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# SOCIALIST IDEAS IN AFRICA

*by*

*Idris Cox*

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1966

LAWRENCE & WISHART

LONDON

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To the freedom fighters of Africa

*Printed in Great Britain by  
Clarke, Doble & Brendon Ltd.  
Cattedown, Plymouth*

## PREFACE

No book on Africa can keep pace with new events. The military coups in Nigeria and Ghana took place when this was already in the hands of the printer. Each of them had its own political pattern, giving prospects of still further changes.

This book is concerned with the root causes of these struggles, and with the new political ideas now being expressed in Africa. It sets out to examine African socialist concepts, and in particular the historical background of the various ideas embraced by the term "African Socialism". As distinct from earlier books on this subject it is the first attempt to do so from a Marxist standpoint. During the past three years several interesting books on "African Socialism" have appeared, as well as scores of articles in various journals in Africa and throughout the world. One of the books is by Lord Brockway, three by African leaders, one by a Catholic Father (an African) in Nigeria, and one is a symposium of views by United States "specialists" on Africa, with copious quotations from speeches at the Dakar "Colloquium" (Senegal) on African Socialism in December, 1962. The United States pours out vast quantities of dollars to its universities for research on African problems and to enable specialists to write on this subject. The State Department is convinced this is money well spent, for Africa now occupies a key position in its world political strategy.

It would be too much to weary the reader with a full list of all the publications consulted in writing this book. A selected list of the most important appears in the Bibliography. But while appreciating the value of the books consulted, I should make it clear that the most positive factor in defining my estimation of African problems has been the close study of

African journals, discussions with many African leaders, and two recent visits to Africa—one to Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, in November-December 1963, and the other to Zanzibar on the occasion of the May Day celebrations in 1964.

I must finally acknowledge a special debt to the trilogy of books on Africa—*Africa, the Roots of Revolt*; *Africa, the Lion Awakes*; *Africa, the Way Ahead*—by my colleague, the British Marxist author Jack Woddis.

IDRIS COX  
London, March 1966

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## INTRODUCTION

Eight years is only a tiny fragment of human history, but since 1957 Africa has witnessed bigger changes than in the previous eighty years. True, this ferment was going on even before. The 1952 national revolution in Egypt marked a new era in the history of that country. However, it was the changes south of the Sahara which stimulated more directly the growth of the African revolution. The spark to the glowing embers was provided by the achievement of Ghana's independence in March 1957.

There are now 36 independent African states. These comprise 84 per cent of the territory of this huge continent, and over 80 per cent of its 300 million population (see Appendix).

Of the British colonies there still remain the white-settler dominated territory of Southern Rhodesia (more properly rechristened Zimbabwe by the Africans), St. Helena, and the three High Commission Territories—Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Basutoland—in southern Africa. There are also the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, San Thôme, Príncipe and Cape Verde islands. Spain still has its colonies of Rio Muni, Spanish Sahara, and Fernando Po, while France still keeps its grip on French Somaliland.

The struggle in these remaining colonies is inseparable from the growing opposition of the independent African states (and indeed whole civilised world) against the apartheid system in South Africa and its domination of south-west Africa. Though constitutionally independent, it represents for the non-white peoples (over 80 per cent of the population) the most ruthless form of colonial rule.

Even in face of these gigantic changes in Africa the fight for political independence is far from being completed. And in these remaining parts of Africa it is likely to be sharper and fiercer than those battles which have already been won. The tragic events in the Congo during the past five years reveal the extent to which foreign imperialism is fighting back desperately to maintain its domination, and even to extend it.

From the moment of Ghana's independence in March, 1957, Dr. Nkrumah never ceased to emphasise that the independence of the separate African states is meaningless unless the whole of Africa becomes free and united. Many African leaders have often accused him of being premature with his proposals for one united government for the whole continent, but Dr. Nkrumah persisted in striving for this aim. Were it not for the persistence of Dr. Nkrumah and other African leaders it would not have been possible to reach the degree of unity already achieved in Africa.

The actual experience of many new African states in fighting to safeguard their independence has served to convince an increasing number of African national leaders of the need for African unity. Every day that passes makes clear that political independence *in itself* is no solution for the problems of the new African states. It is certainly a gigantic step forward, but of no lasting value unless it is used as a weapon to transform the backward economy, break or weaken the economic grip of foreign imperialism, lay the basis for a modern balanced economy, and raise the living standards of the masses.

For Dr. Nkrumah, political independence was only the first step. This was emphasised in his speech at the conference of the African heads of state at Addis Ababa, in May 1963 :

“Our people supported us in our fight for independence because they believe that African governments could cure the ills of the past in a way which could never be accomplished under colonial rule. If, therefore, now that we are independent we allow the same conditions to exist that existed in colonial days, all the resentment that overthrew colonialism will be mobilised against us.”

This is the challenge now confronting every independent African state. In the gigantic task of rooting out the remnants of colonialism, former widespread illusions are being destroyed. The belief that political independence puts an end to imperialist domination is being thrown overboard. The lesson is being learned that imperialism fights to the last to exercise new methods of domination.

Though great economic advances were made in Ghana (with living standards higher than in most African states) many "ills of the past" remained. With the decline in cocoa prices on the world market it became more difficult to finance necessary capital projects, and its foreign reserves rapidly dwindled. In 1965 there was a serious rise in food prices, and this was exploited by those whose aim it was to turn back the clock in Ghana. The military coup was launched, not only in the absence of Dr. Nkrumah but just after the completion of the Volta Dam, which gave Ghana splendid prospects of overcoming some of the most serious obstacles to economic advance.

What the Ghana military coup reveals is that imperialism has become more desperate, and is waging a counter-offensive (also in other parts of Africa) to maintain its former domination. Subtle methods of corruption are combined with open acts of aggression. This is the essence of the strategy of neo-colonialism.

Direct colonial rule is not the only feature of imperialism. It was an essential factor in the growth of the older imperialist powers—Britain, France, Portugal, etc. But it had little or no relevance to U.S. imperialism, which has been able to exercise political domination without direct colonial rule for over half a century.

The real basis of modern imperialism is monopoly capitalism, in which big monopolies dominate the economy and stretch their fingers to all parts of the world. This has been the main feature of capitalism since the end of the nineteenth century, and still remains even after direct colonial rule has been ended in most parts of Asia and Africa.

The advance of the socialist world after the second world war had already seriously undermined the position of imperi-



alism. It paved the way for the victory of national independence in sixty former colonies throughout the world. The combined pressure of the socialist countries and the new independent states, embracing two-thirds of the world's population, has forced imperialism into this desperate position.

At the same time it gives splendid new opportunities for the new independent states to carry forward the struggle against imperialism to a newer and higher stage. The struggle in Africa is against *all* forms of imperialist domination—economic, political, military, and ideological. Externally, it is directed against imperialism and neo-colonialism; internally, against feudalism and reactionary chiefs and other forces of reaction which ally themselves with imperialism.

This new stage of the African revolution is in sharp contrast to the bourgeois revolutions in England, France and Germany in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Its task is not to build capitalism, but to lay the foundations of socialism. It differs also from that of the 1917 Russian socialist revolution and those which took place in other countries which have now built socialism. While the African revolution is likely to benefit from the experiences of these earlier revolutionary struggles, it seems obvious it will also differ from them and take into account the specific historical developments in Africa, the nature of traditional African society, and the new relation of forces in the world today.

For all these reasons many African states have set themselves the aim of achieving socialism, but of doing so without going through the full process of capitalist development. In Marxist circles this process is described as the process of transition of the national revolution to a socialist revolution, leading to the creation of a national democratic state or a state of "national democracy", which is an intermediate stage on the way to socialism. (This is dealt with more fully in Chapter 9.)

This perspective has variously been described as "non-capitalist development" or the "non-capitalist road". It may be interpreted as by-passing *all* forms of capitalist development. But in real life there are no complete stages of social and political development. One merges into the other. Even the

most progressive new states in Africa have some degree of capitalist development, and are unable to by-pass capitalism completely.

The real issue is whether the possibility exists of restricting or shortening the development of capitalism by harnessing the available resources under state ownership and control, extending the co-operative sector of production, and enlarging the public and co-operative sector at the expense of the private sector. This course can be speeded up to the extent that the fullest advantage is taken of the availability of genuine economic aid from the socialist countries—whose only concern is to assist the public and co-operative sector of production.

These new prospects have given birth to a ferment of socialist ideas in Africa. In recent years these have ranged from the concept of a unique brand of "African Socialism", the European concept of "Democratic Socialism", the opportunist trend of "Pragmatic Socialism", the racial trend of "Arab Socialism", and the religious trend of "Muslim Socialism". All these concepts have been the subject of keen discussion and debate in many parts of Africa.

These ideas are now in the melting-pot in the great ideological ferment now at boiling point in Africa. Former advocates of "African Socialism" and "Arab Socialism" are now rapidly moving towards the concept of scientific socialism. Some of them recognise the basic truth of Marxism. The building of a socialist society is now a popular aim in many parts of Africa. True, there are wide divergencies on the real meaning of socialism. Agreement on its basic principles will not be reached simply by discussion, but only to the extent this is related in the crucible of experience to the further struggle against all forms of imperialist domination.

The aim of this book is to examine this new stage which has been reached in Africa, and the roots of the new socialist concepts which have arisen, and to attempt to apply Marxist ideas to the next stage of the struggle.

Marxism is scientific socialism. It is not confined by race or geography. Its principles are universal. But the essence of Marxism is to make a specific analysis of different epochs,

different historical developments, and different relations of class forces. Marxism is as applicable to Africa as it is to any other part of the world.

