

**RACE &
CLASS**

Heresies and prophecies:

*the social and political
fall-out of the
technological revolution*

A. Sivanandan

**Development in India – sustainable or colonial?
Nicaragua, the future and the FSLN • Kenya, where lies
are truth • Cricket, the future • Black self-help**

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Heresies and prophecies: the social and political fall-out of the technological revolution: an interview*

Michael Stack: How do you see the significance of the new technologies?

A. Sivanandan: Their significance, firstly and fundamentally, is in the qualitative change they have brought about in the productive forces, which in turn has predicated a mode of production based on information, data, gathered from dead and living labour. The magnitude of that change can best be understood in contrasting the industrial revolution to the technological revolution. Cast your mind back to that period. Imagine yourself in a society that was moving from handicraft to 'machino-facture' – from energy based on muscle power to energy based on steam power and then, in a second wave, to electricity. Think, now, how micro-electronics replaces the brain. That is the size of the revolution of our times.

Of course I am being sweeping here, and speculative. But the great thing about an interview is that one can speculate, envision. And we desperately need to do that at a time when we have been cast out into uncharted seas and have lost our moorings – when, if I may change my metaphor, we are in the middle of a sea-change, caught in the trough between two civilisations: the industrial and the post-industrial.

Secondly, information is not only a factor of production, so to speak, but also a factor in social communication and political discourse. The term information society should be understood to mean

* Chapter from Jim Davis, Thomas Hirschl and Michael Stack (eds), *Cutting Edge: technology, information capitalism and social revolution* (New York and London, Verso, forthcoming).

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both the information fed into machines to produce commodities and the information fed to people to produce cultural homogeneity, political consensus, etc. Those who control the means of communication control also the economic, the cultural and the political. It is no longer the ownership of the means of production that is important, but the ownership of the means of communication. Not Britannia, but Murdoch, rules the waves.

What I am talking about here is the centralisation of power behind a democratic facade – and that perception underlies my whole thinking about post-industrial society.

MS: What sort of social impact do you see the new technologies having?

AS: Changes in the mode of production change social relations. If ‘the handmill gives you society with the feudal lord and the steam-mill gives you society with the industrial capitalist’, the microchip gives you society with the global capitalist, the universal capitalist, and the universal factory. Capital is no longer restricted by time or place or labour. It can produce *ad hoc*: to the customer’s needs, ‘just-in-time’. Its factories are not fixed in place, nor does it need to aggregate thousands of workers on the same factory floor. It can, instead, take up its plant and walk to any part of the world where labour is cheap and captive and plentiful, moving from one labour pool to another, extracting absolute surplus value – since labour *per se* is increasingly dispensable, and racism decrees Third World labour to be particularly so.

Such emancipation of Capital from Labour alters the whole fabric of industrial society, disaggregates and recomposes the working class into highly-skilled ‘core’ workers at one end and unskilled or semi-skilled ‘peripheral’ workers at the other, with the former being absorbed into management and the latter being gradually cast out into the semi-employed or unemployed zone – so engendering the two-thirds, one-third division of society characteristic of monetarism and the free market.

A similar division obtains in the Third World – except that there the ratio is the other way round: one-third haves and two-thirds have-nots – with the former identifying themselves not with the national interest but with international capital. So that what you have, in effect, is a new capitalist order in which the world is divided into the rich and the poor – with the poor increasingly becoming a population surplus to capital’s requirements – marked out, more often than not, by race and colour.

MS: Two worlds, then, and not three?

AS: Two worlds and three. In economic terms, two; in political terms, three. Global capitalism, as an economic system, divides the world into two, but global capitalism, as a political project, divides the world into

three. The three world schema is to be understood not in terms of its original paradigm but in terms of present-day power relationships. The First World is still the dominant power, but the Second World is its junior partner and the Third World the client state. Or, put it another way, the First World is organically, 'naturally' capitalist, the Second World can choose to be capitalist, the Third World has capitalism thrust upon it.

MS: But how can you separate the economic from the political? And have you done away with political economy?

AS: Ah, that is my great heresy. But to take your first question first. I am not separating the economic from the political. I am saying that their relationship has changed, the emphasis has changed, so that we can no longer talk about 'the political economy', only about the economic polity. Governments receive their power not from the voters, but from business conglomerates, media moguls, owners of the means of communication, who massage the votes, manipulate the voters. Those who own the media own the votes that 'own' the government. The polity is an instrument of the economic imperative. Governments go where multinationals take them – to institute policies at home or set up regimes abroad that are hospitable to capital. The irony is that, with the break up of the industrial working class, the riposte to capital's economic hegemony is no longer economic but political.

MS: To get back to the impact of the new technologies. What do you think has been the social (and intellectual) response to these?

AS: Firstly the flight from class, especially on the part of the metropolitan white left, (a) because of the break-up of the industrial working class and the weakening of the trade union movement, and (b) because, as I said before, the centre of gravity of exploitation has moved, out of sight, to the Third World. And, following on that, secondly, the elevation of the new social forces (blacks, women, gays, environmentalists, etc.) as the agents of change in society – leading, thirdly, to a pluralist view of society, of society as a vertical mosaic of cultures, religions, ethnicities, sexualities, etc. Hence identity politics and cultural politics – but no class politics, no radical political culture. Hence, too, all the post-modernist, post-marxist claptrap. Hence, finally, the moral vacuum on the left and moralistic fundamentalisms on the right.

MS: From the US we tend to see these changes in US terms. Can you give us a sense of their international or global impact?

AS: I think I have already touched on the global impact of the new

technologies from a Third World perspective. What I'd like to do here, though, is to take your remark about seeing things in US terms and, turning it around a bit, ask myself why it is that, when it comes down to the question of the havoc wreaked by US capitalism in the Third World, even the US left, more often than not, do not see beyond Latin America to Africa or Asia. And even when they do, it appears invariably as abstracted, removed – or even paternalist, driven alternately by guilt and duty, carrying the sins of the IMF and the World Bank and the multinational corporations. There is no feel for Africa or Asia: they are continents apart, objects of imperialist study or venues for good works and charity, often pitiable, but always that little bit beyond hope. Even among the black left or 'people of colour', there is no visceral understanding of Africa or Asia, only a sentimental (root-seeking) attachment or an intellectual commitment. Perhaps it is because here in Europe, we – Asians, African-Caribbeans, Africans, etc. – are still only a generation or two removed from our land bases. Or perhaps it is because our home countries are still caught up in the relics of a feudalism that US capital, springing full-fledged from the head of Midas, has never experienced.

MS: The traditional model has been high-tech/knowledge intensive work in the developed countries and low-tech/labour-intensive work in the Third World. This seems to be changing, with the periphery taking on more skilled work. Comments?

AS: Part of the trouble with a revolution is that we get hung up on old questions, or work from old premises. I don't think the old international division of labour model can stand us in good stead anymore. Everything is much more flexible now, much more fluid. Capital can set itself down or pull itself up as technology takes it. And technology changes so fast that any division of labour is *ad hoc* and temporary. For instance, some of the low-tech, labour-intensive work in the garments industry, which was once being farmed out to the free trade zones in Asia, has now, because of new manufacturing techniques combined with the availability of cheap female Asian labour, come back to Britain. And in recent years, Japanese and German car manufacturers have availed themselves of the de-unionised and/or unemployed labour force in Britain to set up factories here.

What I think we should gather from this is the importance not of the international division of labour but of the international alliance of capital. The bourgeoisie of the Third World is no longer a national bourgeoisie working in the interests of its people, but an international bourgeoisie working in the interests of international capital. The so-called Tiger Economies (of South East Asia) which have been held up as pointing the way to Third World capitalist development are

partnerships between state and local capital (often the same thing) and multinational capital – a partnership in robber-baron exploitation which has not improved the lives of the people by one iota, and taken away their freedoms instead.

MS: Have you any comments to make on the 'Brain Drain' or how information – technical, scientific and cultural – is concentrated in the countries of the centre to which the Third World only gets access at a price? Are there other 'intellectual property' issues that you see at play here?

AS: Following on what I said before about the international alliance of capital, as a rider to it almost, I would say that brains go where the money is. And the money is in technology, and technology is in the West. Secondly, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), instituted by the IMF and World Bank as part of their development package for Third World countries, choke off the funds available for education, especially at the primary and secondary levels, and produce an elite whose allegiance is not to their own people but to 'opportunities' in the West. In 1991 alone, Africa lost over a third of its skilled workers to Europe, and in Ghana some 60 per cent of the doctors, trained in the early 1980s, went to work abroad. And, finally, of course, there are the trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) and the 'conditionalities' tied to trade agreements such as GATT and NAFTA which ensure that Third World countries do not develop their own local equivalents of western products. Zantac, for instance, a drug widely used in India for the treatment of ulcers and manufactured locally for local users, can no longer be sold cheaply because of the royalties that now have to be paid to the transnationals which hold the patent. And, under current GATT proposals on agriculture, such patents are to be extended even to seeds, plants and animals.

MS: You write of the end of the working class as we know it, though you have some problems with Gorz's 'Farewell to the working class'. Yet the high profile 'knowledge workers'/'symbolic analysts', etc., are sometimes referred to as the new working class. How do you see classes being played out in this period of 'Information Capitalism'?

AS: What I was trying to say there is (a) that the demise of industrial society heralds the demise of the industrial working class (as we know it) and (b) that the working class of post-industrial capitalism is no longer concentrated at the centre, but scattered all over the non-industrialised world. To say farewell to the working class as a whole, therefore, was Eurocentric.

As for the intellectuals – the 'knowledge workers' – being the new working class, I think it is a useful metaphor. Because, as I have said

before, in a society where information is paramount and does aid or alter material fact, it is they who are in the engine room of power. They are the workers of mind and brain, if you like, that run the Information Society. And it is they who are best placed to unmask governments, counter dis-information, invigilate the communication conglomerates and, in the process, rekindle the drive for a just and equal society. Instead, they have become collaborators in power, wanting only to interpret the world instead of changing it.

And at the other end of the spectrum, we see the growth of a so-called under-class. 'So-called' because it is not so much a class that is under as out – out of the reckoning of mainstream society: de-schooled, never-employed, criminalised and locked up or sectioned off. They are a replica of the Third World within the First, a surplus population, as I mentioned earlier, surplus to the needs of technological capitalism, without economic or political clout – wastrels, given to drugs and prone to AIDS and undeserving of welfare. Hence yet more cuts in health care, housing, child benefit, etc., and so on and on, in a downward spiral.

MS: Given that labour migration is international and there are migrant communities in every metropolitan centre, is the prospect for international consciousness and activity greater, or are there important factors constraining this type of development?

AS: First of all, I think we are beginning to see the end of labour migration, partly because capital can move to labour instead of importing it (and its attendant social costs) and partly because there is a reserve army at home. The European Community has shut its borders to immigration altogether, earning for itself the name of Fortress Europe, and even genuine refugees and asylum-seekers are being sent back to the countries they have escaped from, on the grounds that they are economic and not political refugees. Which overlooks the fact that it is the authoritarian regimes maintained by western governments in Third World countries, on behalf of transnational corporations, that throw up refugees on western shores.

As for migrant communities coming together in some sort of united struggle, the immediate problems are those of language and culture. And these are often used by the government and the employers to drive a wedge between the various groups and further depress their wages and living conditions. But over a period of time – and faced with a common oppression and a common exploitation – the original differences tend to be subsumed to the broader purpose of a common survival around basic rights. Thus in Germany, where citizenship is based on blood (*jus sanguinis*) and is therefore denied even to those 'immigrants' who were born and bred in the country and know no

other, the platform that unites the various groups is the minimum demand for citizenship rights based on length of residence. But in Britain, where black communities have been more political and have a common background in a common colonial experience, there is a greater feel for the problems of Third World countries and a greater international consciousness.

MS: You said earlier, and also in your article, 'The hokum of New Times', that the emancipation of Capital from Labour has moved the struggle from the economic to the political terrain. Can you expand on that?

AS: The point I was trying to make there was that the political clout that the working class had under industrial capitalism came from its economic clout: its ability to withdraw labour, organise in trade unions, set up pickets and so on. All of which, in turn, derived from the labour process: thousands of workers amassed on the same factory floor, stretched out in assembly lines. But the labour process has changed: there are no thousands of workers anymore doing the same thing in the same place, and the assembly lines are stretched across the globe. Taylorism has given way to just-in-time production, and jobs that were once broken down into a hundred different processes to be done by a hundred different workers under industrial capitalism are now being integrated into microprocessors and computers and robots under electronic capitalism. And with the disaggregation of the industrial working class has gone its economic might which, even at its weakest, kept Capital in check and, at its strongest, was instrumental in effecting political change. Not just the Factory Acts, the Education Acts, the Public Health Acts, but even the so-called bourgeois freedoms, of speech, of assembly, universal suffrage, etc., stemmed, not from bourgeois beneficence, but from working-class struggle.

But now that Capital has shaken off its working-class shackles, now that we cannot take Capital head on (not yet, anyway) in its economic might, we have got to go straight for its political jugular – move the struggle from the economic to the political terrain, the terrain of government power, state power, conglomerate power, with culture, a culture of resistance, as the combusting force of that struggle. Industrial capitalism controlled the economy, information capitalism controls the polity.

As a footnote I might add that the problem of our times is not the production of wealth, but its distribution. And that, too, moves the struggle from the economic to the political terrain.

MS: How is such political resistance to be understood? You have written of another type of organisation, of how people come together as a

community 'to oppose the power of the state as it presents itself on the street'. You have described a few such 'Communities of Resistance'. Are the Zapatistas a 'community' of resistance? Do you see other Zapatista revolts brewing about the world?

AS: What I had described in my book were essentially local struggles, black struggles here, of people coming together to contest deportation cases, black deaths in custody, police brutality and so on. But there have been more widespread resistances, too, over the poll tax, for instance, in 1992. It began with poor people refusing to pay what was, in effect, a head tax levied on everybody (irrespective of means) and grew into a popular resistance, culminating in massive demonstrations all over the country – leading finally to the abolition of the tax, a cornerstone of Thatcherite economics.

The Zapatistas are certainly a community of resistance – at a higher level, at the international level, taking on NAFTA and the Mexican government and big business. As is the struggle that the Ogoni people are waging in Nigeria against Shell, and the Nigerian dictatorship, whose coffers it fills, and against the western governments who still refuse to outlaw the murderous regime of General Abacha, even after the monstrous execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the leader of the Ogoni resistance, and eight of his comrades.

Other resistances, too, abound – big ones, such as that over French nuclear tests in the Pacific islands and a host of little ones, such as the resistances to the destruction of the English countryside for the construction of motorways to lubricate multinational trade and transport.

In the process, a wider political culture is beginning to emerge which goes beyond fighting for the personalised rights of individuals and groups to taking on the power of governments and multinational corporations. There is a move, in other words, from identity politics and cultural politics, which close in on themselves, to a political culture which opens out to all.

It is worth making the point here, I think, that in the post-industrial set-up there is no working-class army to take on the system, only a host of battalions. And the outcome may not be revolution, only an incremental progress towards radical change in society.

MS: Community seems to be the in-word these days. What distinguishes your communities of resistance from Etzioni's communitarianism, the British Labour Party's version of community and, indeed, the community of the Internet?

AS: In my defence, I must say that I had been writing about communities (of resistance) long before the term became fashionable. But, apart from the use of the term, there is nothing in common between my understanding of it and that of Etzioni, or the Labour Party (which are

similar) or the Internet. Etzioni's is a self-avowed community of shared values that throws the weight of social responsibility on to the worst-off in society without demanding a commensurate responsibility on the part of the state. The Labour Party's community (or Clinton's, for that matter) takes its inspiration from Etzioni, but is that much more dangerous in that it is policy-oriented. The community of the Internet is a community of interests, not of people. Communities of resistance are political communities that emerge in the course of struggle.

Etzioni's is a middle-class project for middle-class people to safeguard themselves from the excesses of the marginalised. The Labour Party's and Clinton's version of community is an attempt to deny the basic rights, of employment, housing, schooling, welfare, etc., to the poorest sections of society while demanding their allegiance, and so taking away their last right: the right to revolt. A good community, according to them, is that which pulls itself up by the boot-straps that the system denies it.

But these versions of community are so shallow and superficial that we can afford to overlook them. Communities, after all, cannot be set up by manifesto or prescribed by policy: they emerge in the course of resisting, subverting, defending. As a remarkable woman, Pat Partington, said at a head teachers' conference here, 'by resisting we will refine, by subverting we will redirect and by protecting, we will create'.

What I find much more insidious than Etzioni and that lot, however, is the widespread use of the term community in relation to the Internet, because it is another example, if you like, of technological escapism substituting virtual reality for reality. It is such a fad, cyberspace, that people are beginning to make a world out there and pretending it is the real world, with real communities, joined together by common interests – free, not policed over or threatened or repressed. And that plays straight into the hands of capital, for once these virtual communities are established – and this is from a Wall Street report – there should also be an opportunity for what they call 'transaction related and advertising related revenue schemes' to be introduced. As Nat Wice has said, 'for Wall Street, community is the new commodity'.

If I may go off on another tack. I was reading an article by John Barlow, the other day (the American who co-founded the Electronic Frontier Federation) and he was saying that he was disillusioned with cyberspace communities because there was no '*prana*' (the Hindu term for life-force) in them. But he still could not overlook the fact that, when his loved one died, it was strangers on the Internet who had taken up the eulogy he had written over her and put their unseen arms around him, 'as neighbours do'.

A disembodied neighbourliness? Disembodied emotions? I found that a telling indictment of technological civilisation. But, then, America has already disembodied its emotions. Emotions are there to

be displayed, discussed – on the Oprah Winfrey show – to be analysed (as in analysis, that is), applauded, condemned by people (neighbours?) whom you do not know. It is almost as though the only way of being emotional is by disembodiment. The British embalm emotion, the Americans exchange it. Emotion is information – about yourself. Emotion is not my experience of you. Hence, neighbourliness without neighbourhood.

Cyberspace communities are made up of units of information, not of people. Hence, relationships are reified. We do not delve into each other and grow through the experience. As Eliot might have said, we have lost knowledge in information, wisdom in knowledge.

MS: On another level, it has even been suggested that the Zapatista uprising is a post-modern phenomenon, facilitated by the Internet. Any comments?

AS: It is certainly remarkable that a largely peasant army should have caught up with technological capitalism and learnt to subvert the modem, the fax, the e-mail to its own uses to inform the world what their struggle is about. They know that in the age of information, it is important to capture hearts and minds and, therefore, the means of communication. But changing minds does not change reality; it still needs people to make a revolution. Besides, rural Mexico has no electricity.

Remember how people were equally starry-eyed when the Palestinian leadership in the diaspora used faxes to by-pass the Israeli state and communicate directly with the intifada? But what happened? The leadership became even more remote from the uprising: they had the information, but not the feel.

And that I think is true of the situation in Burma, too, where the Internet helps to connect the rebels of one region with those of another, but is unable to bring them together on the ground. As I said, you need people to make a revolution, and the Internet, by bringing them together at one level, separates them at another.

It is typical of the post-modernists, though, to appropriate struggle without entering it. But then, representation is all.

MS: You have got it in for post-modernism, haven't you?

AS: Not just for post-modernism, but for most of the intellectual currents that the technological revolution has given rise to: post-coloniality, post-marxism, end of history, all that stuff. Because, as I've said before, the intellectuals hold a key position in the Information Society, and their ideas, if not the ruling ideas of our time, are certainly the fashionable ones: the style ideas of a style age. And I see it as part of our struggle for a new political culture to contest those ideas and the purveyors of those ideas. Because they are reactionary, dangerous,

treacherous – treacherous of the people. It's the treason of the intellectuals, *la trahison des clercs*. The Information Society gave them opportunity and position, and they sold out.

Look at some of their ideas: history is over, no more contradictions to capitalism, no dialectics; post-coloniality is a condition and bears no relation to poverty, racism, imperialism; and for post-modernists, as for the post-marxists, everything is transitory, fractured, free-floating – there are no grand narratives explaining the world in its totality, no universal truths. Hence, discourse sans analysis, deconstruction sans construction, the temporal sans the eternal.

But it is animals that live in time, humankind lives in eternity, in continuity in meta-narrative. That's why we have memory, tradition, values, vision. The notion that everything is contingent, fleeting, is (if I may quote myself) the philosophical lode-star of individualism, an alibi for selfishness, a rationale for greed. They are the cultural grid on which global capitalism is powered.

As for the post-marxists, they have given up on the search for the Holy Grail of the classless society in the real world and found it instead in the heaven of virtual reality Gates has opened up for them.

To put it another way, the new technology has made fantasy fact. You can now live in that fantasy world, because it is a world that you create in the home, alone. And, therefore, in a world of loneliness, you are never alone. In a world of poverty, you are never poor. In a world of class conflict, you are classless. Post-marxism is the ideology of cyberspace.

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Development as colonialism: the ODA in India

One of the most prestigious current undertakings of Britain's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) is a forestry project in the western ghats of India. According to the ODA, its goals are 'to assist in the long-term conservation of the biodiversity of the western ghats through new forest management approaches. Secondly, it seeks to find ways to assist those, especially the poor, whose livelihoods are dependent on the forest, to establish these on a sustainable basis. The project seeks to achieve these through assisting the Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) to implement the national policy of encouraging popular participation in forest management decision making.'

North Karnataka is littered with industrial units, set up in rural areas, many of them non-functioning; industries that have picked up generous government subsidies for locating in 'backward' areas. Some have failed; others never even began operations – among them, the Western Forest Vegetable Company, Smart Spices and a pineapple-processing plant, which was established after the visit by a chief minister of Karnataka in the 1960s to the Philippines, when pineapples became, briefly, yet another miracle product. The buildings of these units are now ruinous, blackened by monsoon rains, occupied by squatters or cattle.

Such monuments to developmental disaster will not, it is hoped, be left by the more humane reforestation project in northern Karnataka, which places popular participation at the heart of its policy.

Jeremy Seabrook spent eighteen months in India between 1993 and 1995, looking at sources of popular resistance to the economic 'reforms' of the government. He is the author of *Notes from Another India* (Pluto, 1995) and *In the Cities of the South* (Verso, forthcoming).

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The ODA involvement is on a grand scale – an £18 million investment. The instrument for enhancing the economic position of the people who depend on the resource-base is joint forestry management and planning. Village forest committees (VFCs) have been set up in partnership with the Karnataka Forest Department. These are deciding which trees should be planted in the designated areas of degraded forest land, and are actively involved in protection and care of the forest. The benefits are to be shared on a fifty-fifty basis between the VFCs and the Forest Department. By the end of June 1995, two and a half years into the six-year programme, ninety-six village committees were functioning and the regeneration of 42,000 hectares of forest under the project was well advanced.

The project divided the forest land into four zones: zone I is virgin forest, to which people have no access, zones II and III are reserve forest and partly degraded forest, under the management of the Forest Department. Joint management, in the interest of meeting local needs, was originally confined to zone IV, badly degraded forest land.

The involvement of the people is crucial. Earlier so-called 'social forestry' projects failed for lack of public interest, notwithstanding official assertions that these were for the benefit of local people. Melancholy stands of eucalyptus, teak and acacia attest to the indifference of the people towards monocultures, when their overwhelming need is for biomass.

To find out how well the committees were functioning, we went first to Arshengiri, a village three kilometres off the Sirsi-Hubli Road, in the shadow of the ghats. We had heard that extensive re-planting had been taking place here, that the committee had been duly formed and was functioning as planned, with a high level of participation.

The village presented a picture of rural calm, even though it was already early June and the lateness of the monsoon was giving cause for serious alarm. Under a blazing sun, the farmers watched the sky for signs of rain, but could do nothing to their paddy-fields until the rain came. In this village, some former nomadic tribals have settled; women with conspicuous ear and nose ornaments, some of whom were picking out impurities from the rice in preparation for the evening meal. Others were winnowing lentils: a cascade of purple discs from which the husks are blown away by the breeze. An elderly man was making rope from the silvery fibre of a bush. He sat cross-legged, pulling out the strands which he had wound around his foot and plaiting the strengthened fibre. In the village street, ploughs and implements, dry earth clinging to them, lay idle.

Within minutes of our arrival, a group of forty or fifty men of all ages surrounded us, most wearing the traditional *lungi* tied up around the waist. Yes, they said, a village committee has been formed. We have all paid two rupees membership fee. There was a meeting, when the

forest officer came. But after that, nothing. But, we insisted, there is an extensive plantation here. No. They were adamant. There is no plantation. We have seen no tree-planting; as far as we are concerned, this does not exist.

We assumed we had been misinformed and thought we would go elsewhere. We remained to chat a little. One man said the lack of rain was 'because the Janata Dal has come to power.* The same thing happened last time.' Many of the people have three or four acres of land. 'With four acres, a family can live; but if the rain does not come, we shall be ruined.' The landless work in the fields of others.

Vasant, a college student of 20, says that we should perhaps go and speak to Mr Thomas and his brother. 'They are committee members. They may know something more. You will find them about two kilometres further down the road.' Two villagers come to show us the way.

We reach a substantial house. Mr Thomas is working in the yard. Sure, there is a plantation, he tells us proudly. It is quite near. A further half kilometre or so, and there, behind barbed wire strung between poles, is last year's planting: over 1,000 acres of mixed trees. There is *dindal*, used chiefly for firewood; some tamarind seedlings; the sour-fruit *amla* trees with their thorny branches; *matti*, both black- and white-barked, used for construction and firewood. There is *honne*, as well as teak, acacia and mango. This is rich land. Where planting has not been undertaken, spontaneous regeneration already promises an abundant renewal of the forest. Mr Thomas says his family came originally from Kerala. He is a Christian, an evangelical Protestant. He himself has thirty-five to forty acres of land, where he grows sugar cane, *jowar*, paddy.

Mr Thomas speaks excellent English. He asks my religion, and is pleased when I say Protestant. I ask him about the village forest committee. Yes, it exists. There are twelve members. In fact, 200 people belong to it, but these are ignorant ill-educated people. They know nothing, he assures me, and this is why they are not interested. This year, the committee is to plant another 1,000 acres; in fact, work began but had to be suspended because the rain is late. Mr Thomas says the forest range officer comes to see him or his brother if there is any problem. 'We have a good plantation here. After fifteen to twenty years, we will get 50 per cent of the income for the village; 25 per cent will come to the committee, and 25 per cent will be ploughed back into the project. The Forest Department will get the rest.'

The two village men who had come with us say nothing. They look on impassively. It soon became clear that it is impossible for the people to be unaware of so vast a plantation – part of it covers the whole hillside – less than two kilometres from where they are living.

* In the State elections in 1995.

It seems, not for the first time, that powerful local interests have entered into collusion with the forest officers. This, which was to have been a showpiece of ODA involvement, turns out to contain all the traditional flaws of developmental policy through the years. The silence of the people is not the silence of dumb ignorance; it is the silence of fear.

