. And W.E.B. DuBois, who later organised four Pan-African Congresses between 1919 and 1927, was chairman of the resolutions committee and also regional officer for the USA.

Just before Love's People's Convention met in August 1900, the *Advocate* informed its readers about the London Conference. The brief item read:

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> The Pan-African Conference composed of black men is to meet and to deliberate in London during the present month. Its object is to bring before the people and government of Great Britain the circumstances, claims and desires of the black populations incorporated in the British Empire.[12]

The Conference also received the support of another Pan-Africanist figure, J. Albert Thorne, who was, from a political point of view, in the Booker T. Washington mould. Thorne was born in Barbados and taught for many years in Jamaica. He was not a radical but he had ideas about resettling blacks in Africa.

In March 1901, Sylvester-Williams arrived in Jamaica to organise the Pan-African Association. As part of the publicity, the *Advocate* published documents from the London Conference, including the 'Address to the nations of the world', written by DuBois, which sets out the early progressive ideological orientation of Pan-Africanism.

Some success attended the efforts of Sylvester-Williams. Within a month, membership in the Jamaica Pan-African Association reached 500 and there were groups in Kingston, Annotto Bay, Porus, Port Antonio, Black River, Mandeville, and Yallahs in St Thomas.[13] Love and his newspaper performed a vital role in the development of this short-lived Association.

The objectives of the Pan-African Association as set out at the first meeting of the Kingston branch were:

1. To secure for Africans and their descendants throughout the world their civil and political rights;
2. To ameliorate the condition of our oppressed brethren in the continent of Africa, America, and other parts of the world, by promoting efforts to secure effective legislation;
3. To encourage our people in educational, industrial and commercial enterprises;
4. To foster friendly relations between the Caucasian and African races;
5. To organise a bureau as a depository for collections of authorised productions, writings and statistics, relating to our people everywhere;
6. To raise a fund to be used solely for the forwarding of the above.[14]

These were, in a sense, modest objectives, but they represent the beginning of the mass anti-colonial torrents of later decades.

The Governor, Sir Augustus Hemming, opposed the Pan-African Association. He had been asked to give his patronage to a concert to raise funds for the Association, but he refused, citing three reasons. First, he said, there was no need for the organisation; secondly, it was aggressive; and thirdly, he would have to submit the matter to Mr Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies.[15]

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Love replied in his very incisive manner:

> Sir Augustus Hemming, the man, sees in the African Race, a people subject and to be kept in subjection, even though they are called 'British subjects'; and consistently enough, he refuses to sympathise with their aspirations and aims ... Sir Augustus Hemming cannot arrest the tide of aggression. It is the law of the world and if the African, like others, is to be progressive, he must be aggressive. And he is not to ask leave of Sir Augustus Hemming in the matter.[16]

Hemming replied, repeating his position and arguing with crass hypocrisy that 'in British Colonies like Jamaica' there was 'one law for black and white, and that law is impartially administered, without fear, favour, or prejudice'.[17]

Love's reply is well worth quoting at length as, with a touch of his characteristic irony, it cuts through and exposes the class and racial realities that determined how the law was exercised:

> 'There is one law for black and white', is a convenient phrase frequently employed in Jamaica and elsewhere, as a vehicle to convey a false impression as to the prevailing conditions of the various classes, positively and relatively. It has become the stock formula under the plausible sound of which a subtle deception is veiled. 'There is one (constitutional) law for white and black', in the United States, yet black citizens of the United States are publicly shot, hanged, and burned at the stake and thousands are disenfranchised, in spite of that 'one law'. The letter of the law and the spirit of the rulers are very different things. His excellency says: 'In Jamaica there is but one law for black and white, and that law is impartially administered without fear, favour or prejudice', but in spite of this, we are left to ask, where is the black man whom His Excellency has appointed member of any Public Board? Although almost all the prisoners in the island are black men, where is the black man whom he has ever appointed on the Board of Visitors of either the Prisons or Reformatories ... In Jamaica 'there is but one law for black and white', yet by that very law, the black masses are made to pay more taxes than the white classes ... We do not deny that in Jamaica, 'there is one law for black and white', but we do deny that a spirit of impartial justice gives value to that law; and after all the latter is the main point.[18]

It was this very issue of a class- and race-prejudiced judiciary which Garvey was to take up twenty years later and which led to his imprisonment in Jamaica.

Under other circumstances, Love continued to engage the exponents of colonialism and racism. Joseph Chamberlain was reported to have said, 'as the dominant race, if we admitted equality with inferior races, we would lose the power which gave us our dominance'.[19] Love's

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Advocate replied fiercely, attacking colonialism:

> It is with this principle that they vex the Africans with 'punitive expeditions', and destroy the Indians with famine and oppression. It is thus minded that their Governors and officials and under-strappers come to these isles. But Englishmen will wake up some day to find they are making a great mistake ... The subject races will not always be governed by that spirit. They were not always thus governed. The Indian will some day repel the assumption, the African will do the same thing, the Egyptian and Burmese, etc., will vindicate their individuality, and will prove that temporary dominance is not evidence of constitutional superiority.[20]

This line of anti-colonial struggle was directly continued in Garvey's work. Love's was an important orientation that preceded Garvey, a legacy of ideas and battle that he could draw on, a platform of views and aspirations to which he could attract a mass base. Love was a fighter, but he was largely alone; he really had no mass following.

West Indians had a 'paternalistic' attitude to Africa. Some had gone via the colonial route to work as teachers, missionaries and skilled craftsmen. The perspective of the *Advocate* was that West Indians must qualify themselves 'to assist in the enlightenment of neglected Africa'.[21] At the same time, the *Advocate* did its best to use views and information from the West African colonial press. Newspapers like the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, the *Lagos Weekly Record*, the *Lagos Standard*, the *Lagos Echo*, the *West African Mail* and the *Gold Coast Leader* were frequently referred to in the *Advocate*. There is even reference to the *Advocate* having a special correspondent in West Africa.[22]

In 1897, the *Advocate* published a series of articles by Dr Scholes on European imperialist policy in Africa.[23] Scholes was a Jamaican who authored a number of scholarly books critical of imperial policy and racism. In addition to Scholes, the *Advocate* reproduced the writings of Dr Edward Blyden and J.E. Casely Hayford. Indeed, the attitude of the *Advocate* towards African political development is summed up in the comment:

> 'Africa for the Africans' is the new shape of an old cry ... This cry will waken the so-called civilised world to a consciousness of the fact that others, who are not accounted as civilised, think with regard to natural rights, just as civilised peoples think ... [24]

The *Advocate* also dealt with the struggle by Afro-Americans for civil and political rights against racism.

Booker T. Washington was at this time the acknowledged leader of the Afro-American population. Love described him as the 'Negro Apostle of Industrial Education for the African Race'.[25] The *Advocate*, in 1903, published a comprehensive report of the 12th Tuskegee

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Conference, and between November and December of 1901, a series of articles also appeared on 'The race question in the United States' which dealt at length with Washington's activities.[26] However, Love was critical of Washington's apparent acquiescence to the racism of the American South. Instead, Love paid more attention to the more radical Afro-Americans, like John E. Bruce, the radical journalist who later worked for Garvey's *Negro World* newspaper. Love, in an attack on American racism, quoted extensively from Bruce's protest pamphlet, *Blood red record*, dealing with the lynching and burning of blacks in the United States.

These are some of the political positions adopted by Love which make him significant in any study of Garvey's early life and work. Clearly, Garvey had been privileged to hear Love lecture – no doubt, especially around the period of the 1906 election – and he was certainly a reader of the *Advocate*. As a matter of fact, one of Garvey's co-workers at the Government Printing Office, Kingston, Enos J. Sloly, knew Love personally, and Sloly not only travelled to Costa Rica when Garvey went there around 1910, but was to be one of the founding members of the UNIA.

Socio-religious ferment: Bedwardism

While Dr Robert Love represented the secular form of anti-colonialism, there was also the religious form which manifested itself, especially in Bedwardism. Throbbing at the heart of Bedwardism was the restless frustration of the down-trodden and displaced peasant masses who looked to God for salvation, and saw in Bedward his representative in Jamaica.

Bedwardism took the name of its founder, Alexander Bedward (1859-1930), a Native Baptist preacher who had been a cooper on Mona Estate, St Andrew, and in Panama. The Native Baptist movement of Bedward goes back to the peasant activity of the 1840s, which culminated in the 'Great Revival' of 1860-61, and in the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865. During the 1880s in the parish of Hanover, there had also been another significant Revivalist Movement.[27]

The crucial years for Bedwardism were from the 1890s to the 1920s. Bedward was well aware of the historical tradition of peasant struggle from which he emerged. He, in fact, identified himself with Paul Bogle, a fact which set the stage for a repeat of the Morant Bay repression that followed.[28] Bedward is reported to have proclaimed:

> There is a white wall and a black wall, and the white wall has been closing around the black wall; but now the black wall has become bigger than the white wall. Let them remember the Morant War . . . [29]

Characteristically speaking in parables, as so many Jamaican working

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people do, Bedward was challenging the colonial state. This was a seditious statement defiantly uttered in the tradition of Paul Bogle which bore testimony to the fact that the black militancy and rebellious spirit of elements among the down-trodden peasantry had not been snuffed out in 1865. The colonial officials had not forgotten how Bogle had ordered the black constables sent out to arrest him to join their own colour and 'cleave to the black'.[30] Bedward was too ominous a reminder of Bogle and the 'Morant War' to be left alone.

A contemporary white Jamaican police inspector, Thomas wrote in his memoirs:

> It should always be borne in mind that although under normal conditions there is no racial animosity in evidence, any riot which is not promptly and ruthlessly suppressed at once tends to develop into a race war; or rather, I should say, a class war: for the people of mixed race, and even the well-to-do negroes themselves, would in such an event fare no better at the hands of the mob – consisting as it does of the lowest and most dangerous elements of the population – than the 'buckra' who stands at the top of the social scale.[31]

Thomas realised the threat from the lowest as being the most dangerous, and that such a threat had to be 'ruthlessly suppressed'. Thomas' position was the norm of ruling-clas sentiment in the colonies. Beneath the whites were the people of 'mixed race' and 'well-to-do negroes' who were often more vitriolic in their hostility to radicalism than the whites. This difference was not because the latter were more disposed to the blacks than mulattoes or middle-class blacks, but rather it was prudent for others to do their dirty work, and it was a role that the colonial-minded middle sectors could be relied on to carry out.

The elements represented in Love were not the same as those represented in Bedwardism. Bedwardism attracted the most oppressed section of the poor peasantry and semi-proletarian masses out of which Rastafarianism later came. Love reflected the middle-peasantry – the better-off blacks – whose advance in all areas (professional, mercantile, social, cultural and political) faced the stonewall of colonial racism.

The source of disaffection which fed Bedwardism was the bitter struggle waged by the plantocracy and the colonial government to continue the enslavement of the peasants to the estates. As Dr T.E.S. Scholes in a contemporary analysis of the late nineteenth century points out: 'In order to make the peasantry more dependent on the estates, the Sugar Interests pursued the policy of withholding its lands from that portion of the community.'[32] Evidence of this process is seen in the fact that between 1894 and 1901, 128,000 acres of land had been reverted to the Crown. By 1912, this figure reached 240,368 acres.[33] This situation primarily affected the poorest peasants. They faced intensified impoverishment and demoralisation, and sought outlets by leaving for

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other plantations in the Americas, or by abandoning the countryside to settle in Kingston and St Andrew. This rural-urban drift was certainly one of the streams feeding the rise of Bedwardism during the 1890s.

The followers of Bedwardism found an outlet in religion. The followers of Love, for their part, were spokesmen for their class and sought to develop a political movement with an anti-colonial platform. From the standpoint of colonial and racial oppression, the two streams needed to be brought together into a mightier force. The possibilities for this were not realised in Love's time, and when Garvey attempted it severe strains were imposed by the strength of the colonial system itself and the inconsistency of the middle-class blacks, especially those influenced by colonial values and pressures: because the little they had acquired in property and social standing, they did not want to lose.

Bedward, like Garvey and Edward Blyden, often referred to the passage in the Bible which reads: 'Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God' (Psalm 68:31). Used by these men to people who used the Bible to understand the world, their condition and their future, this verse acquired an anti-colonial meaning. That Bedwardism, with all its religious mysticism, was also a form of nationalism, was recognised by his contemporaries and is evident in this despatch by a correspondent to the weekly newspaper *Jamaica Times*:

> . . . for if the heads of church and state take up the uncompromising position (negro inferiority ever; and negro progress never) then what DuBois, the educated American Negro Teacher, and Booker T. Washington and Frederick Douglass and Dr Love strive for will come not by the peaceful wand of the school-master but by the juggernaut car of strife . . . Therefore, I conclude that Bedwardism is a manger of Black Ideals . . . from which will spring the menace of black progress.[34]

Alexander Bedward was a target for the colonial authorities because he was a religious leader of the masses who, in his church and on the banks of the August Town river, preached against British colonialism. On 21 January, 1891, Bedward was arrested and charged with sedition. He spent four months in jail before being summoned for trial. He was judged insane. Bedward, nevertheless, continued his religious work. He was finally put into the mental asylum after an attempted protest march on Kingston in April 1921, when 685 of his followers were arrested and 208 convicted.[35]

That march included casual labourers, cultivators, carpenters, wharf labourers, butlers and shoemakers.[36] From this social class came, in fact, a number of Bedwardites who were drawn to Garveyism or who retained dual allegiances. Just one example of the latter tendency was Roman Henry of August Town, who was active in both the Bedwardite and Garveyite movements at the same time. Garvey himself realised the

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link between his work and Bedward's when he publicly stated in 1927 that the colonial authorities would have a hard time putting him in the asylum as they had done with 'poor Bedward'.[37]

The colonial authorities were supported by the *Daily Gleaner*, which waged a journalistic battle against Bedwardism, maligning the religious practices of the group and calling constantly for their repression. During the early 1890s, Joshua DeCordova, proprietor of the *Daily Gleaner*, described his newspaper's policy towards Bedwardism in the following way: 'The *Gleaner* set itself by reporting and sarcasm to kill the folly and ridiculed it out of existence ... '[38] This was, however, not the truth. Sarcasm and ridicule were minor aspects of a broader policy. In 1921, official policy was to destroy Bedwardism by force. The determination to crush Bedwardism is clearly evidenced in the instructions from governor Sir Leslie Probyn, to resident magistrate Sam. C. Burke, to pre-arrange the charges under which Bedward would be arrested on the day in April he and his followers attempted to march from their August Town camp into Kingston. Plans were also made and effected by the police to ambush the march at Matilda's Corner. Many of Bedward's followers were subsequently arrested and sentenced to hard labour on trumped-up charges. The *Gleaner* argued that 'the only way to smash up the gang' was compulsorily to 'acquire the lands in the village'.[39] This was supported by letters to the press. In one of its characteristic racist comments, the *Gleaner* stated: 'We must choose now between tolerating West African survivals on a gigantic scale and preserving the name of Jamaica as a civilised country.'[40]

What we now know as 'psychological warfare' has a long history as the media in the hands of the ruling class is used alongside the gun in the hands of the soldiers and police. The *Gleaner* resorted both to ridicule and the advocacy of force, using each according to its assessment of the threat represented by the Bedwardites. The challenge to the colonial system originating from Love and Bedward was to inform and inspire Garveyism itself, which, in its turn, was to incur the opprobrium of the colonial authorities, supported by the colonial press. And the same tactics that the *Gleaner* had used against the Bedwardites were to be ably used by the *Gleaner*'s leader writer, H.G. Delisser, against the Garvey movement in the 1920s and 1930s.

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ANWAR H. SYED

Revitalising the Muslim community

Of late, we have heard increasingly of an Islamic resurgence in the Muslim world from Morocco to Indonesia. These reports have been received in the West with a mixture of wonderment and apprehension. The reaction among Muslims is more complex, combining elements of victorious self-assertion, righteous zeal, cynicism, quiet resignation, frustration and/or repudiation. Consider, for instance, the result of a recent election in Pakistan held by General Zia-ul-Haq, who justifies his long military dictatorship on the grounds that he is Islamising the nation's social, economic and political life. Even though no opposition to his rule or programme was allowed to be voiced, the Pakistani electorate defeated seven of his ministers and advisers who had chosen to run. His ally among the political parties, the Jamat-e-Islami, which has been a consistent advocate of Islamisation since independence, was able to win no more than seven of the 207 open contests for the National Assembly.

The *ulema* (religious hierarchy) have been telling Pakistanis for years that their country remains unfulfilled, unworthy of being preserved and unlikely to survive unless it Islamises itself. The recent results might then appear startling. In fact they are not. The Muslims of Pakistan have similarly rebuffed the Islamic parties and their advocacy in every national and provincial election in the past. In his essay discussed below, Eqbal Ahmad expects that in a free election Iranian Muslims

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Race & Class, XXVIII, 3(1987)

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will, most likely, reject the Khomeini regime. What does alleged Islamic resurgence then mean?

A spate of books has appeared in recent years to answer this question. Some of these books have the mission of explaining Islam, as a system of values and law and as a civilisation, to western audiences. One such book is *The Islamic Impact*.* It is a survey, containing essays on Islamic and/or Muslim politics, economics, law, epistemology, women, mysticism, art, music, the meaning of being Muslim and the position of Muslims living in the United States. These are all good and competent statements contributed by scholars distinguished in their respective fields. My purpose here is not to assess their merit but, instead, to use them as points of departure to raise issues their authors do not raise but which must be addressed if Muslims are to clear the brush that currently obscures their road to any real resurgence.

Reports that a new spirit, or even outlook, is taking hold in the Muslim world are not wholly incorrect. There is, first, the fact that since the ouster of western colonial rule from Muslim lands and subsequent assertions of Muslim political will in defiance of western pressures – such as Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez canal in 1956, the Arab oil embargo in 1973, the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and the Iranian taking of American hostages in 1980 – Muslims everywhere have felt that being Muslim is not a state for which they need to feel diffident or apologetic. These acts of self-assertion reinforce their awareness, which they have always had, that their antecedents are worthy of respect in that fellow Muslims in the past have shown themselves to be capable of great accomplishments: built vast empires, created artistic beauty, composed literary masterpieces and advanced science, law and philosophy.

This assertion of Muslim identity also implies a reluctance to submit to either the western capitalist or the marxist models of socio-economic development. It gathers self-confidence and a sense of efficacy from the failure of both western and socialist worlds to solve their own problems. Socialist politics are stern and repressive in dealing with the individual. They may be more egalitarian in distributing the gross national product, but their product lags behind that of western societies in both quantity and quality. The West is technologically capable of producing the amenities of life on an enormous scale, but it seems organisationally incapable of eradicating poverty, deficits, recessions, drug addiction, sexual promiscuity and crimes of violence. Decades of western and socialist aid and advice to the Third World have met none of its more pressing needs. Why not, then, turn to one's own tradition to see if workable solutions might be found there.

In discussing what it means to be a Muslim, William A Bijlefield, in

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*By Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Byron Haines and Ellison Findly (New York, Syracuse University Press, 1984).