The new stage in Africa opens out a wide field for further political study. Far be it for me to pretend that I have found solutions for all the problems involved in advancing from this new stage. My only hope is that this small book (written at short intervals between hectic political activity) will stimulate other students of African affairs to engage in this exciting discussion on the future of new Africa.

## NEW CHALLENGE

New stages in history are not easy to define. There have been many stages in Africa's historical development, but those of the past decade are the most decisive. Africa today has little in common with the Africa of a century ago, for the speed of political development in recent years has outstripped the changes of centuries.

The advance of the liberation struggle has changed the political face of the continent. The existence today of 36 new sovereign states has not only transformed the constitutional relations of these countries with their former imperialist masters. It has laid the basis for big changes in their political relations, not only with their former rulers, but with the whole world.

Within the continent there is an infinite variety of historical backgrounds, natural and mineral resources, economic levels, tribes, languages, customs, systems of land tenure, and methods of political rule. What applies to one independent state is by no means true for all the others.

Whatever the variations, what is outstanding is the total effect on the onward march of the African revolution. It has created for Africans a new pride in their past history, undying opposition to all forms of imperialist domination, unbounded confidence in their own ability to make even greater changes, and a determination that Africa must work out its own path of development.

Apart from the 36 new independent states there is the Union of South Africa, which has reached a high stage of economic development, with a comparatively strong monopoly-capitalist

class—though the Afrikaners and the British occupy different key positions in the economy. There is still the white-settler dominated territory of Southern Rhodesia, also with a growing capitalist economy. The ex-Belgian Congo is nominally independent, but is still faced with the strong economic and political domination of foreign imperialism.

Many of the new states were advancing on the path of capitalist development and the growth of an African bourgeoisie long before they achieved political independence. This was more apparent in Egypt, and to a lesser extent in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Tunis, and Nigeria. Both in the new states and in the remaining colonies there are striking contrasts in the level of capitalist development.

Whatever the changes in the level of economic development and the relation of class forces in all these countries, they have one basic feature in common—the African masses are not only opposed to all forms of imperialist domination, they are also opposed to the growth of the capitalist system. Not only “imperialism”, but “capitalism” also, has become “a dirty word”.

This does not mean that capitalism has been unable to find roots in any of these countries. On the contrary, there is an undoubted growth of an African bourgeoisie, but in most countries it is still on a small scale. The peasantry still comprises more than 85 per cent of the African population, the working class more than ten per cent, and the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie about five per cent.

In South Africa there has developed an indigenous system of monopoly capitalism, bolstered up by foreign imperialist monopolies, with the vast African majority being denied elementary democratic rights. Until a decade ago monopoly capitalism was also growing in Egypt. In most other countries the African bourgeoisie is underdeveloped, deriving their wealth from internal trading operations, contracting, and small enterprises. Even before independence there was also a developing African bourgeois intelligentsia, many of whom secured key positions in the national movements; and since independence they have grown into something akin to a “bourgeois élite” within the new states.

In the vast majority of the new states the African bourgeoisie is so small, and to a varying extent so dependent on foreign monopoly firms, that they do not have resources to engage in large-scale capital investment. Nor was it the aim (nor is it now) of the overseas monopoly firms to encourage the growth of an independent balanced economy, either in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Their main aim was (and is) to secure an ever-growing supply of raw materials and primary products to serve the needs of imperialism, and to get strategic military bases.

Even bearing in mind the varying levels of economic development, the outstanding feature for Africa as a whole is the absence of any substantial growth of capitalism. At the same time, economic growth on modern lines is the first necessity for the new independent states. Should this be achieved on the basis of capitalist principles, or is there a different path for Africa? This is now the clear challenge which confronts African leaders in most of the continent.

Even if the deliberate aim of the new African states were to build up a modern capitalist system, their small groups of capitalists do not have the resources to create large-scale modern industry. To transform their backward economies the new states have to embark on state and co-operative enterprises both of which constitute a growing proportion of the economy. True, the total sizes of the whole economy in any African state bears no relation to the vastly greater scope of the economy of a capitalist country, but the significant contrast is not in its total scope, but in the proportion of the state and co-operative enterprises in African countries within the whole economy.

Moreover, the new African states bear a totally different relation to the historical position of those countries which embarked upon capitalist development between the 16th and 19th centuries. The growth of capitalism in Europe, with its early accumulation of capital, arose not only from the expropriation of peasants from the land (as in England during two centuries) but in colonial expansion, piracy, and the extraction of enormous wealth from those parts of the world which became the victim of colonial rule.

In the modern world it is impossible for the new independent states to embark upon colonial expansion, for the capitalist world is already divided up among the big imperialist powers. Imperialism would fiercely resist any attempt to trespass on its reserves. Nor are the new states in a strong enough position even to attempt to take this course. To embark on this path of development demands a strong modern economy, huge financial reserves, and gigantic armed forces with weapons superior to those of the imperialist powers.

The political climate of Africa is extremely unfavourable to the growth of capitalism. Any African leader who openly advocated the aim of building capitalism would soon lose his position. To the African masses imperialism and capitalism are the main enemy. Any friend of imperialism is a traitor in their eyes to the cause of national liberation.

On the other hand, the growth of the socialist world is making a powerful impact in Africa. Despite all attempts to draw a heavy curtain of concealment over the exciting advances of socialist construction, the African masses are getting to know more and more of what is being achieved in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. Coupled with this is their own knowledge of the amazing extent of socialist economic aid devoted to the state and co-operative sector in the new African states, in contrast to the phoney imperialist "aid" and investments for maximum profit.

Economic planning in the socialist world has made so powerful an impression that most independent African states (even the most backward) have also embarked upon economic plans. These vary in character, and in the balance between the state and private sector of production, but their common feature is the growing emphasis of the state and co-operative sector advancing in contrast to the private sector of production.

In the days of the first post-war Labour Government in Britain (1945-51) there was great emphasis on the value of the "mixed economy", a term used to describe a situation in which 20 per cent of the British economy had been nationalised, leaving 80 per cent still under private ownership and production for profit. In many new African states there is also a "mixed

economy", but the proportion left to the private sector is far less than it is in Britain, and even less than is contemplated by the official Labour leaders during the next decade. Moreover, there are no big African monopoly concerns to benefit from the cheap services of the public sector in the way that big monopoly concerns in Britain skim off the cream of public enterprise to increase their own profits.

In a certain sense most African countries are poised between pre-capitalist society and the alternatives of capitalism or socialism. They all have some degree of capitalist development, but the declared aim of most African leaders is not capitalism, but socialism. They regard grants and loans from capitalist countries as a temporary expedient, and even welcome private foreign investment, together with economic aid from the socialist countries. But no matter how big or small this is, socialism is the ultimate aim.

In this situation it is not surprising that concepts of socialism (together with contempt for capitalism) have become extremely popular throughout Africa. These socialist conceptions are extremely varied, and are influenced by Africa's historical background, its religious trends, and the passion to make the new Africa different from any other part of the world.

This is the outcome of a long and sharp struggle to end imperialist domination, restore the unique contribution of Africa to human history, project the image of an "African personality", achieve African unity, and so ensure that Africa need not be subservient to the ideologies existing in the rest of the world.

What emerges is a passionate search for an African "identity" to find its rightful place in the world of today. To achieve this aim conflicting trends are bound to arise. While rejecting the ideology of capitalism and imperialism, serious doubt is expressed on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. It is claimed that Marxist ideas grew out of and developed in capitalism, that they belong to the "Western world", and therefore have no relevance to the situation in Africa.

Whatever one's views about the socialist concepts now cur-



rent in Africa, there is everything to be gained by a closer examination of their theoretical basis. Marxism has nothing in common with the view that the conception of the path towards socialism envisaged a century ago is valid for all parts of the world today, irrespective of new conditions, the new world balance between socialism and capitalism, and the changing relations of class forces.

Marxism is a scientific theory, not a dogma. What was true a century ago can be false today, and what was false then could now be true. Marxism is a science which provides the means to analyse every new situation and to arrive at different conclusions if new conditions have arisen. It is not a European ideology, or Asian, or Latin American. Marxism is a universal ideology founded on a scientific and objective analysis of the basic laws of social development.

This means that Africa provides a basis for a vast extension and deepening of the Marxist outlook. Just as Marxism can contribute a great deal to light the path in Africa towards the achievement of socialism, so the experience of the African struggle can enrich Marxist theory and understanding.

This is why it is so essential to study the variety of socialist concepts in Africa, not merely as an intellectual exercise, but as a powerful factor in the advancement of the cause of socialism throughout the world. For Britain, which is still the centre of a vast imperialist system (which is an important factor holding back the advance towards socialism), the success of the struggle in Africa is inseparable from the fight for our own victory in this small island.

Socialism in Africa may not be achieved on the precise road envisaged for Britain or other capitalist countries. It can only be won if the specific features of African society and historical development are taken into account, together with the more complex relation of classes in Africa. At the same time, imperialism is breaking down the traditional pattern of African society and is exercising strong ideological pressures, as well as economic and political pressures, on the course of events in Africa. Within the Marxist camp there may also be ideological trends which have the conception that nothing has changed,

and that the victorious path to socialism in other parts of the world must inevitably be the identical path for Africa.

This is all the more reason why it is so important to make an objective study of these new socialist concepts, to find out how far they are influenced by an outworn ideology or by new ideas, and to what extent they serve to stimulate the advance to socialism in the world today.

## PAN-AFRICANISM

A widespread impression has been created that the roots of socialist ideas in Africa are to be found in the growth of Pan-Africanism. There is little evidence for this contention. Socialist concepts in Africa have emerged only in the past decade. True, some of the younger leaders of Pan-Africanism (like Dr. Nkrumah) in their studies abroad twenty years ago were won over to socialism.