The ODA project makes great play of the inadequacy of the 'traditional methods and techniques of forest management' for the satisfactory execution of the scheme. To remedy this, there is a considerable programme of training for senior forest officers in the UK (more than 170) where they have received instruction in participatory forest management. For lower-ranking officers, an extensive training programme is being carried out by MYRADA, a Karnataka NGO, which was established twenty-five years ago to work with the large number of Tibetan refugees settled around the town of Mungod. These locally trained officers receive a four-day programme in participatory management. They are learning to deal more sensitively with people who live in and around the forest. They are also being discouraged from the culture of extortion, confiscation and intimidation, which has been part of forest management in India since British times. We should not be too sanguine about the outcome of this training. One village forest committee president, who had been trained with half a dozen others and an equal number of forest range officers, said the training had been very good. The culture of fear among the villagers had been openly expressed. But when the villagers returned home in the Forest Department vehicle, the forest officer said as they descended from the jeep, 'Look, whatever training you got was good. But you should forget that now you have reached this place.' In any case, in all the village forest committees, the power lies with the secretary, who is always a forest official.

But here is another irony. By its insistence upon a change in the culture of the Forest Department, the ODA is striking precisely at the heart of a frozen imperial tradition. Most of the forest laws in India were enacted during the British time, and the governments of independent India have rarely seen fit to interfere with such satisfactory arrangements. The ODA understands that these archaic, ossified institutions no longer serve their purpose; and, accordingly, part of the expensive expertise (no less than £5 million has been spent on consultancies and training within Britain) has been deployed to modify them. A more evolved and sophisticated imperial power confronts the consequences of its own long baleful reign, does not like what it sees and, with characteristic arrogance, sets about changing a Forest Department practice which is not only deeply rooted, but also scarcely tractable to mere 'training'. It exhibits a disdainful misunderstanding, both of the nature of institutions and of the reality of the relationship between the Forest Department and the people. Two years ago, I stayed in a Forest Department guest house in Uttar Pradesh.

Permission to do so required signing a document, on the back of which were the rules drawn up for guests according to laws dated November 1906; one of these was the condition that 'Guests should dress and behave in a European manner'.

The very idea of 'joint management' between unequals is a contradiction, as many Indian industrial houses who have set up joint ventures with the multinationals are now discovering to their cost. In a joint venture of unequal partners, the subordinate is usually swallowed up: if Coca-Cola were to set up a shared enterprise with the Hubli Soft Drinks Company, it is not difficult to foresee the fate of the indigenous company. And so it is with the Forest Department and the people. Such 'traditions' as forest officials conniving in and participating in smuggling rackets, extortion of money from people who take from the forest for their own use, the naked assertion of power over those they employ (and the Forest Department is the largest employer in the area), are not going to be eliminated by training sessions, no matter how professionally accomplished these may be. And even if some shifts in attitude do occur during the training period, these cannot always be sustained when people return to the context in which power and privilege confront marginalisation and dispossession. As one senior forest officer said to me, 'You are not going to turn policemen into social reformers.'

Officials of the ODA can scarcely be unaware of these relationships. Neither can they declare it is a matter for the government of India. Their choice to alter, modernise and update the traditions of the Forest Department represents a considerable involvement in the social policy of India. Selective and partial, no doubt; for it is scarcely to be expected that foreign governments whose policies celebrate the exacerbation of inequality are going to exhibit any real tenderness for the poor of Uttara Kannara, whatever may appear on the prospectus of their projects.

In some places, where chairmen of village forest committees have been trained at the same time as forest range officers, there is evidence that a degree of mutual understanding has been achieved. This is sometimes favourably reflected in the workings of the committee. In certain villages, however, the chairman has kept the information he has gained for himself and a few associates. There is no openness in the accounts. Forest officials remain in control of the minutes of the meetings and there have been a number of instances where people were required to register their assent to minutes of meetings that were written subsequent to their signature or mark.

* * *

We went to Bellankeri village on a day when the monsoon had churned the road to an all but impassable mud. The plantation area assigned to this village is some way from the settlement: forty-six hectares of

multipurpose tress. On this site, the Forest Department had felled natural forest to plant eucalyptus twenty years ago. These trees were harvested before the area was designated for Bellankeri. Here were *amla* bushes, *honne*, *matti*, casuarina. But the most striking element is the extraordinary capacity of the forest for natural regeneration, independently of any planting undertaken by the project. Indeed, here, the extensively planted acacia will kill off many of the natural *matti* saplings. The still-open ground is covered with tiny yellow *zeddu* flowers, *koli*, the tender leaves of which are eaten as a vegetable, and the ubiquitous touch-me-not leaves, which close up rapidly under the slightest stimulus.

In order to set up this plantation, several families who had been cultivating paddy, some of them for many years, have been evicted. Yet not all so-called 'encroachers' have been removed: the shape of the plantation has been adjusted to accommodate some of the richer and more influential cultivators.

The village itself is difficult to reach because of the rain. The red laterite soil in the standing water is a strange mixture, milk and blood. The chairman of the village committee has gone to Sunday market in a neighbouring town. We sit on the verandah of his solid house: heavy wooden pillars, intricate carving. The house is painted bright blue and silver; on the threshold, an arrangement of the white and purple stars of *nityapushpa*, everlasting flower, an expression of the spirit of the house. On the verandah, a wooden bed, some sacks of paddy. The floor is tiled, the windows have wooden bars to keep out the birds. Incongruously, paper streamers still hang from the roof, remains of a recent festival. On the TV set in the corner, a vase of plastic flowers.

An old man, Bulund Sab, joins us; 75, his sight dimmed by untreated cataracts, but his mind sharp, his memory keen. A Muslim, his family migrated here when he was a child, 'in search of prosperity', as he says; a prosperity that escaped them. He tells how the area was pure jungle when they came. There were tigers and bears here then. Twenty-five years ago, they clear-felled the natural forest for a plantation of *nilgiri* (eucalyptus). Other parts they planted with teak. They were clearing the forest at the rate of more than 250 acres a year. Some people who had no land (about thirty families) then encroached on the *nilgiri* plantation to begin cultivation. He says that cultivators do less harm than monocultures; but, over the years, all have been evicted except three powerful families. The most recent evictions have come with joint forestry management and planning in the last two years. 'The forest officials came and dug trenches while the paddy plants were growing. I have no land. I have four children. All stay with their families separately, but one of them takes care of me now I am too old to work.' His son had been cultivating two acres of land, but this was taken from him for the Bellankeri plantation. He had asked for permission to

intercrop the spaces between indigenous tree species, but this was refused.

Bulund Sab is thin, his body shrunken by more than sixty years of landless labour. He wears a green headcover, a faded shirt and an old *lungi*. When he first began work, he was paid two annas a day. He came here because, in this village, he was paid three. In some places at that time, payment was still in rice.

The chairman of the VFC, Ganpati Gowde, arrives. He says that all ninety-six families in the village paid two rupees to join the committee. They were told that, if they cooperated to stop encroachments, they would receive 50 per cent of the produce from the plantations.

The forest officials came after the membership had been constituted. Ganpati was elected unanimously. 'They asked for our cooperation in planting trees, with the promise of income that could be earned by doing so. But they never consulted us about which trees should be planted. After planting, they came and said, 'This is good, *na?*' Ganpati feels the people were duped. He does not believe that the income promised will ever materialise. 'We met the KFD in good faith. The enthusiasm was there in the beginning, but they destroyed it, because their idea of joint management was to gain our acceptance for whatever they had decided to do. There was no other consultation.' Ganpati says that everyone knows that natural regeneration is best, and that the *lakhs* of rupees spent on planting have been wasted. Regeneration is God-gifted and endures; man-made plantations do not last.

Ganpati Gowde says that if each family in the village had been given one acre to take care of, they would have tended and protected natural regeneration, and this would have given benefits to everyone, free of cost. 'The forest should be entrusted to the people.' Ganpati is himself privileged. He has fifty acres of land, including five of forest. A young man, in his mid-twenties, unmarried and, because among the well-to-do of the village, a potential target for ODA training. But he will not compromise. He calls two men who have been displaced from their land.

Bashya Sab is 55. He had been cultivating two acres of paddy for eight years. He was evicted for planting. Before he took that land, he had been share-cropping. Now, he says, in his old age he is forced to return to being a coolie. He has ten children: two boys and eight girls. Two girls are married; two go to school. The others work as labourers for Rs20 a day. He left the land he was occupying because he was 'afraid of being put behind bars for going against the government'. Anandapa is 70. He had been cultivating two acres of land on the plantation site for the past five years. 'They came from the Forest Department to dig pits for the trees, while the paddy was green. I have no other land. I will have to go back to being a coolie.' All his children work as agricultural labourers.

The complaint of the villagers is that the forest, which has provided

a buffer of support against poverty, is increasingly being closed to them. The forest has always supplemented their diet with fruits like *amla*, rich in vitamin C, nuts, herbs, medicinal plants, honey, *shikakai* (a kind of soap-berry). With the enclosure of more land for plantations, there is less fodder for animals, which have also been a fundamental part of the family economy, as beasts of draught also providing milk and manure. The prospect of monetary reward from enhanced productivity of the forests is a distant promise; it only makes worse the poverty that comes from excluding the people from use-value of forest produce. (Not products, as in the ODA literature: this is the language of industrial society.) In this way, intensifying market-penetration displaces an older economy; it continues and quickens a process set up during the colonial period.

This may also give some clue as to why the participation of women – to which the original ODA proposal gave great prominence – has been unsuccessful. Women are the true conservers, for they, more than men, understand the use-value of what comes from the forest, and they are less likely to trade off daily necessities against uncertain future economic benefits. Wherever we went, women did not figure prominently in the village forest committees.

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The Bangalore-based Centre for Ecological Sciences has its field centre in the town of Sirsi, the heart of the project area. When the ODA project was announced, the Centre submitted an application for research and monitoring, but it was turned down. Prabhaker Bhatt and his colleagues at the CES in Sirsi are critical of the expertise bought in from the UK. Not only has the £5 million failed to benefit Indian institutions, but it has by-passed indigenous researchers. The CES accepts that popular participation is essential, but questions the methods employed to assure it. In any case, the amount of forest land that falls under joint forestry management and planning, following a questionable zoning operation, covers only 8,500 hectares of the 42,000 under the designated area; that is, 5 per cent of the forest land of the Uttara Kannara circle. In fairness to the scheme, the original intention of involving people only in the management of the most degraded land has now been modified; and some degree of participation is now being extended, in principle at least, to all zones except the central core zone of pristine forest.

Micro-planning is supposed to have been carried out in each village, to determine, not merely the wishes of the people, but also the type of planting that suits the ecological niche. This has been sketchy and, in some cases, non-existent. In order to reduce pressure on fuelwood, Prabhaker Bhatt says that improved *chulhas* (cooking stoves) should have been introduced. Far too little attention has been given to the role

of livestock in the existing farming system and the production of fodder. Bhatt says that because forest plantations become closed to cattle, many of the poorest – those the project is supposed to help – have had to make a distress sale of their beasts. Some marginal village lands could have been used more productively; fodder could have been grown on non-arable land. 'Instead, we see funds going into the creation of a herbarium, housed in a costly building.

'Local people are not looking for high-value species. They want the forest to yield a practicable, renewable harvest. They stress multi-purpose trees, not those with commercial value. They want trees such as *terminalia chebula*, which provide good green manure, fruits that can be sold for tanning and then, ultimately, may provide good timber.' Bhatt and his colleagues are scornful of 'people who think they can come and describe an eco-system in three months. You have to live through all the seasons and, because these vary from year to year, you have to remain in the place for a long time before you can make such judgments.'

Prabhaker Bhatt sees little difference between the present project and earlier disastrous so-called social forestry schemes. 'The rhetoric of the ODA is fine, but is at odds with reality. They could have shown that they understand the people are not enemies of the forest, but are the true foresters. There is a problem, we all agree. The people have needs and the forests must be saved. But the people have been conserving forests from time immemorial; it is the arrival of outside interests which began the process of degradation.

'Furthermore, how can people trained in London consult the people here? It will be the higher officials who are trained, but it is the lower cadres who must deal with the villagers. The people have their own criteria for conservation and this may not coincide with the ODA or Forest Department version of conservation. We had some workshops here in August 1994 and people said they found it sad to see not only that the Forest Department was making such small efforts at natural regeneration, but that they were actually removing species that had come back naturally.

'There is one particular bush, *carissacarandas*, which is a thorny shrub, fruits of which are used for making pickles. Many women were dependent on picking these fruits and selling them to a small industrial unit where they were processed. These bushes have been systematically removed from the plantation area. In some places, they have actually fired natural forest to prepare it for planting. There is also a flowering shrub, *ghattikai*, *strovilanthus*, which flowers only once in seven years. They destroyed it while it was in bloom, thus destroying an important source of honey and also preventing the plant from seeding. We feel sad and disappointed that we who have daily contact with the people were not consulted. Even the encroachers could have been brought into the regeneration process instead of being simply evicted.

'There should be a proper audit of the project. The ODA people should come and travel extensively in the interior. For the money and manpower expended, the local people should see better results than a procession of people from the funding agency and foreign experts. Before they even think of coming here, they should see and understand the lifestyle of the people, fully appreciate the relationship of the villagers to the resource-base. If they depend on Forest Department officials to interpret the people to them, it is useless. Poverty has forced people to encroach. If there were any other livelihood, they would never have done so. Now they are already declaring this project a success and moving on to Shimoga circle; their chief success has been in spending money.'

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We visited the poor but extensive village of Bashi, several kilometres from the main road, along a rough track churned to mud by the rain. The village has several narrow streets, houses raised on platforms of *mitti* (earth), or, in a few cases, concrete; the walls mainly of earth, and with Mangalore roof-tiles. The village is shaded by palms and jackfruit trees. Cattle are sheltering in thatched sheds, and here and there are little enclosures where landless people are growing a few vegetables. Some women are washing; poor ragged quilts and faded clothing. Bullock-carts stand outside some of the houses. People are eating jackfruit in the pouring rain, breaking open the yellow segments and passing them round. Many wear brown goat-hair hooded cloaks, which provide protection against the rain, while some workers in the fields wear hats of areca-palm leaves.

Here, we heard what was becoming a familiar story. The forest officers had come and told the people how they would benefit from the scheme; 50 per cent of the profit would go to the village, 50 per cent to the Forest Department. They agreed to form the committee and to develop the forest jointly with the Karnataka Forest Department. It has not happened like that.

The president was elected unanimously but conflict began almost immediately. The committee invited a chief guest to come to the inaugural meeting, a forest activist, but the Forest Department objected and refused to take part.

A politically powerful group remained outside the committee and, when the village forest committee insisted that all encroachers be evicted from the land designated for planting, this group said that only some encroachers should go; meaning that the powerful should remain.

One man in his late twenties – who later made the journey all the way to Sirsi to beg me not to print his name for fear of reprisals – told us that his family had been farming three acres of forest land for twenty years. The forest officials came and uprooted his house, broke down his

banana trees and dug trenches for planting. When he protested that all encroachers should be removed, the Forest Department took him to court, saying that he was creating problems for forest development. He had little choice but to make a counter-charge that the Department had destroyed his growing crops.

The court froze the status quo. That was a year ago. The case remains to be heard. This man was growing bananas, paddy and pine-apples, and he has spent Rs15,000 on legal fees. He is angry and bitter that he should have had to spend so much of his own money to defend his livelihood against a foreign power that has come to evict him from land his family has been cultivating for twenty years.

He wears a white shirt and green check *lungi*. Enraged by the injustice of what has happened, he insists that he does not want to go to the town to become a labourer. Farming is the best life. He says the people who come from outside always underestimate farmers, assume they are stupid and know nothing. Farming, he says, requires energy and a keen intelligence. While waiting for the court case, he can do nothing; he cannot cultivate land that may be taken from him.

Yerippa is an elderly Scheduled Caste man, also a member of the committee. He does not care who knows his name. He says the stated objective of the project is good, but there has been no joint decision-taking. People were initially enthusiastic, but the Forest Department simply went ahead and did what they wanted. It was not the people who were uncooperative. Because of the people's resistance, it was too late to plant the saplings and the Department just dumped them in the river. Yerippa says that when people are not interested, how can the Forest Department expect the plantations to survive? No one will protect the plants. This is what happened with earlier schemes. Yerippa has been cultivating three acres of forest land for thirty-five years. He will be given the title to his land because of the time he has spent there.

At Bashi, they are sceptical about seeing any benefits. The chairman of the village forest committee had gone for a wedding. They will tell him we came and he will come to see us in Sirsi within a few days.

In the rain, the forest is extraordinarily beautiful. An eagle swoops down from the sky, picks up a snake in its talons and sits triumphantly, high on a tamarind tree. Some rays of sunshine through the thinning cloud, filtered through the new plantain leaves, turn them to gold. The drip of rain from the leaves of forest trees falls gently to the ground, a delayed rain shower after the storm has passed. Here, it is easy to understand the fierce pride and protectiveness of the people towards their forests. In these places, you can feel how the word 'sustainability' becomes cant – the interaction between true conservers and those whose business is fundamentally with conserving only wealth and power, and whose instrument for doing so is to turn all the wealth of the forest into the money which they manipulate so expertly.

We pass through Banavasi, the old Maurya capital of the kingdom of Karnataka. In the midst of degraded forest land, there is a wide street with low, red-roofed houses and, at one end, the chariot of Shiva, which is drawn once a year, a somewhat smaller version of the Jagannat chariot at Puri in Orissa. Here stands the ancient Madhukeshwara temple of Shiva, its antique carved splendour stranded now in this 'backward' area. The broad pillars of the temple create a sense of the depth of the time in which this has been a holy place. The temple itself mimics the forest and, sadly, this human-made inspiration from the forests, with the light glowing dimly inside the sanctuary at its core, has outlasted the trees, which have long been desacralised and turned into timber.

Next day, Jayasheel Gowda, president of Bashi VFC, came with three other committee members to Sirsi. A man in middle age, without fear, he was one of the few people to have dared to speak out when the ODA mid-term assessment team came for its brief (two days) stopover in Sirsi.

He says there is no accountability to the VFC for the money spent in its name. There are 200 hectares in which they have invested, but no one informs the people of what is being done, or why. 'We said what we wanted, and they planted 50 per cent acacia instead. This is an Australian exotic. They are preventing natural regeneration. Three times we asked the Forest Department secretary of the VFC to call a meeting. Our decisions were never implemented. We have written to all the higher officials, telling them we want to preserve the forests. They have not replied. This is a rural area. The people are not educated. If we say there is mismanagement, no one cares. People are afraid of officials. For every small thing, if someone builds a house, makes an implement, a plough, he must go to the forest for it. The officials can make it impossible for you to pursue any of your occupations.

'When the election took place, I was elected. The defeated candidate is a powerful man. They started raiding our houses after that, to see what timber we had. Everybody had something from the forest in their house. The group that lost the election has links with the local MLA [member of the State Assembly], so they wanted to show their power to us. There is no micro-planning. The 50 per cent guarantee is an attempt to buy people's cooperation. There won't be any development, so what is there to share? In the beginning, the forest officers said that all encroachments would be settled amicably. There are more than 500 acres for planting; sixty acres have been encroached. Why not leave them?

'There is a story in the villages about a fox that comes wearing a tiger's coat, to terrify the people. Now the real tiger has come, wearing a fox's skin, so the people will give their trust. The people here are poor. If they oppose, they are opposing the Forest Department. Why get involved in such a thing? The people cannot say the reality.

'The ODA people write good reports, but they don't go to the villages. Let them come. We will take them. To make true participation, the responsibility for spending the money should also be with the people as well as the Department. Whatever trees are to be planted, let us decide. Let the Forest Department be there also, make it real participation. The VFC has no power. All they want from us is free watchmen, free labour.

'We also have the *panchayat*, of which I'm also a member. Why do we need another committee? For the Forest Department to use the *gram panchayat* [the wider village ruling body], it would be difficult, because then they would have to tell everything about the expenses. The VFCs, it is like chasing a horse. The people are told, "It has horns." "Yes," they must say, "it has horns." They must say what they are told. The forest official will get the benefits and he will rise up in the Forest Department.

'To bring fuelwood from the forest for one year, we must give ten kilograms of rice. To bring wood for building a house, we have to pay the officials 100, 200 rupees. There are smugglers, but these are not village people. A lorry of timber is coming. The Forest Department catches them and they say, "We will confiscate what you have taken." The smuggler then goes to his political boss. The boss telephones a higher official and then they will be allowed to go on their way. Next time, instead of catching the smugglers, the officials will ask them for so much and not go to the trouble of making all the politicians and officials telephone each other.

'The ODA are testing the medicine on us, and we, the patient, are dying. Giving money to India is wrong. They do not know what is India. The Karnataka Forest Department is getting so much money for this project, they have no further need to work. We have felt so much pain through it, we have suffered mentally, economically. Eight people from the village have gone to court because of it. Higher officials never visit our village, because no cars go. The lower officials make sure their superiors know what they want them to know. What the people know is that forest must be conserved; the better the forests, the better it is for the people. These outsiders are in the business of commercialisation, not conservation.'

As we travelled around the area, we saw a number of small wooden carts on the road, close to the entrance to various villages; on each, the painted wooden figure of a woman, dressed in pieces of coloured fabric. Her face is painted red and in her outstretched hand she carries a sword. This is Maramma, an incarnation of Durga. The cart is wheeled from village to village at this time of year, early in the rainy season. When she arrives at the village, the people are expected to clean out their houses and to pray that no harm will befall the community. When this has been done, they wheel the cart to the entrance of the next

village, where the process of cleaning and warding off evil will begin there.

Some people in Karnataka marvel at the survival of this practice; others express shame at what they regard as a superstitious custom. But its roots lie, as so often, in practical activity: at the beginning of the monsoon, drains are blocked by *kachera* (rubbish) that has accumulated in the dry season, and this begins to rot. Water readily becomes contaminated. It is the proper time to start cleaning and to take precautions against some of the unwholesome consequences of the onset of the vital, precious rain.

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The ODA has not been content to rely solely on the Forest Department for the smooth running of the village forest committees. In areas where NGOs are already active, these have participated in the committees. In some cases, they have acted as mediators between forest officials and people. In others, they have ensured that the committees function more effectively. Indeed, their presence can make a significant difference.

Sudarshan is working with VIKAS, an NGO supported by Oxfam. VIKAS became involved in the village forest committee at Gotgodi village after the plantation has already been established. 'Consultation' took place with villagers only after that. VIKAS has since then helped to ensure that the meetings are held in good order. A teak nursery has been established, and a women's group formed, in response to the neglected area of the gender element referred to in the original proposal. In Gotgodi, the villagers actually caught some timber smugglers, but, says Sudarshan, the Forest Department failed to respond.

Vidyahadhar Gadgil is Oxfam's worker in Sirsi. Oxfam has the task of working with some of the poorest village communities in enhancing and establishing the committees. Vidyahadhar says Oxfam's work is round a range of forest-related issues, some of them connected with joint forestry management and planning, some not. He feels the project has created an enabling environment, in which Oxfam can work, but he is adamant that Oxfam in no way provides an alibi or a justification for the ODA project. 'We are not a certificate of goodness', is his comment. 'When people are asked whether they want plantations or control of the forest, they almost invariably respond that control is what they are looking for. In areas where there is a committed forest officer and NGOs participate, the work is truly collaborative. In some of the coastal villages around Karwar, the intention of the project comes closer to realisation than anywhere else.'

Vidyahadhar says that forest revenue is of less primary importance to the government of India than it was in colonial times. In revenue terms, it has been overtaken by the industrial and commercial sectors.

But the generation of revenue is still of vital importance to the Forest Department itself, because this is the basis of its power. This wider contextual change only reinforces a conservative bureaucratic structure supporting a culture of extraction and self-enrichment. 'The whole thrust of ODA activity cannot be separated from this reality. The bureaucracy exists to regulate, not to promote or to encourage. It is, to say the least, over-hopeful to believe this is going to be seriously challenged, even by air-lifting officials to Britain for purposes of training.'

As to the extravagant expenditure on British consultancies, activists in Uttara Kannara circle (the five divisions in which the ODA project has been set up) see it as a form of out-relief for British academic institutions. They observe that, during the past twenty years, these have been starved of funds. They must now generate their own income and, in this instance, the aid budget of the British government provides an opportunity for them to acquire yet more experience and prestige, at the expense of India. With the 'success' of this, they will doubtless acquire further lucrative contracts in other parts of the world.

Pandurang Hegde has been one of the guiding spirits of the Appiko movement in Uttara Kannara (that is, the Karnataka equivalent of the Himalayan Chipko movement) since the late 1970s and '80s. Pandurang Hegde comes from a village close to Sirsi, where his family were small areca nut farmers. He was influenced by Sunderlal Bahuguna in the Himalayas and spent some time there, before becoming a social worker in Madhya Pradesh. He became aware of the ineffectiveness of working in an area in which he remained, essentially, a stranger. He returned home fifteen years ago and, since then, has been working with the forest people he knows well.

Hegde's first objection to the scheme was the zoning process, whereby only the degraded land was marked out for joint management, with the rest in the hands of the Forest Department. 'In any case, the "benefit-sharing" idea should be shed. It is a monetary inducement to get people to go along with commercial plantations. It is contrary to traditional reliance on use-value of the yield of the forest and encourages further exploitation of the forests.'

Hegde has worked on a profile of more than fifty villages under the project area. The evidence confirms non-functioning or poorly functioning village forest committees. He says: 'Even bureaucrats are now coming to see that you cannot preserve forests by excluding the people. You must give people a stake in forest preservation, rather than regarding them as a burden and an enemy of the forest. To introduce participation is a very desirable development. But the manner in which this has been pursued in practice is harmful to the interests of both forests and people. The fact that so much planting has taken place without the consent of the people and that high proportions of these plantings are

monocultures, with up to 70 per cent or 80 per cent teak or acacia, shows that commercialisation is the main objective. Participation is rhetoric, designed to legitimise what has already been decided.

'In any case, a model of real participation already exists in Uttara Kannara, ironically set up by the British themselves. In some villages in the 1920s, forest *panchayats* were established. There is an excellent example at Halkar in the coastal zone of Uttara Kannara, in the project area itself. Here, people were given control over the resources of the forest. Of course, at that time, mainly degraded land was given. But, over the years, the villagers have reclaimed, cultivated and protected the forest, so that it has now regenerated and sustains them. In fact, the Forest Department even tried to take control from them. The people went to court and had their right to management of the forest recognised. We have here an example of popular management that works, very much after the fashion described by the ODA project. So why couldn't such an approach be extended in the whole area? It can't, because that would mean ceding a genuine control to the people. And that is not what it is really about.

'This has to be understood in the context of liberalisation, structural adjustment, economic reform. This means more pressure on the resource-base of India to earn foreign exchange, to pay off its \$100 million debt, and to find money to pay for luxury imports required by the elite.'

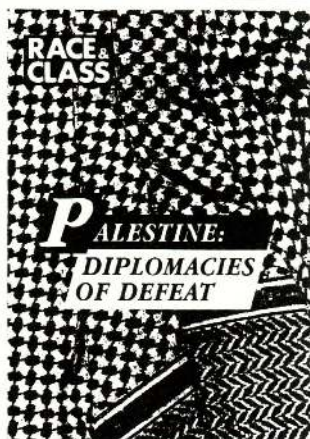
We spoke to a senior forest official, who told us openly that, in spite of the good intentions of the project, forest officials routinely override the wishes of the members of the village forest committees, presenting them with a *fait accompli*. Sullen acquiescence has nothing to do with joint decisions and should not be taken as such.