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his essay in *The Islamic Impact*, first cautions us that Islam may or may not be what Muslims do. But then, as one might expect him to do, he goes on to say that we should not 'want to deal with Islam as an abstraction'; we must take account of the 'lived reality and real persons'. The *ulema* will insist that Islam as doctrine, law and guidance is not to be equated with actual Muslim practice. When we ask what it means to be a Muslim – or, for that matter, a Christian – we do not raise an idle question. It involves control over individual lives by a certain group or class in society. For instance, the Catholic church's prescription of faith, 'works' and observance of sacraments for achieving salvation gave it a long arm not only to direct ordinary individuals but to gather material resources and political power sufficient to overawe kings.[1] Luther asserted the sufficiency of faith alone, and the priesthood of all believers, in the hope of demolishing the church's power. But this was too much, too soon. Calvin declared that only those whom God had elected to save could have true faith, and thus salvation. These, the elect, must govern the unregenerate others according to the law of God which, he insisted, embraced the totality of human life.[2]

It is the same in the Muslim world. The more demanding of the *ulema* will accept nothing short of Muslims living, individually and collectively, according to the law of God to be found in the Quran, the Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet), and *fiqh* (codes prepared by medieval jurists). Taken together, these sources constitute the Sharia which, they say, is capable of providing guidance with regard to all individual and communal actions, issues, problems, and concerns.

The *ulema* claim to be the proper interpreters of the Sharia and would like to have a part in its enforcement. In power political terms, the proposition that Islam is a complete code of life can be pressed to authorise rule whose reach may be totalitarian. Moreover, it opens the way for the *ulema* to demand countless positions in the legislature, the administration, the judiciary and the universities. In other words, it is a euphemism for the *ulema*'s quest for power.

Beyond the Quran and the Sunnah, the Islamic law was first made by judges (661-750), and then (750-900) by jurists and professors. As John Esposito notes in his contribution, they arrived at their formulations in the process of applying the Quran and Sunnah to the situations and circumstances of their times and places. They were, thus, innovative and creative. But soon after their passing away, their disciples and successors closed the door to further reconsiderations and revisions. *Ijtehad*,* they said, would be admissible only rarely, and then it must represent the consensus of the leading *ulema* of the time.

The *ulema* are generally inclined to hold that if the law no longer

*Broadly speaking, the extension of old laws into new areas by using analogy.

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responds to societal needs, it means that the 'needs' have become perverse, that society has wandered away from the path of righteous living, to which it should return. The law itself must remain constant. But society has not moved back to an earlier age and, historically, Muslim governments passed numerous ordinances and regulations to deal with crime, taxation and administrative problems. In other words, the Sharia lost jurisdiction to lay authorities, tending more and more to be confined to personal and family concerns such as marriage, divorce and inheritance.

Economic policy

In the area of economic policy, the first questions must relate to how the goods and services a society needs and wants are to be produced and distributed. Islam does not identify preferred modes for organising production, but its injunctions regarding property have implications relevant to economic organisation. First, it secures the right to property for individuals, groups and the community. Thus, it may be said to allow both individual and communal ownership and management of commercial and industrial enterprises, as well as partnerships and joint stock companies. It disapproves of great concentrations of wealth and its law of inheritance has the purpose of diffusing ownership. It follows that monopolies, 'giant' corporations and great landed estates in the private sector are not approved. But, then, nor is any wholesale exclusion of private enterprise. Enterprises of medium size in a mixed economy would seem to be congenial to Islam's spirit and purposes.

As Charles Issawi notes in his essay, the economies of many Muslim countries are actually mixed. Their governments have taken over banking, insurance, transport, communications, mining and some large-scale manufacturing. This has happened partly from nationalising enterprises once in foreign or domestic ownership. In addition, these governments regulate industry and commerce in the private sector. Government regulation or ownership does not necessarily make for greater production. In fact, public enterprises, run by civil and military bureaucrats, are notoriously inefficient. How is production, then, to be increased so that the average Muslim's access to the amenities of life may be enlarged? If capitalism is repugnant to Islam because it allows great and exploitative concentrations of wealth, and socialism because it excludes private enterprise almost altogether, initiatives such as worker ownership, worker self-management, profit-sharing, stock options – all of which would be acceptable in Islam – might be considered as incentives for increased production. Considering Islam's disapproval of unearned income, exploitation and excess in all matters, ceilings on profits in both public and private sectors would also be appropriate.

Coming to issues of distribution, we should first note that, ideally,

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Islam is a brotherhood and a community whose welfare and interests take precedence over those of the individual. It is a community of equals. Equality in Islam is equality in the sight of God, before law, and of opportunity, regardless of colour, caste or tribe. It is not equality of incomes. But the affluent must have, and show, concern for the disadvantaged. While the community has primacy, the individual is allowed to make certain claims on its resources which it is expected to honour. A righteous Muslim community cannot allow any of its members to be destitute. This has led some scholars and some politicians to assert that Islam calls for a welfare state; a troublesome idea, for apart from some of the Persian Gulf emirates, whose populations are small and oil revenues enormous, and which are thus able to maintain many of their citizens virtually as pensioners, welfarism is simply beyond the means of most Muslim, and non-Muslim, states.

The inequality of incomes remains. But Islam does require the distinction to be blunted. This can be done partly by taxing the rich, by enhancing the wages of lower-ranking workers and by enlarging production and employment. But partly it must be done by controlling consumption, by enforcing Islam's disapproval of ostentatious living and its enjoining of a degree of asceticism to the elites. Will Muslim elites allow Islamic moderation to inform their life-styles? If not, can they be expected to implement any other socially significant aspect of Islam that they find to be personally inconvenient?

Muslim women

Any strategy for getting the Muslims out of their present sluggishness must address itself not only to men but to women, of whom there are over 450 million. It is well known that women in pre-Islamic Arabia were more like property than persons, notwithstanding occasional cases in which they acted as independent agents. Islam moved woman towards equality with man but stopped short of full equality. In some areas of public life it gave her half the status of man: the testimony of two women witnesses in certain types of cases would carry as much weight as that of one man; daughters would inherit half as much as sons from their deceased father; wives could not divorce their husbands as freely as husbands could their wives. Both men and women were asked to be chaste, but in safeguarding the community's sexual morality, the restraints placed on women would seem to be heavier than those expected of men. However, it is noteworthy that Islam established and secured woman's right to property. Jane Smith in her article reports that women own more than half of the real estate in Jedah and over one-quarter of it in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Their lower inheritance is explained by saying not only that man is the family's provider, but that what is man's is the woman's also, while what is woman's is hers alone.

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Except perhaps in the matter of divorce, women, until recently, were subject to considerable adverse discrimination in the western world also. In the mid-nineteenth century, the husband in America could legally chastise and confine his wife, keep the children in the event of divorce, take her earnings and control her property, and force her to perform services.[3] The law governing woman's rights, her own self-awareness and man's attitude towards her in America have since changed. This has happened not because the religious base of American culture has changed but, more likely, because its technological environment, and with it the societal roles and relationships of persons, have changed. As elements of modernity have infiltrated the Muslim world, some of its governments have tried to enhance the woman's social status and role and passed legislation to that effect. The husband's right to polygamy and his free-wheeling right to divorce his wife have been restricted. Muslim women, except in the more conservative societies such as Saudi Arabia, have become civil servants, doctors, lawyers, professors and teachers, industrialists and merchants, even legislators and cabinet ministers. The 'resurgent' fundamentalists want to take women where the Quran had left them. Under their pressure, General Zia-ul Haq's administration in Pakistan recently decreed that thenceforth two women's testimony in court would equal that of a man. He has been sponsoring the idea of separate universities for women. At the same time, they continue to hold high public offices in Pakistan. Twenty-two women were recently elected to the National Assembly and none but two of them wear any kind of veil. Jane Smith writes that in Iraq women make up 28 per cent, and in Indonesia more than one-third, of the workforce. There are many women civil servants in Kuwait. Women are receiving education in greater numbers than ever before. Even in Saudi Arabia, at Riyadh University, they form one-quarter of the student body. Educated women, confined to the home as housewives and mothers, represent an under-utilised resource. In the years to come, many Muslim countries may not be able to afford such under-utilisation: some are short of educated manpower, and if they do not employ women, they will have to depend on foreign workers; in others, as Muslims raise their living standards, families may need two incomes.

The Quran does ask that men and women safeguard their chastity, and it asks women not to flaunt their bodies in front of men. But it does not seem to contemplate woman's seclusion in the home. The *ulema* and other conservative Muslims, fearful that contact between man and woman will lead to romantic relationships, would seem to have concluded that seclusion of women is safer than reliance on self-restraint. Yet, it is likely that they have been unduly apprehensive. For surely it cannot be said that Hindu and Buddhist women, who are not secluded and who go about their business unveiled, are any less modest and chaste than Muslim women. Nor can it be said that Muslim peasant

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women, who work in the fields alongside their men, are less chaste than middle-class women, many of whom in cities, and some even in villages, wear the veil. Nor has it ever been established that seclusion and the veil do actually stop, or even reduce, a woman's inclination to pursue the romantic urges she might have come to entertain. In this connection, note that while men cannot clearly see a veiled woman, she can and does see them.

The *ulema* ought to re-examine their position for internal consistency. We know that Islam does not require arranged marriages. Women, as well as men, are free to select their spouses as did Khadeeja, the Prophet's first wife. How are men and women to find prospective spouses if they are not to see one another socially, if women are to be veiled and secluded? Take, now, the matter of the relative insufficiency of a woman's testimony in court. We might recall that one of the Prophet's wives, Ayesha, who lived long after his death, is among the more important reporters of his traditions. If she is respected in that role, and as an explicator and professor of Islamic law, it is not clear why, as a witness to a robbery or a murder, she should count as only half as competent as a man.

Islam and politics

In his discussion of the connection between Islam and politics, Eqbal Ahmad's purpose is not to report conventional wisdom but to challenge it. Are Muslim and western scholars correct in saying that whereas in Christianity, or in the Judeo-Christian West, religion and politics are separated, in Islam they are united? In a certain formal sense this may be true, he says, but in actual practice the distinction is not valid. Insofar as politics involves linkages between civil society and institutions of power, it is not separated from religion anywhere. Buddhism informs political expectations, styles and behaviour in South-east Asia, and Christian churches sponsor political discourse in the United States, Latin America and elsewhere in the western world.

Considering the matter from another perspective, Eqbal Ahmad observes that, since the beginning of Umayyad rule in 661, politics and religion have been effectively separated in the Muslim world, despite certain links between government and the religious establishment. First, from 750 onwards numerous Muslim princes ruled in their respective territories, even though ideally there should have been only one Muslim state encompassing the entire world of Islam. Second, rulers enacted a substantial body of criminal, fiscal and administrative law beyond the Sharia. Third, while they appointed the *ulema* to judgeships and other lucrative and prestigious posts, and authorised them to enforce the Sharia on ordinary people, they did not submit to Islamic law, or to the *ulema*'s superintendence, in their own political or personal behaviour.

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There is general agreement that since 661 no Muslim government has qualified as Islamic.

Islamic ideas such as one God, one body of law and, ideally, a single all-encompassing state are likely to create the impression that Islam calls for a centralised monolith. But this is not how Muslim society and polity have functioned. Eqbal Ahmad reminds us that Muslims have often resisted government sponsorship of any particular religious school of thought. Their political culture, he says, is activist and insurrectionary; Muslim countries from Pakistan to Mauritania are 'lands of insolence'. Occasionally, Islam has been invoked to mobilise support for opposition leaders attacking the corruption of a ruling class. Muslim saints and sufis have, from time to time, collided with the government of the day to the people's satisfaction, thus reasserting the community's right and obligation to challenge the excesses of political authority. That Muslims have historically lived in a number of separate polities, that they have interacted constructively and creatively with non-Muslims, that they keep their local identities and loyalties alongside their sense of belonging to the global Muslim community – these facts point to decentralisation, deconcentration and pluralism as important elements in Muslim political culture.

Eqbal Ahmad argues that the totalitarian or neo-totalitarian fundamentalist movements in the 1980s are, thus, contrary to the political culture and historical traditions of the majority of Muslims. They arise because the existing state of Muslim affairs is intolerable while Muslim leadership is unable to offer reliable strategies of change. Fundamentalist approaches are expressions of dark despair. Given the chance, Muslims are likely to reject them, as they have done whenever free elections have been held. In the twentieth century, the political heroes of the Muslim world – liberators, founding fathers – have been pragmatic men: Ataturk, Jinnah, Sukarno, Nasser, Bourguiba and chiefs of the Algerian revolution.

Much of the Muslim world today is poor, even though parts of it are wealthy. All of it is technologically incompetent and politically weak when it confronts the non-Muslim. In their own countries, Muslims are ruled by armed minorities, corrupt and callous, who repress and oppress their own people. Israel invades and proceeds to destroy Lebanon, but Arab states, especially the ones who champion Islam and hold hundreds of billions of dollars in American banks, do nothing to stop the invader.

On energising the Muslim community

How are Muslims once again to become competent? They might begin with discarding cliches, half-truths and false notions about their ideology and history. Let us remain with the subject of politics for a

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moment. The *ulema*, and the politicians associated with them, call upon Muslims to reject western models and establish an Islamic political system or an 'Islamic democracy'.[4] A popular view among them has it that the Prophet's rule in Medina constitutes an appropriate model for Muslims to follow, which they may supplement with examples and precedents from the pious caliphate (632-661). These calls are misleading and troublesome.

Muhammad ruled in Medina, and commanded obedience, not only because he was a just and wise ruler but also because he was honoured as a Prophet of God. His example may then be too lofty for his successors, for they do not have the advantage of prophethood. They must devise other ways of establishing their legitimacy. Second, Muhammad ruled in an ad hoc fashion, announcing laws as revelations came, and deciding matters as these arose. He established no political or governmental institutions and organisations. Nor would he appear to have routinised procedures. Third, Medina of the Prophet's time was a garrison state, threatened by the Jews and the 'hypocrites' within and by the Meccans and their allies from outside. There was not enough time to build institutions and procedures. One should indeed look to the Prophet's Medina for guidance on the ethic, ethos, orientation and general bearing of political rule in Islam. But it is simply not true that Medina offers a finished model for organising and structuring a Muslim polity.

During the pious caliphate we see some institutionalisation in the area of public administration – regularisation of functionaries and their roles and procedures – but none in politics. The Quran asks Muslims to settle their affairs by mutual consultation. The Prophet and his four pious successors did consult others but, again, on an ad hoc basis. A number of questions – who are consulted, in what manner, how often, on what matters, and whether or not the advice given is binding on him to whom it is addressed – remained unsettled. Neither the Prophet nor the pious caliphs institutionalised the process of mutual consultation. A second major issue which the Prophet did not settle, and which has plagued Muslim politics since his death, is that of succession to rule. Nor did the pious caliphs, three of whom died by assassination, settle it. There are elements of election in how three of them came to the office. But in each case this element took a different form. In other words, it failed to be regularised. As with the Prophet's Medina, we may look to the pious caliphate to capture its spirit, ethic and ethos but not for guidance on organisational or structural specifics. There is no developed or complete model of an Islamic state that Muslims today might copy. They have to create one.

Many Muslim thinkers construe the injunction to consult as an authorisation for democracy. An 'Islamic democracy', they concede, would call for an elected executive, an elected legislative assembly, determinations by majority vote and public accountability. But it is said

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to be different from western democracy in the following respects: it lodges sovereignty with Allah and not in the people; it holds that a Muslim should not be covetous of office and should not therefore offer himself as a candidate; it disapproves of political parties and an institutionalised opposition because they are divisive.

In functional terms, the sovereignty of Allah must mean the supremacy of His law. In other words, it requires a constitutional government in which God's law is fundamental law, which legislative majorities may not override. The legislature may not, for instance, legalise homosexuality, prostitution, gambling and other practices that the Quran forbids. A constitution can be changed by amendment and, also, by reinterpretation. The Quran cannot be amended. Its words must remain the same. But the meaning and import of these words is open to interpretation, judging by the fact that numerous interpretations do already exist. Of this more shortly.

That a Muslim should not be covetous of office is a requirement easily met. A man's friends and neighbours can usually be counted upon to nominate him, as Umar, the second pious caliph, was pleased to nominate Abu Bakr, his predecessor, after the Prophet's death. But note also that the validity of the maxim itself is dubious, for we know that Ali, the fourth pious caliph, wanted the office right from the beginning and made no secret of it.

The issue of parties, and that of an institutionalised opposition, is more complex. The reservation against them presumably results from the Quran's emphasis on unity and its disapproval of dissension among Muslims. Medieval Muslim jurists and scholars urged obedience even to unrighteous rulers because they thought disobedience would create dissension and turmoil, of which they were fearful. This fear is exaggerated. The Muslim community has never been homogeneous socially or politically. Ethnic, linguistic and tribal distinctions have always existed. The Quran allows them, saying that God made men into tribes and nations so that they may identify themselves to one another. It follows that not all distinctions or divisions are politically tumultuous or disintegrative. If we assume that Islam allows discussion and debate, and elections, then the idea of dialectical confrontation between opposing or competing parties and positions must be admitted. It will not do to say that individual persons in a Muslim community may compete with one another but groups may not. Competing individuals will have supporters and, if they have any political sense at all, they will soon organise themselves and become groups. It is no accident that rival political groups surfaced immediately after the Prophet's death. The Ansars of Medina gathered as a group to choose one of their own as caliph but lost to the Quraish who also acted as a group. Within the Quraish, the Banu Hashim rallied around Ali and supported his political aspirations.[5] The Hashims and the Umayyads remained political

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rivals for a long time. During Ali's caliphate, the Khwarij emerged as still another distinct group in opposition to both Ali, and his Umayyad rival, Muawiya.

Lastly, it should be understood that disagreements – without which debate is impossible and 'consultation' most likely unproductive of useful guidance – will result in dissension if the community has not developed institutions, procedures and skills for handling them. Disagreements in a politically mature community are not only constructive but essential to meaningful citizen participation in politics. It follows that except in the matter of a few practices that the Quran forbids, and which a Muslim government may not therefore legalise, an Islamic democracy would function about the same way as would a western democracy. This conclusion need not be taken as belittling to Muslim ingenuity. Being Muslim and being western are not necessarily antithetical. Repeatedly the Quran asks Muslims to believe not only in that which was revealed to Muhammad but also in that which was revealed to Jesus and, before him, to Abraham, Moses and his successors. Thus, in many ways, Islam, like the West, is Judeo-Christian. Muslims may oppose the West where their values and interests conflict with those of the latter. But there is no Islamic reason for Muslims to reject western experience indiscriminately.

At this point one might ask what living by Islam must mean. Replication of an earlier model of society and polity or reconstruction informed by the spirit of Islamic principles and purposes? As mentioned above, development of the Sharia was a dynamic, innovative and creative process. Jurists during the Abbassid caliphate set aside the rulings of Umayyad judges where necessary. May Muslims today set aside the findings and formulations of the medieval schools? Reformers say that they should be able to do for their time and circumstance what the medieval jurists were able to do for theirs.