Socialist ideas did not arise automatically from the growth of Pan-Africanism. The founders of Pan-Africanism were far from being socialists. Even Dr. Du Bois, father of the Pan-African movement, became a socialist only in the later years of his life.

Strange as it may seem, the ideology of Pan-Africanism did not spring from the struggle in the African continent, but from African exiles abroad. It arose from the Negro struggle against slavery in the United States and from the slave uprisings in the Caribbean. Its founders were descendants of Africans who had been transported from their homeland and sold into slavery in the Western hemisphere.

The early Pan-African movement had no concept of political changes in society. It was based on a desire to return to their African homeland, expressed by one of its founders, Marcus Garvey, in the slogan "Back to Africa". There was not even the concept of a national liberation struggle against imperialism. It was basically a racial revulsion against the oppression of the white race, and Dr. Nkrumah himself described these early stages in the following words: "Garvey's ideology was

concerned with black nationalism, as opposed to African nationalism."

It is extremely doubtful even whether the term "black nationalism" is the correct definition of Garvey's ideology. At this time there was little of the concept of "nationalism" in Africa. What Garveyism represented was a powerful emotional urge to escape the bonds of slavery by returning to Africa, and the growing hatred of white oppression. The concept of "nationalism" in Africa grew much later, out of the struggle for national liberation, and more speedily in the years following the second world war. Garvey's ideology is much nearer to that of "black racialism"—as is the Black Muslim movement today in the United States.

Dr. Du Bois was the outstanding leader who rescued Pan-Africanism from its extreme racial concept and directed its activities to the struggle in Africa itself. Though there was considerable activity before the 1914 world war, it was not until the victory of the 1917 Russian socialist revolution that Pan-Africanism made any headway.

The first world-war (1914-18) was proclaimed as one being waged for "democracy and freedom". So the challenge to translate words into deeds was taken up when Dr. Du Bois organised the first Pan-African Congress in Paris on the occasion of the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference. The main theme was that Africa must be ruled "by consent of the Africans", but at this stage there was no demand for African political independence.

Between 1919 and 1927 there were four more Pan-African Congresses, all of them held outside Africa. The majority present were African exiles, or descendants of African slaves in the United States and the Caribbean. These were by no means representatives of Africa, and Dr. Du Bois himself admitted: "... so far, the Pan-African idea was still American rather than African."

From 1927 onward the Pan-African idea was declining in influence, but it grew again during and after the second world war. This fresh impetus came from a new generation of African students studying abroad, among them Dr. Azikiwe,

Dr. Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and others. Along with Dr. Du Bois and George Padmore, they were mainly responsible for the 5th Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in 1945.

For the first time the resolutions adopted were strongly anti-imperialist in character, demanding the right for Africans to choose their own governments, and urging the Africans to struggle unitedly for this and other aims by all means at their disposal—even by forcible means. It seems clear this new turn was greatly influenced by the prestige of the Soviet Union after the defeat of fascism and the new victories for socialism in eastern Europe.

The defeat of fascism and the advance of socialism created new favourable conditions for the advance of national liberation. The first big impact was in Asia. This was expressed in the national uprisings in Indonesia and Vietnam, and the victories for political independence in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma; in the historic triumph of the Chinese revolution in 1949; and in defeat of U.S. imperialism in Korea, and the growing liberation struggle in Vietnam.

At the same time the liberation movement grew in Africa between 1945 and 1958. First came the 1952 national revolution in Egypt, making a further advance in 1956 (after the defeat of the imperialist Suez invasion) with the independence of Sudan. In 1956 Morocco and Tunisia won their independence, and a similar victory was won in Ghana in 1957, Guinea in 1958, then the whole of former French Africa. From 1960 onwards Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika won their political independence.

Meanwhile, the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in April, 1955, gave a strong impetus to the growing liberation movement in Africa. It was the first time that the newly-liberated states came together after the second world war as an organised political force. Bandung stimulated the liberation struggle in all parts of the world, throughout the Arab countries of the Middle East, all over Africa, and far west to the Caribbean and Latin America.

These developments enable us to understand the factors which

served to stimulate still further the already growing liberation struggle in Africa. Some exponents of Pan-Africanism regard this as a purely African phenomenon, something entirely distinct and separate from the world-wide liberation struggle against imperialism. True, Africa has made a mighty contribution to this world-wide movement, but it is important to emphasise its relation to the rest of the world.

Together with the developments in Africa itself, one could list four main factors from *outside* Africa stimulating the African liberation movement :

1. The impetus given by the descendants of African slaves in the United States and the Caribbean, giving birth to Pan-Africanism.

2. The impact of the 1917 Russian socialist revolution, which gave a new outlook to the struggle for national liberation.

3. The advance of socialism after the defeat of fascism in the Second World War.

4. The triumph of the Chinese revolution in 1949 and the first mobilisation of national liberation movements on a world scale at the Bandung Conference in April 1955.

It is in the past two decades since the second world war that the national liberation struggle has made the most rapid advance. In the last decade the biggest victories have been won in Africa.

In the march towards political independence in Africa, the basic aim was to achieve constitutional power free from the grip of the imperialists and to achieve national sovereignty and the right for Africans to govern themselves. In the words of Dr. Nkrumah, the slogan was "Seek ye first the political kingdom".

It was soon recognised that political independence in itself did not necessarily constitute complete liberation. This lesson was hammered home by the experience of the Congo after independence in 1960, convincing the third All-African

Peoples' Conference in Cairo in March, 1961, that the imperialist strategy of neo-colonialism was now their greatest danger. At the conference, neo-colonialism was defined as :

“The survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries, which have become the victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical measures, and is the greatest threat to African countries that have newly won their independence or those approaching this status.”

This conference marked the most recent turning-point in the character of the liberation struggle in Africa. It became clear that the struggle against neo-colonialism was even sharper than the fight for political independence, for it involved ending *all* forms of imperialist domination. Moreover, it presented a challenge to the newly-independent states; whether their backward economies could be transformed by capitalist methods, or whether they would advance on a path which restricted the process of capitalist development, and choose a different road which would lead to socialism.

It is this new situation which has created a ferment of socialist ideas in Africa. It is true that the most advanced leaders had socialist ideas before their countries won political independence. Until that was achieved the entire emphasis was on winning the right to govern themselves. When it was achieved the new states were faced with the challenge of choosing the capitalist path or the advance towards socialism.

This is why Pan-Africanism had a new lease of life after Ghana independence in March, 1957. This made possible a succession of all-African conferences, beginning with that of the independent African states in Accra in April 1958 and the first all-African Peoples' Conference in Accra in December 1958. The third (and last) All-African Peoples' Conference was at Cairo in March 1961, and since then there have been several conferences of African premiers and heads of states.

In the past ten years the main principle of Pan-Africanism

has been accepted throughout the continent, expressed in the aim of winning freedom for the whole of Africa. This is its main positive feature, one which inspires millions of Africans in the struggle against all forms of imperialism and neo-colonialism. But in practice Pan-Africanism is interpreted in many different ways, and has become a kind of ideological "umbrella" to cover a variety of political trends, expressing conflicting aims.

There is the trend which would isolate Africa from the rest of the world, and the opposite one which seeks to integrate itself with the world movement against imperialism. There is the trend of co-operation with imperialism, in contrast with that which aims to break the grip of imperialism. There is the objective of closer relations with the socialist countries, and opposed to it African repetitions of "cold war" propaganda. There are advocates of an all-African unity which embrace Negroes, Arabs, Asians, and Europeans in Africa, as opposed to those who preach the gospel of black nationalism, or even black racialism. In fact, Pan-Africanism today means almost "all things to all men".<sup>1</sup>

An ideological trend which has little or nothing in common with the genuine and positive aims of Pan-Africanism is that of "Negritude", of which President Senghor (Senegal) is the chief exponent. President Senghor was strongly influenced by Aimé Césaire, the Mauritian politician and poet, and by Father Teilhard de Chardin. Senghor himself was educated in France, became impregnated with French culture, and succumbed to the methods adopted to Gallicise him.

President Senghor himself provides the evidence for this in a lecture given in October 1961 at Oxford University.

<sup>1</sup> While the main political trend of Pan-Africanism is positive and progressive there is a group of South Africans (mainly in exile) who give their allegiance to what they call the "Pan-Africanist Congress". This started in 1958 as a racialist splinter group, which broke away from the African National Congress, and has nothing in common with the genuine aim of building all-African unity. Since its formation it has performed several political somersaults. It has no basis among the Africans in South Africa, and is consistent only in its anti-Communism and constant disruptive activity.



In his fervent quest for what he christens in mystical terms the "Holy Grail : our Collective Soul" he pointed out :

"It was not revealed to us by the 'official France' of the politicians who, out of self-interest and political conviction defended the policy of assimilation. Its whereabouts was pointed out to us by that handful of freelance thinkers—writers, artists, ethnologists, and prehistorians—who bring about cultural revolutions in France".

Despite these critical views on the official French policy of "assimilation" President Senghor's lecture itself provides the evidence of its influence upon him :

"As for France's policy, though we have often reviled it in the past, it too ended with a credit balance, though forcing us actively to assimilate European civilisation. This fertilised our sense of Negritude. Today, our Negritude no longer expresses itself as opposition to European values, but as a *complement* to them. Henceforth, its militants will be concerned, as I have often said, *not to be assimilated, but to assimilate*. They will use European values to arouse the slumbering values of Negritude, which they will bring as their Contribution to the Civilisation of the Universal."