The fate of the project, once the ODA, having disbursed the allotted funds, has departed, is far from clear. Everything reverts to its own institutional tendency – the forest officials return to their culture and the ODA consultants to further remunerative contracts based on the expertise they have acquired here.

The same official acknowledged that the pressure on forests had multiple causes. Biotic pressures have, in places, led to such severe over-grazing that some species have become almost extinct. Fuelwood headloaders, especially near the towns, have been a considerable factor; encroachers, too, have been destructive. But organised smugglers, with the connivance of the Forest Department, police and politicians, have been yet more damaging. And by far the most intensive pressure on the forest has been, and remains, the needs of industrial society, with its insatiable and growing appetite for timber, wood-pulp, wood for construction, furniture, paper, plywood, cardboard. Industrial machinery has reached parts of the forest which the sun has never touched in a thousand years.

The intensifying industrialisation of India is at odds with the conservation of diversity, variety and natural forest regeneration. The objective of reconciliation between these warring needs is reflected in the cultural clash between the Forest Department and the people. If addressing this conflict creatively – rather than coming down on the side of industrialisation – were really part of the ODA project, the outcome might be more open. As it is, much money, expertise, prestige and public relations have been deployed to render the issues more opaque and impenetrable.

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Nicaragua since 1990: the revolution in a new context

Fashion has changed dramatically in Nicaragua since the Sandinistas' 1990 electoral defeat. It is not unusual to see a woman, wearing a 'Jim Brown for Judge – Dade County, Florida' T-shirt, standing next to a burly man with 'Girl Scouts' emblazoned across his chest. Used clothing from the United States has flooded the Nicaraguan market, destroying the incipient national clothing industry and at the same time turning Nicaraguans into walking billboards for US organisations and corporate slogans. In post-1990 Nicaragua, some advertisers have touted products as having the 'flavour of the new Nicaragua'. Yet, for many Nicaraguans, this flavour is very bitter indeed.

In June 1993, Arnaldo Alemán, Managua's flamboyant ultra-Right Constitutionalist Liberal Party mayor, inaugurated a \$US750,000 roundabout touted inaccurately as 'the biggest in Central America'. Five days later, a typical afternoon downpour flooded the traffic circle, rendering it almost impassable. Once the flooding subsided, numerous deep craters in the asphalt, some up to a metre in length, became visible, earning it the appellation 'lunar roundabout'. The showy and shoddy construction serves as a metaphor for the superficial character of 'development' in the 'new Nicaragua'. In contrast to the years of revolutionary government, the emphasis in post-1990 Nicaragua is squarely on open markets, privatisation and the return of expropriated properties to their 'rightful' owners. Thus, on the one hand, Nicaragua looks more affluent: an imposing new Catholic

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cathedral has been built, supermarket shelves overflow with imported goods and gourmet ice cream parlours and trendy Miami-style restaurants dot the Managua landscape. However, on the other, the proliferation of shanty towns and gaunt children selling trinkets at traffic lights present a much different picture of the 'new' Nicaragua.

Even a cursory glance tells the observer that all is not well in the new Nicaragua. The ravages of ten years of US-sponsored war did not engender the unprecedented levels of poverty that Nicaraguans now experience under the neo-liberal programme of the Chamorro government. As a result of these policies, Nicaragua has the lowest inflation in Central America, an indication of 'success' for the international lending community. Unfortunately, it also has the distinction of leading Central America in rates of infant mortality (83 per 1,000 live births compared with 61 per 1,000 live births in 1985), infant malnutrition and youth illiteracy.¹ Poverty, hunger and unemployment are the defining features of life in Nicaragua. The UN estimates that 75 per cent of Nicaraguan households live below the poverty line and that 44 per cent are in 'extreme poverty'.² These dire statistics are in no small part the responsibility of the US government and international lending agencies which condition aid and loans on the enactment of specific political and economic reforms.

The electoral defeat of 1990: consequences and developments

While Nicaragua has experienced many changes since 1990, there remain numerous continuities with the period in which the FSLN held state power. While the balance of power has clearly shifted, the victory of the National Opposition Union coalition (UNO) did not signal a final end to the revolutionary process; rather, it initiated a period of trenchant battles to undo or preserve aspects of the revolutionary programme such as land and property reform. In the lead-up to the 1990 elections, the Sandinista National Front (FSLN) had confidently predicted victory and this assumption was shared by UNO's chief supporters and financial backers, the US government.³ In fact, prior to the declaration of the UNO victory, the US State Department had prepared a statement declaring the elections fraudulent and the FSLN victory a sham. It quickly changed tack when the surprise UNO victory was announced, declaring instead the elections free and fair and a victory for democracy. Given the years of US military, economic and psychological aggression,⁴ many commentators maintained that it was more a victory for US policy in the region than for democracy.

The intensification of the *contra* war had a number of implications for Nicaragua's revolutionary government. Creating a civil society, rebuilding the national infrastructure after the insurrection and the 1972 earthquake, and introducing universal health care, education and

land reform programmes were at odds with a fighting a ten-year war against the most powerful nation in the world. The deleterious economic consequences of the *contra* war chipped away at the revolutionary consensus. As the war increased in ferocity, so did the incentives for the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie actively to oppose the FSLN. First, because there were great financial incentives to do so in the form of CIA funding channelled to opposition organisations, institutes and newspapers. Second, with the weight of the US government behind them, the contras and the organisations that supported them became realistic alternatives to the revolutionary hegemony of the FSLN. Third, as the war progressed and economic austerity and war measures, in particular conscription, began to undermine support for the FSLN, the bourgeoisie came increasingly to believe that it would be able to create a counter hegemonic bloc to supersede the hegemony of the FSLN.

However, the bourgeoisie was not an undifferentiated mass and the present divisions on the Nicaraguan Right have their roots in the years of revolutionary government and, before that, can be traced to the traditional enmity between the Granada- and León-based bourgeoisie. The relationship between the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and the revolution was a complex one and strongly correlated with family and regional ties.⁵ The revolution broke the monopoly of these regional power bases and the dominant families attached to them, but it did not end their continuing importance in the country's economic and political life.

The political and economic supremacy of the Somoza family characterised the Somoza epoch; a group of León-, Chinendaga- and Managua-based families, known as BANIC, involved in cotton production and industry, shared the remaining perks. The Granada-based families, who had interests in cattle raising, sugar production and trade, were largely excluded from the largesse of the state, which was significantly enhanced by international development funds. This latter group was primarily associated with the Conservative Party, while the BANIC group was chiefly allied with Somoza's Liberal Party.

The struggle to overthrow Somoza was a genuinely popular undertaking, with participation from all levels of Nicaraguan society. In Gramscian terms, there was a hegemonic consensus that Somoza had to go. Although spearheaded by the FSLN, this consensus involved, and to some degree articulated, the interests of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and, significantly, the United States, which viewed Somoza's continuing premiership as untenable. With the triumph of the revolution, many of these Granada family members were incorporated into positions of power in the army, the state banking system and the ministry of agrarian reform. Joaquín Cuadra Lacayo, chief of staff of the Sandinista Popular Army; Luis Carrión Cruz and Ernesto and Fernando Cardenal are just a few of the prominent Sandinistas from

notable Granada families. Although these figures had broken with their bourgeois origins, in that they were unambiguously Sandinistas, their more equivocating relations also participated in structures of the revolutionary government.

Liberals lost out, not only in their exclusion from positions of power within the revolutionary government, but also because they were more likely to be targeted for land expropriation than their Conservative counterparts. In fact, all producers and industrialists outside of the Granada family networks were more likely to suffer expropriation. Yet, given the FSLN's stated goal of a multi-class alliance with a mixed economy and the greater willingness of the Granada bourgeoisie to collaborate in this endeavour, it is not surprising that the FSLN would to some degree favour those who demonstrated a greater willingness to cooperate. Thus, many members of the Granada bourgeoisie had one foot inside the revolution and another one outside of it. This partial integration served them well. In contrast, the northern León families lacked this ability to play on both sides of the fence and were thus generally more open and strident in their opposition to the revolutionary government and their support for the *contras*. Hence, they were more open to and less protected from punitive measures, such as land expropriation, than their Conservative counterparts.

In reinforcing this Liberal/Conservative split, the FSLN was able partially to incorporate the Granada-based bourgeoisie into the mechanisms of the revolutionary state. Yet its participation in the revolution was always highly tactical and contingent and, to some degree, the advantages bestowed upon the seemingly 'patriotic' bourgeoisie were squandered, since they did not, in the end, secure meaningful support for the revolutionary process. Moreover, these concessions were often read by a sacrificing populace as an indication that the revolution had failed to break with the old pre-revolutionary order. In the UNO coalition there was a reconstitution of a disparate bourgeoisie into an anti-FSLN coalition. Yet, as the fractious relations within the UNO coalition have proven, this was indeed a tenuous alliance. The enmities and alliances on the Right in the 1990s are not reducible to a struggle between the Liberals and the Conservatives, and the disunity among this class has certainly not abated, even if the traditional divide is not as meaningful as it once was.

Despite its constricted set of options, the FSLN made other grave errors which contributed to its electoral loss, and any assessment of the FSLN defeat undertaken with a view to the 1996 elections must address the shortcomings of the party, as well as the conditions that shaped the parameters of the possible. In examining the voting patterns in the 1990 election, it is clear that gender played a significant role in the FSLN's electoral defeat. A 1988 opinion poll revealed that the two sections of the population most discontented with the FSLN government were the

female-dominated informal sector and the domestic sector composed of housewives and domestic workers.⁶ These two sectors were extremely difficult to organise and, significantly, the informal sector was often on the receiving end of government campaigns against speculation and hoarding. Yet women's participation in the informal sector was usually conditioned on the lack of income earning opportunities available to them elsewhere, a situation conditioned by the poor state of the economy.

The failure to appreciate the needs of these and other women is an indication of the way in which the FSLN often conceived of women – as supporting players on the revolutionary stage. The emphasis on women as the caretakers of children or 'the coddled ones of the revolution' coalesced with existing understandings of what women's interests were (class interests on the basis of an unproblematised gendered division of labour). It also served to valorise women as mothers in nurturing and supporting roles, rather than as having a set of interests separate from children.

Thus, gender identities that served to mobilise women in support of the revolution were nurtured and reinforced, while those that focused on gender-specific interests were often problematised. Ironically, it was middle- and upper-class women who had the economic resources to find individual solutions to problems like family planning, legal assistance and abortion. Yet, while the political climate encouraged a collective sensibility based on class – hence the notion of 'the people' – there was not the same imperative for a collective identification along the lines of gender.

In the 1990 election campaign, Violeta Chamorro had promised an end to the war and the economic embargo and an opening of the floodgates of US aid. In contrast, president Daniel Ortega, the FSLN candidate, had assured, somewhat vaguely, 'all will be better'. It is not difficult to understand how many women might have seen their interests as providers for their families best served, at least in the short term, by a Chamorro victory. Indeed, by the late 1980s, economic hardship, made worse by the structural adjustment policies introduced by the FSLN in an effort to alleviate a large budget deficit and bring inflation under control, was negating many of the economic benefits which had stemmed from the revolution's redistributive policies. As Carlos Vilas maintains: 'This decade of harsh insecure existence was not the creation of the Sandinistas, but a Sandinista government did administer it.'⁷

Ethics, the *piñata* and the 'crisis of faith'

Arturo Sandino, member of the DRI, the party's international relations department, maintains that the electoral loss was fortuitous

because, first, the party did not have the solutions to the country's economic problems and, second, because it needed to be humbled. According to Sandino, by the early 1990s, there was no longer a party line. Within, the FSLN is more of a movement than a party, and Sandino hoped that this would enable it to find the economic solution that it had thus far been able to formulate. Also, and perhaps more importantly, it would fuel the 'moral regeneration' that is desperately needed in *Sandinismo*, the governing philosophy of the FSLN.⁸

Sandino's comments were a reflection not only upon the FSLN's electoral fortunes but also the accusations of corruption that were encompassed in the notion of an FSLN *piñata*,* or free-for all with the resources of the state. The issue of the *piñata* continues to linger in Nicaragua, not only because it coincides with the party's own internal debates on ethics but also because of the Right's accusation that corruption under the Sandinistas was rampant. There are a number of reasons for these contentions. First, there were instances of documented corruption and, in some cases, an unchallenging attitude towards the perks of leadership among some party members.⁹ Second, the Chamorro government has been plagued by numerous and widely reported instances of corruption, and accusations against the Sandinistas serve to deflect attention from its own misdeeds.¹⁰ Third, land reform, which at times involved the expropriation of land, provoked accusations of corruption and patronage.

In 1992, the FSLN established the Ethics Commission in order to root out and expose genuine instances of corruption and to distinguish these from the legitimate redistributive policies of the revolution. Writing in the conservative daily *La Prensa*, Federico Dueñas expressed considerable suspicion regarding the FSLN's sincerity in exposing and rooting out corruption within their own ranks. In fact, Dueñas classified the FSLN's Ethics Commission as a 'coarse and infantile trick' designed 'to make us forget eleven years of repression, injustice, domination, blood, robbery and death.'¹¹ The Commission also received criticism from the opposite end of the political spectrum. According to National Directorate member, Bayardo Arce, 'the Ethics Commission has transgressed its functions' and thus placed in jeopardy its 'prestige and credibility'.¹² Arce contends that the Ethics Commission by-passed the Sandinista Assembly and the National Directorate in making public its accusations against minor current and ex-party members. In discussing the *piñata*, Arce strikes a combative note. He maintains:

* A *piñata* is a clay or papier-maché figure, decorated and usually filled with sweets and small gifts, which often features at Christmas and birthday parties. It is struck with a stick by blindfolded persons, generally children, until it breaks open and its contents spill out. A scramble usually ensues as people come forward to grab the treats. In this way, 'the *piñata*' is used as a metaphor for the irregular and unregulated distribution of the resources of the state.

The 'Sandinista *piñata*', in any case, existed mainly to return to the people everything the Somoza *piñata* had taken from them. But the difference is that all Nicaraguans were invited to this 'party'. It began in July 1979, [and] ... continued when the government used the budget to teach all Nicaraguans to read and write, not to buy opposition parties.¹³

Just what actions constitute the *piñata* are clearly in dispute. As Arce points out, when it comes to evicting peasants from land so that it may be returned to its pre-revolutionary owners (who most likely obtained it in Somoza's *piñata*), the Right had no qualms. However, right-wing business people and landowners have not come forward to compensate the state for the subsidised goods and services that they had access to during the years of revolutionary government. The term *piñata* is thus a relative one; Arce reclaims the term and uses it to indicate how the resources of the state were at the disposal of all Nicaraguans during the Sandinistas' tenure in government.

Despite his vociferous tone, Arce acknowledges that the Sandinistas made a major mistake in not legally formalising the ceding of property in both urban and rural areas. Following their electoral defeat in February 1990, the FSLN attempted to rectify the situation, before they left office in April 1990, by passing laws 85 and 86. These laws were designed to give legal title to individuals and co-operatives who currently held land or property. However, this legislation has not prevented many Nicaraguans from being evicted from their homes and land since the change in government.

Arce's attitude to the issue of land and property redistribution differs sharply from that of Sergio Ramírez and is an indication of the rifts within the FSLN. While Arce staunchly defended the FSLN and its actions, and dismissed all but a few examples of corruption, Sergio Ramírez seemed to give credence to the principle of property confiscation by suggesting that all property should be returned to its original owners. In fact, Sergio Ramírez has called for the return of as many properties to their original owners as possible, maintaining: 'The government will have to swallow some things and we will have to swallow others.'¹⁴

Daniel Ortega's support of the Ethics Commission stems from the conviction that, 'in the ranks of *Sandinismo* there is an ethical, moral and ideological crisis'.¹⁵ Speaking at a public meeting in Masaya, Ortega claimed that *Sandinismo* was 'losing its capacity to sacrifice'. He asserts that the greatest threat to *Sandinismo* does not arise from the far Right or from the 'yanques' but rather from 'the opportunism that can rise up in our ranks, the shift to the right [and] the proposal of converting the FSLN into a party of the rich'.¹⁶ During the time in which the Sandinistas held state power, significant amounts of social

labour were performed on a voluntary basis. Good examples of this were the projects which mobilised large numbers of people to build houses, vaccinate children, provide electrification. Most notable was the UNESCO award winning National Literacy Crusade of 1980 in which 100,000 high school and university students participated. Illiteracy was brought down from 50 per cent to 13 per cent in a matter of months.

In a ceremony to mark the twelfth anniversary of the crusade, Daniel Ortega expressed concern over the policies of the present government which were, he argued, eroding many of the social and economic gains of the revolution. He suggested that university students should turn their attention to bringing literacy to the illiterate.¹⁷ Here, for Ortega, the problem of illiteracy, which increased dramatically from 13 per cent to 30 per cent during the war years of the mid- and late-1980s, was not only a matter of changing government policies. The initial war against illiteracy was waged by *brigadistas* who gave up several months of their time and their home comforts to live and work in very basic conditions. It was the loss of this order of sacrifice and commitment that Ortega referred to when he spoke of an 'ethical and moral crisis in *Sandinismo*'.¹⁸

The subject of party ethics is deeply fraught for the FSLN, because revolutionary commitment and notions of sacrifice are so closely bound. If the FSLN is not equal to the revolutionary values that it espouses, then a 'crisis of faith' is inevitable. To the degree that accusations of corruption have proven founded or remained unchallenged, the prestige of the party has been diminished. For Ortega and for other Sandinistas, the FSLN must regain its 'moral authority' and it can only do so when its commitment to its fundamental values is above reproach.

The struggle to redefine *Sandinismo*

In the years subsequent to the electoral defeat, the FSLN has been redefining the role of the party vis-à-vis the institutions of the state which were formerly under its control. The party also struggled to redefine its role in Nicaraguan society and to determine its relationship to the new government. The majority of Sandinista deputies in the National Assembly have formed an uneasy, tactical alliance with Chamorro. Although the existence of 'co-government' was explicitly denied, the stability of the Chamorro government was seen as preferable to a government of the far Right, who were almost as vehement in their opposition to Chamorro as to the FSLN. Thus, there was a sense in which some Sandinistas were working towards national stability at the cost of the more immediate needs of the rank and file. In January 1993, the far Right parties of UNO officially withdrew from this

coalition, leaving the Chamorro government dependent upon the support of the Sandinista bench in the National Assembly.

This tactic was not the choice of all FSLN members. Gioconda Belli maintained that the FSLN must define itself clearly as an opposition party with a distinctive alternative project for Nicaragua. She contends that 'this pretension of being at the vanguard of popular struggles and at the same time of keeping watch over them in the interests of the state [national stability] is the primordial source of the ambiguity' in the FSLN's post-1990 role.¹⁹ Belli argues that there should be a clear demarcation between the FSLN and the government because the policies of the latter clearly bring poverty and misery. The FSLN must unambiguously disassociate itself from the government and its policies. The seeming collaboration between members of the Sandinista bench, in particular Sergio Ramírez, and the Chamorro government began to open up divisions within the FSLN and to sharpen personal and stylistic differences among the party leadership.

The May 1994 FSLN Extraordinary Party Congress and the build-up to it saw two main currents emerge: the orthodox and the social democrat or, as they preferred to call themselves, the 'Democratic Left' and the group 'in favour of a *Sandinismo* that returns to the majority'. The worker and *campesino*-centred Democratic Left current wanted to 'guarantee that the FSLN continues to be a leftist party, with revolutionary ideals' and emphasised its grassroots strength. Former Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega was the chief spokesperson for this current. While ostensibly sharing this goal, the 'Majorities' current or the 'Movement for Renewal' current was concerned to re-emphasise the multi-class character of the party, renovate its structures and to underline the party's legislative role.²⁰ The Majorities current was closely identified with a conciliatory relationship with the Chamorro government and its chief advocate was Sergio Ramírez.

The leadership elections held at the congress resulted in a decisive victory for the candidates of the Democratic Left, who overall received 65 per cent of the vote to the 35 per cent garnered by the Movement for Renewal. Significantly, Sergio Ramírez was not voted on to the National Directorate, although Dora María Téllez and Luis Carrión, two other prominent supporters of the Majorities current, were. From the Democratic Left current, Tomás Borge, Daniel Ortega, Monica Baltodano and Víctor Hugo Tinoco were elected to the National Directorate, while Daniel Ortega, Tomás Borge and Víctor Hugo Tinoco were chosen as general secretary, deputy general secretary and director of international relations respectively.²¹

Significantly, at this same congress, women were elected to the National Directorate for the first time in the history of the party. The statutes of the party were altered to include a 30 per cent quota of women in leadership positions at national, regional and local levels.

Thus, five women, Monica Baltodano, Benigna Mendiola, Dora María Téllez, Dorotea Wilson and Mirna Cunningham, became part of the party's new fifteen-member governing body.²² The fact that during more than ten years of revolutionary government no woman had ever been a member of the National Directorate was a telling indication of the party's failure to put into practice its commitment to women's emancipation. The inclusion of women in the National Directorate in the post-1990 period highlighted the increasingly vocal and autonomous character of the women's movement and, perhaps, a realisation that women are excluded at the party's electoral peril.

Given the consensus within the party on a range of different issues, including the systematic incorporation of women into leadership positions, it is worth considering how substantive the policy differences between the Democratic Left and the Movement for Renewal actually were. Both factions agreed that the FSLN can only return to power through elections. Significantly, neither faction has developed an economic alternative to neo-liberalism and as such both currents supported Nicaragua's integration into free-trade agreements with the United States.²³ There was very little room to manoeuvre for the FSLN and, thus, some of the disagreements may have been more over style and personality than substance. In this way, Luis Carrión, one of the primary advocates of the Movement for Renewal strategy, maintained:

It will be interesting to see if there are two major political issues [that separate the two sides] or if it is simply a confrontation between groups and people which are trying to gain leadership positions within the Sandinista Front.²⁴

While the FSLN held state power, the critical priority of defending the revolution against external aggression was a strong impetus for party unity. Further, such an urgent and clearly delineated project fostered a unifying and integrative praxis among the party faithful. Although differences existed, these were blunted by a shared 'common cause' and blurred through pragmatic collaboration. The post-1990 period has provided a radically divergent context for party activism. The activities of the party became fragmented, with some members working in the legislative arena and others participating in the institutions of the state, in particular the army and the police. Other points of activism for FSLN members were municipal government, grassroots organisations, foundations, universities, etc. FSLN activity in these sectors was nothing new, but the lack of a unifying project and state structure definitely was. In this way, divisions in the party may be as much about differing points of insertion into the political sphere and the perspectives that these have engendered as they are about fundamental ideological differences.

Since early 1995, there have been two 'projects' claiming to carry the

Sandinista banner both literally and metaphorically. The Democratic Left tendency retains the traditional FSLN red and black flag, while the Majorities or Movement for Renewal current has broken away to form a new party, the Movement for Sandinista Renewal (MRS). The latter has redesigned the FSLN flag to include a white stripe representing 'peace'. Defectors from the FSLN include Sergio Ramírez and former minister of culture Ernesto Cardenal. Dora María Téllez, Mirna Cunningham and Luis Carrión have resigned from the National Directorate, the highest governing body of the FSLN. Cunningham and Carrión also resigned from the FSLN itself, asserting: 'Where before there were principles, today there are only calculations and interests.'²⁵ Despite the split, neither the FSLN nor the MRS has been able to develop a concrete alternative to the neo-liberal policies which, coupled with the effects of the *contra* war, have made Nicaragua one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere.

In cultural terms, the 1990 elections were significant in that they both initiated and reflected a transformation in the way in which Nicaraguans understood themselves and their commitment to the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of wider social change. In the run-up to the 1996 elections, the FSLN will need to have a party structure and presidential candidate that will not only appeal to the rank and file membership who support a more 'orthodox' line, but also to the vast majority of Nicaraguans who are not members of the FSLN or active in grassroots political organisations.

In the 1996 election, the FSLN's most powerful opponent will probably be the demagogic former mayor of Managua, Arnoldo Alemán, whose Constitutional Liberal Party received the most votes in the February 1994 Atlantic Coast elections. It is here that the renewal or compromise-oriented tendency of *Sandinismo* may be strengthened; as with the anti-Somoza struggle, the FSLN will need to have as wide an appeal as possible to regain state power. Yet even the most committed are failing to see post-1990 Nicaragua through the revolutionary lens which had once filtered most experience. For many, political identifications based on an ideology of national transformation were displaced by individualised identities increasingly concerned with survival.

During the time of the revolutionary government, *Sandinismo* had pervaded all surfaces of Nicaraguan life. With the collapse of the FSLN's hegemony, people no longer made sense of their actions within the framework of *Sandinismo*; yet, in the post-1990 period, no overarching paradigm has emerged to replace it. In effect, in post-1990 Nicaragua no stable or coherent hegemonic consensus or ruling ideology has emerged and this has created a very unstable society. The FSLN has aimed to reconstruct its hegemony. However, it was striving to do so in vastly changed circumstances. In the 1990s, it lacks the legitimacy of state power, the recourse to armed struggle and a central

dictatorial figure like Somoza to organise against. Further, marxism as a discourse has been somewhat devalued and, as such, the FSLN must develop a new way of expressing its project without losing what is essential to *Sandinismo*. This is by no means an insurmountable task, as liberation theology and Nicaraguan nationalism had always shaped the particular version of marxism espoused by the FSLN. Yet clearly the tensions between different groupings claiming the banner of *Sandinismo* make reconfiguring these disparate elements into a coherent and appealing project very fraught.

Most importantly, perhaps, the FSLN is working within a context in which alternatives to neo-liberal development strategies are much more difficult to envisage and pursue. For example, in the latter part of the 1980s, two-thirds of all grants, loans and credits extended to the Nicaraguan government were furnished by the eastern European trading block COMECON, Yugoslavia and China.²⁶ Today, the FSLN is attempting to re-articulate *Sandinismo* in a radically transformed global context, one in which the orthodoxy of 'the market' reigns supreme. But neither faction of Sandinistas has yet to put forward a distinctive economic policy which would offer Nicaraguans a way out of poverty.

Conclusion

While the balance of power in Nicaragua has clearly shifted since 1990, the FSLN remains a powerful, if divided, force with its eyes firmly set on the 1996 elections and regaining state power. The current internal disputes mean that the Sandinistas are not providing a coherent alternative that people can gravitate towards and this undermines the vision of an all-powerful party directing 'the people', the supposition which underlies the vanguardist tendencies within the FSLN. If the figure of Daniel Ortega as the strong invincible leader had symbolic power in the 1980s, the collapse of the FSLN's hegemony and his loss to a 'mother figure' represented a shift away from this leadership model. Roger Lancaster offers some interesting observations about the change in CDS leadership at the local neighbourhood level in the late 1980s.²⁷ In elections that he witnessed in the late 1980s, bombastic men giving fiery revolutionary speeches were usually passed over in favour of 'down to earth women' who addressed the concrete problems of the neighbourhoods. This was highly suggestive of the type of leadership that people had begun to look for and a different kind of politics.

Given the critical role that women voters played in the FSLN's 1990 electoral defeat, it is certain that an appeal to women will figure prominently in the 1996 elections. The recent introduction of a one-third quota system for women in leadership positions at all levels of the party structure is some indication of the FSLN's commitment to

prioritise gender issues. In thinking about the future electoral prospects of the FSLN, it is evident that its ability to deliver some measure of economic stability will be a key concern for the electorate. Finally, important as all of these initiatives are, the decisive factor could be the degree to which the FSLN is able to engender a renewed belief in *Sandinismo*. The Peruvian Marxist, José Mariategui, maintained that a political project must generate a deep and personal identification if it is to be successful. The task at hand for the FSLN is to recreate a hegemony based upon a re-articulated version of *Sandinismo* with an appeal to both the head and the heart.