But setting aside the medieval jurists may not suffice in coming to terms with our modern age. How do we approach the Prophet's traditions? Considering that his standing is much higher than that of professors, and passionate love of him is often considered as part of a truly righteous Muslim's disposition, it is not clear how one might justify disregarding any of his traditions. We hear of Beyezid Bistami who never ate melons because he could not determine how the Prophet used to cut and slice them; instead of cutting them the 'wrong' way, he thought it safer simply never to eat them. Those who claim to love the Prophet are likely to assert that all of his actions and sayings were divinely inspired. But the Quran does not support this view. It asks Muhammad to say that he is a human person like his followers, and that he is different from them only in being God's messenger.

We may then see Muhammad as a human person, as an Arab of a certain time and place, as a leader and ruler, and as a Prophet of God. His

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preferences as a human person and his life-style as an Arab – the vegetables he liked, if any, and the dress he wore, for instance – are surely not binding on a Burmese or an Alaskan Muslim. No one claims that he was an expert farmer, mason, engineer or surgeon and any observations he may have made with regard to these crafts may or may not have practical significance. His example as a warrior has limited force, for in none of the battles or military conflicts in which he was present did he ever personally engage in combat. His roles and examples as an organiser, leader and ruler of men should merit the Muslims' respectful attention. But, as noted earlier, he presided over a garrison state, and did not live to rule it during a period of peace, prosperity and consolidation.

It would seem to be straightforward that Muslims must do whatever the Quran asks. The Quran is for all Muslims in all places and in all times; universal and eternal. But further thought might bring distinctions and qualifications to mind. The law in the Quran identifies the purpose to be served, and then it prescribes the measures – usually, penalties – that are to be implemented in that connection. What is then eternal? The purpose, the specific measures, or both? The *ulema* are likely to hold that the prescribed measures as well as the purposes must, for ever, remain unchanged. But other men of learning, outside of the professional *ulema*, have not always shared this view. For instance, Muhammad Iqbal, the 'poet-philosopher' of Pakistan, argued that the Quranic penalties were 'in a sense specific to that people (Arabs of the Prophet's time), and since their observance is not an end in itself, they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations'.[6]

Enforcement of the penalties cannot be an end in itself. There is no joy for God and his Prophet in seeing a man's hand being amputated because he had stolen. Their purpose is to discourage theft, to maintain a polity where people do not take what does not belong to them. The prescribed penalty is incidental to that end. If other ways of securing the end can be found, amputation as a means may be replaced by others.

In most Muslim countries Islamic penalties such as amputation of a limb or flogging are not actually enforced. Following Iqbal's reasoning, they may say that they are still true to Islam, for they are fulfilling its ends by other means. But if they do not accept Iqbal's reasoning, where do they stand? One must then conclude that they have chosen simply to disobey, for it is not open to them to plead that the Quranic penalties are 'wrong' or old-fashioned. It is not unlikely that this persistent disobedience blunts their consciences and generally corrupts their morals.

The Quran forbids the taking of interest that would double and quadruple the borrower's obligation. Its purpose would seem to be to discourage unearned income for those who have funds enough to lend, and to discourage exploitation of the needy who must borrow. If these purposes were to govern the Muslim disposition in this matter, interest

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on commercial and industrial loans advanced, let us say, not by individual money-lenders but by state banks might not appear objectionable. For surely it does not accord with the Quran's purposes that merchants and industrialists, who may be already wealthy, should get funding free of cost.

The *ulema* read the Quran as forbidding interest on any and all kinds of loans. Yet, as Charles Issawi and others report, Muslims have been paying interest for hundreds of years and subterfuges were invented to justify their action. Until a few decades ago, an unintended consequence of the *ulema*'s interpretation came to be that Muslims would not enter banking, foreign trade and industry, so that non-Muslims dominated these areas in Muslim states. Today, most Muslim governments pay hundreds of millions of dollars in interest to western lending institutions and governments, from whom they have been borrowing money, while the more affluent among them keep their funds in western banks from which they receive interest. The distinction between ends and means would apply to numerous other cases, but the ones mentioned here should suffice for our present argument.

Iqbal would have us focus on God's purposes and devise, where necessary and proper, means other than those specified in the Quran. Maulana Muadudi in Pakistan, unwilling to say that specific remedies or penalties are less binding or eternal than the law's ends, offered Muslims an interesting escape from their embarrassment and hypocrisy. He asserted that the Sharia must be enforced as a whole, with the result that the Quranic penalties could not be applied until a Muslim community had become truly Islamic in all other respects. For instance, referring to the provision for amputating a thief's hand he observed:

> But this injunction is meant to be promulgated in a full-fledged Islamic society wherein the wealthy pay Zakat to the state and the state provides for the basic necessities of the needy and the destitute; wherein every township is enjoined to play host to visitors at its own expense for a minimum period of three days; wherein all citizens are provided with equal privileges and opportunities to seek economic livelihood; wherein monopolistic tendencies are discouraged; ... wherein the virtues of generosity, helping the poor, treating the sick, providing the needy are in the air to the extent that even a small boy is made to realise that he is not a true Muslim if he allows his neighbour to sleep hungry while he has taken his meal. In other words, [the provision for amputating a thief's hand] is not meant for the present-day society.[7]

Following Muadudi's advice, a Muslim polity can maintain that the Quran is eternal in terms of both ends and means, but plead that, having fallen into social and moral decay, it is excused from implementing the specific Quranic means for achieving the approved ends. This

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approach condones the Muslims' failure to obey the Quran, but it does not allow them to be innovative and creative. Moreover, they must still be apologetic and embarrassed.

It is not given to us to know what Muslims will actually do in the decades ahead. But it is clear that they will not become a force to be reckoned with unless they pull themselves out of their present state of technological, political and organisational incompetence. Competence will not develop without creative intellectual vigour, which is needed not only in the pursuit of scientific and technological knowledge but in the realm of values that govern what Muslims owe one another as persons in their various roles and relationships. As long as they are content with a life of hypocrisy, double-dealing, embarrassment and apology, neither they nor Islam can be actually and truly resurgent. Only the *ulema* are then resurgent to torment, frustrate and further diminish Muslims.

References

1 Consider, for instance, the position of Pope Boniface VIII who maintained that 'both swords, the spiritual and the material . . . are in the power of the church; the one, indeed, to be wielded for the church, the other by the church . . . One sword, moreover, ought to be under the other, and the temporal authority to be subjected to the spiritual.' Cited in William Elliott and Neil A. McDonald, *Western political heritage* (New York, 1949), pp. 309-10.

2 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian religion*, translated by J. Allen (Philadelphia, 1936), Vol. II, pp. 175-6. For his position on the government's responsibility to enforce church law and doctrine, see pp. 772-5.

3 For an extended statement of woman's grievances, and of American man's violation of her rights, see Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 'Declaration of sentiments and resolutions' and her 'Address to the New York State Legislature' (1860), reproduced in Kenneth M. Dolbeare, *American political thought* (Monterey, Ca, 1981), pp. 255-60.

4 For an influential exposition of Islamic democracy, see Abulala Maududi, *Islamic law and constitution*, translated by Khurshid Ahmad (Lahore, 1960), chs 4-10.

5 See S.M. Zafar, *Awam, Parliament, Islam (The people, parliament and Islam*, Urdu), (Lahore, 1980), pp. 247-71.

6 Muhammad Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1964), p. 172. A word of explanation may be helpful here. In terms of their ends, laws may be eternal or transient. The end of the law that forbids giving of false testimony in court may be considered eternal. But a law which forbids the cutting down of trees in a certain area, where the forest has been depleting and, consequently, the soil eroding, is not eternal. It may be repealed when adequate reafforestation has occurred. But penalties for disobeying the law, regardless of whether its ends are eternal or not, must be chosen with attention to the community's social and economic infrastructure. The law cannot impose imprisonment on offenders in a nomadic society that moves with the seasons and has no jails. It stands to reason that the Quranic penalties were settled in view of the social organisation of the people upon whom, *in the first instance*, they might have to be enforced. It is in this sense that these penalties were specific to a certain people, place and time, as would be penalties prescribed by any other law whether religious or secular.

7 Abulala Maududi, op. cit., p. 85.

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Notes and documents

Chile: the costs of failure

September is Chile's cruellest month, each year marking the anniversary and deepening trauma of dictatorship. In 1986 the sense of impending crisis was overbearingly tangible. Fear, the kind of terror which eats into the soul and induces inescapable, endless nightmares, once more took possession of people's lives. Incessant rumour assumes a telegraphic intensity in a culture slowly suffocating from censorship. Through July and August the information was consistent. Social polarisation, political violence and the steady decomposition of the established structures of the old regime meant something had to give: the most dangerous time since 1973 was the common belief. Talk repeatedly turned to the possibility of another coup – an *autogolpe*, a coup within a coup. A drastic rearrangement of political forces inside the junta seemed on the cards, either impelled by President Pinochet himself in a final bid to reassert his full authority or – far less probable – by dissidents in the military, scared that the unabated continuation of Pinochet's strategy would cause full-scale civil conflict. In the event, the drastic solution came from an unexpected quarter. On 7 September 1986 the assassination attempt on Pinochet transformed the situation.

To the unaccustomed, insular eye of the foreigner, Chile can at first appear relatively tranquil, far removed from the flickering images of clandestine films which accumulate in the memory. Entering the country is a simple formality, encountering immigration officials in Brooks Brothers shirts urbanely tapping computer keyboards, supported by a police presence considerably less than at Heathrow. The downtown area of Santiago is modern and prosperous. It's not repression which immediately strikes the visitor but the smog – a dense toxic cloud which hangs low over the city, slowly dripping poison into the lungs of its inhabitants. This, one might suppose, distinguishes Santiago as a Third World capital.

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But when the eye grows more accustomed, altogether more disturbing images appear. The Chamber of Deputies, surrounded by trees in full blossom, has every entrance chained and padlocked, and is slowly starting to crumble. It has lain empty for thirteen years. On television, as September draws closer, the familiar forms of a colonised culture – 'Poldark' dubbed, the native version of 'The price is right' – are interrupted by sharp, Madison Avenue propaganda for the regime. Footage of the fighters strafing the Moneda Palace on 11 September 1973 recurs, the warm, reassuring voice of paternalism recalling that this was day one of a Chile resurrected, the termination of the chaos of socialism, the first step in the extirpation of the cancer of marxism.

When this shift in perception has occurred, the city rapidly assumes a very different appearance. A slight sharpness in the air, it's now clear, comes not from diesel but from the lingering aftermath of tear-gas; pools of wax on the pavement are all that remain of candles lit for friends taken or disappeared; the damp streets on sunny afternoons have earlier been flooded by water-cannon. Each day roneoed scraps of paper calling for strikes or demonstrations are swept up in the debris of the streets. The flow of the city is constantly punctuated by eruptions of protest, lasting only as long as it takes for squads of *carabineros* to collect. The set-piece demonstrations call for more courage: women, arms raised, chanting 'Our hands are clean'; students barricading themselves in college buildings, provoking the army to dislodge them; school kids, not even born in 1973, exuberantly proclaiming 'Allende lives'; the perpetual silent protests outside courts and prisons and torture-centres publicising the fate of those in the hands of the authorities. Just beneath the surface of civic life, but frequently breaking through, there exists a resilient culture of opposition. Street theatre, wall paintings, singers in buses or cafés, rock groups, even middle-class night-clubs can all thrive in this semi-clandestine yet still perceptibly public culture.

Yet this culture is far removed from the *poblaciónes*, the shanty towns in which are concentrated the mass of the capital's dispossessed inhabiting the city's far flung outskirts. A third of the population of Santiago now lives in these areas, deprived of the most rudimentary amenities and of anything but the most pitiful income – and that for the fortunate. The great expansion of the *poblaciónes* coincided with Chile's breakneck programme of deindustrialisation, and then accelerated further after the collapse of the credit boom in 1981-2. Between 1981 and 1984 Chile's GDP dropped by 15 per cent, double that of any other Latin American country. The human consequences are there to be seen in the *poblaciónes*. It is there, particularly, that repression is at its most intense. After each attack women's groups quickly initiate collective gatherings – tea-parties and such like, where austerity is transcended by a vivacious courage – in order to rebuild morale. Young people see that they have little to lose and defend their communities

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from military incursion using every possible means. The deaths slowly mount up, frequently unrecorded, but impelled by the desperate logic of state terror.

Opposition to the regime has become increasingly organised. There exists a formidable network of organisations which work openly, their personnel known to the police. In the last few years the space for the opposition press, until last September, had widened considerably. There had been a spectacular take-off of feminist organisation touching every area of social life. Countless pressure groups exist, devoted to welfare, human rights, cultural issues and so on. Many provide partial employment for former exiles. Indeed, the gradual return of exiles, slowly making contact once more, re-establishing friendships broken by a decade of dispersal, has been impressive. The extent and range of these networks, implacably establishing their presence in the institutions of civil society, indicated in part the process of decomposition of the regime, its increasing incapacity to regulate civic life except by periodic but persistent police intervention. The challenge from these various groups used to extend until some uncharted shadow-line was reached, at which point a selective terror was set in train. Those involved could usually predict at what point this would occur. But the instability of the recent months now makes this increasingly hazardous.

The complexity of the current period, however, derives most of all from the shifts in the formal political organisations. As often before in Chilean history the socialists, and the opposition in general, are split. On the one hand, there is the Democratic Alliance, primarily composed of the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party section led by Ricardo Lagos. On the other, is the Popular Democratic Movement, made up mostly of the (illegal) Communist Party, the remainder of the Socialist Party and the revolutionary left. In 1983 there emerged the urban guerrilla group, the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) – the group responsible for the assassination attempt on Pinochet – unofficially linked to the Communists. The major tactical difference separating the Democratic Alliance from the Popular Democratic Movement is the assessment of the legitimacy and efficacy of armed struggle.

The current constitution stipulates that the move to democracy will be initiated in 1989, involving a plebiscite to endorse a single presidential candidate who will remain in office until 1997. The intention of the Democratic Alliance is to capture this opportunity for itself.[1] The prospects for this strategy were strengthened last year by the Democratic Alliance and the parties of the right signing a National Accord outlining the basis for the transition to democracy. For the first time political initiative had passed from the government to the opposition, symbolised in November 1985 by one of the largest demonstrations in Chilean history. The National Accord is an indubitably conservative document – hardly curtailing the institutional powers of the army at all, for

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example – but all current politics save those devoted exclusively to armed struggle hinge on it, and on this the legitimacy of the Democratic Alliance rests.

As a result of the National Accord, cracks have appeared in the four-man military junta for the first time. Pinochet refused to countenance any negotiation, while General Mathei of the Air Force welcomed the Accord itself. Moreover, Pinochet shocked even his allies by declaring that he will select himself as the presidential candidate in 1989, thus continuing in office until 1997. Both Mathei, and the naval representative on the junta, the appalling Admiral Merino ('Oppositionists don't recognise their luck; the Nazis would have put them in ovens', he opined on TV) opposed Pinochet's declaration.

Nonetheless, the junta still claims support from significant sectors of the middle class and business who fear a return of marxism and who still regard reports of the regime's atrocities as Communist propaganda. This degree of support, restricted though it is in terms of overall numbers, should, nevertheless, not be discounted. But the great power of the junta still remains invested in the army – in command across the range of state institutions, professional, and deeply loyal to its Commander-in-Chief, Pinochet. It is the dominant political force in Chile, its power increased immeasurably since the failure to take Pinochet's life.

The Popular Democratic Movement operates underground. The revolutionary left – the MIR – a small Guevaraist grouping, has been badly hit by repression and infiltration, but still has an organisational presence. The Communist Party claims a tradition of clandestine work from earlier periods of illegality, and in 1980 adopted the strategy of armed struggle in combination with continuing support for broad popular mobilisation. The tardy initiative of the Nicaraguan Communists in the downfall of Somoza may partly have influenced this switch; but also in Chile the Communist Party's traditional role in the labour movement has been undercut by mass unemployment. Temporarily, at least, the party hopes to channel to its cause the radicalism of the young unemployed in the *poblaciónes*. At the same time, it is not openly or actively hostile to the National Accord: the Christian Democrats are primarily responsible for the Communists' exclusion on the grounds of the latter's commitment to armed confrontation.

The roots of the crisis of the past few months lie in the intransigence of Pinochet and the army, the growing coherence of the opposition despite its internal cleavages, and the consequent polarisation of political forces. The national strike of 2 and 3 July, organised by the broadly-based Civilian Assembly, was a visible success and demonstrated the ability of the opposition to organise the mass of the people. The strike was accompanied by the capture of two young people, Rodrigo Rojas and Carmen Gloria, whom soldiers doused in

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kerosene and set alight. Rojas died but Carmen Gloria is still struggling to live. This particular barbarity perhaps did more than anything to consolidate the moral resolve and legitimacy of the opposition.[2] In addition, the illegal forces of the Popular Democratic Movement had been gaining strength through the year, with the ever more audacious activities of the FPMR. The FPMR identifies correctly the army as the foremost institutional source of power. So far as its guerrilla campaign is directed against the government, therefore, it has been the army which has been subjected to the greatest attack. However, as much as assassination the FPMR has a predilection for armed propaganda, the favoured tactic being the burning of supermarkets. But its range of activities has been spectacular, and well before 7 September it was clearly a force to be reckoned with.

The other critical factor is the US, and here again the National Accord has been influential. Until recently, the Reagan administration has been sympathetic to Chile and – reversing Carter's embargo – has approved loans totalling $2.2b. Of late, though, the messages from Washington have been more ambivalent, the fates of Marcos and Duvalier being prominent in diplomatic negotiations. The irony is that Pinochet's intransigence has advanced the forces of the Popular Democratic Movement, for which no agency of the US government has any liking. Barnes, the ambassador, and General Galvin, of the US Southern Command, have both urged the junta to open limited negotiations precisely to forestall the advance of the left. The State Department has been in active consultation with sections of the Democratic Alliance, a move rapidly imitated by Britain's Foreign Office. The British embassy has invited opposition leaders to cocktail parties, put Tristan Garel Jones, the extremely 'wet' Tory whip, on public display to demonstrate how good Conservatives should behave – his talk on democracy was banned – and invited Ricardo Lagos, a possible Socialist contender for the presidency, to visit Britain for meetings with Dennis Healey and David Owen, all in marked contrast to the public Thatcher line on South Africa.

These diplomatic pressures have been tough and the government is vulnerable, especially in its need to negotiate repayment of the external debt. But Pinochet has no intention of being cast as the expendable tyrant, and still has space to manoeuvre. His grip on the army is still sure; his ability and willingness to settle the $23b debt, given adequate diplomatic support from the US, is not in doubt; and, paradoxically, as the power of the Communists grows, so the option of repression becomes ever more attractive to Washington strategists. Indeed, General Galvin's most recent diagnosis of the situation (publicised by the FPMR, which secured the information by kidnapping a high-ranking Chilean staff officer) evidenced his preference for Pinochet's early and 'honourable' exit, but simultaneously emphasised that if

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political collapse threatened, the US would, of necessity, support which ever forces could best restore order – a clear reference to the military.