It is significant that President Senghor seems blissfully unaware of the existence of conflicting classes in "official France" and that there are different concepts of "European values". In the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels over a century ago, it is emphasised that : "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class." In 1888 Engels wrote a critique of Feuerbach in which he concludes :

"In other words, Feuerbach's morality is cut exactly to the pattern of modern capitalist society, little as Feuerbach himself might desire or imagine it."

Without any class analysis of French, or European society in general, it's not surprising that the French technique of "cultural integration" has made its impact on the thinking of

President Senghor and his colleagues, however much they would wish it otherwise.

At a Press conference during his visit to Britain in 1961 President Senghor frankly admitted: "I am not really a Pan-Africanist. I am a humanist". It all depends what is meant by "humanism", for in this respect Colin Legum seems more correct in his estimation that "Leopold Senghor is a bridge-person between Africa, Europe and the New World" (*Pan-Africanism*, p. 101). President Senghor himself had earlier revealed his warm regard for imperialist France:

"The French Community created by General de Gaulle with Africa's true representatives is one of the greatest achievements of our time." (*West African Evolution*, 1961)

Moreover, the concept of "Negritude" embraces only the "black peoples" of Africa. It can hardly serve to win the co-operation of millions of Arabs and Asians in the common struggle for liberation. President Senghor's definition in his Oxford lecture was given in these words:

"Negritude is the whole complex of civilised values—cultural, economic, social and political—which characterises the black people, or, more precisely, the Negro-African world." (*West Africa*, 4.11.61)

President Senghor's background of Roman Catholicism also gives his concept of "Negritude" all kinds of mystical and religious overtones. One commentator (by no means a socialist) bluntly described its advocates as "Muslims, fetishists, hard-core Calvinists, diehard Papists, and renegade Marxists" (*West Africa*, 30.6.62).

The practical reality underlying the confused vocabulary of this strange philosophy is co-operation with imperialism. It is expressed in Senegal's close relations with the imperialist France, in President Senghor's record in resisting all effective steps to achieve all-African unity, and on decisive issues like Congo and southern Rhodesia.

## PAST AND PRESENT

The concept of "Negritude" made little or no impact in the former British colonies. To some extent this arose from the fact that "assimilation" did not form part of the technique of British colonial rule. No African leader sat in the House of Commons, as was the case with the French Assembly. True, Africans went to Britain and the United States to study, often having a hard time of it to pay their way. Upon their return to Africa to lead the independence struggle they were treated as rebels and put in prison.

However, despite the contrasting experience of Africans in France and in Britain they generally held a common view of African traditional society. There are few more striking contrasts in the political attitude to imperialism than that of President Senghor and President Nyerere. The former is noted for the trend towards collaboration with imperialism, while the latter (especially in the recent period) is outstanding for his opposition to all forms of imperialist domination.

Yet, both have much in common in their estimation of African traditional society, and to what extent its basic features still remain in Africa. President Senghor asserts that :

" . . . Negro-African society is collectivist or, more exactly, communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals . . . we had already achieved socialism before the coming of the Europeans . . . our duty is to renew it by helping it to regain its spiritual dimensions" (*African Socialism*, p. 49).

President Nyerere puts basically the same view of African traditional society, but without the emphasis on "spiritual dimensions".

"Nobody starved, either of food or human dignity, because he lacked personal wealth; he could depend on the wealth possessed by the community of which he was a member. That was socialism. That is socialism . . . Socialism is essentially distributive. Its concern is to see that those who sow reap a fair share of what they sow" ("*Ujamaa*", *The Basis of African Socialism*, p. 3).

The recent Kenya Government booklet, purporting to present a plan to achieve "African Socialism", states that :

"In African society a man was born politically free and equal and his voice and counsel were heard and respected regardless of the economic wealth he possessed" (p. 3).

Father Bede Onouha, an African who is a Roman Catholic priest in Nigeria, expresses a similar view in his recent book *The Elements of African Socialism*, but unlike President Senghor brings in the spiritual aspect :

"It is beyond doubt that traditional African society was based on a profoundly socialist attitude of mind, and governed by indigenous socialist rules, customs and institutions" (p. 30).

"Religion permeated the life of the African through and through . . . African society was spiritual, not positivistic. Life had, essentially, a deeper, divine, dimension. The tribesman was very much at home with spiritual realities—these, for him, were often more real than material things" (p. 35).

There is no dispute in Marxist circles that early communal society was egalitarian in character, and this is now accepted by most social historians. Marx and Engels were convinced of this over a century ago. Though they had no opportunity to study African historical development, they were satisfied that

early communal forms were universal in the evolution of mankind. Engels, in his classic essay on "The Mark" (early communal forms in Germany) concludes :

"Two fundamental facts, that arose spontaneously, govern the primitive history of all, or of almost all nations; the grouping of people according to kindred, and common property in the soil."

In an American symposium on *African Socialism*, one of the contributors, Igor Kopytoff, explains that :

"The view that African societies are organised on some kind of communal principle is by no means recent. Historically, it has been advanced for numerous societies on all continents" (p. 53).

In my view President Nyerere's belief that early communal society embodied the principles of socialism is substantially correct. Engels expressed a similar view eighty years ago, and was hopeful that the communal "mir" system at that time in Tsarist Russia could have been preserved and developed on a higher level as a result of socialist revolutions in the more developed countries of Europe. This did not happen, and it was not until after the 1917 Russian socialist revolution that the principles of communal ownership were re-established within the Soviet Union, but on a far higher level.

And this is the real challenge. No matter to what extent early communal societies existed in the African countries, or to what extent they exist today, they are based more on the sharing of *poverty* than the sharing of *wealth*. President Nyerere himself is obviously deeply conscious of the abysmal poverty in Tanzania. The preservation of communal society in its old form will not make basic changes in this situation. Modern socialism means large-scale production in industry and agriculture, and Tanzania's aim to achieve socialism involves big changes in the old tribal forms of society.

While there is general agreement that African traditional society was communal and egalitarian in character, there is keen controversy on the extent to which the traditional society

survives today. It was more widespread before Africa was carved up between rival imperialist powers. But even at that time the old tribal communal system was being undermined, and after nearly a century of colonial rule was seriously weakened. What will remain after independence has been won can only be preserved in a new form—the adaptation of its egalitarian principles to modern conditions.

More recent evidence indicates that parts of Africa enjoyed a higher level of civilisation in the early Middle Ages than existed at that time in Europe. Feudal states and kingdoms were in being in Songhai, Mali, Oyo, Benin, Ghana and Zimbabwe. Skilled craftsmen in metals and other experienced builders (together with slave labour) erected palaces and temples. Cloth weaving was highly skilled, and well-laid irrigation schemes were devised and put into operation.

Africans are justified in their pride that their forefathers reached a higher level at a time when parts of Europe were almost in a state of barbarism. But these medieval states had little in common with the principles of a communal and egalitarian system. One well-known writer on early African history (Basil Davidson, *Black Mother*, p. 33) records that “these strong states and empires shook and changed the old framework of tribal equality”. From them “emerged the new phenomenon of mass subjugation of one people by another” (p. 33).

This is confirmed independently by two well-known authors (Roland Oliver and J. D. Fage) in their point work *A Short History of Africa*. In dealing with what is termed the “Sudanic” civilisation, which at that time stretched from the Red Sea through tropical Africa and down to Rhodesia, they describe the pattern of that society :

“The main concern of such administrations was the raising of tribute for the support of the king and of the urbanised inhabitants of the capital . . . external trade was always in some sense a royal monopoly . . . in a very real sense, therefore, the ‘Sudanic’ state was a superstructure erected over village communities of peasant cultivators rather than a society which had grown up naturally out of them” (p. 43).

Yet, these feudal states did not entirely destroy the old tribal relations. This form of feudalism was different in many respects from the feudal systems in Europe.

The growth of trade at the time of these feudal states also served to undermine the old tribal relations. In later years this was intensified with the transition from annual subsistence crops to perennial crops like coffee and cocoa, especially in the 19th century with the advent of colonial rule.

Formerly, village collectivism was based on custom, the territorial chief dividing the land between the different families. They could cultivate as they wished, keeping the greater part of the produce, except the portion due to the customary authorities. This is how this transition was described by a well-known Ghanaian professor :

“The grower no longer benefits from a mere harvest but from a plantation established for 25 years, and which is constantly replanted. An investment made in one or more years will yield at the end of the sixth year, and will provide an income for the next twenty. From then on the right of usage has a *marketable* value, and is susceptible to transfer, renting out, and all types of contracts. It tends to become a *proprietary* right, if not in land at least in methods of plantation”. (Prof. Albert Beville : *Spark*, 18.2.63)

Colonial rule intensified this process. At the same time, British colonial policy was to elevate the big tribal chiefs into salaried servants of the colonial administration, through what is usually termed “indirect rule”. This weakened the communal relations, but in many respects British policy was successful in encouraging a reactionary form of tribalism, most useful in creating divisions among the Africans during their struggle for independence.

Though colonial rule weakened the old tribal system it did not undermine feudal rule. On the contrary, colonial strategy has always tried to involve the feudal rulers as allies, in their desperate efforts to maintain their domination.

Until political independence had been won feudal relations still existed in all the Arab countries of North Africa (the

Maghreb), Egypt, northern Sudan, Ethiopia, northern Nigeria, Buganda, and in Barotseland and elsewhere. These countries together accounted for *nearly half the total population of Africa at that time*.

There are other parts of Africa where white minority rule still exists—notably in Southern Rhodesia, South Africa, and the Portuguese colonies. In all other African countries big changes have taken place since political independence, but feudal relations still exist in Ethiopia, northern Nigeria, Buganda, and to some extent in northern Sudan.

Taking all these factors into account it seems clear that the old tribal system of land ownership and usage does not exist on a substantial scale in the greater part of the African continent. Where it still remains (though in a modified form) is in certain regions of tropical Africa, more particularly in parts of West and of East Africa.