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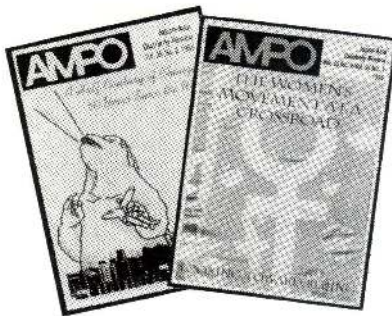
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Towards a cricket of the future

For the third cricket test match against the West Indies, played at Edgbaston, Birmingham, in July 1995, England fielded an all-white side for the first time for several seasons. This exclusion of black players ended a period when their contribution to the national team had become routine, as well as entirely justified. At the final test match against the residually white South Africa in August 1994, nineteen of the twenty wickets to fall were taken by bowlers of Caribbean origin, including Devon Malcolm's match-winning 9-57 in the second innings (the fourth best-ever bowling performance by an English player in all international cricket), and Joey Benjamin's four wickets in South Africa's first innings, which gave a strong foundation for the England victory. Now suddenly there was no Malcolm, no De Freitas or Lewis, Small, Ramprakash or Nasser Hussain. Other black players who had become what the cricketing press called 'one-test wonders', dropped after single appearances and creditable performances and never to be recalled – such as Neil Williams or the recently very effective Benjamin – were also absent from the line-up.

This new lilywhite team was selected at a particular conjunction of events and issues in British political and sporting life which conferred a certain significance upon it. The first signal came through an article by Robert Henderson in the prestigious establishment cricket journal, *Wisden Cricket Monthly*.¹ Claiming to deal with the issue of cricket and national identity, this theme soon reveals itself to be but a fig-leaf for a

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Race & Class, 37, 4 (1996)

series of racist assertions and myths. Declaring that non-English born players are likely to fail Norman Tebbit's infamous 'cricket test' (you are only truly English if you support England at cricket when they are playing against the national team of your country of origin, be it Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India or the West Indies), Henderson comments: 'It is difficult to believe that a foreign-born has any sense of wanting to play above himself simply because he is playing for England.' He also asserts that the oppression and exploitation of Empire and colonialism are 'post-imperial myths' purveyed by 'Negroes' and 'Asians' and, within cricket circles, by liberals and 'coloured England-qualified players'. The essay provoked widescale news and television coverage, particularly when Malcolm and Phillip de Freitas, cricketers playing for Derbyshire, launched a legal case against it, with the full support of their county cricket club and the Professional Cricketers' Association.

The provocative and rhetorical title of Henderson's article, 'Is it in the blood?', his preoccupation with the ideal of the 'unequivocal Englishman' and his final summing up – 'All the England players whom I would describe as foreigners may well be trying at a conscious level, but is that desire to succeed *instinctive*, a matter of Biology? [author's emphasis] There lies the heart of the matter' – stretch his fancifulness into the area of racist genetics. The pseudo-scientific question, 'Is it in the blood?', brings back strong memories of a book I read as a boy, the autobiography of the one-time captain of the South African test team, Dudley Nourse. *Cricket in the Blood* it was called.² From start to finish, in this book, written by a man who lived his life, managed his large farm, played cricket and died in a country where the vast majority were black and poor, there is not a single mention of black life or black people. They are simply rendered invisible, non-existent, not having the cricketing 'blood' of the ruling white race.

The ugly notion of 'blood' as the determinant of national identity is a racist, exclusionary concept known viscerally by black men and women of sport the world over. Jack Johnson knew it, as did Muhammad Ali. So did Jesse Owens, Basil D'Oliveira of Cape Town and entire generations of black American baseball players who were driven from the professional game by its racist controllers and forced into a Jim Crow league structure. Pioneers such as Fleet Walker, the first black professional to play in a major baseball league (in 1884), were hounded out after half a decade. Walker's biographer, David W. Zang, summarised the importance given to issues of 'blood' by race theorists and 'scientists' in the lifetimes of these early black players:

The idea of distinct racial heredity held sway during most of Fleet Walker's lifetime. While elsewhere in North America a person's social standing and racial identity depended on a number of factors, including skin colour, anatomical features and hair texture, in the

United States blood was perceived as the vital source of race distinction. The belief that blood contained the seeds of differing traits between the races was an attractive one for race theorists because it grounded race distinctions in an immutable biological fact.³

Zoning in on schools

Henderson's article regenerated the same fallacies of 'blood' within the heart of English cricket, while, on the educational front, three other related issues converged during that July. Firstly, a survey conducted by researchers from Newcastle and Hertfordshire universities concluded that primary school children (now becoming thoroughly institutionalised within the cultural and learning tramlines of the first two Key Stages of the National Curriculum), 'are in danger of developing a narrow view of national culture which could lead to racist attitudes'.⁴ The survey's results showed white children to be 'confused about whether black people were British', and the researchers themselves were concerned about the 'number of children whose responses indicated a potential for racism'. During the same week that the survey was released, Dr Nick Tate, the chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, made a nationally publicised speech to a group of Shropshire headteachers. In it, he pronounced that 'minority cultures could only flourish' if there were 'a majority culture which is sure of itself' that helps British children 'feel that they belong to a community which stretches back into the past and forwards into the future, which is so important in giving people a sense of meaning in a world which is in a state of constant social, economic and technological flux'.⁵

Here was one of the most influential figures of the British educational establishment speaking, a policy and institution builder at the centre of the hegemonic National Curriculum and its attendant bodies – and his words provoked a quick response from some black journalists. Writing in the *Times Educational Supplement*, Rifat Malik recalled her own past school experiences and being addressed in front of her class as a 'WOG' (kindly explained as a 'Western Oriental Gentleman' by her teacher). She wondered if, in the context of 'the death of Joy Gardner, the racial stereotyping of crime by Metropolitan Police Commissioner Paul Condon, as well as the demonisation of Islam', there was any change at all in British society's racism: 'Any more of an exalted status for British culture must strike fear into the hearts of black and Asian parents,' she wrote.⁶

If Tate's purpose in making his speech was, as he claimed, 'to stimulate debate' (the same reason given by the editor of *Wisden Cricket Monthly* for publishing Henderson's article), he certainly persuaded the imperial nostalgia-wallahs to break cover and appear in the open on the

letters' pages of the *Daily Mail*. One correspondent who claimed to be a nursery teacher rejected any notion of bringing the experiences and knowledge of Britain's black communities into the classroom. Under the headline, 'We've lost our grip on greatness', he professed:

Of course we should be teaching children what it means to be British, and the sensible words of Dr Tate are long overdue. When setting up our school we were told to buy a black dolly and puzzles which represented children of other cultures, and it was suggested that we might like to serve rice and other foreign food at break time to reflect the multicultural environment around us.

Let's make a stand for Britain and preserve what rich heritage, culture and traditions we have left before it's too late.⁷

These sentiments were reinforced by the testimony of another letter-writer looking back to a time when 'a quarter of the world map was still pink and though we watched various countries casting off the colonial cloak, we felt like the Father of the Nations, sending them out, fully clothed, into a maturing world'. Tate's words seemed to have evoked intimations of a remembered divine paternalism that yearned to be reborn: 'God-like, we bestrode the other cultures of the world. A young British white male, growing up then, could truly feel he had "won first prize in the lottery of life"'. No wonder people are searching for some essential "Britishness" to teach our children'.⁸

Hard on the heels of Tate's speech came a statement by prime minister Major on his 'sporting vision' for schools. In a widely-publicised promise of a sporting renaissance for young people in Britain, Major (a cricket enthusiast often photographed holding a bat, or sipping tea at test matches on the pavilion balcony) gave little indication of any extra resources for the development of sport within inner-city communities and their predominantly black young people.⁹ Instead, he advocated that National Lottery money be spent to establish a number of elite sporting academies, reinforcing the model of sport as under the command of establishment bodies with the power to exclude, by culture and habit, the young people of the struggling urban neighbourhoods of Britain. As A. Sivanandan commented on the cricket authorities running the English game who control the academies and training institutions of the sport: 'They are the last stand of Empire. In football, by and large, it's the fans that are racist, but in cricket, it's the establishment. It is *institutionalised* racism. The smell of imperialism is in your nostrils all the time.'¹⁰ Such authorities would become further empowered through the Major initiative, and the hierarchies of British sporting culture further consolidated.

The banner and the bell

During the summer of 1995, the West Indies cricket team toured England and played six test matches. Yet the English cricket authorities were grim hosts. In all the test match grounds from Leeds to Lord's, from Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham to the Oval in south London, bans were introduced on the activities of British-based Caribbean supporters who in previous test match series between the teams had created so much extra excitement and verve, and given the West Indies players the feeling that they were playing in front of their own people. As Emma Lindsey, writing in the *Observer*, put it: 'Long days of banners, horns, call and response and drumming are over. Officialdom has seen to that with the banning of flags and drums for the entire Cornhill Test series.'¹¹ Thus the British cricket establishment and its watchdogs were attacking expressions of the enthusiasm, loyalty and wit of the Caribbean people in England, the music from the terraces and the punning and wordplay on huge white sheets that satirised the vestiges of empire and arrogance, the sheer joy of being alive in live cricket. It was a group of Caribbean supporters who dubbed the 1984 victory of the West Indies in winning every match a 'Blackwash', by writing the word on a fluttering home-made banner on the final day of the Oval test. Since Lord Beginner's *Victory Test Match* celebration calypso which followed the Lord's test in 1950, the cultural affirmation of rising nationhood on the terraces had always been most strongly carried in music and the sounds of horn and drum. Now, in 1995, there was close to silence from the depleting ranks of West Indies supporters, and, although the occasional forbidden banner of encouragement ('Lash dem Lara!') rose up from the whitening terraces, the new 'culture' was being provided by England fans wearing glitzy wigs, party hats and Elvis Presley costumes and masks, replacing the vibrant cricket culture of Caribbean people and overlaying it with a commercial alternative. Here, one might feel, were the echoes of the silence demanded of Caribbean drumming by the colonial plantocracy during the centuries of slavery.

Now at the Oval, private security firms, their officers carrying walkie-talkie radios and wearing fluorescent yellow bibs, patrolled the crowd, searching out the 'offensive' sounds and symbols of the Caribbean. One West Indies woman supporter was reported to have been denied entry to the ground until she surrendered a nine-inch staff bearing a Caribbean flag.¹² Meanwhile, test match admission prices soared, with space for public seating more and more being converted to corporate hospitality boxes for firms entertaining their clients and socialites wanting to be 'seen' as a part of the cricketing aristocracy. And the attempts to sabotage the effectiveness of the West Indies' fast bowlers on the field, by the imposition of restrictions against short-

pitched bowling against England batsmen, resonated with the restrictions on their supporters' exuberant efforts to inspire and goad their players from the midst of the crowd. As one Barbadian fan commented during the Manchester test match: 'The noise is part of cricket and supporting your team. It's going to be detrimental to the West Indian team not to have that. There's hardly any of us here and because we're not all sitting together the players can't see or hear us.'¹³

Yet Caribbean supporters, not to be silenced or made invisible, found free vantage points on scaffolding, roofs and apartment blocks outside the ground, and blew conches, drummed and shouted their encouragement over the brick walls of the Oval. And as the West Indies team drummed up a massive 692 in the first innings, the television coverage flashed to a black man in the crowd, standing up and clanging a large school bell. A white spectator from another part of the crowd answered him, blowing furiously down the horn of a shell. All the while, Lara and Richie Richardson of Antigua flayed the England bowling to all parts of the boundary during a stand of 188 runs.

This pile-up of clampdowns upon black cricket caused insult and disappointment during a month when black young people were being re-labelled by the Metropolitan Police as the prime cause of London street crime, and were being harassed and humiliated in ever greater numbers as a result of the hi-tech 'Operation Eagle Eye'. So much so that, during the July/August 1995 period, three times the usual number of complaints about police behaviour were reported to black community monitoring organisations in Greenwich and Newham. This in a context where black young men were already ten times more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counterparts.¹⁴ Yet the cricket abuses, like the menacing activities of the police, provoked protest and counter-organisation. Not only did black cricketers themselves angrily respond to Henderson's article on television, in letter columns and through the courts, but progressive journalists and cricket supporters responded with public meetings and the formation of an embryonic national campaign, 'Hit Racism for Six'. As founder Mike Marqusee, author of a seminal book on English cricket and national decline, *Anyone But England*,¹⁵ declared at the organisation's launching the day before the final test match at the Oval: 'We want to ensure that all cricket lovers can enjoy the game without fear of harassment or abuse. We want to ensure that cricket is not used to promote racist or xenophobic ideas.'¹⁶

Exclusion and non-selection

The continuing debate around the non-selection of black players for the England team has frequently focused upon Devon Malcolm, who, despite his match-winning performances, has consistently been left out

of the national team – only to be brought back for what team supremo and selector Ray Illingworth has called ‘one-off’ appearances, particularly at the Oval, where the hard wicket has often enhanced Malcolm’s bounce and speed. By August 1995, ex-England opening batsman and TV cricketing sage Geoff Boycott was amazed to see how the selectors had put the fastest bowler in the world ‘on the scrapheap’. ‘There are occasions when I feel like the most frustrated cricketer in the country,’¹⁷ Malcolm has declared in response to the ‘in-out’ attitude to him by the selectors, and this frustration came to the boil in June 1994, when he was included in the thirteen-player squad for the Lord’s test match against New Zealand, then excluded the day before the match began. ‘Why the hell did they pick me if they weren’t going to play me?’ asked Malcolm.¹⁸ Many thousands more cricket supporters posed the same question when he was left out for four matches after playing in the first test against the West Indies in 1995, having played in just the one domestic test following his phenomenal performance against the South Africans in August 1994. Of that onslaught, the South African pace bowler, Allan Donald, who saw Malcolm bowl at the closest of quarters and who, alongside Malcolm, is reckoned to be among the fastest, observed: ‘England would be stupid to ignore Devon Malcolm. His pace last year was unbelievable. He moved the ball away and I’ve never seen anyone bowl so fast and put it in the right place.’¹⁹

Yet Malcolm’s occasional press-quoted dissatisfaction about this whimsical and unreasonable treatment by the selectors (referred to euphemistically in the *Guardian* as ‘the uneven contours of his England career’) was considered ‘not cricket’ by the England cricket establishment and its spokesmen.²⁰ Considering the merits or otherwise of Malcolm’s recall to the England team for the final test in August 1995, the *Daily Mail* cricket correspondent, Peter Johnson, wrote that ‘the only obstacle to his return was probably his loud and persistent insistence on it’.²¹ For, whatever else, black players must keep quiet, wait, stay obedient on the cricket plantation and be grateful for the gift of selection; must never question the wisdom or selection processes of the overseers of the cricket establishment who hold players’ futures in the selections they make.

This truth became more blatantly apparent during the England winter tour of South Africa (1995/96). Cricket in South Africa, as with all aspects of life, has been an area of anti-racist struggle throughout its history. Yet this first tour since the formal end of apartheid showed that, while in South African urban areas there are moves towards genuine development and progress for black South African cricketers, the England touring squad had not shown a similar process of development. Again, the issue centred around the treatment of Malcolm.

It was almost as if he were being willed to fail, every obstacle was being placed in his way, as if a black cricketer, even one with over 100

test match wickets behind him, must be convinced that he can never finally win through. For Malcolm, only recently recovered from keyhole surgery on his knee, was yanked out of the first-class match in which he was playing in Soweto – where he had been publicly and warmly congratulated by president Nelson Mandela as a role model for South Africa's township youth²² – and taken to Pretoria for a concentrated 'coaching session' by bowling coach Peter Lever, in an effort to change his bowling action. All this crude and humiliating restructuring activity did was to disorient his bowling rhythm and put more pain upon his injured knee. Following this training debacle, Lever announced: 'He has pace and fitness, but that is all. The rest of his cricket is a nonentity.'²³ Illingworth followed this up at a press conference by saying that Malcolm had 'no cricketing brain'.²⁴ He further declared: 'It's not worked out with Devon as we hoped ... we have not had the time to do the two months' work we wanted with him ... at the moment he would not frighten you [the press] never mind the South African batsmen.'²⁵

These comments came two weeks after Malcolm's victory in the High Court and the awarding of damages to him for the racist statements made about him in *Wisden Cricket Monthly*, on whose editorial board sits the England captain, Mike Atherton. Another member of the board, sports journalist Frank Keating, wrote angrily in the *Guardian* about the events in South Africa. Under the headline 'Devon mugged by crudely wielded Lever', he wrote: 'Malcolm, as the only black man in England's team, has by all accounts wholeheartedly leapt to the battle standard of Mandela's new nation. I agree it would be grotesque to think the England management has treated its black man as an olde tyme Afrikaner of legend, but I cannot remember ever reading any sports page and being so angry.'²⁶ The 'patronising disdain' and 'brutish affront' to Malcolm, as Keating put it, were condemned by other sports writers of the establishment press. Ian Botham wrote that the bowler was being treated like a 'drinks waiter',²⁷ and Simon Barnes in *The Times* observed how Malcolm was being used as 'the Aunt Sally of the half-baked. In the summer he was the principal butt of that grubby piece of racism in the magazine *Wisden Cricket Monthly*. And now the England management has made a vast public meal of the fact that Malcolm hasn't re-modelled his bowling action at their behest.'²⁸ Even the conservative London *Evening Standard* described Illingworth as the 'Obersturmbannführer who has publicly humiliated Devon Malcolm', at the side of a cartoon showing the manager in Gestapo gear,²⁹ and Donald Trelford, ex-editor of the *Observer* and now writing in the *Daily Telegraph*, wrote of 'the lofty and doubtless unwitting colonial touch of the England management. I was reminded of the exasperated way the old white settlers in Kenya and former Rhodesia used to talk about the Africans: "Lazy lot, can't teach them anything, you know."'³⁰

Kim Barnett, ex-captain of Derbyshire who nourished and supported Malcolm's bowling over many years, described the 'slur' on his team-mate: 'Illingworth and Lever seem to be taking turns to belittle him. The South Africans must be laughing their socks off.'³¹ Not black and progressive South Africans though. They would quickly recognise a new import of English-brand apartheid behaviour very close in its essence to the system which they struggled against for decades. That is also the nature of Devon Malcolm's struggle and that of all black British cricketers who have international aspirations. For Malcolm was not picked for that first test match at Pretoria, performed well with six wickets in the second at Johannesburg, only to be discarded again in the two that followed.* What was again clear from this encounter between South Africa and England was that black cricketers of both countries still have formidable barriers to break down at the very crux of the sport they love – obstructions that are symbolic of all other walls of racism in the societies where they live.

Malcolm's inspiration

It was on such an uneven cricketing landscape, brought down to the very local level, that a team of schoolboy cricketers travelled up from Sheffield in South Yorkshire in July 1995, to play in the finals of the *Yorkshire Post* under-13 competition at their county ground and test match arena, Headingley in Leeds.

The next day, when the *Yorkshire Post* printed a match report and a full scorecard, from numbers one to eleven in the batting order, readers could see that all the names were Islamic.³³ Nine of these boys had their family origins in the Mirpur region of southern Kashmir, now Pakistan. Another's parents were from Sylhet in Bangladesh, and Yahya Ahmed, an arrivant two years before from Sana'a, Yemen, was most likely the first ever person from that country to have played cricket at any international venue in Britain.

These boys were all students at Earl Marshal Comprehensive School in the inner city of north-east Sheffield, and all regular members of the Devon Malcolm Cricket Centre which, since 1990, has been an integral part of the interaction between the school and its local community of Pakistani, Caribbean, Yemeni, Somali and white South Yorkshire families. Malcolm himself, originally from Jamaica, had arrived in Sheffield as a teenager, played for local Caribbean, Asian and regional

* When Malcolm was finally picked again for the last match of the series, which South Africa easily won, Illingworth blamed him directly for the defeat – finger-wagging him and telling him he was 'crap' in the dressing room, in front of his white team-mates.³² And when Malcolm, on his return to England, questioned whether he might have been treated differently if he were a white cricketer, he was told by the Test and County Cricket Board that his words were offensive and that he could face a £10,000 disciplinary fine.

league sides before finding success and fame for Derbyshire and England. The Centre's coach is another Jamaican Englishman, Steve Taylor, ex-opening bowler partner of Malcolm in their younger days of South Yorkshire league cricket and Derbyshire Seconds. Taylor's son, Bjorn (named after the Swedish tennis ace) is also a fine young cricketer and regular member of the Centre's team. Of the three other joint founders are Mike Atkins and Owen Gittens, Barbadian veterans of Sheffield's Caribbean community organisation and cricket club. They remember boyhood matches between the canefields with other youths named Sobers, Hall and Griffith. The other is the school's former headteacher, a man of Essex who grew up bowling seamers on its green and dewy pitches, and who played for England schools in the early 1960s.

The Centre arose through a sustaining love of cricket manifested by Caribbean and Pakistani communities in inner-city Sheffield, and the local school's commitment to respond to this enthusiasm. It was nursed and grew in vibrancy in a context where Yorkshire County Cricket Club and its official structures have shown no interest at all in the county's young cricketers from black and arrivant communities. Injustice and rejection willed the Centre on, gave it a particular aim and aspiration – to produce the county's first black representative cricketers, to darken the white rose and make it the emblem of all Yorkshire, not just white Yorkshire.

It was to this pioneering centre named after his inspiration that Malcolm donated a proportion of the damages he gained from *Wisden Cricket Monthly* for the publication of Henderson's racist article. As Ross Slater, a journalist on the *Caribbean Times*, wrote under the headline 'Sweet dreams are made of this: youth to benefit from the dismissal of cricket's racists': 'The school children at the Centre have their own battle to face against cricket's established racist attitudes. Based in the heart of South Yorkshire, the youngsters know all too well that the County Cricket Club have never had a black native of Yorkshire on their staff. How heart-warming that money from *Wisden Cricket Monthly*, the guardian of conservatism in cricket, will now help them to realise their dream!'³⁴

Here's how one of the first budding players from the Centre, Nasar Mohammed, expressed his sense of loss and deflected self-blame at being excluded from the possibility of playing for his homeplace county in the days before Sachin Tendulkar, the young Indian prodigy, became the first black player to take the field for Yorkshire – when the county had to go thousands of miles to find such a pathfinder while hundreds play in parks and on grounds in the cities scattered across it.

Unfortunately for me, I was born in Pakistan and my family moved from Rawalpindi and migrated to Britain where we moved to

Yorkshire, to Sheffield, when I was at the tender age of four years and three months.

I use the word 'unfortunate' because being born in Pakistan automatically ruled out the possibility of me representing my home and beloved county of Yorkshire as a cricketer. However, I did not realise this until I was thirteen years old. Up until that age I had my eyes set on the white rose of my county. When I realised that I would not be able to play for Yorkshire, I felt for the first time in my life locked up in a prison, and outside of the prison walls people were playing cricket with a purpose. My own crime was being an 'overseas-born player', as they said.

'Why can't I play for Yorkshire?' I asked. 'I'm just as much Yorkshire bred as they are.'

Meanwhile I did not let these things bother me and I played as much cricket as I could. I played with Frecheville, a local club, and also in the Asian league.³⁵

This is not the testimony of a cricketer who is rejecting either his new county or his new country which have nurtured his game. His words are those of a young man expressing a deep sense of unfairness, disappointment and exclusion caused by those who organise and play cricket in his place in the world, the place he shares with them. 'You are here but you do not belong here,' they tell him. 'You are here but you cannot be with us, you cannot be one of us. You are a foreigner and not a part of us.'

Thus, when the project of the cricket centre developed in his community, Nasar seized upon it as a new, welcoming opportunity. 'I went to all the meetings which I was able to attend and also the cricket sessions run by Steve Taylor,' he recalls. When the Pakistani cricket captain, the legendary Imran Khan, visited the Centre in December 1990, Nasar's sense of loss was transformed into an intense cultural prize, particularly when he was chosen to face the great all-rounder as he bowled the ceremonial first ball in the Centre's nets: 'I was sweating and my throat was dry. There were about 700 people watching me and Imran Khan, and once he had let that ball go from his hands, I felt that all eyes were on me. The ball was a full toss, so to show a bit of respect I played a forward defensive stroke. After the nets, me and Imran had many photos taken together.'

There is much to be learned from Nasar's story. It shows us how rejection provokes self-doubt and a loss of confidence in young cricketers. But it shows too how it breeds a search for alternatives – in a cricketing sense creating your own all-Asian teams and leagues where you can strive to play without rejection or racism. It shows, too, how such vices also bring forward struggle; a fighting campaign in cricket for inclusion, for equal treatment, for sporting and thus social justice,

for an end to racism in all dimensions of life, in sport and culture as well as in politics and economics. It is that very resistance to the paradigm of race in sport, not the smokescreen of 'national identity' invoked by Henderson, that is the true issue, the reality that counts to young cricketers growing up and learning their game in the inner cities.

'Why is cricket important to you?' I asked this question of some of the young players at the Devon Malcolm Cricket Centre. 'Cricket makes me feel proud,' declared Tahir, one young Pakistani all-rounder. 'Cricket has built my courage up by letting me play some matches when, even if we are losing, never to lose hope and to teach us that there is always a chance.' And writing his thoughts down, he broke into poetry:

When I bat and bowl
I remember the courage I had lost,
And what cricket had brought back.

Hope and courage, qualities of cricket, but needed for much more too in the British inner city. And for Imran Ali that other is ambition: 'Cricket is important because if I become a cricketer my Mum and Dad will say "My son has become a cricketer" and I'll become quite famous. And the Pakistani community will get happy and say, "Here comes another Imran Khan!"' Yet Imran's models are Imran, of course, but also 'Gooch, Ambrose and my brother Nasar', with his favourite player Darren Gough of Barnsley and his 'second favourite player' Waqar Younis. So there is no simple or one-dimensional nationalism here, no scope for the narrow responses of 'cricket tests', 'blood' tests of national identity or anything so facile or close to the processes of quasi-fascism. The truth is that the young Imran, like most developing inner-city cricketers from the arrivant communities, is immensely and sophisticatedly cosmopolitan about his tastes and loyalties in cricket. They are young sporting internationalists who set aside all boundaries of nation and race, and that is part of their new vitality and vision, forever beyond the sights of Henderson, Tebbit and their confrères. Imran writes, for example, of the Jamaican teacher who has taught him the game with so much love, dedication and skill: 'Mr Taylor is a great teacher at Earl Marshal and he learned me how to bowl and to bat. He learns you properly, he gets everything into your mind before you start. He is a brilliant teacher. When I become older and become a cricketer, I will always remember him.'