It was this requirement for Pinochet to demonstrate his control and contain the opposition which accounted for the extraordinarily intense ideological campaign by the government during August – constructed initially around the supposed discovery of an immense Soviet arsenal in the north of the country. This was accompanied by a period of heightened censorship and the jailing of numerous opposition journalists. Day by day, the government press carried ever more lurid stories. At the same time, street terror erupted, most fearfully marked by the reappearance of the group calling itself Chilean Anti-Communist Action, which operates with tacit government backing. A Christian Democrat student leader was murdered, a woman activist working with exiles kidnapped, the women's centre in Santiago burned to the ground, the home of Ricardo Lagos sprayed with bullets, busloads of schoolchildren arrested (in all, 1,000 since May) and some tortured: a horrifying escalation. In the face of this intimidation the strike of 4 September, itself the occasion for further mass arrests, was less successful than the previous one of 2 July.

Then came the attack by the FPMR on Pinochet, which was a huge gamble. If it had succeeded, and it very nearly did, the situation would have been much more favourable to the opposition. But having failed, in the short-term at any rate, the position is now very dangerous. The junta and right have rallied to Pinochet, Washington's equivocation has deepened and the rationale for repression extended. The arrests have continued, reaching deep into the middle-class districts for the first time for years and encompassing people – such as Lagos – who have long been on record for denouncing armed struggle. The opposition press has been closed down, and José Carasco, a prominent journalist and trade unionist of great integrity and courage, murdered. Other murders, too, have taken place.

The strategy of the Democratic Alliance of outwitting the junta in a slow, delicate business of constitutional negotiation has for the time being been halted. In the next few months the alliances between the parties which make up the Democratic Alliance will be likely to weaken. Whether any more radical shift takes place – the withdrawal of the parties of the right, a regrouping of the various socialist tendencies – remains to be seen.

This may well depend on whether the Christian Democrat leaders can keep their heads and on their willingness to bargain hard for the continuation of the Democratic Alliance in a situation of great repression, neither frightening the right nor being frightened by the left. The Popular Democratic Movement now has no option but a strategy of illegality and confrontation. Its leaders have been arrested, and it is

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difficult to gauge the underground strength of the parties and their ability to withstand the coming months. Although the FPMR has continued with sporadic acts of armed propaganda, it does look as if the military has the capacity to destroy any concerted armed campaign.

However, in the long term, the junta has little alternative than ever more repression. The head of the secret police, the CNI, has been elevated to the junta. And Pinochet himself has stated: 'Now we're going to start the war from our side and it's going to be hard.' As silently and effectively as the lethal poison which envelops Santiago, the dictatorship is going to continue its killings.

October 1986 BILL SCHWARZ

References

1 For an excellent discussion, see Alan Angell, 'Why is the transition to democracy proving so difficult in Chile?', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* (Vol. 5, no. 1, 1986).

2 A long and moving account by one drawn into this tragedy can be found in Ariel Dorfman's feature in the *Guardian* (26 July 1986).

A national campaign to save the life of Carmen Gloria has taken hold of Chile. In a country devoid of a public health service, money for surgery is desperately short.

Contributions to 'Salvemos á Carmen Gloria, c/o 54 Studley Road, London E7 9LX.

Israel and the contras

'Consider any Third World area that has been a trouble spot in the past ten years and you will discover Israeli officers and weapons implicated in the conflict – supporting American interests and helping in what they call "the defence of the West",' comments Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, a former professor at Haifa University, now teaching at Columbia University.[1]

One such 'trouble spot' is Central America, where Israel has long been involved. By the mid-1980s Israel had become a truly indispensable partner in the CIA's covert war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua. As Congress placed restrictions on US involvement with the Nicaraguan contras, increasingly the Reagan administration has teamed up with the Israelis to bypass congressional restraints and keep the contras supplied with weapons and military advisers.

From Somoza to the FDN

Israel first entered the weapons market in Central America in the 1950s, when it sold small arms to the now fallen dictatorship of Anastacio

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Somoza in Nicaragua. It wasn't until 1978, when the Carter administration cut off US weapons exports to Nicaragua as a part of its human rights policy, however, that Israel became Somoza's chief arms merchant. During the last year of the dictatorship, the Israelis provided 98 per cent of Somoza's arms needs. According to *Ha'artz*, an Israeli newspaper, '[An] agent of the corporations which deal with arms export [censorship cut] continued supplying Israeli weapons to Somoza until the final stages of his downfall [censorship cut]. The agent employed one of his men in Nicaragua, who lived in the bunker of Somoza's army commander. This man presented himself as a commander in the Israeli army.'[2] Among weapons supplied were Galil rifles which, in mid-1978, were being supplied direct to a special terrorist unit headed by Somoza's son. The unit was responsible for assassinating Somoza's political opponents – its victims included women and children.[3] Israel Shahak, writing of Israel's almost exclusive support of the Somoza dictatorship in its last months, points out: 'This fact assumes great importance if we recall that in the last two years alone, the Somoza regime killed about 50,000 people, or that his regime bombed the poverty slums of Managua, as well as other towns, mainly with Israeli-made Arava and West Wind planes.'[4] (Shahak is a professor at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.)

After the downfall of Somoza, Israel was, from the start, active in supporting the contras. In 1981 Mossad, alongside the CIA, gave training and support to the first units of the Honduras-based, and CIA-instituted, Nicaraguan Democratic Force.[5] This was, however, part of a wider strategy. Israel planned to step up its weapons exports, and wanted to reach an agreement with the US to sell arms to some of the most repressive regimes in the Third World. Yaacov Meridor, the top economist in Begin's cabinet, was blunt about the arms role Israel expected to play. 'We are going to say to the Americans, "Don't compete with us in Taiwan, don't compete with us in the Caribbean or in other countries where you couldn't do it directly. Let us do it",' Meridor announced in a 1981 speech.[6] Later that year, the US and Israel signed a Memorandum Concerning Strategic Cooperation, key sections of which dealt with strategic cooperation between the two countries in Africa and Central America.[7]

'Cooperation' with the US

By 1983, the Israeli role in support of the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries had expanded considerably. 'Israel, at the request of the US, is sending weapons captured from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to Honduras for eventual use by the Nicaraguan rebels', wrote the *New York Times*. 'Israel's coordination with the Americans marks a departure from its previous activities in Central America as an independent supplier of arms. The new role brings Israel closer to acting as a surrogate for the US.'[8] Indeed, according to the

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Washington Post, Begin's government had for some time aimed at such 'cooperation' with the US over Central America – especially where 'congressional restraints on human rights raise obstacles to direct aid'.[9] Israel's strategic usefulness in this respect was further stressed by Israeli official David Kimche, after discussions with Reagan administration officials in 1983.[10] As the *New York Times* pointed out: 'American officials said the Reagan administration, concerned about congressional limitations on involvement in Central America, had encouraged the Israeli activities as a means of supplementing American security assistance to friendly governments. In addition, the officials said the administration wanted to establish new lines of support to the Nicaraguan rebels in case Congress cut off covert support.'[11]

About the same time, the Israelis opened up an arms pipeline to the Costa Rican-based Nicaraguan contras of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) led by Eden Pastora, sending weapons captured in Lebanon from the PLO, and supplying military advisers. 'Sources in Pastora's movement say the decision to supply ex-PLO weapons was probably taken "at the request of the US".'[12] Israel was soon to become even more deeply involved in support of the contras. The then US ambassador-at-large, Vernon Walters, in early 1984 met the Israeli ambassador to the US, Meir Rosenne, to ask for a bigger Israeli commitment in 'defending the free world', and its interests in Central America in particular. Rosenne is reported to have agreed with the US request.[13]

As it became evident in 1984 that the House of Representatives was determined to cut off US aid to the contras, the Reagan administration made energetic efforts to keep up supplies of finance and weapons to them. Israel's* 'well-concealed financial assistance' was said by the *Washington Post* to total several million dollars – a sum which could be repaid 'in the $2.5 billion in military and economic aid [the US] sends annually to them. Israel'.[15] Questions were raised on Capitol Hill about the diversion of US arms and supplies, and the use of other countries as a conduit for aid – a proceeding which was proscribed at the time. The Reagan administration was determined, however, to keep this alternative pipeline to the contras open. Congress, asserted an administration official, might well want to reconsider the ban.[16] After considerable behind-the-scenes wrangling, the law-makers did an abrupt about-face and lifted the prohibition on the funnelling of US aid through Israel and other third-party countries.[17]

Israel's involvement has been confirmed by contra leaders themselves. Edgar Chamorro, a top FDN leader who later quit the counter-revolution, confided to *Time* magazine that Israel channelled Soviet-made AK-47 rifles through a private arms dealer.[18] Similarly, Colonel

*Secret support for the contras was also arranged from Korea and Taiwan.[14]

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Enrique Bermudez, commander of the FDN guerrilla force, attested to the Israeli connection. When asked how his troops got their AK-47s, Bermudez told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 'From the weapons that the Israeli government took from the PLO in Lebanon.'[19] According to FDN leader Adolfo Calero, his group began searching in early 1984 for alternatives to US assistance. Private finance was not sufficient. 'We need a government. We think the Israelis would be the best because they have the technical experience.'[20]

Shipments of Israeli arms to the contras were accelerated when US military assistance ran out in the summer of 1984 after the House of Representatives rejected new funds for the counter-revolutionaries. Israel also provided more military advisers as the House vote also barred direct or indirect CIA or Defense Department involvement with the contras.[21] 'Retired or reserve Israeli army commandos have been hired by shadowy private firms to assist the rebels', *Time* pointed out. The London *Guardian* reported Israeli mercenaries as being 'paid up to $10,000 a month' to train and supervise the contras. The British newspaper noted that 'mercenary activities are not only known to the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) but also aided by IDF manuals and catalogs. The mercenaries appear to be IDF-seconded personnel.'[22]

Diplomacy and the arms industry

Historically Israel has been eager to prove its worth to western imperialism as a 'strategic asset'. 'Israeli diplomacy dating back to the 1950s has sought to identify the country with the West and with the democratic Free World', writes Israeli political scientist Aaron Klieman. 'Israel's self-image is that of a significant Middle East component in the system of anti-communist containment and collective security. But because the other members of the Western Alliance also perceive of Israel as problematic if not a liability in the narrower regional and Arab-Israeli contexts, there is always a need for Israel to demonstrate its usefulness short of the event of war and to reconfirm the positive contribution it makes to the security of the West.'[23]

In part, Israel's growing role as weapons merchant and military adviser in Central America stems from the imperatives of its highly militarised economy. Armaments are a major Israeli industry and a mainstay of the country's shaky economy. Out of an industrial work force of 309,000, anywhere from 58,000 to 120,000 work in the defence industry. Even using the lower figure of 58,000, Klieman has calculated that this means that 'no less than 20% of the entire industrial work force and 5% of the country's employed workers are connected, directly or indirectly, to an expanding military industry with markets at home and abroad'.[24]

Klieman estimates Israel's annual arms sales total at $1-$1.5 billion. (Israel shrouds its weapons trade statistics in secrecy.) Israeli weapons

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exports 'in effect salvaged Israel's trade position in the face of a chronic trade deficit. They have helped the country to become one of the world's ten leading export nations on a per capita basis.' Arms exports help reduce 'the outflow of gold reserves to pay for fuel, arms purchases from the US and, not least, the unabated inflow of consumer goods'.[25] Latin American countries are reported to buy from one-third to a half of Israel's weapons exports, and it is one of the largest 'secondary suppliers' to Central America.[26]

Arms sales in Central America and elsewhere in the Third World also serve as an instrument of diplomacy in Israel's effort to achieve legitimacy and international recognition. Thus the decision by Costa Rica and El Salvador in the mid-1980s to move their embassies to Jerusalem on the occupied West Bank from Tel Aviv, which is still recognised by most nations in the world as Israel's capital, was, Klieman has argued, an important diplomatic victory resulting from Israeli arms sales to those countries – as was the resumption of diplomatic relations with Liberia, Sri Lanka and Zaire. As a major arms supplier, Israel has, perforce, to be taken seriously on the world stage, as well as in regional politics.

But, ultimately, Israeli arms sales abroad are a byproduct of Israel's aggressive posture in the Middle East and its determination to maintain military superiority in the region. Inevitably, this means that older weapons systems rapidly become obsolete, discarded in favour of increasingly expensive newer systems. In this context, the export of obsolete and surplus equipment, and, increasingly, of more sophisticated items manufactured in Israel, 'is a logical function of the continuous rearmament process ... Defence sales thus alleviate to some extent the burden of the defence budget, thereby helping to insure the country's military competitiveness',[27] Klieman concludes.

Israel has become an invaluable covert partner in the Reagan administration's war against Nicaragua. The administration has repeatedly teamed up with Israel to bypass congressional restrictions in regard to US involvement with the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries. But because of Israel's 'special relationship' with Washington, this partnership has, so far, not become an issue in the debate over US intervention in Central America. However, opponents of the contra war, fearful of being branded 'anti-Semites' for criticising the Israeli contra connection, can no longer afford to ignore the Israeli role, if they are truly serious about stopping this war.

Washington, September 1986 JACK COLHOUN

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Lion hearted women: the Sistren Theatre Collective*

Sistren in Jamaica means more than 'blood sisters', it means right on, it means from the people, of the people, in the people and for the people. It is a term of high respect and love and this is how Jamaicans and

* A shortened version of an article first published in *Spare Rib*, no. 172, November 1986.

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Caribbean people of all walks of life regard the Sistren Theatre Collective. Commenting on Sistren's performance in New York last year at the 5th Festival of Latino Culture, Annette Walker of the *Guardian* said: 'These women have returned the art of making and enjoying theatre to the people from whom drama emerged in the first place.' One main reason why Sistren has been able to achieve this – and sustain it through the years, is that they are not just playing roles, they are living them. They expose in their dramatic art the reality of their own daily lives and those of their people.

Sistren made their appearance in the mid-1970s as a group of women involved in a special employment programme, then called the Impact Programme. It was so then and it is even more so now, ten years later, that six out of every ten persons unemployed in Jamaica are women. Yet even official figures put over one-third of Jamaican households as being headed and supported solely by women. In an attempt to dent the massive unemployment, the Michael Manley government of the 70s initiated a 'crash employment programme' consisting largely of manual road work, with an element of basic training for service tasks in the health sector and day care centres, among others, to be phased in over time. At the time, the People's National Party Women's Movement led by Beverly Manley and the Committee of Women of Progress led by Linnette Vassell successfully petitioned the government that positive discrimination should be applied in respect of the ratio of women to men employed in the Impact Programme, owing to the harsh conditions facing the women and their very great responsibilities. Thus the group of women who were to become Sistren received the opportunity to take the first step away from unemployed and isolated (from each other) drudgery in the house. They were never to look back, even after, with the defeat of the Manley Government, the Impact Programme was scrapped, numerous other employment projects closed; throwing thousands back again into unemployment. Some of the sisters came to the Impact Programme with nothing but their strong bodies, a willingness to work hard, deeply-buried creative talents and a determination to survive. Like so many women in ex-colonial societies, many of them had been forced to shoulder the heavy responsibilities of survival, of family and children, without even being equipped with the basic skills of reading and writing, in a society where also live people who can afford to send their daughters to finishing schools in Switzerland.

Sistren's subsequent experience confirmed the importance of a main demand of progressive women's organisations in Jamaica and the Caribbean, that for jobs. The economics of this demand are quite clear. But as well, confined to the everlasting drudgery of the house, there was no possibility for these women to even begin to develop their creative talents. Although the Impact Programme was far from ideal, it firstly took the women out of this prison of the house. It allowed them to earn

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a very small but nonetheless independent income. It allowed them to meet and commune with each other. And it allowed them to begin together to act out the reality of their lives, which was also that of the lives of the majority of their sisters and mothers. As our slave mothers and fathers before us sang 'work songs' in the broiling sun on the sugar-cane plantatations under the slave-drivers' whip, so our Sistren sisters joined with each other in song and mimicry under the equally broiling twentieth century sun in road work under the Impact Programme. In the climate of the 70s, when the progressive forces were on top, when what ought to be and could be was forcing a volcano of burning power-lava through the veins of the sons and daughters of African slaves, it is not surprising that these sisters could find the space and confidence to make the next step. That is to put before their people the testimony of their own creativity.

And the Jamaican public was waiting for them. They started out with mini-dramas mirroring the lives of the working class women – like their *Belly-Woman Bangarang* ('Belly-woman' means pregnant woman) and climaxed in this period with their astounding and multiple award-winning *QPH*. In this, they took a legend, that of a famous prostitute Pearl Arbor, who died in the poorhouse. They took a contemporary traumatic happening, the Eventide 'Home for the Elderly' fire in Kingston in 1980 in which nearly 150 old women perished, the same 'home' in which Pearl Arbor had died. They handled it with such intimate understanding and skill that amidst the laughter at the humorous moments all stood naked and exposed – as to how colonial societies treat our people and our women; the humanness of the protagonists; how colonialism continues in the clothes of neo-colonialism; how we can and should change these conditions. Speaking of her role in *QPH*, Didi Elliott says, 'My favourite role is the part of Queenie (Pearl Arbor). The part just fit me. On the night of the Eventide Fire I was living nearby and I ran out and saw everything. So, especially when we do the play at night, it reminds me of the fire and me just put everything into it.'

A major milestone in the development of Sistren was the expansion of the group in the late 70s and early 80s to incorporate some other sisters trained in cultural skills. Again in this respect, Sistren were disproving some age-old myths as well as pointing to what can be and should be. When I was in England earlier this year, a Black sister said to me: 'You know, when I saw Sistren, I was surprised to see all those white women in the group. I thought they were working class Black Caribbean women.' I thought for a minute, oh how was I going to explain the Caribbean reality to this Black sister who had to live everyday in a society in which there were, in reality, such sharp lines between Black and white. And my poem, 'Of colours and countries' (*Word Rhythms from the Life of a woman*, Karia Press) came to mind:

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White is not a colour
It is an attitude
A certain behaviour

Black is not a colour
it is a statement
of a shared past
a present reality
a future intent . . .

I quoted these lines to this sister and then I said, 'I think you are referring to the brown-skinned Jamaican sisters in the group. It is true that our experience in the Caribbean of slavery and colonialism has taught us also to be at least wary of non-Black people. But you must also understand that those sisters you see there have paid their dues. That is they have proven by their works that they are with the Black majority in our islands. They have undoubtedly brought something of value to the group and that is the bottom line on which we, as Caribbean people, judge all comers.'