Among many authorities of African history are M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, joint authors of *African Political Systems*, who made an objective study of the economic and political pattern of traditional society among the Zulus of South Africa, the Ngwato of Bechuanaland, the Bemba tribe in north-eastern Rhodesia, the kingdom of Ankole in Uganda, and other parts of Africa. Of the Bemba tribe they point out that :

“The prerogatives of a chief consist in rights over the labour of his people . . . to answer sudden calls for help . . . and also claims to tribute in kind (p. 106).

In the kingdom of Ankole in Uganda the situation was much worse, for the chiefs had the power of life and death over members of the tribe.

“It is difficult to assess the amount of the tribute gathered. . . . The peasants are unanimous in stating this burden is heavy, but it was ‘better to pay tribute than die’ ” (p. 147).

All their researches and personal investigations on the spot led these two authors to the conclusion that :



"African societies are not models of continuous internal harmony. Acts of violence, oppression, revolt, civil war, and so forth, chequer the history of every African state" (p. 16).

Lord Hailey, who spent several years in preparing his noted five volumes on *Native Administration in the British African Territories* (1950), does not accept the idealised picture given of traditional African society. If the "community of interest" so strongly emphasised by President Kenyatta existed in Kenya during his early days, it certainly seems to have disappeared before 1950. This is what Lord Hailey points out :

"Most of the tribes in Kenya . . . possessed no organisation involving the existence of chiefs and sub-chiefs with traditional authority over recognised territorial units" (Vol. 4. p. 92).

"The (Coast) Province contains no tribes which are distinguished by a tradition of strong tribal cohesion, or even evince a tribal spirit . . . there is now little trace of a tribal organisation under traditional or hereditary chiefs" (p. 107).

"Among the most noticeable characteristics of the Kikuyu today are a strong instinct for trading and profit-making . . . There is a marked tendency to forsake the old communal basis of society and to adopt a purely individualistic outlook" (p. 121).

Ten years ago the late Professor Ivan Pothekhin<sup>1</sup> spoke at the 5th Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in Britain, based largely on his own researches and personal investigation; he was satisfied that primitive communal relations *had* existed in Africa, and in 1956 still occupied "a prominent place in the social structure of the present-day African village". At the same time, there was "no such thing as a standard African village", and clan relations "are no longer self-sufficient, and in their pure form are not to be found anywhere".

Professor Pothekhin warned against drawing conclusions

<sup>1</sup> Until his untimely death in 1964 Professor I. I. Pothekhin was director of the Africa Institute in Moscow, which was associated with the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He made prolonged visits to various African countries before and after they achieved political independence.

from external impressions, and stressed the need for a closer examination of the internal workings of tribal society. His own conclusions were that :

“In all the matters concerning the land the peasant depends on the chief of the tribe. A peasant may be given a plot of land only on condition that he should give up part of his labour or part of his harvest for the benefit of the chief. . . .”

“Clan relations, characteristic of the classical clan society, no longer exist. At present it is possible to speak only about the survivals of clan relations that have been more or less preserved. . . The present-day African village community is not a clan community, it is not socially monolithic; it is characterised by contradictions and struggle between various social groups.”

Another noted sociologist and Marxist, Professor Jean Suret-Canale, made a special study of traditional society in what are now the ex-French colonies of tropical Africa. His researches led him to the conclusion that, side by side with the survivals of primitive communism, there was the beginning of social differentiation and the formation of antagonistic classes. This was expressed in a kind of dual situation, that of “patriarchal slavery” and of “elementary feudalism”.

In the system of “patriarchal slavery” the slave was the property not of the individual, but the collective property of the patriarchal family; the slave becomes integrated with the family, and with almost equal rights. In the system of “elementary feudalism” the egalitarian relations between clans under primitive communism deteriorate into the subordination of one by another, ranging from patronage to a kind of serfdom.<sup>1</sup>

In a later study *The Traditional Societies of Tropical Africa, and the Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production* the Pro-

<sup>1</sup> These extracts are taken from an article by Professor Suret-Canale, translated from *Recherches Internationales*, a Marxist bi-monthly journal published in Paris. It was published in English in two parts in *The African Communist*, Nos. 8 and 9 in the first and second quarters of 1962.

fessor prefers to abandon the term "feudalism", since it could imply a general system of feudal *political* rule as well as feudal relations of production. He concludes that Marx's concept of the "Asiatic mode of production" seems to apply to a stage which most human societies have passed through including many parts of Africa. (There will be more of this in the next chapter.)

The development of cash-crop cultivation was a powerful factor in developing contradictions within the patriarchal community and breaking down the old relations. In disposing of cash crops the head of the family now had money at his disposal, generally using this for personal interests. This also led to small-scale individual cultivation.

Despite these changes, Professor Suret-Canale states that the majority of African peasants within these regions are still mainly organised "within the economic and social framework of the patriarchal community", and that "internal social differentiation is not highly developed". There are differences in wealth in different sectors, and also between families and individuals, but not sharp differences of class.

During the period of colonial rule the chiefs drew their income from feudal dues and from forced labour done by peasants on village lands, though officially they lived on their salaries as civil servants of the colonial rulers. Their income did not come from ownership of the land, because the system of collective land ownership still remained in force.

Since political independence the chiefs have lost a great deal of their power. In the Republic of Guinea their administrative functions have been abolished, and so they have been deprived of their ability to demand dues and forced labour. In Senegal the chiefs still receive their salaries but no longer have any administrative functions. On the other hand, in northern Cameroons the feudal structure has remained almost intact, and serves the interests of neo-colonialism.

Looking at Africa as a whole, the situation is extremely uneven. In South Africa only 12 per cent of the land is reserved for Africans. About half of them are in the reserves, where communal land ownership still exists. A small proportion

live outside the reserves on land which constitutes their collective or private property. Roughly a similar number live on land belonging to Missions, Crown lands, or European private land which is not cultivated by Europeans but leased by the peasants for a money rent. And more than 40 per cent of the entire African peasantry live on farms and plantations owned by Europeans.

In Southern Rhodesia more than half the land (and all the best land) is owned by Europeans, and over 200,000 Africans work on European-owned farms and plantations. The land left to Africans is generally stony and sandy, not enough to provide a living, and this creates mass migration to the towns and mining centres.

In the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) under colonial rule there were mass expropriations of land from the peasantry. In Algeria in 1946 there were 500,000 landless peasant families, growing to 625,000 landless families in 1956, one-third of the total peasantry. Under colonial rule one-eighth of the cultivated land in Morocco was owned by big foreign landlords, and in Tunisia it was 20 per cent.

Before independence 16,700 square miles in Kenya were reserved in the White Highlands (the best land) for European settlers, and 52,000 square miles of poorer land for the Africans. With seven million Africans and only 2,800 European settlers the average of land available for an individual European was 470 times as much as for an individual African.

In the former Belgian Congo 14 per cent of the land under crops was owned by European settlers and companies. Europeans had big land concessions in Angola and Mozambique, and in Ethiopia large-scale feudal land ownership still remains.

Before the land reform in Egypt there were more than 2½ million Egyptian and nearly four million foreign landowners, owing between them most of the cultivable land, while there were millions of land-hungry peasants or farm workers on the big estates.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These extracts on the distribution of land ownership in certain African countries are taken from an article "Land Relations in African Countries" by Professor Potekhkin in No. 15 of *The African Communist*, October-December 1963.

Throughout Africa the pattern of land ownership is extremely uneven, and it seems perfectly obvious that the traditional form of communal ownership is rapidly being undermined. In the words of Professor Potekhin :

“Today, however, the peasants’ land-owning community in many African countries serves as a screen for the semi-feudal exploitation of the peasantry by the aristocratic upper crust of the clans and tribes.”

## MARX AND TRIBAL SOCIETY

Many African leaders reject Marxism on the grounds that Marx and Engels knew nothing of pre-capitalist society and that their belief in the class struggle has no relevance to the situation in Africa, which has not experienced the growth of capitalism and its consequential struggle between an industrial proletariat and the capitalist class.

It is perfectly true that Marx and Engels were mainly concerned with an analysis of the capitalist system, its class and social structure, the conflict of classes and the clash of ideologies. After all, this is not so surprising. They lived under capitalism, *not* within the communal relations of a tribal society. They studied the growth of the capitalist system and its basic features.

They became convinced it would prepare the economic foundation for a modern socialist system. This would not come automatically, because those whose class interests were based on private ownership and production for profit would fight to the end to protect their privileges. But the socialist pioneers were convinced of capitalism's inevitable downfall—even though they were not able to predict exactly at that time where the first break-through to socialism would be made, or the precise methods by which it would be achieved.

Marx and Engels did not conjure up the class struggle out of their own imaginations. It existed before they were born, and grew more acute during their lifetime. It arose from the class conflict in society and it was inherent in the capitalist system, reaching its highest point with the growth of imperialism.

What the two socialist pioneers did was to bring out the basic aspects of the already existing class struggle. It was arising from this analysis that they were able to give the perspective of a new social system (socialism) which would end the class struggle and achieve a classless society on a far higher level than that which could possibly have existed in the early communal societies.

At the same time, Marx and Engels did not confine themselves to an analysis of the capitalist system. Their theoretical conclusions were based on a close study of pre-capitalist societies, of a close study of the basic causes for the change from one form of society to another. This is how Lenin described Marx's great achievement in the realm of scientific theory :

“The historical materialism of Marx represented the greatest conquest of scientific thought. Chaos and arbitrariness, which reigned until then in the views on history and politics, were replaced by a strikingly consistent and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how out of one order of social life another and higher order develops, in consequence of the growth of productive forces—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of serfdom.” (*The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*, 1913.)