Nothing is as dangerously simplistic as Henderson's assertions about a single-track national identity, and nothing so unreal in the context of inner-city cricket. These young cricketers move with ease every day between languages – be they Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Somali, the varieties of Caribbean Creole as well as South Yorkshire English – they cross cultures, religions and the frontiers of sport. Their bats are

made in Pakistan and signed by Imran, their bowling machine is named 'Devon' and their pads and gloves are manufactured in Nottingham, London and India when their fathers can afford to buy them. Zahid supports Lancashire although he lives in Yorkshire. This is not apostasy but merely the result of staying with his uncle in Manchester when he first came to live in England. He also supports Pakistan, and why not? He is an internationalist like his friends, and not bound to the absolute rules and sentiments of nations and boundaries. His favourite cricketer is Robin Smith, a transplanted white South African. Mohsin too proclaims, 'Cricket for me represents my country, Pakistan', but then he writes of a greater and wider polity expressed through his cricket team and its Centre: 'Keep on trying together and we'll keep on winning.' The word is 'together', nations and youth playing, organising, cooperating, living in loyalty together in the village at the heart of their British city, in Yorkshire.

For Yahya, the cricketer from the Yemen, and also for his two Somali friends on the point of breaking into the team, cricket was unheard of until he crossed over land and sea to Sheffield in 1993. He made some Pakistani friends while studying in his 'English as a second language' class. Among them was Sarfraz Nawaz, who scored a fifty at Headingley in the *Yorkshire Post* competition, described in the match report as 'fluent' and full of fine and powerful drives. So to meet young Pakistanis in Firvale, Sheffield, is also to meet cricket, and Yahya held bat and ball with his new friends, discovering a game which, in the Arabian highlands of his birthplace, was not even a whisper in the searing sun. At first, he remembers, his Pakistani classmates laughed at him. 'I had trouble batting the ball properly and bowling. But I said to myself, I can do it, my body can to anything I want it to do. The power is not only in the muscle, it is in the brain.' So Yahya achieved talent and style with his Jamaican coach and cover drives of grace and excellence.

Thinking of Yahya, of Imran, Sarfraz and Mohsin, of Rob Miah from Bangladesh with his wicket keeper's pads and the careful tutoring of Steve Taylor, what could be so limiting, so anachronistic and future-crushing as the crude application of the bigoted clichés and mindset of 'national identity'? Here is an organic and working internationalism with cricket as its nucleus and catalyst, fomenting unity and energy between young people of scattered, diverse and divided communities. It is what cricket is for. Young people are making new identities for themselves in the context of the world culture they represent, developing in their schools, their streets, their playgrounds and their cricket centre. They are the creators of a new concept of 'England', forging new versions of selfhood in the old 'steel city', as in urban contexts through the country. Their raw and often prodigious cricketing talent, if developed and canalised with skills and commitment like those of Steve Taylor, could create a team of world beaters. For the new English

cricket power is not coming from the public school playing fields or suburban parks, or from the echoing greens of the traditional 'English game with the beautiful name'. It is coming direct from between the traffic, terrace houses and blocks of Bradford and the London boroughs, from Sheffield, Manchester and Nottingham, from smaller and less fashionable northern cities like Dewsbury and Oldham, Rotherham and Huddersfield. The new urban cricketer is not a young person of bigoted or narrow nationalism. His friends are from families that have moved across continents and migrated over oceans. A Yemeni boy declares:

I crossed the seas
I travelled thousands of miles
I watched the stars and the moon

and now he has come to Sheffield and he plays cricket.

The Pakistani boy writes of the old game of Empire, now transformed by great players like Richards and Imran, Gavaskar, Lara and Warne, Waqar and Hadlee – but also by young cricketers like himself. This is from a poem by Farooq:

It is a sport which has its own passion
Has its own pace,
For me has its own skill
But most of all has its own identity.
I am a young Pakistani lad
Who loves cracking the ball over the boundary
Who loves to smash the stumps
As fast and skilfully as Waqar Younis –
Cricket will always stay the best sport for me!

Here is a world in a sport, neither a mere nation nor a group of 'blood', a world and its people at play in urban streets, finding pride, confidence, power and a new friendship of equals together in a striving to cooperate and win through in their lives. It is the cricket of the future.

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URBAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

PAPERS IN HONOR OF MATTHEW EDEL

Call for Papers

Review of Radical Political Economics

Special Issue

The renewed assault on the poor is at the same time an attack on cities. Yet these attacks and their attempts to compartmentalize unemployment, poverty and other systematic effects of the capitalist social formation come up against the integral role of cities in the social and economic reproduction of capitalism. They also call for the development of new strategies of resistance.

Since the last time the *Review of Radical Political Economics (RRPE)* visited the urban political economy in a special issue, former editor Matthew Edel passed away. Matt was an activist scholar whose work integrated race, gender and class in a domestic as well as global context. His work continues to serve as an intellectual guide to a generation of urban political economists, and we dedicate this special issue to carrying on his work.

We invite submissions representing a diversity of perspectives within radical economics and related disciplines. Some suggested topics are:

1. Spatial analysis of, and empirical work on: class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and poverty. Examples include the "underclass" hypothesis; the role of women and minorities in urban restructuring; labor market segmentation and the spatial mismatch hypothesis; and environmental racism.
2. The fiscal crisis of cities and their fiscal prospects. The use of block grants, and fiscal relations among center cities, edge cities and suburbs.
3. Community development theory and practice, including: political responses, cooperative strategies and institutions, small business development, the "new Black capitalism," urban "empowerment" and "enterprise zones."
4. The political economy of housing, planning and metropolitan transportation, including redlining, discrimination and the class functions of home ownership. Downtown redevelopment and "public-private partnership" in urban "revitalization" and planning.
5. Third World urbanization and international comparisons, especially Latin America.

Contributors should send submissions and queries to *RRPE* Managing Editor, Dept. of Economics, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Articles, notes and book reviews are due September 1, 1996 and should adhere to the "Instructions to Contributors" style sheet inside the *RRPE*'s back cover (or available from the Managing Editor). All submissions are subject to the *RRPE*'s usual review procedures.

Commentary

Kenya

Creativity and political repression: the confusion of fact and fiction

The four-year prison sentence meted out to Koigi wa Wamwere in a court in Nakuru, Kenya, on 2 October 1995 attached a tarnished and ragged silver lining to the cloud hanging over the veteran dissident, one of the few Kenyan opposition politicians untainted by any hint of corruption. It could have been worse: Koigi could have been condemned to death if convicted on capital charges – charges considered false by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and other impartial observers.¹ But, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it on 3 October, the presiding magistrate ‘inexplicably’ dropped the capital charge.

Nearly everything connected with Kenyan politics occurs ‘inexplicably’. Along with three other defendants, Koigi had been awaiting trial for nearly two years. It was his fourth arrest and imprisonment, and hardly the first time he had been tortured. Earlier in 1995, the court heard medical testimony supporting his claims to have been tortured in nearby Lake Nakuru National Park, one of the sites the government has used since shutting down the infamous torture chambers in the basement of a government building called Nyayo House in the heart of Nairobi.

From the point of view of the regime of Daniel arap Moi, president of Kenya since 1978, it was a smart move to locate the trial in the provincial town of Nakuru, which Koigi once represented as an MP. Because it is well away from the more volatile capital, what happens in Nakuru may be obscured in Nairobi. Koigi has told friends that a sympathetic warder saved him from being poisoned while in prison.²

An Article 19 report details other brutal mistreatment and torture endured by him and his co-defendants. The penniless Koigi was represented in court by courageous lawyers working *pro bono*. In July 1995, Human Rights Watch awarded him a Lillian Hellman/Dashiell Hammett grant for writers suffering political persecution. While the news may have given some comfort, it could not spring him from his squalid prison cell.

Koigi's mother, Monica Wangu Wamwere, who has publicly supported her son, has been frequently harassed and her house has twice been demolished. She was among the mothers of political prisoners who organised notable public protests in 1992, prior to her son's most recent arrest, which followed hard upon the previous one. In the words of one observer, Alexandra Tibbetts, the protesting 'mamas' were illiterate 'rural, elderly Kikuyu women [who] descended on Nairobi with a potent demand', the release of their sons.³ In a protest sustained over an entire year, the mamas conducted a hunger strike in tents set up in Uhuru Park in Nairobi. When the police broke up a demonstration in support of their strike, some of the victims required hospitalisation. This event triggered an even more dramatic event, one with deep roots in Gikuyu tradition: three of the mamas stripped naked, a gesture that at once protests violence and puts a curse on those who are violent. As they stripped they screamed: 'What kind of government is this that beats women! Kill us! Kill us now!'⁴ Moi dismissed them as 'women whose heads are not okay'.⁵

In Kenya, which now displays the window-dressing of 'multiparty democracy', a new wave of government repressions began early in 1995, complete with the firebombing of a magazine office, the banning of a newspaper, the suppression of groups researching public policy and government corruption, arrests of opposition MPs, and government fabrication of a 'guerrilla movement' operating on the border with Uganda. Undeterred, some members of the opposition, led by the famed palaeontologist Richard Leakey, joined to form a new political party, Safina (Ark), to oppose the party that has ruled Kenya since independence, the Kenya African National Union (KANU). Leakey and three of his leading supporters, Moi said in May, each had a guerrilla unit in Uganda. In August 1995, while en route to visit Koigi, Leakey and others were badly beaten in Nakuru by Moi's goons (security men ludicrously described as 'KANU youths'). As the beating took place, police officers merely 'smirked and smiled', according to Louise Tumbridge, a British journalist who herself suffered fractured limbs.

Such attacks remind journalists, as if they needed reminding, how dangerous the truth can be in Kenya, where 'insulting the president' is a capital crime. Saying publicly that 'Moi's government is the government of Satan' leads to arrest and imprisonment, as does 'imagining the death' of the president. When Moi disappeared from public view for a week or

two at the end of January, his imagined death inspired celebratory feasts in Nairobi. Asked at the time about the death rumour, a Kenyan exile in the United States replied with wry caution: 'He's died before.'

Words critical of the government uttered over a sociable cup of tea may also lead to arrest, as Kivutha Kibwana, formerly dean of the University of Nairobi faculty of law, learned in August 1995. Kibwana, a leading human rights lawyer, was arrested following a tea-time chat on political matters in the senior common room at the university. Perhaps he should have known that some of the top university officials frequenting the senior common room were informers. Resigning his position on 2 August, Kibwana accused the university itself of having instigated his arrest; he felt 'abused, violated and betrayed' by his own peers. Earlier in 1995, I myself experienced the fear and suspicion that are endemic in the university when administrators denied me access to minor documents relative to curricular changes a quarter of a century ago. Fearing that I might write something that would 'embarrass the university', they did not realise that the denial itself could be construed as 'embarrassing'.

* * *

Ever since 'multiparty' was introduced at the end of 1991, the government has used tactics reminiscent of colonial 'divide-and-rule' policy to counter the threat that democracy poses to tyranny. Like the colonial rulers, the government works to disunite its citizens so that the word 'Kenyan' no longer encourages national unity,⁶ intertwining vicious oppression of the political opposition with a brazen encouragement of ethnic tensions. From 1991 on, the government has been inspiring violence that pits Moi's ethnic group (the Kalenjins) against what he sees as their chief rivals (mainly Gikuyu, Luo and Luhya). During the worst period – between October 1991 and July 1993 – ethnic clashes 'instigated by the government killed 1,500 Kenyans and displaced 300,000 others to refugee camps', according to a Human Rights Watch report. When the dissident environmentalist, Wangari Maathai, formed a group to aid those displaced during 'ethnic clashes', the government accused *her* of causing the clashes. They continue to this day.

One notorious example of ethnic manipulation is the 'traditional' poisoned arrows used by Kalenjin 'warriors' wearing 'traditional' warpaint that they hope will disguise them from the neighbours they attack. Traditional? Onlookers have observed boxes of these arrows, marked 'South Korea', being unloaded as ordinary cargo at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Even Kalenjin intellectuals admit the truth of the Korean 'Kalenjin' arrows. Some of the 'warriors' have arrived by helicopter, hardly a 'traditional' means of transportation.

During the past several years, a number of groups in Kenya have

boldly published reports criticising government violations of human rights. In 1992, the National Council of Churches of Kenya asserted that Kalenjin 'warriors' had found sanctuary for themselves and their weapons in the homes of government officials and politicians. In the same year, an official Parliamentary Select Committee reported damningly on the 'ethnic clashes', only to have its report quashed by Parliament itself. These and other documents make plain the official use of a variety of tortures, and they speak repeatedly of violence perpetrated by the very persons supposed to protect against such acts – the police. Related stories fill private conversations. Adherents of opposition groups speak of a new kind of torture – the injection of mercury into dissidents' veins, causing permanent mental and physical damage. It was mercury, they say, that turned one opposition leader into a shadow of his former self. Such allegations are impossible to verify, but political trials such as that of Koigi wa Wamwere suggest a sound basis for fear.

Few people believe the government charges against defendants like Koigi, for in Kenya prosecutorial 'facts' presented in a court of law are often less truthful than outright fiction. As government repression was reaching a new climax early in 1995, the Nairobi *Daily Nation* featured a photograph of a previously unknown young man named Patrick Walele Simiyu. On the front page of the *Nation* on 21 February 1995, Simiyu stares into space, one arm hanging limp at his side, the other grasped at the wrist by one of the police officers escorting him to prison. Frail, bewildered, he looks younger than his twenty-three years. In court, Simiyu admitted membership in a 'guerrilla movement' dedicated to violent overthrow of the Kenyan government. He was unrepresented by a lawyer and made no statement in mitigation. A lawyer who sought to defend some of his alleged co-conspirators remarked, 'If you look at these people when they appear in court, they are dazed and hazy as a result of the torture.'

Despite the prosecutor's closely detailed account of activities that allegedly took place between May 1992 and 28 October 1994, it is not clear when Simiyu was arrested, nor why he was unrepresented, nor why the prosecutor failed to present corroborating witnesses or offer evidence other than his own narrative. Nor is there any explanation for the tight security in a courtroom empty of all but reporters, police officers and a few prison warders – or for the fact that Simiyu's one-hour trial began at 4.45pm, fifteen minutes before the end of the official working day. One thing *is* clear: Simiyu, a nonentity himself, had the misfortune to come from western Kenya (the name is Luhya, an ethnic group on the Ugandan border), and the government, needing 'enemies' on the border, had invented 'guerrillas'.

Kenyans know how to read between the lines of such a story. The fabrication of what opposition leaders have called 'imaginary threats to state security' is an old device of the Moi government. Kenyans have

read other newspaper accounts of other torture-induced 'confessions'; they know that most people charged with capital crimes are unrepresented by lawyers. Familiar with the intermingling of fact and fiction that characterises Kenyan discourse, they read newspapers as they read the novel *Three Days on the Cross* by the newspaper columnist, Wahome Mutahi – himself tried, convicted and imprisoned for possession of 'seditious' material widely believed to have been planted by the government.

'This is purely a work of fiction,' Mutahi tells his reader on the copyright page, taking place in a country that bears no 'resemblance to any existing African country'. But the country is obviously Kenya, Mutahi's story is familiar to Kenyans and his disclaimer is part of the fiction. *Three Days on the Cross* is clearly based on the suppression of the underground movement, Mwakenya, in the later 1980s – memories of which are revived by the 1995 arrests. The publisher's blurb sums up Mutahi's 'Kafkaesque' story of innocent suspects who 'confess to crimes they have not committed' while held in 'dark dungeons and torture chambers hidden in the basement of a building' recognisable as Nyayo House, a striking ochre skyscraper in Nairobi, 'the smiling capital of a nation which, under the wise leadership of the [Most] Illustrious One, masquerades as a civil society'. By no coincidence, the initials of Most Illustrious One are an anagram for Moi. One of M.I.O's victims is called Kigoi, an anagram for Koigi wa Wamwere. An exiled 'marxist' professor reminds readers of the eminent and exiled Ngugi wa Thiong'o (as Mutahi's title bows towards Ngugi's novel *Devil on the Cross*). The water torture suffered by one of the protagonists closely resembles that recorded in a torture diary that the victim, a Mwakenya supporter, managed to smuggle out.⁷

The real-life case of Patrick Walele Simiyu, recounted in copious if inconsistent detail by the deputy public prosecutor, Bernard Chunga, is as much fiction as Mutahi's novel – if not more. The events were invented by Chunga, surely one of the most influential creative writers in Kenya today, who crafts his stories so as to implicate not only those in the dock but a whole array of 'enemies' of the Kenyan government – international organisations like the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the International Red Cross, leaders of the Kenyan opposition and a great many Kenyans dead at government hands. The dead – with whom Chunga ominously links the accused who are, thus far, alive – range from Dedan Kimathi (leader of the Mau Mau rising, executed by the colonial government in 1957), through Bishop Alexander Muge of the Presbyterian Church (who spoke out against the government and died in a car 'accident' in 1990) to the politicians J.M. Kariuki (found murdered in the Ngong Hills in 1975) and Robert Ouko (foreign minister at the time of his 'mysterious' death in 1990).

The leading creative writer of Kenya is Ngugi, currently professor of

comparative literature at New York University. Ngugi hasn't been in Kenya since June 1982, when he received word in London that 'they' would be waiting for him at Jomo Kenyatta airport. He had come to London for the launching of *Devil on the Cross*, a novel written in Gikuyu on toilet paper during his own year in prison (1978). Never charged, Ngugi had committed the 'crime' of co-writing a play satirising the power structure – and writing it in Gikuyu, a language the illiterate could understand. In his London exile, Ngugi wrote a second novel in Gikuyu, *Matigari*, published in Kenya in October 1986. During the book's brief life in Kenya, a curious reversal of fiction and fact occurred, narrated by Ngugi in an introduction to the English translation (1989): 'By January 1987, intelligence reports had it that peasants in central Kenya were whispering and talking about a man called Matigari who was roaming the whole country making demands about truth and justice.' After issuing an arrest warrant for Matigari, the police learned that he 'was only a fictional character'; they then raided every book shop in Kenya, seizing all copies of *Matigari*.

Nine years after that ludicrous and frightening event, one might suppose that things have changed in Kenya. After all, the English translation of *Matigari* (although not the Gikuyu original) is available in book shops and the repeal in December 1991 of Section 2A of the Constitution resulted in something labelled 'multiparty democracy'.* Other apparent changes include the willingness of some people to identify themselves publicly as former members of Mwakenya and the decommissioning of the Nyayo House torture chambers, in which the author of the diary mentioned earlier was tortured into hallucinations. Such are the changes: some previously banned books available, the advent of 'multiparty democracy' and relocation of torture chambers.

But journalists continue to suffer savage harassment; 'democracy' and 'multiparty' are a sham; and dissidents like Koigi, as well as chance victims like Patrick Walele Simiyu, undergo torture in one of the newer sites – perhaps Lake Nakuru National Park, or unmarked police cells, or various KANU 'jails'. Mwakenya – alive somewhere in exile, its members in Kenya dispersed into other like-minded groups – issued a statement in May 1994 reiterating its refusal to participate in elections as long as Moi's party, KANU, is in power. Mwakenya believes that participation would accord 'legitimacy to an illegal government' (and anyhow, the election was rigged). There's another continuity: as in the trial of Koigi and his co-defendants, courageous lawyers still defend (or try to defend) those who fall foul of the Moi regime, despite harassment, arrest and, sometimes, torture.

* * *

* In 1982, in the wake of an abortive coup, Section 2A made Kenya a one-party state *de jure*, as it had been *de facto* since 1969.

It was Moi himself who contributed to Kenyan fiction with his announcement, early in February 1995, that a self-styled 'brigadier', John Odongo (said to be a 'communist'), was leading an organisation called the February Eighteenth Movement (FEM).⁸ FEM supposedly planned a coup to be carried out by its military wing, the February Eighteenth Revolutionary Army (FERA). According to Bernard Chunga, Odongo 'expected to celebrate Christmas [1994] at State House, Nairobi'. Chunga's script, in which Patrick Walele Simiyu plays a bit part, features an elaborate 'plot' in both senses of the word – a story-line concerning an imaginary conspiracy devised not by 'guerrillas' but by the Moi government.

One of the subplots of this story involves thirty-two young men arrested in January and February of 1995 in western Kenya – among them Simiyu – who disappeared from sight as soon as they were picked up, an event unknown to the local police. Conceived by a paranoid mind, the fictional plot concerns supposed attempts to destabilise the government, which claims that these attempts include ethnic violence. But since 1991 the real and horrifying ethnic violence has been instigated by the government itself. Africa Watch and other impartial observers describe these episodes in familiar and chilling terms – 'political violence' or 'genocide' or 'ethnic cleansing'. Despite Moi's rhetoric of 'peace, love and unity', he himself is ultimately responsible for violence with the potential for civil war.⁹ Even as he hints that a return to a one-party state would solve Kenya's problems, Moi claims that it is already 'a perfect democracy'.

Creators of fiction like Moi and Chunga run the risk of open dissent, for not everyone succumbs to what Ngugi calls 'the culture of silence and fear' (in *Detained*, his prison memoir). On the very day that Patrick Walele Simiyu's face saddened the front page of the *Daily Nation*, a young lawyer named Nancy Baraza went to court at the request of relatives of two other men accused of complicity in the 'plot' to which Simiyu had 'confessed'. By declining her offer to represent them, the men had 'saved the court much time by pleading guilty to the charge', the chief magistrate observed; efficiency took precedence over justice. When Baraza visited one of the accused at the notorious Kamiti maximum security prison, he told her that they had been held incommunicado, 'blindfolded, stripped naked, hit with strong objects and ... tortured in their private parts'. Promised release if they would plead guilty and refused legal representation, they received five-year prison sentences.

Even before the fabrication of the Odongo affair, the government claimed that the opposition was backing 'guerrillas' operating from 'abroad' (i.e., across the border in Uganda). The 'guerrilla crisis' produced one benefit: the squabbling opposition united for a two-day meeting. Afterwards, fifty-one MPs sang 'We shall overcome' as they marched through the Nairobi streets and attempted to deliver a

statement to three top government officials who just happened to be out. Calling the allegations of guerrilla warfare 'hysteria and paranoia', the MPs warned: 'The imprisonment of innocent Kenyans charged with fictitious political crimes is precursor to restoring one-party rule.' Moi responded by claiming that the 'heartless' opposition was threatening 'massacre through guerrilla warfare'. Evoking the 'senseless genocide' in nearby Rwanda, he ratcheted tension yet higher to imply that the Uganda government backed both the new Rwandan government and the Kenyan 'guerrillas' on its border. As he prepares for elections in 1997, Moi heeds an elementary law of politics: foreign threats distract attention from domestic difficulties.¹⁰

Independent sources describe 'brigadier' Odongo, Moi's scapegoat, as a khaki-clad man of 'simple character' who lived in Kampala, Uganda's capital. Once a major ally of the deposed Ugandan ruler, Milton Obote, he worked as a fishmonger and trader in second-hand clothes – 'a mere poverty-stricken refugee', according to the Ugandan government. To one Ugandan witness, Odongo seemed incapable of 'command[ing] even two men', let alone a guerrilla troupe. According to Uganda's president, Yoweri K. Museveni, Odongo had ambitions nonetheless. Museveni told a press conference on 20 March that he had learned in 1993 of Odongo's plans to invade Kenya from a camp near the border; Ugandan troops had attacked his camp and handed him over to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.¹¹ It is quite possible that the ex-fishmonger/clothes trader/refugee experienced delusions of leadership. According to Charles Onyango-Obbo, editor of the Kampala newspaper *The Monitor*, Odongo used to hang out in the bar of the Nile hotel in Kampala, where he 'rambled on about Kenyan politics', looking like 'one of those people begging for money or looking for food'.

How did such a *nebbish* become an international *cause célèbre*? Onyango-Obbo believes that the Kenyan government made him a person of consequence by dubbing him 'a rebel, ... no longer a fake'. Real rebels – like Museveni himself, whose guerrilla movement overthrew an illegitimate government – fight long and hard. In contrast, notes Onyango-Obbo, 'Odongo's rise to folk hero was the cheapest ride to fame', for FERA has not fought a single battle. When the Kenyan government demanded Odongo's extradition, Uganda verified his refugee status with the UN High Commission for Refugees and expelled him to Ghana.¹² Thus Odongo joined the company of exiles said by the Kenyan government to be enemies of the state.

* * *

Among these exiles, the most distinguished is Ngugi wa Thiong'o, these days a mild-mannered professor at New York University (NYU) whose works were the subject of an international conference at

Pennsylvania State University in 1994. Once the scourge of the developed world (a den of 'thieves and robbers'), Ngugi now looks for what is 'positive' in the West, such as 'the notion that nobody, nobody, is above the law. This', he says earnestly, 'is a concept we can really develop in Africa.'

Despite his long absence, Ngugi's name still raises hackles in Kenya. Several weeks before president Moi invented his fiction of FERA and FEM, a big spread on Ngugi appeared in the 'Weekender Magazine' of the *Daily Nation*. Genial and thoughtful, Ngugi was pictured with his second wife and their baby daughter – no longer the scathing satirist of yore but, in keeping with his insistence that Africans write in African languages, a writer of love poems in Gikuyu. The main *Nation* article by Martin Mbugua, a Kenyan computer expert employed at NYU, was accompanied by Mbugua's interview with Ngugi; it was countered in the same spread by an article on (and sympathetic to) Ngugi's first wife, who remains in Kenya, an article clearly intended to fan the flames of resentment that flare easily in the highly personalised atmosphere of Kenya's small intelligentsia.

The predictable sequence of attacks and defences that followed the *Nation* spread included a dry suggestion that Ngugi 'can write better in the United States where nobody is interested in detaining or imprisoning him'. The more unthinking among his erstwhile admirers say that he ought to return to Kenya, forgetting that in Moi's Kenya he is unemployable and that he would soon be imprisoned or, remaining 'free', be murdered in an automobile 'accident' like Bishop Muge and others. Sometimes it seems as if he has died already, or has been 'disappeared'; the *Sunday Nation*'s literary columnist can discuss the 'Myth of "Great" Kenyan Writers' without even mentioning Ngugi.

Not only is such self-censorship common, but the government still clamps instruments of repression on opposition publications, above all on those in Kenyan languages, thus providing ironic evidence of the power Ngugi attributes to African languages. One of the research groups suppressed last year published a newsletter, *Nuru* ('light'), in nine Kenyan languages. Soon after the eclipse of *Nuru* came the banning of *Inooro* ('sharpened'), a monthly published in Gikuyu that was founded in 1985 by the Murang'a Catholic Diocese (circulation 15,000). The large file – the carpenter's or prisoner's instrument, not the clerk's – on *Inooro*'s masthead (illustrating its name) alludes unmistakably to the capacity of words to spring open the prison house of the mind as well as their power to land speakers of 'dangerous' words in prison. Any reader of *Inooro* would know about the Gikuyu play that occasioned Ngugi's imprisonment, and about the 'arrest' of *Matigari*. Soon after the banning of *Inooro*, eighteen Catholic bishops published a pastoral letter condemning the Moi government as 'sick'.

Such truth-telling can give scant comfort to the hapless Patrick

Walele Simiyu, who is not the only Simiyu to feature in a work of fiction. In 1965 there appeared in London a novel entitled *The Confessions of Jotham Simiyu*. It was written by Harold Beaver, a German-born Englishman who had taught secondary school in western Kenya in the early 1960s. Told in the first person, the book purported to be the story of a man from western Kenya educated in a colonial school and hence mentally unfit for the new Kenya. Before sinking into oblivion, *The Confessions of Jotham Simiyu* was taken up by a number of East African intellectuals, who treated it as an accurate depiction of the trauma inflicted by colonial education – as ‘true confessions’. Did it matter to these anti-colonial intellectuals whether the author was an ‘authentic’ African or an African imagined by a British refugee from Hitler’s Germany? Apparently not. Nor do such distinctions matter in Kenya today, where a deputy prosecutor presents, at the behest of the president, fictions as facts.