In fact, it is without doubt that this ability to bring together in unity and incorporate among the best that our society has to offer has been a major factor in the survival and development of Sistren. Any organism, whether natural or social which does not grow, must die. And growth involves the bringing together into interaction of all that is good and uplifting. So that first there is the myth that poor, Black working class women cannot achieve anything worthwhile. Sistren disproved this decisively in their earlier period. Second, there is the myth that women cannot get along with each other. Sistren disproved this from the beginning and continue to do so. Third, there is the myth that people of different class backgrounds, yea, of different races and colours cannot unite and work together for the good of all. Sistren is a living example to the contrary. As Dr Trevor Munroe, leader of the Workers Party of Jamaica says, 'Once you are at the bottom and there is someone or something which is over you keeping you down, you have to and can unite.' And this applies to Sistren. All the women are at the bottom of established society and they have little problem with uniting with each other and with their people to develop the creativity of all.

From this unity and incorporation of the best that is available, behold Sistren today: dramatists and singers, educators, contemporary historians, sociologists, researchers, writers, painters, archivists, film makers, ambassadors of the Caribbean people . . . *women*.

Since the 'humble beginnings' of the Impact Programme days, Sistren has come a long way. They are probably the most prolific, most active theatre group in Jamaica and the Caribbean, they perform original plays, skits and dramatised songs all year round in almost every single community in both urban and rural Jamaica. They are among the

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most travelled of Caribbean artistic groups, having performed in all the Caribbean islands, in the Americas, in different countries of both western and eastern Europe. They are a theatre collective with a difference. Firstly, they develop their material from real life. For example their production *Sweet Sugar Rage*, based on the life of women working in agriculture, was developed through actually living and working with women agricultural workers in Jamaica:

> Clad like scarecrows in ragged men's trousers under torn work clothes, women sugar workers toil under a blindingly hot Jamaican sun. The mud on the field hides needles of the cassia macca. The women work barefooted.

Sistren takes the life of Iris, 25 years a sugar worker, recounts the scandal of conflicts with the male-supremacist trade union leadership and management over her right to equal pay as a female field supervisor. This production has been made into a film, the promotional brochure of which describes Sistren's method: 'We glimpse Sistren recreating through improvisation, the characters from Iris' story and the lives of the people on the estate. The outcome is a provocative dramatisation of Iris' dilemma. Sistren takes the play to urban audiences. We are immersed in a workshop in Kingston with participants who confront through role play, the problems facing sugar workers. The play sparks off animated discussion. *Sweet Sugar Rage* probes sources of women's oppression, and shows how women, through drama, can explore solutions to that oppression.'

Indeed, Sistren do not see the creative arts as being apart from the lives of Caribbean people. They are artistes in the midst of their people. They take positions on all issues affecting women and the entire people. They work closely with the artistic community in Jamaica, the Caribbean and all the countries in which they have performed. They are an integral part of the women's movements in Jamaica and the Caribbean. In Jamaica and the Caribbean they hold and participate in workshops, seminars and conferences on sexual abuse, abortion, on contraceptives, legal reform for women's rights, Caribbean sovereignty, halt to the arms race, the Caribbean as a zone of peace, world peace and detente, the Soviet moratorium on testing of nuclear arms, South Africa and the defeat of Apartheid; freedom from hunger, from poverty of all the peoples and better health care for women and children. Their very popular *Sistren Magazine* is avidly read not only in the Caribbean but also in many countries of the world.

Drawing on their years of work with other Caribbean cultural groups, in 1985 Sistren helped to initiate the first Caribbean popular theatre exchange in which theatre groups from all over the Caribbean, including Spanish speaking, were invited to Jamaica by Sistren to

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perform all over the island and participate in workshops. It came to an end with a call on Caribbean governments 'to facilitate popular theatre work which affirms the cultural identity and independence of the Caribbean in the face of increased imperialist activity in the Region'. In their final declaration, participants also called for popular theatre work to deal specifically with the concerns of women and youth.

What Sistren has meant for Caribbean people broadly, is also reflected in the development of the group's members themselves. The original sisters who began with very little but their determination and talents have been assisted in developing these talents as well as having learned other skills.

This advance is reflected in the present watershed of the Sistren Theatre Group, and that is the publication of the book *Lionheart Gal* by the Women's Press. *Lionheart Gal* is the all-encompassing, collective effort of Sistren, the biography of all the Sistren members. But it is much more than that. It is a unique document. There has not been and is not anything like it. Written in Caribbean English, which embodies the entire history and mixture of Caribbean peoples, it goes to the heart of how Caribbean women originated and live. It is likely to be the most frank and from-the-heart account of the things that our women do not even dare to remember and think, much less to publish. It originates from Caribbean women but it is not confined to them. Millions will feel themselves in *Lionheart Gal*. It abounds in humour. But it is the humour which we Caribbean people describe as 'taking bad things make laugh'. It is a rebirth because when women, when a people, can begin to look at their experiences and not feel ashamed about them because they do not fit into what established society says is, but what we all know, isn't – when a people can take these experiences and laugh and cry publicly about them as *Lionheart Gal* does, then we know we are beginning to be reborn. Because the 'First stage is self-awareness/other awareness/Plain awareness' ('Dialectics of struggle' from *Word Rhythms from the Life of a Woman*). *Lionheart Gal* is a revolution because it makes into the real heroes, 'everyday people', like Winnie Mandela of South Africa, everyday woman who does what she has to do for liberation. *Lionheart Gal* does not speak specifically about Winnie Mandela but it speaks of the experiences of women like Winnie Mandela: ordinary women who survive and fight because history and circumstances have put no other option before them.

Audiences see in drama some of the most crucial problems that concern ordinary people in their everyday lives – the unemployment, the street violence, the sexual violence, are brought out into the open and discussed with the audience through song and dance and drama. But in seeing and participating in Sistren you do not only see a group of skilled Caribbean dramatists. You see the history of an entire people. You see the disproving of age-old myths. You see that it is possible for an

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oppressed sex, an oppressed people, with unity and determination to damn all the 'gods of servitude' (as another Caribbean artiste from Trinidad, Einto Springer, said) and to stand up and, in standing, pull others to do likewise.

As I enter into 20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston, Jamaica in the Caribbean, the headquarters of Sistren, the sisters want to take me on a tour. I go on the tour, but I quickly settle myself on the back patio with some members of Sistren. And I soak up their creative spirit. One has just had her brother killed in criminal violence. Another has just been told that her man has been arrested and will not be given bail. Another has just been told that her child has not reached home from school. Another has just confirmed that she does not have enough money to feed her children and herself with that day's dinner ... because prices have gone up again. And in the midst of this, there is a major national performance for two nights hence, for which they have to rehearse. There is the next Caribbean popular theatre exchange to organise. A section is going on an overseas tour. Another section is to hold a workshop with women garment workers in Kingston's industrial district. There is much activity including moaning and groaning about life's daily trials for working class women. But the show is going on ...

I settle down to read *Lionheart Gal* – a fitting tribute to these lionhearted women who keep disproving the age old myths about women and people.

ELEAN THOMAS

UK commentary

'The new true anti-racist movement'

> ' "SOS Racism" will be non party-political and concentrate its activities on spreading general anti-racist sentiments amongst young people and an awareness of the problems faced by ethnic minorities in Britain.'

This statement appeared recently as part of a submission to Manchester Council, outlining the proposed launch of SOS Racism in the UK and requesting a supporting grant. At a public meeting in Birmingham on 6 October, held to introduce representatives of SOS Racisme's international executive who were ostensibly in Britain to meet individuals and groups involved in anti-racist campaigns, it became abundantly clear that the above statement was not just a cautiously worded request for funding

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from a local authority but did indeed represent a simplified version of the organisation's aims and objectives. It is primarily because of SOS Racisme's apparent European 'success' and the resulting appeal that such a movement could have here that we need to look at its analysis of racism, the strategies which derive from it and where these might lead.

Racism as original sin

Many of the arguments presented to the meeting in Birmingham that evening seemed to be based on a curiously ahistorical and non-materialist analysis of racism in Britain. SOS Racisme claimed that years of struggle and resistance had not succeeded in eradicating this problem. As one of its representatives remarked when asked about the success or failure of past campaigns, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. It was time to adopt a new strategy, modelled on the French experience of a mass awareness campaign, directed at youth and non-political in character. The objectives of this movement would be to campaign for basic rights and to make the slogans popular; to spread these ideas in schools and other places where young people gathered; to obtain the declared support of celebrities admired by young people; and to publish a newsletter, sell attractive badges with anti-racist slogans, print posters and hold musical and other events for young people. [Manchester proposal] Without dismissing the need to politicise and involve young people in anti-racist activities, it is difficult to imagine just how this cosmetic strategy, apparently based on spreading the 'good word' in a social and material vacuum, would challenge the structures of racism and the behaviour of racists in any significant way.

What was remarkable about SOS Racisme's analysis was that not only did it fail to recognise the particular historical and materialist context of racism in Britain, but it appeared to have no plausible explanation for racism at all. What we were told repeatedly by its representatives was simply that they were not interested in politics, left or right; rather theirs was a fight against *racism*. Although this apolitical argument follows easily enough from a position in which racism is not rooted in any particular set of conditions, it is one thing to be critical of specific actions taken by trade unions and political organisations on the left, but quite another to lump left with right, and to suggest that their respective historical projects can somehow be equated. Rooted in a version of 'original sin' in which white people are born with 'inherently' racist attitudes, their analysis of racism readily dismisses any concept of class-based politics by virtue of the fact that racism has existed on the left. SOS Racisme's project, then, would seem to be to exorcise this racism with a kind of mass race awareness training where enlightened stars would presumably preach the anti-racist gospel to young people at gala concerts; a kind of RAT, mass RAT, with glitter and pizzazz.

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Struggles and strategies

The practical implications and limitations of this approach to racism became apparent as the meeting progressed. For example, in France, it has led to the marginalisation of campaigns directed at fascist organisations like the Front National. Despite the FN's overt and clearly enunciated policies on repatriation, as well as documented links with right-wing paramilitary groups like SOS France, they and their leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, are not thought of as fascist by SOS Racisme. We were told several times that evening that as the FN had not broken any laws, the struggle was not really against them. It was, in fact, against *racism* – a racism that seems to have little institutional or organisational presence.

This does say a great deal about SOS Racisme's apparent understanding of 'the law' and its use in legitimising and maintaining racism and even more about its fundamental approach to resistance and anti-racist strategies. We must assume from this that the struggle is indiscriminate, and should be fought at the level of ideas and attitudes rather than that of behaviour where real black people suffer discrimination, abuse and attack.

This kind of approach often results in reactive and isolated attempts to deal with bits of racism rather than strategies which derive from an understanding of how racism works within capitalist societies. Therefore, while we were told that SOS Racisme campaigns against deportations, it has no policy on immigration quotas – immigration not being a problem in France! Whatever the truth of that statement, it begs the question, at the very least, of how the French model can simply be transposed to Britain in such an ahistorical fashion. More specifically, what it misses in the case of either country is an understanding of how immigration quotas, visa rules and deportations are all racist responses by the state to a set of specific conditions and cannot be treated as discrete issues which have no correspondence.

In a similar manner, SOS Racisme's limited perspective and the emphasis it places on awareness led to a superficial, media-oriented response to the recent bombings in Paris. In answer to a growing anti-Arab hysteria and to an increase in repressive measures adopted by the state, their campaign centred on well-known intellectuals making public statements to the effect that there were no necessary connections between Arab people and terrorism. Little or no mention was made about such issues as police harassment or the imposition of visa controls. In fact, its concept of resistance and struggle appears to be limited to those soft responses acceptable to a broad range of groups and individuals 'concerned' with racism; the type which fits neatly within the parameters of moderate and acceptable protest.

Challenging racism with anti-racist sentiments

Although the events proposed by SOS Racisme would in all likelihood

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draw attention to the issue of racism and succeed in attracting relatively large numbers of young people to concerts in particular, such strategies have serious implications for anti-racist struggles in Britain. They give legitimacy to an essentially liberal and attitudinal version of racism in much the same way as the peace and ecology movements have over their respective issues. The mass demonstrations and the 'awareness' they might bring would be ends in themselves. As a result, the shift in emphasis is away from interventions directed at tangible examples of racism which black people face on a daily basis and towards more ideological responses. It would then be enough for people to go to an event and be sensitised to the issue of racism, to discuss and understand its 'inherent' nature and to become wholeheartedly supportive of a multi-racial society. Although goodwill might eventually be engendered in this way, it is much easier to fend off or deter a racist attack with an organised self-defence group than it is with well intended 'anti-racist sentiments'.

In the same way as an emphasis on awareness dictates particular strategies, the insistence that young people have no real interest in the politics of left or right and that an anti-racist mass movement should not compromise its appeal by being seen to be 'political' sets narrow limits within which struggle and resistance can occur. Yet it bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the type of consensus positions which political parties adopt when appealing to a broad electorate. By simply arguing that the left as well as the right has been racist and that direct association with either should be avoided, the issue of how racism is constructed within capitalist society is evaded. There is then a clear shift from combating left-wing racism from within to placing the socialist project alongside a whole range of movements whose interests may only converge at the specific point of 'abolishing racism' and diverge and, in fact, contradict at many others. The common strategy then becomes the safest and least provocative one. Any correspondence between anti-racist and class struggles is marginalised or resisted altogether. What we are left with is a new anti-racist appeal, directed at those individuals and groups whose ultimate goal is not the transformation of society but is rather the reform and refinement of liberal democracy.

Further contacts

Given the combination of arrogance and naivety with which the case for the adoption of the SOS Racisme model was argued, it was hardly surprising that their representatives received a rather critical reception at the Birmingham public meeting. Their apparent disdain for the interventions made by a wide variety of speakers from groups, often with different perspectives, whose experiences of anti-racist struggles over several decades entitled them to a certain credibility, did not suggest that a high degree of cooperation was possible. Their insistence on

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establishing a movement which takes little or no account of the specific conditions which shaped racism in Britain, nor of resistance to it, prompted a number of people to suggest that they needed to rethink their entire approach before looking for support from anti-racist groups in Birmingham.

What unfortunately was missing from their agenda was the possibility of establishing some sort of network where information about the activities and movements of British and European fascists might have been exchanged on a regular basis. Indeed, many of us thought that the SOS Racisme tour was intended primarily to make links and exchange experiences rather than as a recruiting drive for their UK organisation. In any event, that project remains essential in the light of increasing fascist activity and is worth pursuing if possible, whatever our differing positions.

Birmingham JOHN SCHAECHTER

Visas and the British press

In the summer of 1985, amidst a panic over Tamil refugees fleeing Sri Lanka to Britain, the British government imposed a requirement that visitors from Sri Lanka had to obtain a visa before travelling to Britain. The change, the first time such a restriction had been imposed on Commonwealth citizens, was preceded and legitimated by scare stories in the press about an impending 'floodtide' of Tamils about to engulf Britain. One year later, the British press was at the forefront of a campaign to extend the visa restriction to other Commonwealth nationals and to defend Britain, once again, from an invasion by immigrant hordes.

Weeks before the British government announced on 1 September that visas were to be required from visitors from India, Pakistan, Bangla Desh, Ghana and Nigeria, sections of the press had begun to whip up support for new restrictions and to set the terms of the issue. In mid-July, the *Daily Express* ran a two-page feature, 'Scandal of the vanishing immigrants', claiming that 'hundreds of illegal immigrants' were using Heathrow Airport as 'their passport to a new life in Britain',[1] and in August the theme was picked up by others. The *Sun*, Britain's largest selling paper, reported a 'Migrant "Escape" Scandal', claiming that eighteen suspected illegal immigrants had disappeared after being granted temporary admission to Britain by immigration officers.[2] Not only that, the press claimed, but new arrivals enjoyed '£50-a-night luxury' at the taxpayer's expense, implying that these were something other than immigration prisoners detained in hotels because the detention centres were full.[3]

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By the time it became known that the government was actively considering extending the visa restriction, the press had managed to portray a situation in which visas were necessary to stop a new flood of illegal immigrants which was threatening the country. Such a 'crackdown on Third World immigrant cheats', the *Sunday Express* said on its front page at the end of August, would 'stop the chaos created by the immigration services being swamped';[4] while the following day the *Daily Express* claimed that visas were necessary because of the numerous 'undocumented arrivals from Asia and Africa, many plainly determined to turn their visit into permanent residence'.[5] The reporting of the government's announcement of 1 September made the message even clearer: 'Visa curb for migrant fiddlers', headlined the *Sun*, reporting that the system would 'control the flood of illegal immigrants who are swamping Britain's ports and airports'; while the *Daily Mail* saw it as a 'Clampdown on illegal immigrants', and the *Daily Star* reported it as a 'Visa plan to beat immigrant cheats'.[6] It hardly mattered that the Home Office's own figures showed no evidence to support such allegations or that the immigration service, as the *Guardian* reported,[7] had deliberately relaxed its use of temporary admission in the knowledge that absconding would increase and that publicity on this would increase support for a visa system. Indeed, of the country's then nine national newspapers, only the *Guardian*, *Today* and the *Financial Times* questioned the new restrictions in any way.

Not surprisingly, the number of people arriving in Britain increased dramatically as the visa deadline of 15 October approached. But this simply provided the press with more evidence that Britain was threatened by an 'immigrant flood' and the press let loose its own torrent of lurid reportage: 'Migrants flood in to beat visas',[8] 'Heathrow in visa flood',[9] 'Immigrants paralyse Heathrow',[10] 'Asian flood swamps airport',[11] 'The stampede'[12] and '3,000 Asians flood Britain'.[13] Nor were such headlines confined to the tabloid press: 'Asians' visa dash swamps Heathrow', reported *The Times*, while the *Daily Telegraph* reported 'Heathrow under siege by Asians'.[14] And to such headlines and consequent reporting editorials were added, the *Daily Mail* going so far as to claim that, in earlier times, 'such invasions would be repelled by armed force'.[15]

There was no question that the arrivals might be genuine visitors, concerned that their entry might be hindered by the new visa restriction. The 'flood', the *Sun* argued, had proved the correctness of the government's decision, for, if the arrivals had been genuine visitors, they would not have been in such a rush to beat the deadline. They were, the paper made clear in three-inch headlines, 'The liars' who told immigration officers '1,001 lies' to 'cheat their way into Britain'. The biggest lie of all, the paper said, quoting an immigration officer, was that they 'intend to go back home after their visit'.[16] Instead, as another paper put

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it, they would 'hot foot it' up the motorway, 'adding to the burgeoning numbers of illegal immigrants overcrowding this country'.[17]

The press also kept alive the idea that the new arrivals would enjoy 'luxury' at the taxpayer's expense. On the day the visa restriction came into force, the *Daily Mail* carried a large cartoon by 'Mac' (awarded the 1984 'social and political cartoonist of the year' prize by the Cartoonists Club of Great Britain) showing a penniless Bangladeshi arriving at Heathrow Airport only to be handed £50 'to stay in a posh hotel' and going off thinking that the British well deserve their reputation for stupidity.[18] The following day the paper reported that the Home Office was looking for 'four star hotel beds for 400 immigrants', while *The Times* carried a story about Asians being accommodated in a hotel costing £86 a night.[19] But the new arrivals were not just costing the public money on their arrival. Even those who were allowed in – the 'genuine visitors' – according to the press, posed a new crisis as the 'frightening costs of absorbing the new wave' began to emerge.[20] In one area, the *Daily Mail* said in a story headed 'Asians start new housing crisis', the homelessness problem was now 'totally out of control'.[21] Again, the truth – that short stay visitors cannot claim public housing – counted for nothing.