Lenin led the first socialist revolution in history. No one knew better the value of Marxist theory. True, neither Marx nor Lenin was able to make a specific analysis of African traditional society, but they were both fully conversant with the type of earlier societies which existed before the advent of capitalism.

Even the most cursory reading of the works of Marx and Engels makes clear that they made thorough studies of pre-capitalist forms of society, and especially the primitive communal systems. It was arising from these studies that they were able to analyse the basic factors responsible for changing society. The basic Marxist analysis of social changes was made clear in the Preface written by Engels to the 1888 edition of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 :

“That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation following from it, form the basis on which is built up, and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (*since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership*)<sup>1</sup> has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of revolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction and class struggles.”

It is true the *Manifesto* itself asserts that: “The history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggles”, but Engels appends a footnote to make clear:

“That is, all *written* history. In 1847 the pre-history of society, the social organisation existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then Haxthausen (1792-1866) discovered common ownership of the land in Russia. Maurer proved it to be the foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and by village communities were found to be, or to have been, the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organisation of this primitive communistic society was laid bare in its typical form by Lewis Morgan’s (1818-1881) crowning discovery of the true nature of the ‘gens’ and its relation to the ‘tribe’. With the dissolution of these primaeval communities, society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes.”

In 1894 Engels himself wrote his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. This was made pos-

<sup>1</sup> *My emphasis.*



sible by a close study of the original researches of Maurer, Morgan, Kovalevsky, and others.

Marx also made an independent study in this field. Many of his writings were not published until after his death in 1883, and it was left to his collaborator Engels to edit them. Some were not published until after the death of Engels in 1895. One very important manuscript written by Marx during the years of 1843-58 was published in book form in English for the first time in 1964. Marx explained that his book (*Pre-capitalist Economic Formations*) was "the result of fifteen years' research, that is to say the best years of my life". Only small extracts appeared in the German paper *Neue Zeit* in 1903, and the complete manuscript remained unpublished until it appeared in Russian twenty-five years ago.

Anyone who reads *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations* is bound to be deeply impressed by Marx's profound grasp of nature of early communal societies. True, African history was still largely a closed book, but Africa is not the only continent in which the communal form of society existed. There is a remarkable similarity between the communal societies which existed "everywhere from India to Ireland", and even on the American continent, and the communal societies which existed in Africa. The actual *form* of those in Africa may differ, with different tribal formations, religions, languages, etc., but the essential economic foundation was *communal ownership of the land, based in its use*.

Marx distinguished three different types of society which were based on common property, each having its own special features. The first is described as the "Asiatic mode of production", and at times as the "oriental" or "slavonic" form. The real foundation is tribal or common property, upon which basis there is the production of a surplus which is appropriated by an *élite* who take no part in the productive process and who really function as rulers.

The second is the ancient or "classical" form of ancient Greece and Rome. The city becomes an important centre, and conflict arises between various communities :

‘War is therefore the great all-embracing task, the great communal labour, and it is required either for the occupation of the objective conditions for living existence or for the protection and perpetuation of such occupation.’

The third is the “Germanic” community. This is not concentrated in the city but on the land. It does not have a ruling group divorced from production—at least in its early stages. A number of allied villages formed a hundred (the *mark*) of which Engels wrote a brief description at the end of his famous work *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* :

“Just as the members of the community had equal shares in the soil and equal rights of usage, so they had also an equal share in the legislation, administration, and jurisdiction within the mark. At fixed times and, if necessary, more frequently, they met in the open air to discuss the affairs of the *mark* and to sit in judgement. . . . Laws were made, but only in rare cases of necessity. Officials were chosen, their conduct in office examined, but chiefly judicial functions were exercised. The president had only to formulate the questions. The judgement was given by the aggregate of the members present” (p. 100-101).

Many African leaders will recognise in this the age-old practice in African tribal society too. It makes clear that Africa does not exist in some kind of vacuum. It is not the only part of the world which has experienced tribal society. In fact, all these three different types of early communal societies (though differing in many respects) have a great deal in common.

The titles given by Marx to these different types of early society (Asiatic, Ancient, Germanic) can be misleading. Writing on this subject over a hundred years ago Marx was only able to study such evidence as was available at that time. Little or nothing was known about Africa. It is now known that the “Asiatic mode” was not confined to Asia. And Marx and Engels themselves drew attention to the fact that features of the “Germanic” community were found to have been present earlier among the Celts in Wales and in Ireland.

The term "Asiatic mode of production" is certainly misleading, and its use has recently been qualified by many Marxist scholars, precisely because many of its features have existed in other parts of the world. Professor Suret-Canale, in his latest work on this subject (*The Traditional Societies of Tropical Africa, and The Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production*), gives the collective view of himself and other Marxist research workers on African history.

"Our view remains that the fundamental structure of the Asiatic mode of production is limited to the coexistence of an apparatus of production founded on the rural community (on the collective ownership of the land, to the exclusion of any form of private property) and of the exploitation of man by man in forms that are often very varied, but always use the community as an intermediary."

Defined in this way, the "Asiatic mode of production" assumes, in their view, a "universal validity", since it applies to a stage "which most human societies appear to have passed through, and of which pre-colonial Africa offers many examples over a large part of its territory". For this reason the authors abandon the term "Asiatic mode", for they argue that it has no meaning in the light of the evidence available since Marx wrote on this subject. To them, the "Asiatic societies" which Marx referred to represent only a variant of a *general* process which humanity has passed through, and the African societies which have attained this level represent another variant.

In the first few sentences of *Pre-capitalist Economic Formations* Marx starts off with the basic relations between man and his environment :

"The first prerequisite of this early form of landed property appears as a human community, such as emerges from spontaneous evolution : the family, the family expanded into a tribe, or the tribe created by the inter-marriage of families or combination of tribes."

"The spontaneous evolved tribal community . . . is the

first precondition of the appropriation of the objective conditions of life. . . .”

President Nyerere in fact confirms Marx's view that the only right of the individual in communal society is to *use* the land. Nyerere explains that :

“To us in Africa, land was always recognised as belonging to the community. Each individual within our society had a right to the use of the land. . . . But the African's right to land was simply the right to *use it*; he had no other right to it nor did it occur to him to try and claim one” (*Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism*, p. 5).

Marx had emphasised this a *century ago*, almost in the same words. True, it was not applied to Africa, but to Asia and Europe, and as far west as the Celts in Wales and Ireland. Which all goes to show that, despite all the contrasting features in Africa, the basic form of early communal society was similar all over the world. Compare Nyerere with the words of Marx :

“Where property exists *only* as communal property the individual member as such is only the *possessor* of a particular part of it, hereditary or not, for any fraction of property belongs to no member for himself, but only as the direct part of the community. The individual therefore is only a possessor. What exists is only *communal* property and private possession.”

Until the second half of the 19th century Tsarist Russia also had its communal land system (the *mir*) under which more than half the land was at one time owned in common by the peasants. In certain conditions, Engels believed, its basic positive features could be preserved—much as many African leaders believe the advance of socialism in the world today will help to preserve the most positive aspects of African communal society. In the preface to the 1882 edition of the *Communist Manifesto* Engels asserts :

“If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for workers' revolution in the West, so that both complement

each other, the present Russian common ownership of the land may then serve as the starting point for a communist development.”

Ten years later Engels became convinced this was not possible. Not only was capitalism developing in Russia, it was growing more rapidly in Western Europe. In a letter to Danielson, one of the Russian socialist leaders, he expressed his changed views in these words :

“If we in the West had been quicker . . . if we had been able to upset the capitalistic regime ten or twenty years ago, there might have been time yet for Russia to cut short the tendency of her own evolution towards capitalism.” (February 24, 1893.)

In a further letter a few months later Engels went on to elaborate this theme, and to emphasise that communal society in Russia could not develop into a higher social form unless that higher form was already in existence in another country “to serve as a model” :

“Had the West of Europe been ripe (1860-70) for such a transformation then the Russians would have been called upon to show what could have been made out of their commune, which was then more or less intact. But the West remained stagnant, no such transformation was ever attempted, and capitalism was more and more rapidly developed. And as Russia had no choice but this : either to develop the commune into a form of production from which is was separated by a number of historical stages, and for which not even in the West the conditions were then ripe (evidently an impossible task) or else develop into capitalism : what remained to her but the latter choice?” (October 17, 1893.)

History now records that the growth of capitalism in Russia destroyed any prospect of these “communes” developing, and becoming the basis of a new socialist society. In his early years Lenin wrote his famous work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, in which he traced the breakdown of the old com-

munal system, the growth of capitalism, and the division of the peasantry into rich and poor.

There were still those in Tsarist Russia (the Narodniks or "People's Party") who idealised the former communal *mir* system, and had grandiose ideas about a socialist system based on village communities.<sup>1</sup> They ignored the growth of a new stratum of rich peasants within the frame-work of feudalism. Based on a clear analysis of the division among the peasantry Lenin exposed those who urged the peasants to rely on the *mir* community :

"We have just mentioned the bad counsellors . . . who are fond of saying that the peasants already have such a union. That union is the *mir*, the village community. . . This is not true. It is a fairy-tale. A fairy-tale invented by kind-hearted people. . . If we listen to fairy-tales we shall only wreck our cause, the cause of uniting the rural poor with the urban workers." (Lenin : *Alliance of the Working Class and the Peasantry*, p. 36.)

Common ownership of the land was restored in Russia only after the 1917 socialist revolution. The victory of socialism after the second world war made this possible also in Eastern Europe and in China. Only recently Cuba took this step, and in Algeria and Egypt the land is also being taken from the grip of foreign white settlers and their own former feudal lords.