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References

- 1 Some of the information in this essay derives from articles published in the Kenyan press in February–June 1995 (mainly the *Daily* and *Sunday Nation*, but also *The People*, *The East African*, *The Economic Review* and *Finance*), as well as from private conversations during a visit to Kenya in February 1995. Other sources include reports by Africa Watch (*Divide and Rule: state-sponsored ethnic violence in Kenya*, 1993), Amnesty International (*Kenya: torture, political detention and unfair trials*, 1987; *Kenya: Human Rights: an update*, 1988; and *Women in Kenya: repression and resistance*, 1995), and Article 19 (*Censorship in Kenya: government critics face the death sentence*, March 1995). I have also used a statement by Mwakenya published in the *Review of African Political Economy* (No. 61, 1994), pp. 475–8; Makau wa Mutua, ‘Human rights and state despotism in Kenya: institutional problems’, *Africa Today* (Vol. 41, No. 4, 1994), pp. 50–56; Alexandra Tibbetts, ‘Mamas fighting for freedom in Kenya’, *Africa Today* (Vol. 41, No. 4, 1994), pp. 27–48. Reference is also made to three books by Ngugi wa Thiong’o: *Detained: a writer’s prison diary* (Heinemann, 1981), *Devil on the Cross* (trans. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Heinemann, 1982) and *Matigari* (trans. Wangui wa Goro, Heinemann, 1989); and to Wahome Mutahi’s novel, *Three Days on the Cross* (Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers, 1991).
- 2 A journalist who was himself, ‘courtesy of his profession’, a ‘state guest’ describes eighty inmates ‘forced to share a 12ft by 18ft room ... so tightly packed that turning [over] would require the cooperation of the entire room’ (Mwenda Njoka, ‘The death chambers that are Kenya’s prisons today’, *The People* (9–15 June 1995), p. 4). As Wahome Mutahi’s *The Jail Bugs* (Nairobi, Longman Kenya, 1992) demonstrates, terrible conditions are shared by non-political and political prisoners alike.
- 3 Tibbetts, op. cit. See also Amnesty International, *Women in Kenya*, op. cit.
- 4 Tibbetts, ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Western press reports of the October 1995 national election in Tanzania remark on that country’s success in achieving a true national unity embracing some 120 ethnic groups. Tanzanians themselves are proud of the contrast with Kenya, their neighbour to the north.
- 7 See Carol Sicherman, *Ngugi wa Thiong’o: The Making of a Rebel: a source book in*

Kenyan literature and resistance (London, Hans Zell, 1990), chapter 11.3.

- 8 The name alludes to the date of Dedan Kimathi's execution, 18 February 1957.
- 9 See Africa Watch, *Divide and Rule*, op. cit. On physical attacks on newspapers and reporters attempting to write about the political violence, see Article 19, *Censorship in Kenya*, op. cit.
- 10 See Chris Otuma Ongalo, 'The African tragedy long foretold', *The People* (206 June 1995), p. 6, which draws parallels with the regime of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Kenya has long been an Orwellian state.
- 11 In February 1995, a Ugandan newspaper reported that Odongo had admitted to guerrilla activities. But with no opportunity to interview Odongo, independent observers cannot verify (or disprove) such statements.
- 12 According to subsequent rumours, Odongo was later moved to Scandinavia.

UK

Brother Herman: tribute to a founder of black self-help in Britain *

Ladies and gentlemen: Many of you will know that the purpose of these lectures is two-fold. First, it is to commemorate the life and work of the late Martin Luther King Jnr, and thereby highlight a remarkable epoch in world history. Martin Luther King was at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America in the 1950s and 1960s. In the new era of television, many people in different parts of the world were able to see white racists and bigots behaving normally, almost claiming as a right their practice of brutal, dehumanising treatment of black people and the denial to their black countrymen of human, civil and political rights. The revulsion and guilt these scenes aroused had an effect on every multi-ethnic society in the English-speaking world and beyond, and so contributed to whatever progress, however slight, there has been since.

Even in the USA itself, people are beginning to forget details of the struggle. I heard recently of a cartoon in an American newspaper following a report that Rosa Parks had been assaulted by a black mugger. The cartoon showed a young black man being beaten by a black policeman who is saying to him: 'You are the kind of thug who goes around mugging people like Rosa Parks!' And the wretched youth asks: 'Who is Rosa Parks?'

And how many young people today know the *tune*, far less the words, of 'We shall overcome'? But we believe that that particular part

* Delivered jointly by Wilfred Wood, Bishop of Croydon, and Ms Shona Edwards, the daughter of Brother Herman, as the Ninth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture, at the Lambeth Mission, 20 January 1996.

of the struggle has a special importance and must be drawn to the attention, again and again, of every new generation. That is one part of the purpose of these lectures.

The second purpose of these lectures is to examine the relevance of Martin Luther King's life, work and philosophy to our own times and in our own setting here in Britain. Months ago, when we were deciding what aspect of his philosophy should provide the focus of this evening's lecture, we recalled the emphasis he placed on self-help among those who find themselves on the receiving end of bigotry and injustice. It was he who said: 'To expect God to do everything for us while we do nothing is not faith, but superstition.' So self-help in Britain is to be our theme.

Nor did we have to look far for an appropriate lecturer. Our Martin Luther King Group is the successor to a group which flourished in the 1960s. This earlier group was made up of a number of people, each of whom had pioneered a self-help initiative in the black community. These initiatives were in fields such as community organisation, employment, theatre, youth service and legal defence and aid. In this group were people such as George Campbell of South East London Parents' Organisation, Oscar Abrams of Keskids, Vince Hines of Dashiki, David Udo of International Personnel Employment Agency and others. There was also Brother Herman Edwards, who had founded 'Harambee' in Islington and served the black community in Britain for many years before returning to live in Antigua. If the lecturer was required to speak from personal experience, there was none better qualified. We got in touch with Herman and were delighted when he agreed to deliver the lecture.

Sadly, some months ago, Brother Herman became seriously ill and was admitted to hospital. As the time for the lecture drew closer, we had to accept that he was not strong enough to prepare and deliver the lecture, or even to leave the hospital to be with us tonight.

It was then that we decided that, in commemorating Martin Luther King, we should illustrate the theme of self-help in the black community by reference to Brother Herman's work.

* * *

Thirty-odd years ago, when Martin Luther King passed through Britain on his way to Oslo to receive his Nobel Prize, we had no race relations laws, no community relations industry, no black MPs, no black lecturers in universities, no black papers in W.H. Smith, no black newscasters on our TV screens.

Racism was raw, stark and unmediated. It was perhaps inevitable that black self-help would be born in those conditions. But more than any other person, it has been Brother Herman Edwards, who arrived in

Britain in 1955 from Antigua as a skilled builder, who made the idea of black self-help a practical reality and epitomised the purity of its precepts when others succumbed to the blandishments of money, power or publicity.

For what Brother Herman's life's work – spanning three decades – has taught us is that the struggle for black people is never ending. It was not just a matter of meeting a social need, interesting people in the issue, involving the community, raising money and getting premises. Those, one could almost say, were the easy tasks. Then came the business of defending those projects from attack, all sorts of attacks from bureaucracy, the courts, the police, the local council, politicians, *funders, the media*.

Brother Herman was not a difficult man, though so many people, from town clerks to high court judges, were flummoxed by him. Brother Herman was simply a totally principled man who, in saying 'no' to handing over deeds or accounts, in saying 'no' to flocks of white councillors treating his projects like their private property and black young people like zoo animals, was developing the principles of independence and dignity so central to his concepts of self-reliance and black self-help.

Herman, first in his role as builder and teacher at the Black House and later the founder of Harambee, was a pioneer of black self-help in Britain even before the term had really been coined. And he remained a believer and practitioner of self-help long after its days were numbered – through state intervention, on the one hand, and opportunism, on the other.

What drew Herman (and others like him) towards self-help in the mid 1960s were principally two things: the burgeoning ideas about Black Power and a deep concern about what was happening to young members of the black community. Herman had come to Britain as a skilled man. He had worked hard and successfully in his trade. What worried him was the impact of poor education, racism and under-employment on those who had come a generation after him to join parents in Britain.

For three years he worked without pay at the Black House, which he described as 'one of the first times we built something for black people in England'. 'We had quite a lot of young black people roaming the streets by day and night because of conflicts at home. The street was their refuge and then from the street they went first to police cells and then on to the big jails.' The Black House tried a form of rescue with 400 or 500 young people coming in for classes, advice or just food.

When the Black House closed, Herman was tempted to return to the West Indies but it was the pleas from black parents that urged him both to stay in Britain and to devote himself to looking after the welfare of the young. The need was certainly there. For example, one case, which

was reported in the *Sunday Times* of 21 May 1972 and in the *Guardian* the following day, was of an 18-year-old who got 'lost' in the system after he was arrested for being a trespasser with intent to steal – in a house where he rented a room! He was kept in a detention centre and then a remand home without trial from 9 September 1971 until 7 March 1972, and no one knows how much longer he would have been detained if Harambee had not tracked down the arresting officer, who was under the impression that the young man was out on bail all the time.

First, parents were asking him to find out where their children were; then, when children went to court, they were asking for a lawyer to defend them; then they asked him to visit their children in prison, and then he found that the children had lost any rapport with their parents. Herman, when he recalled those days, pointed to the times he met the Reverend Wilfred Wood at the Black House and, through discussions with him, realised the need to restore to the young people their self-confidence, self-respect and dignity.

The project Harambee (from the Swahili word for working together), described as an attempt at Juveniles, Police, Parents' Cooperation, was set up in 1969 in north London to help alienated young people to get back into society. The idea was not to provide a growing sociology research industry with fodder, or social workers with clients, but to help young people to put their instinctive support for one another when in a common predicament to good use. So 'ex-offending' youngsters were recruited to the committee and to share in the work. It was difficult to get the Home Office bureaucracy to understand this and give permission for such persons to accompany Herman on his visits to remand centres. It was also difficult to get some upwardly-mobile black parents to understand why their children did not share their craving to be like their white neighbours and despise the more disadvantaged black people. Wilfred Wood recalls the hostile reception they sometimes got on school visits when speaking to sixth-formers who had unquestioningly accepted the bad press given to black youngsters and had little sympathy for Herman's work.

With bases in Islington, Haringey and Hackney, Harambee provided a range of services – from prison visiting and bail hostel accommodation to training courses and black educational programmes. Herman identified the problems as stemming from a vicious circle wherein young people were forced on to the streets in a society that did not understand them and left them to carry the burden without elders to lean on. Harambee's was a holistic vision of rescue and regeneration.

From the start, it was uncompromising in the way that 'rescue service' would proceed. It was a programme of total development, which meant a development which went beyond liberal paternalism to enable those it was ultimately assisting to be able to help themselves. The first principle was self-reliance. Harambee used old properties, not

merely because it could afford no better, but also to engage the young people in the physical restoration. They were to learn the discipline of work and skills which would lead them to a more prosperous future. Harambee was about equipping them for the wider world. When Herman recorded part of the history of Harambee, his writing showed his pride in the way the young people had become self-sufficient in terms of creating their own jobs. They bought cloth wholesale and made dresses and dashikis to sell to the community; they bought books and food wholesale and distributed the products in the same way; they were encouraged to pool resources to create a driving school scheme. Through Harambee, black kids were creating their own opportunities. An officialdom paranoid about so-called 'Black Power' responded by raiding the premises and confiscating typewriters and books.

And, wherever possible, Herman would try to involve the wider black community in the project of rehabilitation. He had black lawyers, architects, teachers, social workers to help Harambee on, giving the young people work experience in their offices. The experience of Harambee was as much about grounding the professionals with their brothers as teaching skills to those society had rejected.

In the late 1960s, when Harambee was conceived, self-help meant self-reliance and self-sufficiency. The projects came out of perceived needs, needs engendered by a racist society. These could only be met by a black community which understood and related to the particular problems of its young. No one expected a racist government to provide; no one wanted a racist social worker or teacher or race professional to intervene. To understand the battles that Harambee was forced to wage against the ILEA, Job Creation Programme, the Home Office, Islington, Haringey and Hackney councils, is to understand the fight for the basic principles of self-help. In 1974, an Urban Aid grant of £281,000 was offered to Herman to fund three Harambee hostels. But it was conditional on local authority control and ownership. After three years' wrangling, Herman turned it down.

Brother Herman's was a lone fight but not a personal battle. He was, in fact, fighting for all those principles that black self-help had once been imbued with. He should have had a phalanx of fighters alongside him.

Harambee began without government money or local authority hand outs. It relied on voluntary contributions and the help of church people to provide office space and cover expenses. The development of Harambee was dependent on the energies of the young people themselves. Brother Herman described those early days as 'the best and most constructive ones. The destruction started', he wrote, 'with the intervention of government personnel and government money. My conflict with many of the institutions has been as a result of the fact that they end at the "cap in hand" stage. I see the need for the community to gain

some self-confidence and erase the cap-in-hand syndrome. Over the years I have found I am not only in conflict with a hostile society but I am also in conflict with the black person with the begging bowl.'

As Herman put up his fight over principles – not to have to account for every penny (according to him, it was slave money anyway) and not to open his doors as though his young people were tourist attractions on show for white people, not to hand over the deeds to properties the project owned – he paid a very heavy personal price. On a number of occasions he went to jail for the most trivial of reasons (non-payment of [discretionary] rates, not paying a fine after noise was alleged at a fund-raising party, not making returns to the Inland Revenue) alongside some of the young people he was helping. But the hardest thing for him to tolerate was that other black community activists were prepared to take the monies which had been withheld from Harambee because of his insistence on respect for black integrity.

The idea of black people at one another's throats for crumbs from the colonial table was bad enough. But, by the end of the 1970s, he could see that the divide-and-rule tactics of the Labour Party then in power – especially in local politics – had developed into something yet more dangerous – clientism.

Herman deplored the dependence that Labour politics and funding policies demanded of black projects. Instinctively, he sensed that this was killing black initiative, preventing black people from owning property, developing businesses, serving their communities the way they wanted to. It was also a cheap way of buying off black protest and a transparent attempt to defuse black discontent and bring black leaders under control.

* * *

Just a brief snapshot of Herman the man.

Rail as he might against politicians and systems, he never lost his humanity and capacity to see and love each individual person. He never forgot his gratitude for example to the Reverend Colin Morris or Bishop Trevor Huddleston for their support in the early days. He never forgot how 'young Jeremy' (i.e., Jeremy Hawthorne, then field officer with the British Council of Churches) came and laid bricks at Perth Road. He might hate the white system, but he loved those white individuals who stood by him and Harambee. And what a man he was – to attract the gift of a coat from Anthony Rampton (which, of course, he gave away within days to someone more needy), a prison visit from Oxford Professor of Logic Michael Dummett, a letter from Bishop Jim Thompson. High or low was of no account, so long as they were good people.

One judge who sent him to prison was clearly bemused by the procession of character witnesses, including an archdeacon, a police superintendent and an ILEA schools inspector, who were prepared to

find time to appear in court and testify on Herman's behalf. And during the trial it was clear that Herman had won the admiration and respect of the barrister who was prosecuting him! Nonetheless, he was found guilty of spending 'between £2,000 and £20,000 on unauthorised projects' such as visiting courts and prisons, even though the judge accepted that Herman had spent none of the money on himself.

Secondly, Herman was, despite all his struggles, a man of non-violence who keenly followed the tactics of Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Funnily enough, it was after his last jail term, when he had been handed Stalin's writings, of all things, in the prison library, that he began to talk more violently. 'Bof, bof, bof. Up against the wall like Joe,' he would say about an Islington councillor, and follow it with hearty laughter.

Thirdly, he was a man of austere habits. For example, he was a vegetarian long before this was fashionable. Austerity was second nature to him because worldly goods held such little value. The idea that this man, who never had a coat to his back, should embezzle any funds for personal gain amused all that knew him.

It is difficult to know when Herman had time to read, but his wisdom was always liberally laced with analogies from other struggles and quotes from black leaders. Everything, from the experiences of Fanon and Ben Bella in Algeria, the Panthers, Malcolm X and Walter Rodney in the Americas to anti-colonial activists like Gandhi and Nkrumah, was grist to his mill.

Anyone who knew Herman well got used to the way he approximated his quotations, often forgetting the exact name of the person about whom he was telling a tale. But there was no denying the fact that Herman knew so well the inscape and worth of those from whom he drew inspiration, he was able to take licence without losing an iota of their truth.

And no one influenced his work and beliefs more than Martin Luther King. At the beginning, it was King's emphasis on black rights, worth and dignity which inspired Herman. But, towards the end, it was King's ability to withstand hostility and even some ridicule from within black ranks which sustained Herman.

Today, all those battles for self-help inspired by Martin Luther King and carried forward by people like Brother Herman have lost their way and become undermined. In place of black self-help, we now have a whole professionalised black voluntary sector which apes the white statutory services and sets up career structures for black caring. Gone are the ideas of commitment to the community, totality of caring, the need to change a society even as you serve the victims. And black people, instead of returning their education to the community that gave it to them, as Nyerere taught us, have begun to feather their own nests.

On the surface, things might look better than thirty-two years ago.

We have had race advisors in every town hall, black politicians, prominent media stars. But the problem now is that raw racism is merely obscured. A few individuals are doing well, while whole sections in the black community go to the wall. The poverty, racism and hopelessness in the young that Herman fought and hoped to arrest are still there, but now compounded by a culture of 'crack' and an increased violence, and issuing in mental illness and suicides. Those black projects that remain are being forced to justify their existence in terms of how many 'users' they can 'through-put'.

In such circumstances, we are desperately in need of the values that Herman stood for. Justice, community-based initiatives, self-reliance were his watchwords and the issues on which he had to fight the powers that be. Selfless devotion, not market-speak, was the idiom he knew.

If the black community is to survive, it has to be on such terms. And that means helping each other, giving back to the community what it has afforded us, helping the young to understand that they are not the first rebels. It was their parents' and grandparents' rebellions that made it possible for them to have even the modicum of rights they have today. And they, in turn, must fashion a self-reliant future for their own children.

In sum, what we can learn from Herman's experience is that self-help means *self-reliance* for a community. And, to achieve that, black people must return their skills to the community, learn not to be distracted by monies that come with strings, create our own opportunities without relying on outside agencies to provide them.

Self-help is not the same as group selfishness. Genuine self-help will create *genuine unity* within a community. And that means:

- Black groups not competing with one another, for resources, but sharing those resources;
- It means not treating service to the community as a mere means of attracting awards;
- It means treating all our young people as our own children;
- It means respecting the struggles of past generations of black people whose achievements in their time are far greater than they appear today;
- It means a refusal to trade justice and human rights for money, status or any other bribe;
- It means recognising that we are now engaged in building foundations, not comparing these foundations with what other people have inherited from hundreds of years of exploitation;
- It means not allowing bitterness to paralyse us in our struggle or the loss of support to cause us to give up;
- It means that, whatever our religion – Christianity, Islam, Rastafarianism or any other – we are still brothers and sisters. So we

must respect one another and do to others as we would have them do to us.

These are Herman's values and he continues to keep this faith. They are summed up in the phrase with which he ends all his letters: 'One love, peace, justice and totality of equality.' They should be our values too.

Asylum: the government's false alarm

On 24 February, an estimated 30,000 marchers from trade unions, refugee and migrants' rights organisations, anti-racist groups, churches and political parties braved wind and rain to demonstrate their anger at the Asylum Bill. But, despite intensive campaigning by an unusually wide alliance, taking in welfare and housing rights groups, charities and churches organising lobbies, rallies, pickets and soup kitchens as well as legal challenges, the government's twin-track onslaught on immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers remains on course.

The package comprises two new measures to target 'bogus refugees' and 'illegal immigrants'. The Asylum and Immigration Bill, introduced into parliament by home secretary Michael Howard at the end of November, is expected to become law in the summer. Its main provisions are:

- a 'white list' of designated countries of origin of asylum-seekers deemed safe. Asylum claimants from these countries will have to meet a legal presumption of safety which, since the defeat of a proposed amendment, even medical evidence of torture will not rebut. So far ten countries have been named: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Pakistan, Poland, Romania and Tanzania;
- the extension of 'fast-track' appeals, currently used for asylum-seekers who have travelled through 'safe' countries, to a whole raft of other asylum claims deemed 'manifestly unfounded';
- the abolition of in-country appeal rights in asylum claims involving 'safe' countries of transit;
- criminal sanctions with up to seven years imprisonment for anyone who helps an asylum-seeker to get into the country (except those acting 'otherwise than for gain' or who work for a bona fide refugee assistance organisation);
- criminal sanctions for employers of unauthorised immigrant workers;
- no social housing or child benefits for immigrants and asylum-seekers;
- increased police powers of arrest, search and seizure in immigration offences.

The second half of the package consists of new social security regulations introduced by social security secretary Peter Lilley at the Tory party conference in October, which came into force in February. Their main provisions are:

- removal of all benefits from asylum-seekers immediately their claim is rejected by the Home Office (they are currently entitled to urgent case income support, which is 90 per cent of normal safety-net benefit, and to housing benefit, which continue during appeals);
- denial of entitlement to all benefits from anyone who claims asylum after coming to the UK in another capacity, such as visitor (currently 70 per cent of asylum-seekers claim after entry);
- denial of all benefits to 'sponsored immigrants'.

Between them, the measures institutionalise in legal form the political propaganda against 'bogus' asylum-seekers by disqualifying many current claimants; by criminalising them and those who help them; and by removing them from the welfare net. The provisions also attack Britain's settled black population by tying welfare benefits, including social housing, firmly to immigration status, so making immigration officers of welfare providers, and by criminalising employers of unauthorised ('black') immigrant labour.

'Bogus refugees'

The government justifies the package by crying 'bogus refugees', pointing to the very low recognition rate for refugees in the UK over the past few years (4 per cent). This is a sleight of hand which adds insult to the injury perpetrated on asylum-seekers by the reduction from 80 per cent to 20 per cent, over the past two years, in the proportion recognised as deserving of asylum and allowed to stay in the UK, either as refugees or by the grant of exceptional leave.

This inversion in the proportion of those admitted and rejected was not due to the arrival of a golden age of justice, peace and freedom; the number of refugees from war, civil war and persecution continues inexorably to increase. But an unannounced Home Office policy decision has virtually abolished exceptional leave to remain or 'humanitarian' status for those fleeing war or civil war in countries such as Sri Lanka and Algeria. In addition, the 1993 Act, which introduced in-country appeals for all asylum-seekers, paradoxically resulted in a dramatic deterioration in the quality of asylum decisions, through the removal of a number of procedural safeguards which the Home Office had been forced to concede over the previous five years.

The result has been reasoning which, as demonstrated in a number of recent studies,¹ has ranged from the dishonest to the bizarre. A Zairean who claimed to have escaped to Congo by canoe across the

river Zaire was told that he could not have done so because of the 'size, strength and considerable dangers posed by the river such as shifting sandbanks and crocodiles'. Asked to produce evidence for this assertion, the Home Office withdrew the line of reasoning. Another Zairean told the Home Office that soldiers raided his house, arrested his father and shot his brother. The Home Office 'noted your claim that the soldiers were firing wildly within the house, and considered that the shooting of your brother was not necessarily a deliberate act. He further noted that they did not shoot your father, who was the most politically active member of your family.' Another example of perfect logic, encountered by a Colombian, was: 'Your enemies have had ample opportunity to kill you, but they have not done so.'

Medical evidence of torture is systematically denied or marginalised. Accounts of repeated arrest and detention are routinely countered by logic such as: 'You would not have been released/allowed to escape/given a passport/allowed to leave the country if the authorities were really interested in you.' In other words, those who are persecuted are dead or cannot get out of their country; *ergo*, those who have managed to get to the UK are *by definition* not genuine. There is, in fact, no such thing as a genuine refugee.

In answer to arguments such as these, the government points to the small number (4 per cent) of appeals against Home Office decisions which succeed. But, far from vindicating the government's claims about bogus refugees, this figure demonstrates the extent to which the poisonous 'culture of disbelief' permeating the Home Office has trickled down to infect the appellate system. (Curiously, the only appeals which have a high success rate are those against the certification of 'safe' countries of transit. Over 40 per cent of these appeals are successful. The government's response is a testament to the utter cynicism behind the new legislation: the in-country appeal is abolished.) Many adjudicators reject Amnesty International reports on countries of origin of asylum-seekers as too 'contentious', preferring the more diplomatic US State Department country reports, or the unsourced, sometimes confidential, country assessments produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the Home Office.

But, in the compilation of these country reports, all sorts of other interests play a part, sometimes resulting in a totally distorted picture of conditions in refugee-producing countries. The Home Office assessment of Nigeria was recently described by the Refugee Council as 'fundamentally flawed', and containing 'major distortions about the reality of human rights abuses against pro-democracy and human rights activists'.² Since the annulment of the 1993 presidential elections and the imposition of martial law, only four out of 2,000 Nigerian asylum-seekers have been recognised as refugees, with a further fifteen granted exceptional leave. Shell Oil extracts almost a million barrels of

oil a day from Nigeria, and Britain continues to license the export of police arms and equipment despite an embargo.

The role of arms sales and commercial considerations in influencing refugee policy was graphically illustrated as the Asylum Bill was making its way through parliament. While ministers publicly ranted about floods of bogus refugees, they were doing a back-room deal to remove a thorn in the flesh of the Saudi princes by expelling refugee and human rights activist Mohamed al-Masari from Britain to Dominica, in exchange for the renewal of arms contracts worth £20bn. Dominica was persuaded to take Masari by a 300 per cent increase in aid to Dominica to £2m.

Although, following the execution in late 1995 of human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa by the Nigerian military regime, the Home Office announced that Nigeria would not be on the 'safe' list, nevertheless military and diplomatic considerations can be seen at work in the 'white list'. India and Pakistan are large arms customers for Britain. India bought £700m worth of arms from Britain in the five years 1988-92, and Pakistan bought over £100m worth. Shortland personnel carriers made by Shorts of Belfast were used by police to suppress dissent in Sindh province in 1993. Both countries were severely condemned in recent Amnesty International reports for the routine torture and murder of political dissidents. Kenya is another 'safe' country featuring heavily in critical human rights reports – and one with which the UK has strong and continuing trading, police and military links.

Diplomatic and commercial considerations can also be seen behind the Home Office declaration of Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic as 'safe'. In all of these countries, extreme racist violence against the Roma is perpetrated. But all the east European countries on the list have recently signed Association Agreements with the EU, whereby crumbs of EU investment are traded for the role of buffer-zone for Europe's unwanted refugees.

The role of Europe

These ideas – 'white lists', 'fast track' procedures, 'manifestly unfounded' claims – are not the product of Michael Howard's evil genius alone. They were devised in intergovernmental resolutions and agreements at EU level, and similar measures are in force, or being brought into force in many European countries. Following a 1992 ministers' meeting on safe countries of transit and origin, most EU member states now have fast-track procedures for 'manifestly unfounded' claims, during which asylum claimants are frequently detained, and Germany and the Netherlands have introduced 'white lists'. An elaborate network of intergovernmental mechanisms ensures constant liaison on immigration and refugee policies and procedures across Europe, and a

clearing house, the Centre for Information and Reflection on Asylum (CIREA), allows the confidential exchange of information by member states on refugees' countries of origin.