Not only was the press virtually unanimous in its support for the new visa restriction, but it attacked anyone who dared to disagree. The *Daily Mail* supported Prime Minister Thatcher in her rejection of the 'febrile objections' of opponents,[22] while both the *Daily Express* and *The Times* attacked Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who had dared to say that the restriction was racist.[23] The new 'quality' paper, the *Independent*, attacked the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants,[24] while for the *Sun*, the real villain was the Labour Party's shadow Home Secretary, Gerald Kaufman, who was portrayed as supporting the 'flood' of immigrants because he had criticised the chaos at Heathrow and had said that genuine visitors should be allowed entry without visas.[25]

Just as ten years ago sensationalist press reporting of the arrival in Britain of Asians expelled from Malawi was accompanied by a further turn in the spiral of racist violence,[26] so in the wake of recent press frenzy physical attacks on black people, already at a frightening level, began to escalate. On the evening of the day that the *Sun* reported that '3,000 Asians flood Britain', an Asian-owned newsagent's shop in east London was daubed with the slogans '3,000 moor [sic]' and 'Packie Patel'.[27] The following week the offices of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, which had consistently opposed the visa restriction, narrowly escaped serious damage after an arson attempt,[28] and one week later Moslems at prayer in an east London mosque were stoned by a gang of fifty thugs. (When the police arrived, they managed to arrest only three people – all Asians who had been praying in the

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mosque at the time of the attack.)[29]

In its reporting of the visa restriction, the press, with few exceptions, not only ignored the fact that the new restriction would be considerably more expensive than employing more immigration staff at airports to examine arrivals. It ignored the real reason for the restriction. This was that the government had found a way of doing what it had been trying to achieve, unsuccessfully, for months – curtail the right of Members of Parliament to intervene in the cases of people refused entry to Britain by immigration officers. This right of MPs to intervene on behalf of people refused entry, and thereby to put a 'stop' on their removal and ensure at least temporary admission, is the only effective way of reviewing decisions made by immigration officers. Since 1985 the government had been conducting a campaign against a number of MPs who used this right extensively, claiming that they were 'abusing' the system. In February 1986 the Home Office issued draft guidelines which sought to restrict MPs' powers by applying a time-limit to the making of representations, restricting representations to anyone but the relevant constituency MP and stating that entry was unlikely to be granted to anyone who appeared to have been advised that entry might be secured by recourse to an MP. These guidelines were modified somewhat as a result of protest, although in practice the Home Office has taken a harder line on representations. There have been cases where people have been granted temporary admission after an MP intervened, but have then been removed without the MP being informed;[30] and in November 1986 it was reported that the Home Office had refused to consider representations made by the Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, in a case where the relevant constituency MP, a Conservative, had refused to act.[31] What this means, of course, is that people with an unsympathetic MP have, in effect, no way of appealing against a decision made by an immigration officer.

The visa restriction does away with the 'problem' of MPs' representations and interventions at a stroke: those suspected of not being 'genuine visitors' will not get within a thousand miles of Britain, MPs will not be able to intervene where visas are refused and the injustice and racism of immigration control will be removed from even the barest scrutiny in Britain.

The press not only supported the government, but led its campaign. It created a threat where none existed, a threat – of being swamped by hordes of illegal immigrants – which was all the more powerful precisely because it was invisible and unquantifiable. Using the 'swamping' rhetoric first employed by Margaret Thatcher in her bid for power in 1978, the press not only created a climate of opinion in which the new restrictions could be imposed with hardly a whisper of opposition, but gave notice that it clearly intends to keep immigration – and the defence of the nation from immigrant floods – as an issue in the run-up

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to the next general election. And having dealt with the 'enemy' from without, whether this be Tamil refugees in 1985 or visitors in 1986, the press will now turn increasingly against the 'threat' from within.

London PAUL GORDON

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Book reviews

Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression

By HUSSEIN ABDILAHI BULHAN (New York and London, Plenum Press, 1985), 299 pp. $45.00

Frantz Fanon's unfinished *ouevre*, brought to a tragic end by his untimely death at the age of 36, is inestimable in both senses of the word. The power of his intellectual insight and the force of his political intervention in and for Third World liberation is almost unsurpassed. At the same time, those who choose to assess his work are never simply bound to the labour of interpretation and critique; for the challenge of his creativity demands an activist reading, an engagement with the complex reality of his words that only becomes truly meaningful as they are used to analyse and intervene in the political realities of our own times.

It is in this spirit of activism and analysis that H.A. Bulhan has approached his task. What makes his book particularly welcome is its double focus. On the one hand, he presents a meticulous and scholarly commentary on the familiar intellectual antecedents and affiliations of Fanon's work – Hegel, Marx, Freud, Adler, Jung, Tosquelles, Cesaire, Sartre, etc. – providing us, in addition, with the most valuable account of Fanon's lesser known clinical writings composed during his politically decisive phase as psychiatrist at the hospital at Blida Joinville, the largest psychiatric hospital in French-occupied Algeria. At another level, Bulhan intersects his political and intellectual biography of Fanon with the submerged history of the Black diaspora as it has been inscribed in the racist, stereotypic discourses of Eurocentric anthropology and psychology, and as it has been institutionalised in the discriminatory, dehumanising practices of the medical and psychiatric establishments. In analysing and opposing these racist and ethnocentric traditions, Bulhan attempts to extend Fanon's work towards a tradition of

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psychology that focuses on social oppression rather than individual or familial trauma. More ambitiously, he works towards a 'psychology of liberation' where the oppressed, involved in a *pyscho-praxis*, develop a sense of conscious self-determination that is based on the discovery of their social needs – food, shelter, unalienated labour – rather than the pathology of their individual drives.

Bulhan's ambitious project is well within the Fanonian tradition. Where Fanon sought to push the limits of psychoanalysis to recognise the victimage of colonial racism and the liberationist reality of the Algerian revolution, Bulhan seeks to break the ahistorical boundaries of psychological behaviourism in order to empower collective, political action in the Black American and South African struggles. Where Fanon was critical of traditionalist and populist forms of cultural nationalism, Bulhan is scathing about the 'loudly declared "revolutionary" aims and "socialist" pronouncements of the ruthless military juntas who today reign over Africa'.

If both Fanon and Bulhan share a political dream of liberation – with the rest of us – they also share a theoretical problem that is germane to the realisation of that dream. Unlike traditional marxists who believe that deliverance from oppression comes with change in ownership of the means of production, Fanon and Bulhan are aware of the complex, psychic mechanisms that determine human actions and relations, which do not necessarily keep pace with the motor of revolutionary change. Even more significant, within modern capitalism, are the differences in structure and time, between the materiality of culture and the materialism of the economic infrastructure. The psyche is articulated in myth, ritual, projection, symbolic and social fantasy, image and metaphor, in that space of representation and mediation that we call culture. The means of production or the base, which informs the formation of 'class', is an instance of economic rationalism that deeply interpenetrates the formation of culture and the psyche, but is neither a simple reflection of it nor simply identifiable with it. Thinking together the realities of culture/psyche and social formation/economy – as we must for any political practice – produces the problem that the latter assumes a degree of social collectivity and objectivity, whereas the very structure of the former – *culture/psyche* – makes it the privileged social space for posing the problem of how the moment of subjectivity comes to be articulated in the collective and governmental process of power relations. The political problem of relating psychology to socio-economic relations must be thought across their unequal and differential articulations, for whereas economics assumes the sociality of human relations, psychology sets out to understand how social groups come to be formed, what is entailed in the production of cultural collectivities and identities. If the premise of economism is the collective reality of 'class', the problematic of psychoanalysis is the psychic

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reality, or *fantasy*, that initiates and intervenes in any process of group formation.

It is the complexity of this issue that eludes Bulhan's elaboration of a psychopraxis (as he calls it); a complexity that Fanon finally leaves unresolved in his 'sociodiagnostic' psychology, although he displays that difficulty so fully in his writings that we come to understand something of its ambivalent effects. Bulhan is quite correct in suggesting that the main traditions of ethnopsychiatry contain a profoundly Eurocentric, capitalist ideology of 'possessive individualism'; he is right to question the positivism of western empiricist traditions that dehistoricise social reality. Western psychology profoundly ponders on the death-drive and 'injured social narcissism' without taking account of the collective immiseration of the Third World, its daily tryst with hunger and starvation, its alienated labour, its confused and confusing cultural-media colonisation. It would, I think, be quite appropriate to suggest that the psychic affect of these traumatic, Third World conditions ought to become the province of psychological and psychoanalytic analysis and not be relegated solely to the realm of sociology and political theory. And finally, Bulhan is right not to attribute these limitations to some vague, polemical racism, but to suggest that they are part of the individualist perspective of traditional psychology. But is his needs-based psychology of the social self convincing? Has he managed to think through the relation of the psyche and society in a non-reductive manner? Has he arrived at a sense of the social that is aware of the ambivalent interpenetration of the cultural and the economic?

The balance of Bulhan's book tends more towards providing a political sociology of the psychology of oppression, often leaving the question of psychical mechanisms unposed. Where he does raise these issues, as in his discussions of strategies of projection, introjection and paranoia (at the end of chapter 7) and in his account of Fanon's 'Colonial wars and mental disorders', we see a much more interesting, if technical, argument developing. An argument that would go much further towards developing – in the light of Fanon – an understanding of social and political antagonism on the grounds of psychic ambivalence. An argument which, if pursued, would lead out of the traditions of social and group psychology from which Bulhan writes, into the realms of psychoanalysis.

The crux of this argument was, for Fanon, the question of political violence. Bulhan judiciously mediates what has become a cause célèbre, putting into perspective both Hannah Arendt's racist rantings against Fanon and Black Power, and properly refuting the dogmatic strictures of orthodox marxists. Bulhan usefully locates Fanon's concept of violence within the paranoid structure of the manichean colonial world, and attempts to justify it politically in terms of Fanon's humanism, an

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attempt to give the colonised a sense of independent action and self-determination. This is a consistent reading but not a daring one. From the wilder realms of interpretation, I would like to suggest that the originality of Fanon's 'violence' is its profound anti-humanism, hence the severe dismissal of it on the part of liberals, hegelians and marxists alike. Violence is the negation of narcissism that structures, according to Fanon, the binary order of the racist, manichean, colonial system. However, revolutionary violence does not provide the elements for a dialectical, transcendent history of liberation or a humanist reconstruction of 'the people'. Fanon is himself uncertain, but from that certain, uncertain light he sheds, there emerges the rare chance to think the moment of liberation outside of the posturing and the polemic that so often accompanies the rhetoric of political struggle:

> ... rather we must join them in the fluctuating movement which they are just giving shape to, and which, as soon as it has started will be the signal for everything to be called into question. Let there be no mistake about it; it is to this zone of occult instability where the people dwell that we must come; and it is there that our souls are crystallised and that our perceptions and our lives are transfused with light. (Fanon: *On National Culture*)

London HOMI K. BHABHA

Touching Ground, Taking Root: theological and political reflections on the Philippine struggle

By ED DE LA TORRE (London, Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1986). 214 pp. £5.75

The 'theology of liberation' has tended to be associated by many western writers with Latin America, partly because it is the works of Latin American theologians such as José Miranda, Juan Luis Segundo, José Miguez-Bonino and Gustavo Gutierrez which have been translated into English. But theological reflection on liberation struggles occurs in a variety of contexts in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and elsewhere, and one of the first books entitled *Liberation Theology* to be published in English was by the American feminist theologian, Rosemary Ruether (Paulist Press, 1972). It is a mistake, then, to connect the theology of liberation exclusively with Latin America, and the present book by Fr de la Torre arises out of his experiences, particularly in prison during the Marcos regime, of the struggle for justice in the Philippines. Unlike the writers mentioned above, he has not presented us with a systematic theological treatise, but with a series of meditations, reflections and questions. This is Christian theology done in a hurry, a street theology for people who must 'reflect on the run'.

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'A theology of liberation', he insists, 'can exist only if there is a process of liberation that it can reflect on.' Like all the writers within this tradition, he sees theology as a reflection on struggle and on lived experience, not a series of propositions from which social practice can be deduced. It is, in Gutierrez's famous phrase, 'the second step', it 'arises only at sundown'; the first step is the commitment to the struggle for justice. Again, like all liberation theologians, de la Torre recognises that traditional 'Catholic social doctrine', as expounded by popes from Leo XIII to John Paul II, has tended to address the affluent, urging them to treat the poor with justice. It has not addressed the poor, telling them that they are unjustly treated. The former is called preaching, the latter is called agitation. He points to the danger of a 'classless' and ahistorical view of human liberation which bypasses concrete issues and ends, as it begins, in vague language about reconciliation and harmony. He quotes the memorable words of the late Saul Alinsky: 'Reconciliation means I am in power, and you get reconciled to it.' Theologies which begin by asserting the 'common good' (presupposing that there *is* a common good, that good news for the oppressed is good news too for the oppressors) invariably end up supporting the status quo.

It is important that those involved in liberation and resistance struggles who stand outside the Roman Catholic communion should watch very carefully what is happening among liberation theologians and in the Vatican. For it was the late Pope Paul VI who attempted to move away from the idea of a pre-packaged 'Catholic social doctrine' and encouraged Christians in situations of revolutionary struggle to develop styles of reflection and action relevant to their context. And it was his encyclical *Populorum Progressio* of 1967 which gave the green light for liberation theologians to pursue their work within the framework of Catholic orthodoxy. The present pope, to the extent that he understands what all this ferment is about, is unsympathetic to it, and for some years there has been a sustained attempt to silence the liberation theologians and to restore the older securities and certainties of Catholic social doctrine.

One of the most frequent criticisms of liberation theology is that it has forsaken spirituality for political activism. In fact, the opposite is the case. This is a deeply spiritual movement which seeks to unite contemplation and struggle. At the heart of de la Torre's reflections is his quest for a spirituality for combat (a phrase originally coined by the present Bishop of Durham at a consultation in Sri Lanka in September 1982). He sees within the Christian tradition a tendency to seek a 'middle way' between resignation and conflict, and he illustrates this by a contrast sometimes made between Buddha, Lenin and Jesus. In this contrast, the Buddha stands with his hands fully open in resignation, while Lenin stands with fists tightly clenched. But the figure of Jesus has hands half clenched and half open, neither one thing nor the other.

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De la Torre sees this image as reflecting the typical middle-class captivity of theology, and so he paints the crucifixion in which Jesus has one hand open, and one clenched. He explains:

> I thought how people are at the start – one hand open, begging for some relief, from those above them, but clenched fists against each other, competing for what trickles down. At the end of the organising process, the clenched fists are directed to their proper target, upward. The open hands receive each other as companions in a shared struggle.

And there is much more of this kind of reflection. This is not a tidy book, but rather a spiritual and political notebook, with many unresolved ideas and unanswered questions. For liberation theology only makes sense to the western reader if she or he abandons preconceived notions of what theology means within the western context. The difference is brought out dramatically in some words at the beginning of the book, recalling a conversation with another prisoner.

> 'What do you think brought you to prison?'
> 'I was looking for a Filipino theology.'
> 'You don't land in prison for that! Theology is not a dangerous enterprise.'
> 'It can be. But it's a long story.'

This impressive volume tells part of that story.

Board for Social Responsibility
Church House

KENNETH LEECH

Anglicans and Racism: the Balsall Heath Consultation

By RACE, PLURALISM AND COMMUNITY GROUP, Board for Social Responsibility (London, Church of England, Board for Social Responsibility, 1986). 50 pp. £2.25 paper

In 1981, a consultation was held in Leicester on the Church of England and racism. That event marked the beginning of the work of the Race, Pluralism and Community Group for Racial Justice in the Church and laid the foundations for the first phase of its efforts. Five years later, a second consultation took place to assess the work done since 1981 and to draw up priorities for the next decade. As the report of that second gathering, *Anglicans and racism* represents the future direction of the Church of England's commitment to combating racism.

In the pre-consultation document, 'The Fields of Charity and Sin', Kenneth Leech makes it clear that the 'primarily educational' role prescribed for the Anglican Church's Race Relations Field Officer has

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not made any significant impression upon the structures, policies and practices of the Church or the wider society. He characterises the last five years largely in terms of failure, due to the Church's indifference to its own racist foundations and p.actices. Therefore, he concludes, 'Whatever happens in the future, it seems clear that a central focus of any work must be that of confronting racism within the thinking and structures of the Church. Judgement must begin at the House of God.'

Sandra Wilson, in the opening address of the Consultation, argues that judgement has already taken place; that white Christianity has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Following very much the analysis of the Black Revolution pioneered by James Cone, whose student she was, and drawing on the American experience, Sandra Wilson finds the White Church compromised by its historical 'chaplaincy to the forces of oppression' and inhuman in its indifference to the cry for liberation of blacks. To atone for that blasphemy, she argues, the Church must recognise its collusion in the racist patterning of society and repent of it by offering its own life for the cause of 'Black Power and Black Freedom'. In doing so, the Church will imitate the revolutionary love of the Christ who takes on blackness to identify with the wretched of the earth. For, from the perspective of black theology, 'Black is holy ... a symbol of God's presence in history on behalf of the oppressed person. Where there is Black, there is oppression ... where there is Blackness there is Christ who has taken on Blackness ... '

Responding to the judgement of the Church brought about by black theology and the black revolution, Kenneth Leech and Barney Pityana suggest that the Church of England faces the same crisis now. From his position within the Anglican establishment as its Race Relations Field Officer, Leech argues that the Church has largely chosen to ignore the presence of black people and, more pertinently, the pervasiveness of racism in British society. Its approach to combating racism has been restricted to education and the changing of attitudes, even during a period when the gaps between black and white and rich and poor have been widening at an unprecedented rate. If not out of obedience, the Church should now choose to align itself with the demands of black Anglicans for equal rights and justice out of self-interest. To have credibility as anything other than the chaplains of the forces of oppression, the Church must be changed in structure, practice and commitment.

Barney Pityana opens his contribution to the Consultation by stating:

> It is fair to say that it is a sad indictment on the church and on society that there has to be a programme to combat racism and officers for race relations ... But what is even more sad is that these concerns take a rather low priority in our church's ratings.

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Reflecting on his own experience as a black Anglican priest and on a survey addressed to bishops, carried out in 1985, Pityana argues that the last five years notwithstanding, the Church of England still remains largely ignorant of the experience of black Anglicans and lacks the will to effect change, either on their behalf or to encourage their autonomous organisations. If the Church is to move beyond lip-service to its pronouncements, it must think more clearly, strategise more coherently and act more definitely in the knowledge that 'the struggle [for racial justice] is not a syllabus you start and finish and pass. It requires vigilance and moral consistency of a continual kind.'