Now that socialism is victorious in one-third of the world, it makes it easier for independent African countries to preserve the most positive features of what remains of the system of communal land ownership, or to take over the land where it still remains under private ownership.

It was not possible for this to happen in Tsarist Russia. But the growth of socialism today has transformed world relations. What was not possible in Tsarist Russia can now be achieved

<sup>1</sup> Despite the lessons of history Professor Peter Worsley (an ex-Communist), puts forward the view in his recent book *The Third World* that the peasantry is the leading revolutionary force in the world today, and hopes for a new kind of Narodnik (or Populist) movement which failed so miserably in Tsarist Russia.

in many African countries, because socialism now exists in one-third of the world.

The existence of this new socialist world is a powerful factor in undermining the whole basis of imperialism, and weakening the reactionary forces which still exploit the African peoples and try to enforce their domination in a new way.

Whether the positive features of what remains of communal society in Africa can be preserved and become a factor in advancing towards socialism will depend not only on the freedom struggle in Africa itself, but on close and friendly relations with the new socialist world.

The possibility has now arisen of bridging the historical gap between what remains of tribal communalism and the more advanced stage of society reached by socialism, but only by common action of African and liberation movements throughout the world with the socialist countries against imperialism.

Lewis Morgan was not a Marxist, but when he wrote his *Ancient Society* in 1877 he visualised the most positive aspects of traditional communal society being preserved for mankind.

“Democracy in government, brotherhood in society, equality in rights and privileges, and universal education, foreshadow the next higher plane of society to which experience, intelligence and knowledge are steadily tending. It will be a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes.” (pp. 561-62).

A few years later (1894) Engels wrote his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, in which he quoted this passage with approval. Lewis Morgan did not foresee the sharp class struggles in the next eighty years, and Engels himself could not be expected to have foreseen the precise and tortuous course of the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

In this new world situation there are far more favourable factors for the transformation of the positive features of the old tribal society to the “higher plane of society”. To the extent the African revolution is allied with the forces of socialism in the world, with the struggle taking place in the capitalist

countries against imperialism, to that extent Africa will be able to shorten the process of its development. In this way the most positive features of African traditional society can become a factor in the advance towards scientific socialism, which is a stage towards the communism of the future—the highest foreseeable pinnacle of human development.



## CAPITALIST GROWTH

There is still need for a far deeper and more extensive study of African history. Even with the big strides made in this sphere in recent years there are many aspects on which information is so meagre as to give rise to keen controversy. Controversy can do no harm, and indeed be of great value, providing it is based on an objective study and analysis of African history.

Whatever the disputes about past history and the impact of tribal society in Africa, it seems fairly clear that African traditional society is now rapidly breaking down. It is one thing to appreciate the positive aspects of tribal society, and strive to preserve these in going forward to a higher stage of human development. It is quite another to believe that *all* the features of tribal society can still exist within the framework of a modern industrial system, which is the only sound economic foundation for socialism.

The effect of imperialism and colonial rule in Africa has been to destroy traditional forms of African agriculture and many of its skilled crafts. Foreign capital has concentrated mainly on the extractions of minerals. As these are centred mainly in South Africa, Congo, and Rhodesia, this gave rise to migrant African labour on a colossal scale, so that millions of Africans are really seasonal workers, able to stay at home only a few months in the year.

The main impact of imperialism, foreign capital investment and economic growth in Africa has been to change some forms of the old society while preserving many of its negative features.

The United Nations, in its "Special Study on Economic Conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories (1958)" pointed out :

"The indigenous communities have been brought into contact with world trade centres and their economies have become linked to the sensitive commodity markets of the distant world. In less than half a century the closed system of the family economy has broken into pieces under the pressure of circumstances."

The pressure is now stronger than at any time in the first half of the century, and before the end of the century far bigger changes are likely in Africa. Much will depend on whether the independent African states rely on foreign loans and capital investment (which will tie them closer to imperialism) or strive to create and build up their own balanced economies, and work for closer economic and political relations with the socialist countries. The first can only lead to a more rapid growth of capitalism in Africa, but the second can assist in measures which can lead to socialism.

Despite the gigantic *political* victory achieved in winning independence for thirty-six new African states, from the *economic* standpoint the harsh truth is that most African countries are still in the grip of imperialism and foreign capital. True, great strides have been made in Egypt, Guinea, Algeria, Mali, Ghana, and more recently in Tanzania, to develop an independent balanced economy. But even these countries suffer from the pressure of international monopoly by the driving down of world market prices for their goods while having to pay higher prices for the capital and manufactured goods they have to import.<sup>1</sup>

The winning of political independence destroyed the *direct* colonial rule of individual imperialist powers, but not their

<sup>1</sup> At the United Nations Trade and Development (UNTAD) Conference in the Spring of 1964, the Secretary-General responsible for this Department (R. Prebitsch) estimated that by 1970 the 77 "developing" countries would lose in one year £7,000 million to the "developed" countries of Western Europe and the United States as a result of the decline in world prices of primary goods and raw materials, and the rise in the prices of capital and manufactured goods.

*economic* domination. Moreover, the colony-owning powers could now no longer prevent economic penetration by other imperialist powers. The result is that, during the past decade, there has been a growing penetration of foreign capital into Africa (as well as ideological influence) from "non-colony owning" imperialist powers like the United States, West Germany, Holland, Italy, and Japan.

Huge international consortia have been formed (and are still growing) to exploit newly-discovered resources of oil, iron ore, natural gas. These are joint international monopoly concerns comprising the big monopolies of all the imperialist countries, which are striving to get the maximum profit from the natural riches of Africa. (In his valuable study *Neo-Colonialism, the last stage of Imperialism* Dr. Nkrumah gives a graphic picture of this process).

One of the latest examples is the amalgamation of the Standard Bank, the Bank of West Africa (both of them British) and the Chase Manhattan Bank (the world's second biggest bank) which is associated with Rockefeller. Three of the British "Big Five" banks already have a foothold in the Bank of West Africa, and will keep it there. The new bank will have assets of £600 million and 1,100 offices in 17 African countries. French, West German and Japanese capital will take part.

United States experts are busy working out what is likely to be the scale of new foreign investment in Africa. Even four years ago more than thirty American "experts" on African problems (many of them economists) were brought together to a conference in which they presented papers on "Indigenous and Induced Elements in the Economic of Sub-Saharan Africa". Its main findings were published in a bulky volume, *Economic Transition in Africa*, edited by Melville J. Herskovits and Michael Harwitz.

In one of the tables it is calculated that the "capital inflow" (foreign capital) required in Africa for 1961-66 was \$1,544.5 million, or \$308.8 million per annum; and for the period 1966-71 a total of \$1,853.8 million, or \$370.8 million per annum. This is an increase of over 20 per cent.

There are no recent complete statistics to indicate the rate

of foreign investment for the period 1961-66. However, judging from official reports, British and U.S. investments alone were far above the estimated total. And there can be no doubt that the actual increase for the period 1966-71 will be far greater than the estimate given.

Most of these investments go to South Africa, Rhodesia, and the Congo. Of the other countries it is most likely that Nigeria will get the biggest share—the main independent ex-British colony which co-operates most closely with foreign imperialism.

Indigenous African capital investment cannot yet compare with the scope of foreign capital, but it is growing more rapidly. In all orthodox economic surveys of Africa it is emphasised that the indigenous African capitalists are few in number, largely confined to trading and contracting, and that far more numerous are the petty traders and a growing stratum of wealthy cocoa farmers and peasants growing cotton and coffee.

In the absence of adequate official surveys it is not easy to give a reliable estimate of the number and strength of the indigenous African capitalists. In *Economic Transition in Africa* it is estimated that internal investment would total \$48.6 million in the period 1961-66, and \$74.2 million in the period 1966-71. This is an increase of over 52 per cent, compared with 20 per cent of foreign capital, and of 16 per cent in the gross national product in the same period. But a great deal of this (even the biggest proportion in some African countries) would be “public investment”, not private investment for profit.

However it is significant that the number of companies in many African countries is growing year by year. In the official reports no distinction is made between foreign and African companies, though it seems clear that the *number* of African companies is greater, though their total investment may be smaller than that of foreign capital.

In 1963 the Minister for Economic Development and Planning (Mr. Nailo Swai) in what was then Tanganyika announced that “investment in the private sector amounts to 60 per cent” (*Reporter*, 5.10.63). Even two years before, the

*Industrial Directory* gave a list of 2,000 firms (large and small) in Tanganyika. It is still a dark secret how many of these were foreign and how many were indigenous (European settlers, Asians, Arabs, or African), but with the rapid pace towards "Africanisation" in that country it seems clear the majority were African.

Tanzania still depends a great deal on foreign capital, and especially for the production of sisal, which is its main export. Its existing economic plan (though still aiming for increased foreign capital investment) aims to encourage the growth of state and co-operative enterprises in sisal and elsewhere, as well as striving for African ownership. It will need far more decisive measures to make these changes, for the sisal plantations are almost entirely owned by foreign capital, and there are also at least 150 British-owned farms.

In nearby Zambia 140 new companies were formed in 1964. Together, their total capital amounted to £1,525,000. Bearing in mind that the four big copper trusts owned by British and U.S. capital are the dominant feature in Zambia's economy, it seems clear that these new companies are much smaller, each with an average capital of £10,000. It is possible that some of these are European, but more likely the majority are African.

The report of the Kenya Registrar-General for 1963 gives a total of 5,005 registered companies, of which 4,717 were private and only 288 were public, and 624 were foreign companies. This leaves more than 4,000 indigenous Kenya private firms. True, it is possible that the biggest of these would be owned by Indians and Arabs (who have been the main traders in Kenya for generations), but the great majority are owned by Africans.