Having defined refugees out of existence by use of the white list and the 'manifestly unfounded' procedures, the Bill drives home the racist message by making it a criminal offence for anyone except a bona fide refugee assistance organisation to help asylum-seekers to get into the country. While it is a defence to show that this was not done for gain, the risk of being charged is calculated to deter many from humanitarian acts of rescue, and its symbolic importance in putting refugees on a par with dangerous drugs is incalculable. At the same time, the Bill's proposed criminal sanctions against employers of unauthorised immigrant workers will, according to a recent employers' poll, stop over half of all employers from hiring any black labour at all for fear of prosecution.

If the Bill works by redefinition and by criminalisation, the new social security regulations work by starvation. From 5 February, anyone claiming asylum in-country, and anyone whose asylum claim is rejected, is excluded from all benefits – including the most basic safety-net welfare benefit preventing destitution. On 8 January, thanks to retrospective provisions in the regulations as originally drafted, 13,000 asylum-seekers were due to come off benefit. Soup kitchens, plastic tents and church halls were made ready. But there was massive adverse publicity for the proposals, with protests by churches, unions, refugee and anti-racist groups taken up by the liberal media and threatening a government defeat. The government realised that the impact of such a large number of poverty-stricken refugees on the streets all at once, in the cold of January, might be counter-productive, evoking sympathy rather than disgust. So, although the government-appointed Social Security Advisory Committee advised wholesale rejection of the regulations, only their retrospective provisions were rejected by the minister when he finally presented them to parliament. Thus, the threat of immediate mass immiseration among refugees from 8 January onwards was to be replaced by steadily growing numbers of in-country and rejected claimants, from 5 February onwards.

The government accepts that the regulations will cause destitution and misery among asylum-seekers. But its rationale is deterrence: 'bogus' asylum-seekers will be deterred from coming, from claiming asylum after arrival and, if they claim and are rejected, from appealing. The regulations test for genuine refugees echoes medieval methods for finding witches. Those who leave rather than face destitution are obviously bogus, while those who die of hunger and cold rather than return home might perhaps be recognised, posthumously, as genuine refugees.

Even this is doubtful. Asylum-seekers who currently go on hunger

strike in detention are ignored. So are the growing number who kill themselves rather than be returned home. Thus, in August, a rejected Tamil asylum-seeker killed himself in prison in Norwich. In October, a young Ethiopian whose claim was rejected and who was told to report to the airport walked in to a petrol station in west London, doused himself with petrol and set fire to himself. He died of his burns. Far from causing an outcry which forces the government to confront its cynical opportunism, these deaths have been ignored by the mainstream media.

The provisions are bound to cause more deaths. Growing numbers will be driven to suicide through homelessness, destitution and despair by the new laws. But these will not be the only results. By whipping up indignation and hatred against asylum-seekers while simultaneously kicking them out of the most basic welfare provision, the government is providing racists with both motive and opportunity for yet more murderous attacks.

London

FRANCES WEBBER

References

1. See, eg, *No reason at all: Home Office decisions on asylum claims* (London, Asylum Aid, April 1995); *A betrayal of hope and trust* (London, Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, 1995); *Adding Insult to Injury* (London, Asylum Aid, April 1995).
2. *Beyond Belief: the Home Office and Nigeria* (London, Refugee Council, 1995).

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Book reviews

Framing Blackness: the African American image in film

By ED GUERRERO (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1994), 256pp. £15.50.

In the 1992 US box-office hit film, *Deep Cover*, a powerful white bureaucrat confronts an ambitious black cop with the question: 'What's the difference between a black man and a nigger?' It's a tricky question and it is the question at the centre of this rangy discussion of black, African American representations in the commercial cinema of the US. The book is argued as though getting an angle on the question in the fictional world of cinema is key to alleviating the predicament of African Americans on the street. It is a kind of treatise on black life in an 'image-information driven society', where Hollywood wields one of the big whips.

In fact, Guerrero argues that the twentieth century is marked by Hollywood's readiness to be used as an agency to strike back at and neutralise the push of the black civil rights and black power movements, specifically in the US – notwithstanding the smattering of multicolour casting and social conscience movies on its list. Broadly speaking, Hollywood cinema has presented blacks as 'infantile, lazy and subservient' in times of white complacency, but as vicious and violent in moments of white anxiety (usually following high points of black social and political militancy, or low points of white male security), with the emphases shifting as these phases cycle and overlap.

Guerrero has produced a very smart 'niche' book here. It discourses on several very popular themes – the movies, cultural imperialism, racism and black outrage. And it does this mixing the 'hip' language of black 'attitude' with that of the academic cultural studies agenda. The

book is full of interesting observations and connections, but it is also a frustrating read. It provides neither a complete survey nor a theoretical frame for the analysis of the use of African American images (and absences) in Hollywood cinema. Nor does it present an entirely convincing close analysis of Hollywood as a cultural tool of racism in the US. And, although it positions itself to give us a full rundown on the new black cinema of the 1990s, it doesn't do that either. It does tamper tantalisingly with all these significant and topical subjects and it is one of the few books addressing them.

We are given a rapid tour of the twentieth-century history of Hollywood's hold over big screen images, with rich illustration of the centrality of the manipulation of blackness in its key narratives – from D.W. Griffiths' *Birth of a Nation* (1915) to Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992). For most of this period, 'the ideological, psychoanalytic and political constructions of race in cinema' have left black people screaming at twisted theatrical projections of themselves, says Guerrero.

The totally dominated and distorted picture began to be adjusted in the 1960s, off the back end of the civil rights and black power struggles. And a 'new black film wave' of the 1990s may signal a radical break with the past. However, Guerrero believes that 'the struggle [of African Americans] to liberate themselves from "devil pictures"' continues to be marked by 'the psychic residue of slavery which subtly taints all black-white social relations and transactions in the USA', including its cultural consumption. It's a hard line and this book would claim to substantiate it.

Cinema was hardly twenty years old in 1915, when Hollywood's very first, feature-length studio production opened to extremely popular white acclaim, and to black opprobrium and horror. It was D.W. Griffiths' explicitly racist *Birth of a Nation*. Twenty-five thousand Klansmen marched in Atlanta to celebrate the film's opening. Since *Birth*, Hollywood has repeatedly reworked Griffiths' stereotypes and signs, only refining its crudities – the loyal mammy, the inept or criminal black male, the forbidden-fruit fever of the black male for the white female, etc., etc.

All of the early landmark, and still cherished, great moments of Hollywood cinema contain insulting, racist representations of blacks and other non-whites and, by the same token, racist elevations of whiteness. In the 1930s, the top box-office films were *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) and *King Kong* (1933)!

The 'classic period' for the silver screen had peaked by 1945 and the close of the second world war saw a turn in Hollywood cinema. Guerrero suggests that the economics and politics of the anti-fascist war in Europe called for new cultural strategies. Hollywood also faced

a scramble for new film audiences as box-office receipts rapidly fell away from their 1945 peak. The studio bosses began to realise that there was more than one kind of audience for film. They eventually came to wooing the citizens of the black inner cities, who were already fast joining the NAACP-initiated drive for black civil rights which climaxed two decades later in the Watts urban rebellion of 1965.

Hollywood cinema had to be reinvigorated. So this period saw the slow demise of the old plantation genre movie, the opening of scope for experimentation in the work of innovative white film makers like Robert Altman, Arthur Penn and Stanley Kubrick. There was a new interest in sci-fi and fantasy and horror movies about invasion and exploration and 'difference'. Guerrero races through references to the rich and complex symbolic field of 'race', 'otherness' and non-white representation in the metaphors and allegories of these cinematic forms. He notes that they opened some space for a counter culture to the products of US 'racist, cinematic psyches', which had been gaining momentum since the 1950s – from *The Boy with Green Hair* (1948) to *ET* (1982) to *Edward Scissorhands* (1991).

But the overwhelming majority of Hollywood's fantasy/horror output has served to rework its sedimented narratives. In the massive hit *Gremlins* (1981), for example, the (not so sub) text is read as an extraordinarily explicit allegory around the fears and concerns of whiteness in regard to otherness and blackness. The Gremlin creatures run the gamut from amusing, cute and entertaining minority other to multiplying like flies, menacing, swamping monster others; and from light-brown, domesticated plaything to wild, loud, intimidating, white-woman-attacking, black-toned menace. The film even includes a reference to Hollywood's own *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), as though to underline its racist allegorical structure.

It took a little while, but the politics of black resistance threw up a new black arts movement, so that, by 1965, 'cultural' blackness, which had become beautiful and loud and proud, began to invade the area of film representation. In the face of a rising tide of black rage and militancy, Hollywood indulged in typical commercial opportunism. First, it gave white America and the *Ebony* black middle class, Sidney Poitier – a neutered black box office star in nine or ten big movies of the '60s. Then, as the decade of urban rebellion climaxed with 384 uprisings in 298 cities in the period 1967/68 and with poor African Americans in the middle of most of them, the studios harnessed some of the talent and some of the mood to make a commercial killing. Partly off the example and success of the fiercely independent black film maker, Melvin Van Peebles, whose most famous film is *Sweet, Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), Hollywood invested in what came to be called the 'Blaxploitation' movie boom.

Between 1969 and 1974, the studios produced more than fifty black

ghetto, action movies. Only a handful of these ever transferred to general release outside the US and its immediate backyard. *Shaft* and *Superfly* (1972) were the most widely distributed. The films aimed to capitalise on the black nationalist impulse of the late 1960s. They were aimed, too, at a black youth market which now boycotted old style screen misrepresentations and demanded more black situations as blacks knew them to be. The irony was that this Hollywood swing to black narratives peopled by violent, drug dealing pimps and gangsters soon threw up a black backlash. Not surprisingly, once over the box office depression panic, Hollywood would again drop black narrative cinema.

The 1970s through the early 1980s saw the capping of explosive rebellion in the US, but the period was marked by continuing political challenge and economic instability. Black cultural nationalism, insurgent gender and sexual activism, anti-war militancy, Watergate scandals, Arab oil cartels, Iranian and Nicaraguan wars, national economic crises, decline of the Carter administration – all called for a hegemonic reassurance.

Guerrero's thesis is that, in this situation, while Reagan's Washington acted on the political stage, Hollywood moved in the cultural arena to regain in the realm of the imaginary what was, in fact, lost in reality. A 'cinema of recuperation' was installed, marked by a two-step strategy: the adoption and elevation of a new, brash, black superstar, Eddie Murphy, embraced into a series of black/white 'buddy, buddy' movies, alongside a splurge of movies featuring assertive, white vigilantism and resurgent imperialism. The very successful Sylvester Stallone *Rocky* cycle (1976/79/82/85/90) and the biggest box office grosser of all time, *Star Wars* (1977), epitomise this cinematic shift.

With the end of Hollywood's 'Blaxploitation' venture came a reversal of black gains which had been made in the mainstream film industry and, related to this, independent black film began to shape up anew.

Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* (1986) and Robert Townsend's *Hollywood Shuffle* (1987) announced a turning point. Both these films were made on 'guerrilla financed' shoestring budgets. Both were extraordinarily successful at the box office, initially with black audiences. Hollywood caught on quick. Lee is credited, particularly after his (1990) *Do the Right Thing* smash hit, with opening up the 1990s scene for the new wave of black cinema. In 1991 alone, twenty black films were produced or picked up for distribution by Hollywood. But here, too, there were contradictions.

The 1990s new black wave has black directors in charge of black subjects but still not controlling the still white commanding financial heights. What Guerrero calls the 'neo-Blaxploitation action, ghetto-centric, gang epic' has emerged as box office friendly, with films like John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), Mario Van Peebles' *New*

Jack City (1991) and Ernest Dickerson's *Juice* (1992). The other '90s success has been the 'black comedy', which simultaneously relaxes white pent-up fears and permits sublimated expressions of black rage. Meanwhile, more serious, socially oriented black feature films, like Charles Burnett's *To Sleep with Anger* (1990), Wendell B. Harris' *Chameleon Street* (1989), Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* (1990), are categorised as 'art house', hesitantly marketed, viewed by more whites than blacks and never make it as box office hits. Black young urban populations have not flocked to these films as to the action and violence features. And thereby hangs a tale.

Guerrero waxes lyrical about Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992) as the outstanding achievement of the new black film wave. With much courage and imagination, Lee managed to complete the film to his design, returning to some of the strategies of his early 'guerrilla financing' days in order to lever an increased budget from his Hollywood backers. His combination of a daring intertextuality (he uses documentary footage of Nelson Mandela and the notorious Rodney King LAPD beating in his film) with Hollywood style and language and his mounting of a strong black narrative with a pan-Africanist message has been spectacularly successful, crossing over to white audiences. But even his example goes only part of the way to challenging Hollywood's hegemony. For Guerrero is still mindful of the fact that cinema, as part of the commodity system, 'supplants acts of political choice and freedom with the great reductive act of postmodern industrial living – the freedom to shop, to consume', even if it is consumption of a 'fantasy'.

London

COLIN PRESCOD

The Gaza Strip: the political economy of de-development

By SARA ROY (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 375pp. \$27.95.

Gaza: Legacy of Occupation – a photographer's journey

By DICK DOUGHTY and MOHAMMED EL AYDI (West Hartford, CT, Kumarian Press, 1995), 202pp. \$15.95.

Sara Roy has written the most important book about the Gaza Strip to appear in the English language. A prodigious accomplishment in research terms, *The Gaza Strip: the political economy of de-development* breaks new ground in every field in which it ventures – history, theory, economic analysis. Never losing sight of the ideological imperatives of Zionism, with its 'land over people' driving force, Dr Roy demolishes Israeli claims to have presided over a 'benign' occupation and raises

far-reaching questions about a 'peace process' in which Israeli policy remains intact.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Sara Roy, with indefatigable and courageous persistence, collected Israeli primary source documentation not available to the public (including the confidential 1986 Gaza Plan, which may still guide aspects of Israeli policy), conducted hundreds of interviews with Palestinians, Israelis, Jordanians, Europeans and Americans, and searched Middle East libraries and research institutes for statistical data and secondary source material. After cautioning the reader about the methodological problems involved in assembling data about a society in which the last official census took place in 1967 and all research since has been subjected to severe political constraints, she pieces together a compelling study of the evolution of the political economy of the Gaza region, from the advent of British rule to the beginnings of Palestinian 'self-rule'.

Under the British Mandate (1917-1948), when the Gaza District encompassed 5,333 square miles (in contrast to the 140 square miles that make up today's Gaza Strip), the agrarian Palestinian economy experienced expansion, but only limited and deformed structural change. The failure of Palestinians to achieve 'real economic development' is rooted in the economic dualism fostered by British policies and intensified by 'the Zionist interest in Arab *land* rather than in Arab *people*'. As the Mandate administration ensured 'a flow of surplus from the Arab peasantry to the emerging Jewish capitalist mode of production', the Jewish and Arab sectors became increasingly segregated from one another. 'One can also argue that the Jewish and Arab sectors did not develop separately,' Roy writes, 'but that the processes that promoted the development of the former created the conditions for the underdevelopment of the latter.'

Development, underdevelopment, undevelopment and finally de-development: Roy uses these unwieldy terms with convincing clarity to describe the economic shifts which occurred after the birth of the State of Israel in 1948, forced the exodus of 55 per cent of the Palestinian population and gave Zionists control of more than 78 per cent of Mandate Palestine. Between 200,000 and 250,000 Palestinians fled from their homes in what became Israel to the Gaza Strip. Severed from its agricultural hinterland, the Gaza Strip was formally created in 1949 and placed under Egyptian control.

'The birth of the Gaza Strip', Roy writes, 'was wrenching and traumatic. A new economic unit was created by factors that were entirely non-economic.' Except for the brief period of the first Israeli occupation from December 1956 to March 1957 which foreshadowed its later policies, the isolated Gaza Strip, which had become almost entirely dependent on employment provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), remained under Egyptian rule

until 1967. On the eve of the 1967 Six Day War, the Gazan economy was fragile and largely devoted to citrus production. Its GNP was only 20 per cent that of the West Bank, and together the combined GNP of the Gaza Strip and West Bank equalled only 2.6 per cent of Israel's.

Dr Roy goes on to make the case that Israel as occupier after the 1967 war sought 'absolute control over land and water, Gaza's critical resources' and totally rejected 'any independent indigenous political or economic movement'. The central argument of the book is worth quoting at length:

Israeli policy in Gaza was not motivated primarily by economic rationality but rather by political ideology. This ideology abhorred the notion of Palestinian sovereignty and rejected any process that might encourage it, especially economic development. Consequently, the government of Israel has pursued a policy of de-development in the Gaza Strip which is predicated on the structural containment of the Palestinian domestic economy and the deliberate and consistent dismemberment of that economy over time. However, although radical structural change of the economy was prohibited, individual prosperity was not. Indeed, limited prosperity was meant to mollify Palestinians politically, whereas the loss of their indigenous infrastructural base was meant to insure their continued dependence on Israel economically and preclude the emergence of any nationalist movement or cultural identity from within the occupied territories. In this way, de-development may be regarded as the economic expression (and continuation) of Israel's ideological and political priorities.

Demonstrating that traditional development theory cannot explain an Israeli-Palestinian relationship based on the dismantling of the peripheral economy, denial of all civil and political rights and suppression of national identity, Roy differentiates Zionism from the usual form of settler colonialism. Motivated by ideology, its overriding mission is not to dominate and exploit the native population for profit, but rather 'to dispossess them of their economic and political resources and physically remove them from the land'. In the powerful second part of her book, she examines the economic domination and political and cultural aggression to which the occupied population is subjected as Israel sets out 'to appease and then fragment Palestinian society ... to render it unviable, and to do so quietly and without notice'.

Permeating the occupation is a 'Kafkaesque violence' which is 'distinguished by its ordinariness, prosaism, and invisibility'. Roy describes how this violence 'defines development and undermines it at the same time' and documents Palestinian forms of resistance which are 'profoundly a matter of survival'. Rather than arrest the processes of de-development, the *intifada* accelerated them, as Israel imposed new

restrictions and punitive measures on the Palestinian economy and workforce. The Gulf War, with its devastating curfew losses and loss of remittances from workers in Gulf countries and aid from Arab nations and the PLO, intensified the economic crisis in the Gaza Strip. In March 1993, when Israel responded to Palestinian violence by ordering 130,000 Palestinian workers to be barred indefinitely from their jobs in Israel and prevented residents and goods from moving from one part of the occupied territories to another, the economic dismemberment of the Gaza Strip was virtually complete.

Will the Gaza-Jericho Agreement enable Palestinians to reverse the dynamic of de-development? Roy sees little hope for this in an accord which allows Israel to keep control over Gaza's key economic resources (including land and water) and decision-making. However, if the economic fundamentals of occupation are to be changed, they must first be seen for what they are. Sara Roy has brilliantly illuminated the lie of the land and, in doing so, made a substantial contribution to the cause, however long-term, of Palestinian liberation.

What impact do Israeli policies have on the lives of the people who must endure them? *Gaza: Legacy of Occupation – a photographer's journey* complements Roy's volume by bringing the human dimension to the fore. Setting out to chronicle 'the life that is called ordinary', American photo-journalist Dick Doughty and his 'host, guide, cultural consultant, and, more than anything, unflagging and buoyant friend', Mohammed El Aydi, who worked at the UN Social Welfare Office in Rafah, have created a haunting portrait of the resilience of the human spirit. Giving us a way of seeing beyond the media images of Gazan violence, Doughty and El Aydi convey the fortitude, courtesy and aspirations of a people who have been treated as less than human during nearly three decades of Israeli occupation.

Dick Doughty came to the Gaza Strip to take pictures of the refugee camp straddling the Egyptian-Gaza Strip border known as 'Canada Camp'. Its inhabitants were driven from eight refugee camps in Gaza in 1970 when then Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon ordered their houses razed so that a new system of roads could be built for military manoeuvres.

At the time, Canada Camp was entirely on land occupied by Israel. But in 1982, when Israel gave Sinai back to Egypt, part of it was on Egyptian territory and Israel refused to allow more than thirty-five families from among its 5,000 residents back into the Gaza Strip each year. The rest were stranded in 'Canada Camp Egypt', separated from their friends and relatives in 'Canada Camp Palestine' in Rafah by a 300-yard-wide no man's land. From 1982 until the present, families have been forced to communicate with each other by yelling across the trenches and razor wire.

The few families repatriated each year come home not just to an

occupation, but to economic prostration and 'an underlying political scene as Byzantine and volatile as that of any oppressed nation where political discourse has been forced underground'. In the words of one of the repatriated:

We've come, like, from a kind of freedom to a prison. All the young men suffer. Someday we might have to build an insane asylum here just for the *shabab* [young men]! You can't go anywhere, there's curfew every other day, Erez is closed so you can't work in Israel, you don't ever feel safe anywhere, so what do we do? We are constantly afraid of being arrested or beaten or exposed to shooting. Constantly.

The prison that was – and still is – the Gaza Strip soon becomes the main focus of this book. It vividly evokes the all-pervasive stress of life under occupation: the fear induced by daily confrontations with the military, the intense claustrophobia of being under curfew every evening and often for days at a time, awaiting another night raid by soldiers, while anti-tank missiles and explosives reduce homes to rubble and the death count mounts.

Doughty was in Gaza shortly after Israel's expulsion of 415 alleged Islamic militants to another no-man's land in Lebanon in December 1992. During the month and a half that followed the mass expulsion, twenty-seven Gazans were killed by the military and nearly 2,000 injured. Chafing against curfews, sometimes becoming 'intolerably angry', always exhausted, he is frank about his own failure to endure the pressure cooker conditions with equanimity and his frequent need to retreat to Jerusalem as a 'refuge from the Strip's abuse of mind, heart and body. I had scarcely guessed ... how fear can dig in so and consume every moment, how it can demoralise so quickly and completely. The word "occupation" no longer calls up the right images: *halat harb*, "state of war", is more accurate.'

Towards the end of Doughty's stay, the indefinite March 1993 closure sealed Gazan workers off from their jobs in Israel. Under the closure, in Sara Roy's words, 'production gave way to survival; unity to fragmentation. Malnourishment, unemployment and violence became part of daily life.' Doughty feels its effects deeply. 'I try to fend off a wave of despair,' he writes. 'When I think of Gaza's future, images of Native American reservations fill my head. Closure only seems to make this image more palpable still, even pragmatic.'

Doughty finds little has changed six months after the handshake on the White House lawn, when he visits the Gaza Strip again in March 1994. Over a hundred Gazans had been killed by the Israeli army and more than six thousand injured since he left the previous April. Unemployment was still above 50 per cent, with the employed working only part time.

A year later, he telephones Mohammed el Aydi to find out if life without curfews and fear of night raids has made a fundamental difference to people's lives. 'You know,' he is told, 'the feeling is not so different as you might expect. It is like now, the economic situation has taken over ... Expectations were raised high, and what we see is the opposite.'

Gaza: Legacy of Occupation brings us back to Sara Roy's conclusion. The Oslo accord has not disrupted the political economy of occupation. Twenty-four-year-old Nisreen, who lives in Rafah, sees this clearly. 'The agreement was like a dream at first ... But now the child has died before being born, or if it is born, it will be a cripple ... Israel will limit and define the economy, like always. It will be done to make us forget the *intifada*, to make us work only for money, to make us forget all those who died for us. Occupation is not just soldiers in streets.'

Boston

NANCY MURRAY

Encounters with Nationalism

By ERNEST GELLNER (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995), 208pp. £10.99.

Participation in common cultural forms and membership of communities that are self-governing or at least autonomous in their own affairs are vital elements in human advancement for the vast majority. No people can solely depend on the dignity and self-esteem afforded by individual rights. It is also necessary to end the oppression of particular cultural traditions, for this alone would bestow a sense of honour and dignity on specific peoples. In other words, dignity and self-esteem depend not only on the enjoyment of negative liberties but also on distinctive values and ways of life being embodied in the social and political institutions to which people are subject. It becomes difficult for a minority group to recognise itself in the negative liberties that are enjoyed with all other citizens. The cultural group has to view its identity in the institutions and forms recognisable to it.

Common cultural forms are important as they reflect and help individuals to seek their identities. A type of pluralism underpins the formation of these identities. Cultural identity cannot be evolved in isolation. Dialectical participation in common cultural forms is the essentiality of multiculturalism. Individual well-being is bound up with this interaction and dialogue. Why do people then feel loyalty to their nation, as well as to their family, region, class and religion? Why is there an inherent urge to develop a specific and particular identity in nationalism. When is a healthy sense of national identity transformed into a virulent nationalism?

Such crucial and contentious questions are analysed in Gellner's *Encounters with Nationalism*, where he tries to tackle some of the major issues concerning national identity which continues to be the dominant aspiration of all peoples. Ten years ago, everyone wanted to study marxism, and now it is nationalism. The London School of Economics has begun an MSc in nationalism and the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN) has launched a journal called *Nations and Nationalism*. This, along with the recent publications on this subject, indicate that the study of nationalism has begun to flourish and receive wide academic recognition. Given the explosion of ethno-nationalist sentiment and activity everywhere, the need for intensive study based on comparative analysis has become pressing. Gellner's range is wide, covering the ideas of some modern thinkers from Marx, Malinowski and Carr to Heidegger, Hroch, Havel and Said. He examines eastern, western and Islamic societies and includes extensive discussion of the related themes of civil society, theocracy, communism, imperialism and capitalism. The fashion for linguistic philosophy, study of religious beliefs in the Atlas Mountains, kinship, civil society, the development of Russian anthropology, and the intellectual life of central Europe are some of the areas of Gellner's interest in this book of essays written over the years. They are full of original ideas and arguments which reach out beyond the confines of the immediate debate, throwing up subjects that still need to be explored.

Provocative essays on the problem of dissidence in the former Soviet Union and on Havel's indifference to the role of the former communist party after he came to power form a part of this book. But a substantial portion of it also concerns the question of nationalism, an elaboration of the theme in his earlier book, *Nations and Nationalism*. He is of the view that when agrarian societies evolve into industrial societies, the basic social and economic structures which underpin them undergo an inevitable change. The world of the peasant is more local than national and operates through marked distinctions in dress, language and accent, depending on the locality and the class that the group belongs to. But, as soon as you move into the realm of an industrialised society, there arises the need to introduce a uniformity of skills which is possible only if a national language subsumes all the regional dialects and thereby becomes the standard medium of communication. This has happened in England, in Germany and in France, ultimately resulting in a nationalist aspiration which strives for the yoking together of political identity and national culture. Gellner's theory is relevant to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as well as to the British or French obsession with the purity of their language and national 'high' culture in the face of an onslaught of alien cultures.

But this thesis has one major problem. As the industrial 'high' culture now does not differ much in Brazil or in Italy, will the

proletariats of the world finally unite, their mental equipment being so similar? Why should such a phenomenon be accompanied by the rise of nationalism which works in the opposite direction? The answer might lie in the ethnic distinctions which can never be ignored when defining 'high cultures'. Another argument for the phenomenon of nationalism could be the throwing up of trade barriers to protect national interests from the overwhelming economic strategies of the industrially advanced countries. Gellner is opposed to Elie Kedourie's view that nationalism is a concept in the history of ideas and instead links it to the social and economic crises of modernisation. Rival explanations of nationalism are not overlooked by Gellner, however, and it is for this reason that this volume becomes all the more compelling.