In the context of the Church's limp history of combating racism, the recommendations made by the workshops are tantamount to acts of resistance. They represent the refusal of people of faith to accept the ideology of 'everything's getting better' or the belief that black people must continue to be sacrificed for the 'unity' of the white power structure. There is the recognition that black people do not want 'equal opportunities' to become white and accepted, that what is demanded is not mere visibility but fundamental changes in the structure and practices of the Church. Black autonomy and participation in the processes of government are constant themes throughout the workshop reports, whether the issue be theological education, black theology, Church structures or the racism of the wider society, and reflect the shift away from the 'race relations' ethos of the Leicester Consultation and towards 'black freedom and black power'.

Anglicans and racism, in one sense, does not say anything new or surprising. That the Church of England has been thoroughly compromised by its reaction to black people in Britain over the last thirty years is hardly a revelation. What emerges from this document, though, is that even in 'the belly of the beast' there are people committed to, and fighting for, racial justice, that the Church as an establishment is continually being challenged by a call for a revolutionary love and a divinely black Anglican Church.

Birmingham PAUL GRANT

The Press and Political Dissent: a question of censorship

By MARK HOLLINGSWORTH (London, Pluto, 1986). 256 pp. £6.95

These are difficult times for the left in Britain, but it's important to keep one's sense of humour. Very occasionally, the right-wing national press can provide a belly-laugh, as in the following example from the *Daily Telegraph*: evidence that 'extremists' were behind the disturbances on the Broadwater Farm estate in 1985 was provided by the presence on the streets of 'white, bearded men in sandals, many accompanied by girls'.

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But, alas, the newspapers seldom display this kind of creative wit. Few of the other articles assembled here by Mark Hollingsworth can raise even the ghost of a smile.

The press and political dissent confirms, in general, what we already know, that most newspapers cheat, lie, misrepresent and fantasise, creating a world where to disagree is to be insane, to protest to be evil and power-mad. Hollingsworth has ploughed through a very great deal of sheer filth, examining the treatment of a broad range of topics: Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone and the late Greater London Council, black people, Peter Tatchell and the 1983 Bermondsey by-election, the Greenham Common peace camp, the 1983 general election and the miners' strike. Often he has been able to cross refer the printed word with interviews with Fleet Street journalists, which prove overwhelmingly that the papers knew exactly what they were doing, that their distortions were the product of conscious decisions.

And yet, diligent as he has been, this is a flawed and unsatisfactory book, severely deficient both in analysis and in contextualising, historically, this pot-pourri of garbage. Given the weight of evidence presented, his conclusions are weak and disappointing. Does it all matter? How important is Fleet Street? Hollingsworth writes:

> I do not subscribe to the view, held by some sections of the Labour Left, that the British newspaper public are being systematically brainwashed by Fleet Street . . . equally, it cannot be seriously argued that press coverage has no effect at all. Even on a subconscious level, the press must have some influence.

He claims that the newspapers have reacted to 'new forms of protest and radical ideas', which emerged when 'the traditional style of machine party politics was being swept away' – a peculiar notion for any current observer of the Labour Party. These radical forces, he contends, in themselves believed that 'confrontation was . . . the only way of achieving real change' – and the press responded in kind. Moreover, he goes on, this 'cultural backlash' (sic) against the 'Butskellite consensus', made up a coherent 'radical movement', a 'rainbow coalition of peace activists, women, blacks, gay people and trade unionists venting their anger inside the Labour Party' – to this reviewer, a remarkable acceptance of a mythical category which has no meaning outside the minds of the very Fleet Street hacks Hollingsworth seeks to criticise.

Probably the press has become more vicious, but not for the reasons Hollingsworth suggests, and those reasons ought to produce a rather firmer conclusion about the ultimate importance of tabloid journalism than Hollingsworth feels able to advance. Consensus – so far as it ever existed at all – did not begin to break down, as Hollingsworth claims, with '1968 – the year of student unrest'. The polarisation of British politics and society has more concrete, material origins: decolonisation,

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deindustrialisation and the breakdown of capitalist social formation in its wake; the growth of a new world where 'service industries' have become a substitute for industrial production and where such production as remains is increasingly labour-extensive and specialised, while whole swathes of the country have gone into a process of underdevelopment and decay.

To the political and economic leadership of such a world, ideology begins to assume paramount importance. Hollingsworth's book would have benefited from a look at the things which the newspapers do cover in a positive fashion – that classic agent of social mediation, the Royal Family; the glamorous lives of soap stars and aristocrats; the bravery of Falklands heroes. For the press to disgorge a complete ideology, it is not enough to vilify the opposition to the order which the newspapers themselves represent: it must have its own, coherent world view – where Britain is still Great, policemen wonderful (Hollingsworth omits to note the exceptional venom afforded critics of this particular arm of the state), parliament sovereign and representative, black visitors to our shores welcome and tolerated guests so long, as befits their origins in Empire, they are mindful of their place.

In the pages of the right-wing press, such an ideology finds daily vent. Its effect, of course, is awesome: no less than to lay down the strictest of parameters for all discourse within the political mainstream. Tabloid news values have reached beyond their authors and readers, to *Marxism Today* and *New Socialist*, to Neil Kinnock and his doughty team of paranoid press aides. Will Labour make police accountability a shibboleth of their next manifesto? Will they socialise financial capital? Will they examine the public sector to purge institutionalised racism root and branch? Here lies the real censorship: the People's Party has swallowed those news values whole, and deperately wants to be seen as 'sane'.

London DAVID ROSE

Anglo American and the Rise of Modern South Africa

By DUNCAN INNES (London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1985). 358pp.

Anglo American is a multinational corporation that rivals such giants as Shell, BP and Unilever. It began its meteoric career in 1917 as a mining group in South Africa. Today, it is actively involved in exploiting the resources of over forty-five countries, spread over Africa and Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia.

Duncan Innes' book focuses on the rise of Anglo American within the context of the trajectory of capitalist development in South Africa.

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He shows how social and political factors influenced that process and the extent to which Anglo American itself could influence the social formation.

The first part of the book discusses how, with American, British and South African capital, Anglo American, under the famous Oppenheimer family, secured the monopoly of the gold mining industry and absolute control of the diamond industry in South Africa. But the author points out that Anglo American differed from other mining groups. The latter were typical imperialist concerns in that their main interest in South Africa was to develop the gold mines and channel the surplus value gained to London, where it was used to finance expansion on an international scale. South Africa was, in short, only one part of their world-wide operations. For many of these companies, South African interests accounted for less than 50 per cent of their world-wide operations.

By contrast, the interests of Anglo American were, at its inception, all tied up in South Africa. At the end of the First World War the Anglo American group had enough capital only to develop its South African mining activities. In the immediate post-war period, moreover, international instability precluded it from implementing a programme of expansion on an international scale. Finally, the Group seized the opportunity at the end of the war to secure control of the rich diamond fields in former German South West Africa, now a colony of South Africa.

By 1922 Anglo felt it was so heavily involved in South Africa that it registered in that country and transferred its headquarters to Johannesburg – so making South Africa the focus of its activities. Still, in registering itself in South Africa, the Group was doing no more than any international firm would do: namely, seeking to secure an advantageous tax position for itself. At the same time, the future of the Group was bound up with the economic, social and political reproduction of capitalism in South Africa. It sought to influence state policies. The chairman of Anglo, Ernest Oppenheimer, entered parliament, as did his son, Harry.

The book stresses that the development of monopoly capitalism in South Africa was both the cause and result of Anglo's birth. By concentrating and centralising production under its control, Anglo became the leading mining company in South Africa. In the late 1950s, Anglo had to find new outlets for its accumulating funds. Consequently, it embarked upon two forms of expansion simultaneously: the first being its diversification into the South African sectors of manufacturing and finance, of property and agriculture; and the second being its penetration as a multinational combine into other countries. These developments came at a time when South African capitalism was being transformed into monopoly capitalism – the merging, that is, of bank capital and productive capital and the emergence of the phase of finance capital.

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The author advances the theory, in the final chapter of his book, 'that the transition to monopoly capitalism in South Africa also produced the phenomenon of South African imperialism'. He points to South Africa's colonial stranglehold over Namibia and the complete economic dependence of Lesotho, Swaziland and Botswana on South Africa as proof of its imperialism. South Africa itself, he contends, has broken out of the vicious cycle of underdevelopment, having developed a relatively advanced industrial base. It can no longer be regarded as a peripheral capitalist social formation. Finally, the fact that South Africa exports capital even to advanced countries like the US is proof, he says, that it exhibits an important characteristic of imperialism.

On the other hand, others argue that South Africa is still in a position of dependent capitalism, having to rely heavily on foreign investment and technology and being unable to compete with the advanced countries in selling her manufactured goods on the world market. It is obvious that marxist theories of imperialism are in need of further development to cope with new trends in global capitalism.

London KEN JORDAAN

Lifetimes: under apartheid

By NADINE GORDIMER and DAVID GOLDBLATT (London, Jonathan Cape, 1986). 115pp. £15.00

The Child is Not Dead: youth resistance in South Africa 1976-86

Compiled by ANN HARRIES, ROGER DISKI and ALASDAIR BROWN (London, British Defence and Aid Fund/ILEA, 1986). 64pp.

A History of South Africa

By MARGARET HOLMES and NIGEL WEST with others (Leeds, Development Education Centre, 1986). Four pamphlets, plus teachers' notes.

Apartheid: a graphic guide

By DONALD WOODS with illustrations by MIKE BOSTOCK (London, Camden Press, 1986). 148 pp. £4.95

How does one attempt to convey – to an audience familiarised to cliché and half-truth about apartheid – the reality of South Africa today? The four items under review here take strikingly different approaches, and achieve different measures of success. All use illustration as well as text, and three of the four – BDAF/ILEA's *The Child is not Dead*, the DEC teaching pack and Donald Wood's *Graphic Guide* – are aimed at young people.

It is not clear, however, who the handsomely produced *Lifetimes: under Apartheid* is aimed at – indeed, the cynic might conclude that all

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the elements were there, already in existence, and only awaited selection and assembly. Extracts of varying length from Nadine Gordimer's previously published novels are interspersed with finely printed photographs by David Goldblatt. The extracts appear to be only tenuously linked with the photographs, and the sequence of these shows only a loose, and rather static, internal relationship, undeniably evocative though many of them are. The parade of strapping white flesh in a 'lovely legs' competition held at some hideous hypermarket comes to mind, or, in complete contrast, the terrible fatigued dreariness of the unending bus journey in the small hours from Kwa Ndebele to work in Pretoria. Intended to appeal directly to the imaginative and the visual senses – to give the white reader the clarity of perception of both novelist and photographer – it nonetheless leaves a residue of dissatisfaction and unease – perhaps because this rawest of raw material has been tamed and transformed into 'art'.

The very skill of the photographer has subverted his purpose. The naked gnarled feet of an old woman beside the dusty body of a naked child (only its torso and limbs are shown, not its head), carefully positioned in the frame, have become an object to be gazed at, not the stark embodiment of an unbearable deprivation. Similarly, the smoothly compelling curve and roundness in the picture of a shabby man, asleep on the ground, become an essay in line and balance, softening the human tragedy. And what remains, from both the pictures, and much of the writing, is an impression of a people who are done to, never doing; the overall sense is one of passivity.

No such impression is conveyed by BDAF/ILEA's excellent *The Child is Not Dead*. This, too, has photos – graphic raw snatches of life in the South African townships today – which strike an immediate and powerful response, whether of an angry, grief-stricken young man carrying a boy shot in the face, of crowds demonstrating, police getting ready to take aim, children washing tear-gas off each other's faces, or a young girl studying by candlelight in front of a cracked mirror. Well-produced and excellently designed, *The Child is Not Dead* is a thorough, carefully thought out and absorbing piece of documentation on how young black people have spearheaded resistance in the townships over the last ten years. Its cleverly chosen starting-point is the reproduction of an exchange of letters from a teenage magazine – one from an English girl ignorant of South Africa but worried about what is happening there, one from a white South African mother, who, claiming that apartheid is right, says that no one has the right to criticise 'something they know nothing about'. Thus, from the very beginning, the book, both in subject matter and approach, treats its young readers as rational, intelligent and capable of forming their own judgements, and in the process allows them to identify with the situation of their black peers in South Africa. The bulk of the text is from a wide variety

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of published sources – articles from the press, both in Britain and South Africa, cartoon strips, personal testimonies, poems, interviews – all carefully chosen and organised, with a basic linking commentary. What emerges is a full picture not only of what Soweto itself is like (the very width of its roadways designed 'to allow a Saracen (tank) to execute a U-turn'), but of the language issue that triggered the initial uprising, the nature of 'Bantu' education, the spreading resistance and the police and military response. Here the raw material is still raw: a cacophony of voices which disturb, anger and inform, yet without hysteria or rhetoric. The well-chosen questions and suggestions for work, too, if followed, will encourage an active and questioning response from the book's users, and make it an excellent resource.

More skeletal in nature, and more cheaply produced, is the Development Education Centre's teaching pack on the history of South Africa. This has also been produced by teachers, but the emphasis here is much less on presenting a rounded picture and much more on encouraging different sorts of project work around the elements of the information that are presented. The pack includes teachers' notes, plus four pamphlets on South Africa as at 1837, 1939, 1976 and today. The information is presented with the bare minimum of commentary and introduction, largely through the potted biographies or testimonies of various (presumably fictional) characters, together with charts, maps, cartoons and rather dull drawings.

What comes across initially is a disparate and often confusingly laid-out set of pages, with the onus very much on the pupils, through the activities suggested, to make the story coherent, discover the correct relationships and assess, for example, what position in the social hierarchy would find expression in a particular attitude, and so on. While this is useful, and the pupil might learn in detail about one or two topics, he or she will, unless exceptionally inquiring, develop only a hazy idea of how the parts fit into the whole. For example, one wonders how much is learnt from the 1939 booklet, with its very brief description of the position of the ANC, United Party, National Party, and supporting 'evidence' sheets, of why the National Party finally came to dominate and later institute Apartheid, or, indeed, why so much of white South Africa was on the side of the Nazis. There is not the meat on these bare bones to satisfy a child's curiosity.

The answers to such questions can be found, however, in Donald Woods' *Apartheid: a graphic guide*, which takes its political history back, long before the official starting-point of 1948, to the colonial impact. Writing for the most part in a terse and colloquial style, he attempts to explain both the material and, to a certain extent, the ideological factors that led to 'this paradise (becoming) the most hated country in the world', from the first encroachment of the Dutch in 1652, through the battles for control between the British and Afrikaners, the

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invention by the British of concentration camps for the Boers, the community of interest between the Afrikaners and the Germans, and the limitations of the liberalism of Botha and Smuts that left a vacuum for the rise of the National Party and the implementation of apartheid. He outlines some of the main trends in black resistance, but far more cursorily – nor is this woven into his story, but treated rather as a separate topic. Such sketchiness, a form, almost, of lip-service, and which is not really allayed by the description of P.W. Botha as the 'last Prime Minister' of the Apartheid system, is a major flaw in this otherwise useful and informative book.

Occasionally, the author pinpoints the terrifying absurdities of apartheid to telling effect. On the Pass Laws, he comments: 'In 1984, it was decided as concession that black marathon runners could run through a white area if they had a photocopy of the main page of their pass book pinned to their chests.' At times, though, his quick-fire, rapid style becomes over-facile and grating:

> 'To the early Dutch settlers ... the implications were clear. These "savages" now confronting them in the New Promised Land were none other than those descendants of Ham. Servants, Slaves. Their divinely ordained task was obviously to hew wood and draw water for the settlers!
> "Good theology there, Jan."
> "Thanks, Piet, I kinda like it myself." '

But this slickness is not, unfortunately, confined to the writing. The book is copiously illustrated with specially commissioned drawings by Mike Bostock, which are, all too often, embarrassingly crude and literal in their interpretation of the text. Not that the artist is not skilled as such – the images that do work attest to this – but it is the worst kind of visual rhetoric to portray a screaming, caricatured policeman, with his eyeballs as swastikas, picked out in virulent red, the only splash of colour on an otherwise black and white page.

Institute of Race Relations HAZEL WATERS

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The Roots of Crisis in Southern Africa

By ANN SEIDMAN (New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1985). 209pp.

Consolidated Gold Fields: partner in Apartheid

By COUNTER INFORMATION SERVICES (London, CIS, 1986). 48pp. £0.95.

Apartheid's Private Army: the rise of right-wing vigilantes in South Africa

By NICHOLAS HAYSOM (London, Catholic Institute of International Relations, 1986). 141pp. £2.50

It is often at the instigation of struggle itself that academics, journalists and well-intentioned observers set forth to analyse that ferment. South Africa, whose people have, especially since 1984, been locked in a sustained and deadly struggle for an end to exploitation and racism is a case in point. There have been numerous publications attempting to define the nature of the Southern African political climate and, usually, the possibilities for peaceful change and negotiation. Lately, the chance of a peaceful settlement seems even more remote, as the Pretoria regime burrows deeper into the veld, entrenching itself further in its own fascist nationalism.

Ann Seidman's book sets out to provide information and analysis for the use of those who have an influence on or interest in American politics. She contrasts the different strands of American foreign policy – such as constructive engagement – with the harsh reality of life for blacks in South Africa, and leaves no doubt as to the US's role in bolstering apartheid. This, she shows clearly, has the express purpose of maintaining massive profits from the region in the face of a world economic recession. The book is essentially a well documented and researched case for sanctions and Seidman shows how the South African regime's strength is achieved not only through high profits and low black wages, but very much through the support it gets from British and US investment.

The US stepped into South Africa when the latter's foreign exchange earnings could no longer pay for imports. US investment strengthened the regime, while appearing to put pressure on it to make changes to apartheid. Moreover, US aid to other countries in the region has been used to this end – given or withheld according to whether US policy on South Africa is supported or opposed. For example, Zimbabwe had its aid package reduced as a result of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's denunciation of US interference in the region.

Seidman also charts South Africa's own principle of destabilisation: the phoney Nkomati 'Peace' Accord, the funding of rival movements, the coup in Lesotho, and numerous bombing raids in Angola, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia. Destabilisation occurs also

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through the gradual sabotage of alternative trade routes for the surrounding countries, so that their economies are virtually controlled by South Africa. Seidman is careful not to imply that these countries' plight is somehow inherent in their being ruled by black governments but rather that:

> As a result of colonial neglect, the new governments had to double and triple government expenditures to bring educational and health facilities in line with the people's needs ... At the same time, as tensions mounted throughout the region, they began to budget more for defense.

Seidman includes information about the growth of some liberation movements and the move by the constellation of southern African states to form SADCC, in an effort to wrest their destiny from South Africa. The book is useful because it deals with the region's economies as interconnected, and not with South Africa in isolation. It includes succinct and informative summaries of each section, with detailed tables and charts of foreign investment and information on the frontline states. However, it is not critical of the role of aid (the author herself worked for a voluntary aid agency), nor does it advocate that an end to apartheid should necessitate an end to highly exploitative foreign investment. By its implications and recommendations that structure remains unchallenged.