For Gellner, the new role of culture in industrial societies is paramount in the formation of nationalism: the peasant has to learn the new language of the nation state and surrender provincial customs and taboos. This is the peasant's new role and he or she can fully come to grips with it only by realising that the nation is the basis of their identity and history. Concentrating on rhetoric and folklore is not enough for grasping this reality. Here there are many historical facts that contradict Gellner's thesis. For instance, the Germans were conscious of their nationalism before they had woken up to a world of factories. But, to my mind, Kedourie is wrong in suggesting that industrial nations like Britain or the US had no concern with any nationalist movement: the national heritage, the obsession with the Shakespeare industry, the Anglo-Saxon support for canonical studies, a national language and a national education system, all go to prove that nationalism is at the heart of British politics and is not ignored especially in an era of multiculturalism and the unifying aims of the politics of the European Union.

Many questions remain unresolved: political historians, historians of ideas and anthropologists have to combine their views to create new explanations of the phenomenon of nationalism. How does one agree partially to surrender one's sovereignty for economic gain, when the nation-state is all that can give us some protection from the neo-imperialism of international capitalism? Loyalty to one's nation or race, on the one hand, and economic compromises, on the other, will certainly clash, a fact evident from the recent history of the closing years of the twentieth century.

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SHELLEY WALIA

The Rape of Paradise: Columbus and the birth of racism in the Americas

By JAN CAREW (New York, A&B Publishers, 1994). 290pp.

The Search for Africa: a history in the making

By BASIL DAVIDSON (London, James Currey, 1994. 373pp. £11.95.

The Rape of Paradise is history written by a poet. Throughout these interconnected tales, Carew is the village poet/storyteller. As the keeper of the people's history, he sings to all who will listen of the lands that gave them life, dignity and hope. With artful simplicity, his word pictures resurrect the spirits of the land's ancestors and disinter their terrible violation and destruction. For this poet, all times are the present: the darkness spread in the name of God and gold possesses the Third World now and must be resisted in the names of the ancestors and for the sake of future civilisation.

Paradoxically, Carew's spirit guide for this descent through hell is the figure of Columbus. In recounting 'the rape of paradise', the poet's song invokes the Genoan's shade to bear witness to the sacrifice of countless ancestors and innumerable futures on the altar of awful gods. It is through the story of Columbus that Carew gives human shape to the darkness visited upon Africa and the Americas as the light of Europe cast its shadow over them.

Davidson shares this same mission of telling the story of the past to humanise the present and change the future. Like Carew, Davidson's search for the past has had a profound impact on his history, but, unlike Carew, he has had to journey far to find his home. As a result, his voice is less that of the 'grounded and rooted' teller of tales and more that of the itinerant scribe moving towards his heart's desire. Throughout the essays, Davidson makes it clear that he has been possessed by the discovery of joy and the joy of discovery in his search for Africa. This quest has allowed him to become a humble student, seeking knowledge and insight at the feet of Africa's people, both living and dead.

For Davidson, this creative and vibrant darkness has given the world so much in the past and offers hope for the future through the efforts of Africa's peoples to reinvent themselves according to the best of their own traditions in the face of overwhelming odds. His companion on this dark path into enlightenment is the spirit of Cabral. Here Cabral represents a distillation of the hope, morality and realism that characterises the best of Africa, a spirit that infused and guided Davidson's work even before he could give it a name.

On their respective journeys across time and space, both Carew and Davidson map out similar terrain. Their work challenges, in both intent and content, the complicity of intellectuals in the subjugation of

historical fact to political considerations, especially the 'neo-creationists' who argue that the history of the world sprang from the loins of Europe in the late fifteenth century. Their riposte to this thrust exposes the 'rational' barbarity of the Europeans, the horrors attendant on 'discovery' in Africa and the Americas, and the Dark Ages which preceded and succeeded them. Here, capitalist 'civilisation' is compared with the 'cultured' lifestyles of, for example, the Tainos and the Moors.

Carew and Davidson also highlight both the necessity to rescue the 'pre-capitalist' values of such cultures and their contribution to the development of civilisation in the modern world. In this, both writers present Columbus as the prism through which the powers of his age focused their arrogance, greed and violence with lethal consequences down the centuries. But where, for Carew, the very ground upon which he sits cries out against its violation, for Davidson, the continuing history of Africa holds the key to the future of the world.

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PAUL GRANT

School of the World: writings from Earl Marshal School, Sheffield

By STUDENTS OF EARL MARSHAL SCHOOL (Sheffield, Earl Marshal School, 1994). 128pp.

This is the latest of several anthologies of narrative and verse compiled in recent years from the work of students at Earl Marshal School in Sheffield. Earl Marshal is a comprehensive school serving culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse communities of students whose first languages range across Punjabi, Arabic, Yemeni, Somali, Bengali and diverse varieties of English from the Caribbean and South Yorkshire. Previous anthologies from the school, including *Valley of Words* and *Lives of Love and Hope: a Sheffield herstory*, have been esteemed in Britain and around the world by readers who favour approaches to literacy which go beyond merely ensuring mastery of 'basics' and aim, instead, to promote social critical forms of engagement with texts. This latest collection will be welcomed as warmly as its predecessors.

At Earl Marshal, learning is guided by the ideal of developing and nurturing informed and active global citizens – 'authentic internationalists who have lived in and moved beyond many nations, seas, languages and cultures' – imbued with practical ethical and political commitment to social justice and the right to dignity for all human beings. Affirming the school's motto that 'none but ourselves can free our minds', the works of these student poets and narrators likewise attest to a powerful philosophy of literacy, long espoused and promoted by Earl Marshal's then headteacher, Chris Searle. Since the 1970s, Searle has maintained consistently that working-class children

should learn to read and write, spell and punctuate, and develop the word as a tool in struggles – their own, and those of people like them, wherever they may live – for improvement and liberation. At Earl Marshal, this ideal encompasses explicit engagement with themes of race-cultural, linguistic, gender and religious oppression within a truly internationalist perspective.

At a time when opponents of progressive education line up to announce rampant illiteracy as the number one growth industry of our schools, technicist ‘quick fixes’, admixed with good square doses of ‘the basics’ and bolstered by mandatory testing at regular age intervals, are the order of the day for all – including, especially, students who encounter Standard English as a second, third or even more distantly removed language. *School of the World* proves the case, beyond reasonable doubt, that far richer and more effective approaches to language and literacy learning are available for challenging the widely publicised patterns of ‘educational disadvantage’ and ‘endemic underachievement’ among working class/ESL-EFL/migrant students.

Readers will be twice blessed by this delightfully produced collection of narrative and verse. First, by the beauty, power, literary excellence and thematic elegance of the works themselves. These are high quality achievements by any academic, scholarly or aesthetic criteria we choose to employ. And second, by the joy of sampling the fruits of a critical social literacy won through hard work, inspired pedagogy and the unshakeable belief that grounding education in genuinely progressive principles and practices is the surest way to promote the skills, understandings, knowledges and dispositions required on the part of future citizens living in multicultural democracies.

The anthology is neatly organised around four themes: ‘School’ (*our* school, learning, knowledge, the roles of teacher and learner, academic striving); ‘of the World’ (Mandela’s dream, free elections in South Africa, racism at home and abroad, colonial and neo-colonial exploitation, the possibilities and hopes of redress, of reconciliation, of justice achieved); ‘Journeys’ (the experience of arriving in England from Yemen, Yemen from England, visiting Pakistan, imagining the village where my mother was born, ‘Mecca, Medina and our Haj’, Jamaica Dream, Roots, Our Welsh Journey); and ‘Poems for Quddus’ (a series of poems written in response to the racist attack which left Quddus Ali, a Bangladeshi youth living in east London, three months in a coma).

These are emphatically *not* the products of any self-professed ‘neutral’ education. Rather, they are responses to a pedagogy which wilfully harnesses the task of learning to be literate in English to the larger ends of practising in deeds as well as words the moral and civic art of living justly and democratically. Yet these students speak with their own voices. Not for them the role of passive dupes of manipulating

pedagogues. They speak as already-citizens who bring their distinctive voices and perspectives to perennial human concerns: the most pressing concerns of our condition. Witness, for example, the response on page 11 to the question, What does it mean to know?, the poetic majesty of 'The Undiscovered Land', or the 'phenomenology' of 'Teacher' – among the many treasures assembled here.

In the end, this is a book to be used with students, as well as to inspire us and to bring us pleasure. It extends an invitation to enter others' worlds and see our world through others' eyes. It calls us to imaginative empathy and to purposeful creative practice. *School of the World* will call students to dialogue and provoke emulation. It is exemplary.

Brisbane

COLIN LANKSHEAR

Blacks and Reds: race and class in conflict 1919-1990

By EARL OFARI HUTCHINSON (East Lansing, Michigan State University, 1995). 338pp. \$27.95.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson has written a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on the relationship between the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) and the African American people. This book is important because it surveys the entire period, beginning with the founding of two rival Communist Parties in 1919, neither of which had a black member, to the eve of the acrimonious demise of a tiny group with minimal influence more than seven decades later. The interim years witnessed periods both of genuine influence – in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and in the organisation of the unemployed – and isolation, following the 1939 Soviet non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany and at the height of the McCarthy period. Hutchinson charts the tortuous history of the party's attempt to grapple with the dialectics of race and class while pursuing the allegiance of African Americans.

This study is not marred by the obsessive anti-communism found in Wilson Record's pioneering *Race and Radicalism* and *The Negro and the Communist Party*. Nor is it limited by focusing on individuals as do important autobiographical and biographical works by Harry Haywood, Hosea Hudson and Nell Irvin Painter, and Gerald Horne. Hutchinson also uses a broader geographical canvas than path-breaking books by Robin D.G. Kelly and Mark Naison, which deal with the Communist Party in Alabama and Harlem, respectively, in more limited time-frames.

The author asks the question, 'Were the communists friends or enemies of African Americans?' His pursuit of an answer leads him to

examine both the changing theoretical constructs expounded by the self-proclaimed proletariat vanguard party to analyse what later came to be called the 'national question' and its activities and practice with African Americans. This enables the reader to follow the CPUSA historical trajectory in relation to African Americans. Ironically, differing approaches to the African American question were central to its recent implosion.

The entrance of the first blacks into the party in 1921, the size and influence of the Garvey movement and pressure from the Communist International (Comintern) stimulated significant changes in the CPUSA orientation towards black Americans. There was a recognition by 1922 that African Americans were 'exploited and oppressed more ruthlessly' than whites. This was a marked improvement over the 1920 pronouncement of John Reed, the author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*. He argued at the Second Congress of the Comintern, 'the only proper policy for the American Communist to follow is to consider the Negro first as a laborer' and cautioned that blacks were only important as part of 'a strong proletariat labor movement'.

By the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928, the position had evolved to a recognition that African Americans constituted a nation (as defined by Stalin in a 1913 pamphlet) in the black belt of the southern US with the right to self-determination. It was further modified by a 1930 Comintern resolution.

Although the impetus for the policy change clearly came from the Soviet Communist Party, it had non-marxist historical antecedents in the US going back to the nineteenth century. Martin R. Delaney, an abolitionist, journalist, novelist and 'father of black nationalism', called African Americans 'a nation within a nation'. A prominent journalist and early African American communist, Cyril Briggs, had called for an independent homeland for blacks in the western United States several years before joining the CPUSA. However, this was unknown to the commission that formulated the new policy in Moscow.

The onset of the depression, signalled by the 1929 stock market crash, and the new theoretical orientation opened up unprecedented opportunities for the CPUSA in black communities in the north and south. It rose to the challenge. The party gained African American members and a reputation as the 'Party of the Negro People' in the decade that followed.

James W. Ford, a prominent African American communist, ran for vice-president three times, in 1932, 1936 and 1940, on the CPUSA ticket. The party spearheaded the formation of the National Negro Congress, an important united front, and led broad, successful struggles, with international support, to save the lives of the Scottsboro Boys and free communist class prisoner Angelo Herndon. The CPUSA also became a major force in the cultural life of the African American

community. Prominent writers like Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Margaret Walker and Ralph Ellison were in the orbit of the party. Communists also promoted black music in their newspapers and journals and sponsored concerts.

Nevertheless, conflicts also arose. The CPUSA had strongly supported the 'Hands off Ethiopia' campaign, which gained widespread black support, following the Italian invasion of the independent African country in 1933. Then, black communists were put in an untenable position when information about Soviet oil sales to Italy at below the market price was published in the *New York Times*. The revelation caused an African American CPUSA leader, Herman Mackawaine, to resign his post, but this was not his only concern. He also 'accused the Party leadership of discouraging independent black organising, failing to promote black leadership, and ruthlessly suppressing all internal dissent'. Similar issues were raised more than fifty years later as the CPUSA was breaking up.

The CPUSA remained a force in the African American community into the 1940s, despite rancorous disputes with mainstream civil rights organisations and leaders like A. Phillip Randolph, a prominent trade unionist. An avowed communist, Benjamin J. Davis Jr, an attorney and son of a prominent black Republican, won a New York City council seat in 1943 with broad support, including Congressman and Baptist minister Adam Clayton Powell, who previously held the seat. However, the CPUSA opposition to the 'Double V Campaign', promoted by the influential *Pittsburgh Courier* – victory in the US against racial discrimination at home and fascism abroad – earned it caustic criticism.

Black CPUSA membership fell to its lowest level in ten years following the second world war. There were fewer than 2,000 black members in 1946. Eleven party leaders, including two African Americans, Ben Davis and Henry Winston, were indicted in 1948 for advocating the violent overthrow of the government. This did not augur well for the 1950s. The situation was compounded by the onset of cold war repression and the perception among many blacks that the CPUSA had neglected civil rights concerns during the war. An ill-advised, divisive four-year campaign against white chauvinism inside the CPUSA further reduced its ranks.

Despite the steady decline of the CPUSA, the party-initiated Civil Rights Congress led important civil rights struggles and embarrassed the US government by charging it with genocide against blacks, in a detailed petition to the United Nations. It was defunct by 1954, the year the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in public schools, generally considered as a turning point in the struggle for black rights. The CPUSA played a negligible role in the mass civil rights movement heralded by the Montgomery Bus Boycott and led by the Revd Martin Luther King Jr.

Communists failed to give leadership to the radical Black Power movement, which developed in the second half of the 1960s out of the civil rights movement. Even when marxist ideology began to make inroads in the black community, heretical marxists like James Boggs, an ex-trotskyist, exerted more influence than the CPUSA theorists. A short relation with the Black Panther Party in the early 1970s ended in mutual recrimination.

The single major CPUSA intervention in the black community developed around the successful campaign to free Angela Davis, an African American communist university lecturer. She was linked to guns used in an attempted prison escape. African Americans of all classes rallied around this articulate, educated and radical black woman. However, it soon became clear that she was supported because of her race, and despite her politics. Tension increased in the CPUSA, because some white members were accused of not supporting the campaign.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson has written an important first chapter in the unfinished quest to understand what lessons can be drawn from the history of the CPUSA to African Americans. He has clearly shown that an adherence to marxism does not confer immunity to racism, as the histories of communist parties in countries with colonies clearly show. Other contributions will undoubtedly follow that further deepen our understanding of an attempt to apply marxism to US race relations. Yet, although there will be some who wish to throw the baby, marxism, out with the bath water (the moribund, tiny CPUSA), marxism continues to inform the analysis of a number of prominent African American intellectuals.

MALIK M. CHAKA

Fenianism in Mid-Victorian Britain

By JOHN NEWSINGER (London, Pluto Press, 1994). 102pp. £6.95.

We are all familiar with the word 'Fenian' as a general term of abuse from the mouths of Ian Paisley and his ilk. Those more acquainted with Irish politics will know that all shades of nationalist opinion in northern and southern Ireland claim some lineage from these nineteenth-century revolutionaries. More specialist students of history will be aware that 'Fenianism' is the subject of a right-wing historical reinterpretation which draws on both new research and an old establishment habit of belittling plebeian rebellion. Re-examination of the history of Fenianism is no mere academic exercise, for both the academic interpretation itself and the movement's historical legacy are caught up in the vortex of Irish, and therefore British and US, politics.

John Newsinger had first to survey the actual battles the Fenians fought before himself joining the battle over what it all means today. His first four chapters provide a summary, yet readable and fairly detailed, account of the origins and vagaries of the Fenian movement. There is much that is surprising, even to those with some familiarity with Irish history: John Mitchell, Young Irelander and part of the pantheon of Irish republicanism, was an ardent supporter of black slavery; the official hostility of the Catholic church to the Fenians was far from universal among the clergy and certainly not reciprocated by the majority of the Fenian leadership; the English labour movement, usually thought to have had but two strands, one hostile, the other indifferent, to the Fenians, is shown to have also contained a significant sympathetic section.

The Fenian movement was one of the most long-lived of the revolutionary movements in nineteenth-century Europe. The origins of the Fenians can be traced to the rebellion of 1848, itself prompted by the Great Famine of the late 1840s. The movement's core organising body, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), was not founded until 1858, but survived until 1924, by which time the IRB was split by the civil war into Free-Staters and anti-treaty IRA supporters. In the course of its long life, the IRB organised a mass armed rebellion in the 1860s (which included mutineers in the British army); infiltrated and influenced the various struggles over land and home rule from the 1870s onwards; prepared the 1916 Easter rising, and, latterly, influenced the war of independence and the acceptance of the 1921 Treaty with Britain.

For republicans right or left, the first problem posed by Fenianism is the failure of that major rebellion of 1867, so long prepared for. Historically, as Newsinger argues, the Fenian leadership of the day let the moment pass. In late 1865 or early 1866, rebellion had much to recommend it: the ending of the American civil war had released experienced soldiers of Irish origin and Fenian sympathies, and the network of potential Fenian mutineers inside the British army was solid, extensive and, as yet, undiscovered by the British authorities. But the leadership faltered and, by the time an uprising was attempted in March 1867, the situation had altered radically: such actions as were finally attempted were easily put down. Showing how, despite the failure, this attempt was crucial in 'the keeping alive of the spirit of Irish nationality and of revolutionary separatist tradition' has been an important part of republican historical interpretation. Newsinger is sympathetic to such claims and gives due recognition to the crucial role the Fenian uprising and subsequent actions had in shaping both republican ideology and Irish history. But coupled with this is often an exaggeration of an unbroken republicanism, embodied in the maintenance of the IRB as an organisation, and here Newsinger parts company with the traditional nationalist interpretation. For one thing,

the social composition of the Fenian movement changed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century from being predominantly urban and working class to being more rural and middle class. As many observers have commented, what made the original Fenian movement socially radical was its class composition and its mass base, not its formal programme. The change in its social orientation and diminution in size came with the rise of the land rights and home rule agitation and resulted in the IRB following, rather than leading, the new mass organisations and parties, and being marginalised. The revolutionary rebirth of the IRB in the run-up to the first world war saw yet another change of character for the IRB, though it did not fundamentally alter its middle-class orientation, despite the brief alliance with the socialist working-class Irish Citizens Army in 1916.

But of far greater importance in any reassessment of the Fenian movement today has been the threat from the modern revisionist historians, some of whose work has served to 'diminish Fenianism as a revolutionary movement and instead portray it as a social activity, as a leisure pursuit.' By implication, Ireland and Irish politics are offered the endorsement of a moderate evolutionary development. Here, Newsinger sees the work of R.V. Comerford as crucial. For example, in terms more reminiscent of sociological or psychological modelling than political history, Comerford has sought to dismiss Fenianism as, in his own phrase, 'tens of thousands of young Irishmen in search of self-realisation through appropriate social outlets'.

At a time when Ireland appears to be on the eve of major change, to attempt to reduce its tradition of political rebellion to a sociology of youth culture is, as Newsinger shows, itself a political matter.

London

DANNY REILLY

Last Served? Gendering the HIV pandemic

By CINDY PATTON (London, Taylor and Francis, 1994). 163pp.

Despite the initial history of the AIDS/HIV pandemic, there is no reason why so much of the research, educational outreach and activism surrounding it should have concentrated almost uniquely on men. And yet, until 1990, there was no consolidated research on women's clinical progress. Only in 1993 did US Centres for Disease Control change the definition of AIDS and expand the list of HIV-related illnesses to include gynaecological abnormalities and cancers affecting women. Likewise, the gay male community has been instrumental in organising 'safe sex' campaigns. Lesbians, thinking they weren't concerned because so little is known about the transmission of the disease as a direct result of lesbian sex, have engaged far less in such campaigns.

Based on examples such as these, Cindy Patton argues that women have been invisible in discussions of the global pandemic. Time and again, the media and policy makers either blame the 'deviant' behaviour of certain groups of women (prostitutes, drug dealers) for the spread of the disease or represent women as passive recipients ('innocent' sexual objects for 'guilty' bisexual men) or passive transmitters of the virus (child bearers). This opposition is often articulated around racial and class lines: women of colour are blamed for their 'excessive' sexuality, while white, middle-class women are deemed victims. Because there is no really shared, common identity for women as a whole, Patton does not argue that the solution to women's invisibility is their new-found visibility. For her, it is not enough to reintroduce 'woman' as a concept into theoretical and analytical discussions without examining how identities and groups such as 'woman' are determined by both global geopolitics and local politics.

As far as 'innocent victims' are concerned, the case of female partners of haemophiliacs is revealing. After the initial shock, the predominantly male haemophiliac community in the US responded to the needs of partners and children. It nevertheless underestimated the extra psychological and social strain on women of providing care despite their own illness; of changing their sexual relations as a preventive measure; of postponing childbearing decisions, and of deciding what to tell children who were already HIV-infected. As they struggled against AIDS/HIV, these women were in many ways oppressed by traditional western family values which placed the burden of attending to the family on them. Because of their espousal of these very values, however, they could not create alternative communities and alliances with other oppositional groups. The experience of the female partners of haemophiliacs in the US attests to the double bind in which many women all over the world find themselves.

A key insight of this book is its insistence on the relationship between social patterns and migration as they pertain to health and gender issues. Criticising research on prostitution, for instance, Patton argues that it is not sufficient to replace this term with the more neutral 'sex worker'. Instead, it is far more necessary to explore how capitalist accounting, contingent on a split between domestic and public labour, either ignores bartering sex – like other domestic services – or defines it as a strictly commercial exchange when it often has other overtones. In Southern Africa, for example, because of cyclical patterns of migration to urban centres, many women and men who revert to sexual bartering do so as a transient and cyclical activity, often alongside other sexual and economic relations. Women who live near mining camps providing food and laundry services may also trade sex with their clients. AIDS/HIV awareness and prevention programmes which address only the 'sex worker' ignore this very significant group of people.

Many of the problems that Patton explores in the context of the AIDS/HIV pandemic are similar to those in other global programmes on women's health, namely poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and inadequate access to family planning services. Moreover, as in the case of AIDS/HIV policies, government programmes which address the social, physical and mental health of women often do so only in terms of future mothers. Unlike Patton, such programmes do not necessarily have women's autonomy and equality in mind.

In her chapter on women's global health programmes and on planning for women around the world, however, Patton's commitment translates less successfully. These chapters read very much like a checklist for policy implementation. Because of her experience as an AIDS/HIV activist in the US, she depends on the experience of oppositional communities there, whereas concrete accounts of local experience and organising in Third World countries have disappeared. These accounts need to be documented and circulated. With the increasing attack on social services all over the world, such organising and networks may soon be the only answer.

Geneva

SABA BAHAR

Beyond Black and White: transforming African-American politics

By MANNING MARABLE (London and New York, Verso, 1995).
236pp. £18.95/\$24.95.

The contemporary racial and urban crises in the United States are the consequences of interconnected political and economic forces which are fundamentally racialised. The ability of the transnational corporations to gain a free hand to cheapen labour in the United States, or to dispense with US labour altogether, has required the cooperation of the US state in both the domestic and foreign policy arenas. The Reagan and Bush administrations – like the Thatcher and Major administrations in Britain – undermined and dismantled large parts of the post-war Keynesian accommodation by cutting the already inadequate social wage, by attacking working class organisations and creating an ideological and legal environment in which corporations could both prevent and abolish unionisation. It is significant that the election of a Democrat, Bill Clinton, has led to little change in these processes or to the anti-inner-city policies of his Republican predecessors.

The racial component of the crisis is as stark in 1996 as it was at the end of the Reagan and Bush years. The disproportionate levels of poverty, unemployment, infant mortality and maternal mortality among African Americans continue to be a characteristic of American society. The even more disproportionate imprisonment of African Americans –

with 32 per cent of young African American males in the maw of the criminal justice system on any given day (a greater proportion than those in higher education) and with the rate of imprisonment of African American women increasing at a higher rate than that of any other demographic group – is a further indication of and consequence of the racial component of the crisis.

Manning Marable has been involved for over a quarter of a century in the struggle for social justice in the United States, both as activist and scholar. His academic publications have been among the most important sources for analysing the symbiosis between racism and class inequality in the United States, and his syndicated newspaper columns and radio broadcasts have reached millions of people, telling it like it is – and so providing them with the everyday ‘weapon of theory’. This collection brings together eighteen of his most recent essays and its main thesis is that “‘race”, as it has been understood within American society, is being rapidly redefined, along with the basic structure of the economy, with profound political consequences for all sectors and classes’.

The essays are divided into three sections: ‘The politics of race and class’; ‘African-American leadership: society, education and political change’, and ‘Beyond black and white’. Marable identifies the central role (historical and contemporaneous) played by ‘whiteness’, which he sees as ‘the very “center” of the dominant criteria for national prestige, decision-making, authority and intellectual leadership’. This has so distorted the humanity of those Americans who accept and embrace such a definition that 60 per cent of such people voted for former KKK Grand Dragon and American Nazi leader, David Duke, when he ran for governor of Louisiana in 1991.

Marable argues that, ‘Since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, in presidential contests the Republican Party operates almost like a white united front, dominated by the most racist, reactionary sectors of corporate and finance capital, and the most backward cultural and religious movements.’ It has been that ‘whiteness’ and its associated stereotyping of African Americans as welfare cheats and criminals which has been central to the ability of capital and its political allies to revoke the Keynesian accommodation. The attack on affirmative action, the dependency culture of the underclass and the criminality of Willie Horton *et al* have ensured the political support or acquiescence of large parts of the white working class in the attack on their living standards and the future of their children.

At the same time, the acceptance of the economic status quo by large parts of the Civil Rights leadership and the emerging African American *middle class* has led to the disabling of the African American community’s struggle for racial justice and, hence, social justice. Marable tellingly critiques the ‘reform from above’ strategy of the liberal

integrationist and argues that 'partial ownership and access to an inherently inequalitarian and racist social order only fosters the illusion of democratic change. Inclusionary reform from above certainly benefited the black middle class via public-policy concessions like affirmative action, but did little to address the deep structural problems of the working class and the poor.'

Marable calls for a radical leap in social imagination as the essential ingredient in the struggle to create a multicultural democratic movement in the US. We must build upon the transformations tradition in black political history, the legacy of W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, Fanny Lou Hamer, and move from racialised discourse and analysis to a critique of inequality which has the 'capacity and potential to speak to the majority of American people'.

University of Manchester

LOUIS KUSHNICK

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