How such investment operates, through the machinations of multinational companies, and how the companies then conceal their tracks is revealed in the CIS pamphlet *Consolidated Gold Fields: partners in Apartheid*. From this detailed study of how one company obfuscates the facts, it is not hard to imagine how other companies deny their heavy involvement in South Africa when brought under public scrutiny. South African gold mines are controlled and administered by just six mining houses. Between them, Anglo-American and Gold Fields of South Africa control two-thirds of all gold production. Operating under GFSA, Consgold employs a plethora of methods to play down its sizeable investments. The single largest employer, it pays its black workers wages below the poverty line even for South Africa. Its health and safety regulations are dubious, and at least 97 per cent of its 465,000 black workers live in single sex, migrant labour hostels, and receive a pittance for pension when they inevitably contract the deadly phthisis from dust inhalation. Peaceful strikes over pay have been met with violence. In 1982, 800 mineworkers were dismissed and twenty-two arrested. The wage remained virtually unchanged.

Characteristically, like other multinationals, Consgold has subsidiaries in England, Ireland, US and Australia, and emphasises the construction work in which these are involved. It is careful not to have more than a 50 per cent stake in any company, to increase only gradually

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direct holdings in profitable mines, and claims not to control them by allowing them to operate largely independently of one another. In reality, Consgold has over 50 per cent of its total land in mines in South Africa, and these account for 64 per cent of its total sales. It also receives large tax allowances from the British government which further boost its profits. For example, pre-tax profits in 1979 were £17m; in 1983 they rose to £51m.

No company's 'records' can be accepted at face value after the demolition job done by CIS on Consgold. It is this kind of pamphlet that gives extra muscle to the call for justice. That justice is long overdue – and it is its continual frustration to the point of desperation that has spawned the gnarled and bitter cries of the 'Mabangalala', right-wing black vigilantes. But, as Nicholas Haysom points out in *Apartheid's Private Army*, the phenomenon of the vigilantes is neither clear cut nor consistent. Thrown up by the contradictions of a disintegrating 'South African' psyche, the vigilantes have appeared in different areas under different circumstances, wrenching the already besieged communities almost asunder through their acts of mob terror and intimidation. Variously called 'fathers', 'Amabutho', 'A-team' and so on, their emergence has been seized upon not without a little glee by the media. What is widely reported as black on black violence (see how they can't even agree among themselves now – imagine them in power) acts as a buttress to the apartheid system where it is being challenged by militant communities and activists.

With the spread of an economic recession in the form of high unemployment and indecent pay, a reduction on government spending on already inferior housing and health services, and a growing dissatisfaction among the youth over 'Bantu education', black discontent has increased. When urban councils were set up, supposedly to substitute for the Tricameral Parliament afforded to the 'Indian' and 'Coloured' sections of the population, those that worked in them were seen as part of the state, and hence a target for attack. Furthermore, amidst increasing poverty, they constituted an urban elite.

Certainly, the vigilantes that organised in Huhudi and Leandra did so in response to community organisations that formed to fight the high rents and the threats of removals decreed by these urban councils. Frequently, the vigilante squads consist of leaders in the councils, or, as in the case of the Ciskei 'Mbokhoto' or the Kwa Zulu 'Amabutho', the chief ministers and officials of 'homeland' governments. They also enjoy the protection, if by default, of the South African Defence Force which, in case after case, either refused to come to a victim's aid, left the scene or fabricated charges to justify an assault. Killings, maimings and beatings are the order of the day. Incidents such as that at Crossroads (where vigilantes destroyed over 50,000 homes that the authorities had wanted pulled down earlier) or Durban (where the 'Indian' community

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produced its own vigilantes to ward off attacks from Zulu based 'Amabutho') are more extreme cases of the same phenomenon.

That vigilante action exacerbates tensions and divisions and generates more violence within the society there is no doubt – it represents a regression to conservatism of the worst kind, and one that leaves nothing unscathed but apartheid. The undeniable rise of the 'Mabangalala' is, however, a painful reminder of the necessarily complex issues involved in attempting to cohere resistance. Frequently, the people who are recruited to the vigilante squads perceive their role as that of preservers of some normality in a fast changing world; others are on the margins of political activity. Sometimes theirs is a response to the way in which consumer boycotts are organised and enforced by some young enthusiasts. Others perceive loyalty to tribe or clan as paramount, and not class. All these aspects signify the need to address the contradictions that apartheid has exploited thus far, which are the very ones that in fighting for a psychological and economic liberation for Azania, need to be properly assessed, understood and worked through as part of the long and intricate fight to come.

Institute of Race Relations BUSI CHAANE

Haiti: family business

By ROD PRINCE (London, Latin American Bureau, 1985). 85pp. £3.50 paper.

Few books which set out to offer an up-to-date analysis of a given country or political system can escape the danger of being overtaken by events. This fate has befallen Latin American Bureau's *Haiti: family business* in as much as Jean-Claude Duvalier, the figurehead and principal beneficiary of the system which the book describes, is currently in comfortable retirement in the Côte d'Azur, having fled the country in February 1986. But this in itself does not lessen the book's significance and value, for not only does it provide a now historical and retrospective view of Duvalierism, but it also explains much about the present development of post-Duvalierism in Haiti.

In *Family business* the author traces the political degeneration of Haiti from the first independent black republic to a corrupt dynastic dictatorship. Out of this overview emerges the consistent theme of US involvement in the country's economic and political structures. From the earliest gunboat diplomacy and the nineteen-year American occupation to the substantial financial aid supplied to Baby Doc's regime, the US has always played a central part in what it perceives as a crucial corner of its 'backyard'. The book makes it abundantly clear that American concerns for regional 'stability' have invariably outweighed

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scruples in relation to democracy and human rights, and that Haiti's geographical proximity to Cuba had done much to determine its strategic importance in Washington's eyes. Yet, as Rod Prince points out, not all US administrations have approached the problem of an unpalatable and ambivalently anti-communist dictatorship in the same way. Jean-Claude Duvalier's superficial 'liberalisation' programme, for instance, was an uneasy response to the Carter government's insistence upon respect for human rights; conversely, the crackdown against dissidents in 1979 corresponded closely to Duvalier's justified expectation that the Reagan administration would prove less delicate on the same issue. Ideological permutations within the White House and conditions imposed upon aid payments have hence had a direct effect upon the practice of Duvalierism.

Although compact, the book deals with a wide range of topics, providing much statistical information and telling illustration. The differences between Papa Doc's system of terror and mystification and Baby Doc's selective repression and bogus reformism are thoroughly explored, as is the regime's vital and perhaps fatal shift in patronage and collaboration from the black rural middle class to the traditional coloured elite of the capital. Other important aspects which are covered include Haitian relations with the neighbouring Dominican Republic, the scandal of migrant labour in the sugar industry, and factors surrounding the Haitian 'boat people'.

Recent events have confirmed the validity of the book's analysis. If Duvalier himself has gone, removed by his erstwhile American allies, then many elements of Duvalierism remain intact. The US, in particular, is now intent upon limiting damage to its economic and strategic interests in Haiti and is clearly determined to prevent the appearance of a radical government in the country. As *Family business* concludes of American regional policy, 'it supports anti-communist minority undemocratic regimes in preference to unknown dangers, such as social upheaval and the possibility of revolutionary regimes or even radical nationalist regimes taking power'. It remains to be seen whether such support will again be necessary in order to frustrate the majority of Haitians in their desire for genuine and irreversible change.

Family business offers a clear and accessible insight into the complications of Haitian politics. In tying together the legacy of French colonialism and civil war with the history of US intervention, it does much to explain the growing impoverishment and dependency of what is now the poorest country in the western hemisphere. As part of Latin American Bureau's consistently stimulating 'Special Brief' series, the book is to be welcomed as a timely corrective to much of the stereotyped material which appears on the subject of Haiti.

Oxford JAMES FERGUSON

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An Insular Possession

By TIMOTHY MO (London, Chatto and Windus 1986). 593pp. £9.95

At first appearance it seems that Timothy Mo's *An Insular Possession* poses a welcome challenge to the grip that imperial nostalgia has long had over the English historical novel. The book is concerned with elaborating a fictional response to the first Opium War, a British aggression that even the hardiest of apologists would have difficulty justifying today. This gives the work a surface radicalism that, unfortunately, it does not really justify.

With great technical skill and considerable wit, Mo successfully creates a physical and mental universe for the European (and American) settlements in Canton and Macao at the end of the 1830s. The exercise is no cheap celebration of period charm, but is instead a rich study of change and development, of the emergence of a new world with its newspapers, photography and steamships. Paradoxically, Mo's successfully executed portrait of a society in the process of change has as its result a somewhat crude vindication of bourgeois individualism, an individualism that is, moreover, explicitly masculine. The very last sentences of the book have one of the characters reach out to us over the years to make the point clear: 'To you, reader, I reach out my hand. *I* was a man!'

The only substantial woman character in the novel, Alice Remington, is very much a creature of the drawing room. She is completely uninvolved in the great events that are beginning to unfold and is soon removed from the field by her uncle, offering no resistance to his bullying. After this comedy of manners, the only other women to intrude into Mo's masculine world are various prostitutes.

While Mo's skills as a writer can be appreciated and enjoyed, the challenge he poses to imperial nostalgia is, at best, slight. For all of its concern with the opium traffic, the novel remains very much within the limits of what the literary establishment considers acceptable to write about the British Empire.

Mo presents us with a liberal critique of imperialism, that while it roundly condemns the opium traffic, still celebrates the onward march of the Empire, in this instance the founding of Hong Kong. The 'hero' of the novel is the British Plenipotentiary, Captain Elliott, the founder of Hong Kong, who, we are told, is still not commemorated in the colony he established. He is portrayed as a man of great integrity and both moral and physical courage, as well as being moderate and humane in his dealings with the Chinese. Mo is clearly out to remedy the shabby neglect of this great man.

Elliott is viewed through the appreciative and admiring eyes of two young Americans, Walter Eastman and Gideon Chase. It is from the standpoint of their liberalism that British policy is criticised and

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judged. Both men bitterly oppose the opium traffic and campaign against it in their newspaper, *The Lin Tin Bulletin and River Bee*, but they still support the opening up, by force if necessary, of the Chinese Empire to the 'civilising' influences of trade and commerce.

The Chinese authorities' attempts to put an end to the opium traffic eventually confront the European settlement in Canton with such hostility that the decision is taken to abandon the factories and take flight. A new settlement is established at Hong Kong and once this base is secured, military operations are begun to bring the Chinese to heel.

The reader views the Chinese through the eyes of the two Americans, in particular Chase, who develops considerable sympathy for the Chinese people. When war finally breaks out, Chase inevitably sides with the British however. To begin with he hopes that Elliott's policy of restraint will detach the peasantry from their rulers. The dreadful excesses of the Indian troops, who rape and murder with impunity, make this impossible, and eventually goad the peasants into taking up arms against the foreigners. Mo's portrayal of the Indian soldiers as uncontrollable, homicidal criminals is, it must be said, extremely unsavoury.

The war is a succession of one-sided military operations with the British invariably inflicting huge losses on their brave but poorly-armed opponents. Nowhere does Mo enter into the Chinese experience of this aggression. The war is viewed overwhelmingly from the point of view of Gideon Chase, who, while often critical, is still, in the end, supportive. He joins the British forces as an interpreter and the Chinese eventually put a price on his head.

One incident in the novel illustrates the flaw that this limited viewpoint represents. After the capture of Canton by the British, the American Ridley discovers that some Chinese have stolen and eaten his dog. He takes up his pistols and begins shooting every Chinese he can find. This is regarded as a joke by the novel's other characters, who are amused by their friend's eccentricity, and is at the same time humorously portrayed to the reader. The result is that the reader is made complicit in the crime, laughing along with the murderer's friends.

The joke would look very different from the Chinese point of view. Unable to harm the all-powerful foreigners physically, they strike a symbolic blow by killing and eating a much-loved dog. A good joke on the arrogant Europeans that backfires, however, when one of them commits murder in retaliation. The outrage that the same event viewed from the Chinese side inevitably provokes is missing from Mo's story.

Without any doubt, Mo is a most accomplished writer. In *An Insular Possession*, however, he has written a novel that is altogether too respectable.

Leicester JOHN NEWSINGER

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London Labour Plan

By GREATER LONDON COUNCIL, INDUSTRY AND EMPLOYMENT BRANCH (London, GLC, 1986). 552pp. £5.00

What was one of the most potentially far-reaching and substantial initiatives of the former Greater London Council (GLC) has also been one of the least heralded. While this has ensured that it has not attracted the more bizarre perversities of the tabloid press (several hundred pages of carefully argued, substantially researched documentation and analysis with a practical social purpose are hardly sensational), it has also meant that it has not attracted the depth and spread of serious discussion that it merits.

The *London Labour Plan* is the latest in the series of major economic reports that was begun with the London Industrial Survey, followed by the London Financial Survey. More are still in the pipeline. Published in the last week of the GLC's existence, its distribution was delayed for many months by negotiations with the London Residuary Body. Now that the GLC has finally gone, it is even more important that the implications and lessons of this major body of work should be taken up and examined by the left. For what is being attempted here, in the context of the industrial and social restructuring of Britain, is a new 'economics of labour ... which takes the livelihood, health and human capacities of labour as its core.'

> What is needed is a defence of those [workers'] rights, a strengthening of trade union organisation and a major extension of economic democracy ... Better hours, conditions and pay can be secured in the less skilled jobs. New technologies can be developed which extend the use of skills for the labour force as a whole. Employment can be redistributed through reducing hours, disallowing overtime and increasing the time allowed off for education and training ... In short, it is the argument of this *London Labour Plan* that the changes in work and the labour market that are now taking place can be redirected into a restructuring of the labour market in the interests of labour.

In substance, the *Plan* is a detailed, thoroughly researched and well-documented survey of every aspect of London's workforce. It analyses the make-up of the job-market, details the disparities in income levels, status, conditions of work, to reveal an increasing polarity between a shrinking sector of well-paid, secure employment with good conditions, and a growing sector of low-paid, part-time work with little status and no security. It looks at the discrimination that gays and lesbians are increasingly coming to face – particularly in the light of AIDs hysteria – and at the lack of anything but the most menial tasks for the disabled (some of whom, it points out, became disabled through their work). It

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reveals the cycles of low-wage, low-status, demanding jobs into which black workers and most women are forced, and then trapped – with black women experiencing the worst conditions. Strategies to combat racism, it stresses, such as equal opportunities policies, must be accompanied by practical measures to regenerate, economically, the inner cities. And in this, it takes into account the view so often expressed by black people that racism is not so much a personal affliction or an ideological shibboleth as something woven into the very economic fabric of society.

The *Plan* goes on to discuss unionisation, social security and taxation, as well as the potential for action by local authorities themselves, and at every stage it makes practical recommendations. Indeed, the strength of the work as a whole is precisely its combination of a detailed grasp of specifics and practicalities with a clear, hard-headed and, above all, positive analysis of what is to be done.

Institute of Race Relations HAZEL WATERS

The Racial Politics of Militant in Liverpool: the black community's struggle for participation in local politics 1980-1986

By THE LIVERPOOL BLACK CAUCUS (Liverpool/London, Merseyside Area Profile Group/The Runnymede Trust, 1986). 144pp. £2.95

This book was written by members of the Liverpool Black Caucus, but edited by Gideon Ben-Tovim of the University of Liverpool, with a foreword written jointly by the Roman Catholic Archbishop and the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool. It sets out to describe in a fair amount of detail the campaign to persuade Liverpool City Council to adopt an equal opportunities policy during the years 1980-86. The bulk of the book is concerned with the period from 1983, when a Labour administration, dominated by the Militant Tendency, won control of the city council from the Liberals. As such, it provides some well-documented evidence on the cynical treatment of the black community by Militant Tendency, not simply in relation to the controversial appointment of the principal race relations adviser in 1984, but over a whole range of allegations of blatantly corrupt and dishonest practices, including an alleged attempt to bribe members of the black community.

The book, however, contains two fundamental flaws which have dangerous implications for the struggle against racism. First, there is a naive assumption that local authority equal opportunities programmes are able to effect fundamental change; second, there is a failure to acknowledge the significance of specific local struggles during the period (1980-86) with which the book is concerned.

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The rapid growth of municipal 'anti-racism' during the past five years has been a key feature of the local state's response to the rebellions of 1981. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that this has made any significant impact in dismantling racist structures and practices. True, there may have been some increase in local state funding for black voluntary organisations, and the proliferation of race relations units, with their attendant highly-paid posts, may have facilitated upward social mobility for a few individuals. For the vast majority of black people, however, material conditions have actually worsened over the past half-decade. At the same time, there has been the alarming increase in racial attacks, an intensification of state racism through stricter visa controls on black people and the greater ability of the police to control inner-city areas through increased powers and militarisation. The further rebellions of October 1985 should have convinced even the most naive of observers of the limitations of local authority race strategies in initiating fundamental change, particularly as some of the most serious incidents occurred in Haringey and Lambeth, where the local councils had been developing 'progressive' and 'advanced' policies since the late 1970s.

It is unfortunate that this book neglects to examine the relevance to Liverpool of local authority race initiatives in other parts of the country. If it had, it would have perhaps been more critical of the assumption that conditions for Liverpool's black community would somehow be significantly better had the city council adopted a fully-fledged equal opportunities policy from the outset, and appointed a principal race relations adviser with more professional experience in race relations, greater managerial ability, more maturity and wisdom than the hapless Mr Sampson Bond.

There is further evidence of naivety in the argument that the main obstacle to progress in Liverpool is the dogmatic workerist ideology of the Militant Tendency and their 'colour-blind' approach to race. The book claims that only with the demise of Militant, through a combination of expulsions from the Labour Party and probable disqualification by the courts, will rapid progress in race relations take place either because of a 'Liberal electoral break-through' or a 'real shift in power and direction in the Labour Party'. Again, an examination of other local authorities might have led to a more realistic assessment. The 'fixing' of appointments is not unique to Militant; nor is a 'colour-blind' approach or the use of grant-aid to control and divide the black community. Militant's dogmatism cannot be opposed by an equal opportunities policy; only by a real political alternative, something which this book ultimately fails to offer.

The emphasis on the town hall as the principal arena of struggle leads to the marginalisation of other forms of black struggle over the past six years. The significance of the street rebellions of July 1981 for subsequent political developments within Liverpool's black community is

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glossed over in a mere two or three pages. There is scarcely any reference to the ways in which the community organised itself politically at that time: the struggle to defend itself against continued police harassment; to retain autonomous control of its own community centres and to protect them from closure; and the struggle for the establishment of a law centre, wholly independent of local authority funding and control.

Instead, the campaign for the city council to adopt an equal opportunities policy is seen as the most important development during this six-year period. Moreover, the role of the community relations council and the formation of a broad-based alliance of 'political activists, council officers, trade unionists, community workers, civic and church leaders and, indeed, all citizens' are seen as more significant in combating racism than the black community's own forms of political organisation and struggle. The editing of black people's history, like its re-writing, is a dangerous exercise for it may ultimately hijack the struggle.

Liverpool RASHID MUFTI

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