A recent survey revealed that the combined total capital of 62 big British firms (which had a large proportion of their investments in Kenya) was over £6,000 million. And the Overseas Development Institute (London) estimated a minimum profit of 20 per cent after three years on that part invested in Kenya. Recently West German and U.S. investments have rapidly increased in Kenya.

There is every indication that the growth of foreign monopoly and the emergence of African capitalist firms is even

more marked in countries like Nigeria and the Ivory Coast. There has been so much emphasis in the past decade on the small number and weak position of African capitalists (which was true ten years ago), that it seems there may now be a serious danger of underestimating the recent growth which has taken place.

In 1964 Raymond Barbé, a well-known French writer on African affairs, in his study, *Social Classes in Black Africa*, threw new light on the growth of classes in the ex-French colonies (now independent) in West and Equatorial Africa. These comprise one-fourth of the whole continent and one-sixth of its population. Most of the facts given relate to the period 1955-59, and it is clear there have been big developments since then.

This writer reveals the growth of class differentiation even in agriculture in these countries. In the Ivory Coast 500 African planters (representing only 7 per cent of the total) had each a minimum of 29 acres of cocoa and coffee in the rich region of Bongouano. Each employed five or more workers, and together their estates produced 25 per cent of the entire output. Not much evidence of an "egalitarian" society in this region!

It is estimated there are nearly 10,000 planters owning 25 to 29 acres and employing at least five workers each in the whole of the Ivory Coast. Houphouet-Boigny, President of the Republic, himself owns more than 247 acres (as well as a sumptuous palace), and there are many planters with over 124 acres. Many former peasants have been driven to end up as wage-workers on these plantations.

In Dahomey, where the main crop is palm-nuts, one-third of the proprietors own 60 per cent of the land under cultivation and now employ wage labour. In 1957 there were 17,500 coffee producers in the Cameroun, owning nearly 150,000 acres of plantations and making an average of 100,000 francs each that year. This was well up to the average of the Ivory Coast.

An agricultural enquiry in Senegal in 1960-61 (where the main crop is groundnuts) revealed there were 40,700 holdings of more than 17 acres each, comprising 43 per cent of the cultivated land. On the other hand, there were 127,000 holdings

of less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres comprising 12 per cent. At the bottom of the scale there were 63,000 holdings of less than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres and at the top 2,800 holdings with more than 42 acres each, covering *twice* as much land as the 63,500 small holdings. This is the country in which President Senghor denies the existence of classes, and admits only "social groupings"!

A similar picture emerges from a recent study of *Farmers among the Plateau Tonga* in Zambia. Among the 600 African cultivators in this 100 square miles of maize-producing territory, fifteen are classified as "commercial farmers". This small number have more land and machinery, a bigger combined income, and employ more labour than all the other 585 put together. Between them they own four maize mills, six motor vehicles, one sawmill, three tractors, one bakery, four stores, and even one petrol pump. The other 585 have only two maize mills between them, but possess none of the other things.

Alongside the growth of capitalist elements in agriculture is the far more rapid growth of African capitalists in the urbanised areas, in the towns and villages. They are engaged in trade, transport, contracting, banking, and in small enterprises. Many Africans have now become directors of big overseas monopoly firms. Their fees are big enough to enable them to invest also in other firms, to make huge profits, and to own smaller enterprises. It is among these that foreign imperialists naturally find many of their best friends.

Apart from those who derive big profits from these sources there is also the growth of what can be described as an African *élite*. This consists of members of the governments, chiefs of government departments, civil servants in high positions, university professors, and others who get big salaries. They are under constant temptation to feather their own nests by commissions from overseas firms for "fixing" contracts, speculation on their own account, and rewards for "finding jobs for the boys".

The extent to which these practices exist in the independent African states is hotly denied by most African leaders, but that they do exist is borne out by frequent public exposures, and the stern measures taken to stamp them out.

Of course, imperialist propaganda often gives publicity to this kind of corruption when it suits its interest. But what goes on in the whole of Africa in this respect is nothing compared to the widespread (but more cunningly contrived) corruption in the imperialist countries.

To the extent that African bourgeois elements engage in corruption they simply copy the earlier methods of capitalist elements in Europe and the United States. But they cannot possibly compete with the modern technique and scale of corruption in these countries.

With the growing impact of foreign capital, hastening the breakdown of traditional African society (and the increasing number of African capitalists), comes the rapid growth of the towns and cities. In less than half a century the populations of many African towns have increased tenfold (like Conakry in Guinea) and one of them (Abidjan in the Ivory Coast) by one hundredfold. And the most rapid growth has been in the past decade.

This growth of towns and cities coincides with the increase in the African working class. Like the growth of capitalist elements, the growth of the working class has always been underestimated. The total of wage-earners in enterprises with over five workers in Nigeria in 1958 was officially estimated at 500,000. At that time the total population was estimated at 30 million. The 1964 census gave a total of 56 million in Nigeria. It is fairly obvious that the working-class total is equally bigger.

There has never been a complete account of the African working class, and all the estimates of the United Nations and the International Labour Office (I.L.O.) have either been incomplete or well below the real total. It seems that the most accurate estimate is that given by Jack Woddis in an article published in the Italian journal *Critica Marxista* and reproduced in the Ghana *Spark* of May 1964.

This gives an estimate of 20 million African workers. Of Africa's total population of 300 millions this is only 7 per cent. But if one takes adult population only (over 16 years of age) it is more likely to be in the region of over 10 per cent. Even



this accounts only for the total at a given time. Because of the big proportion of migrant workers (many of whom return to the land after working a few years for wages) the number of Africans who have working-class experience could be much greater.

However, the main conclusion that emerges from this chapter is that capitalism is growing in Africa, giving rise to class conflicts in society as in the recent Nigerian strikes. Agriculture is still the main occupation, combining the peasantry (the vast majority) and those employed on European and African plantations—over 80 per cent of the population. The working class constitutes probably over 10 per cent, the African capitalist elements perhaps about 5 per cent, and the remaining Europeans 2 per cent.

These are only rough estimates, but what becomes crystal clear from this examination is that there exist conflicting class interests in modern Africa. The egalitarian features of the old tribal society survive only as exceptions. Even with the growth of an indigenous African capitalist class it is imperialism which remains the chief enemy.

One can therefore appreciate the desire to preserve the high degree of African unity achieved in the struggle for independence. This is essential to solve the new problems facing the independent African states. It can be achieved only in the basis of uniting all anti-imperialist elements, with the working class as the *leading* force, allied with the working farmers, the peasantry, intelligentsia and progressive elements among the ruling African bourgeoisie.

Although the working class is small in numbers, it is the most advanced and homogenous class. The process of production brings workers together in a single enterprise under one management, and the increasing division of labour makes obligatory a growing degree of co-operation in production. This makes it easier for workers to recognise the contradiction between *co-operation* in production and *private ownership* of the means of production.

From this grows the understanding of the need to change the social system and to strive for a new system based on com-

mon ownership and production for the benefit of the people. Moreover, the growth of modern large-scale industry and agriculture with scientific methods of production (essential for a socialist system) inevitably means that the working class will become an increasing proportion of the labour force and the peasants a decreasing proportion.

## NEW ECONOMIC PATTERNS

Capitalist growth in Africa is extremely uneven and is influenced by many factors. It depends on the location of mineral resources, the proportion of European settlers in the country and extent of their domination, and many other factors.

Foreign capital is most desirous of a constant supply of minerals and other raw materials. So it is not surprising that it is concentrated in South Africa, Rhodesia, Congo, Angola, and Mozambique. Nor is it strange that this is where the European minority domination is centred.

In 1960 the net value of Africa's output was \$26,000 million equal only to half that of Britain.<sup>1</sup> Its population was 8 per cent of the world's total, but its share of capitalist world output was only 2 per cent, though its share of exports was 5 per cent. In that year the value of its exports reached \$6,600 million and its imports \$8,000 million—leaving an adverse balance of \$1,400 million, mainly due to the adverse terms of trade on the world market.

Thus its exports were 25 per cent of its total output, and its imports 33 per cent. This compared with Britain's exports that year which were 18 per cent of total output and imports 22 per cent. Despite Britain's great concentration on exports it will be seen that the African countries (with their low economic development and mass poverty) have to export a bigger proportion of total output than Britain!

In 1960 agricultural output in Africa was four times the

<sup>1</sup> "Industrial Growth in Africa" (*Report of Economic Commission in Africa, December 1961*). Most of the economic facts provided in the early part of this chapter are taken from this report.

value of industrial output, in many countries ten times, and in some of them even 20 times more. Together with subsistence agriculture there has been a rapid growth in recent years of co-operatives among African peasant farmers, and this is likely to continue.

The independent African states are faced with a gigantic problem in their endeavours to transform their backward economies and to build up modern industry and agriculture. The capitalist "experts" argue they should not even attempt to create basic heavy industries, but to concentrate on agriculture.

Certainly it is essential to diversify agriculture and to apply more modern equipment and methods of production. But this is only possible with more agricultural machines, chemicals and fertilisers. Unless African countries start to produce these for themselves they will go on relying on high-priced foreign imports. As long as they depend on agriculture (with most of their minerals in the hands of foreign monopolies) they will continue to suffer from the adverse trade terms.

*There is no hope for Africa's economic future unless decisive measures are taken for the industrialisation of its economy. This means the construction of machines which can turn out the means of production (machines to make machines) and the growth of modern iron and steel, electrical, chemical, and engineering industries, and an adequate supply of electricity, oil and gas.*

This is a gigantic task, and its achievement does not depend merely on blue-prints, but on the relations with imperialist countries, the extent of dependence on foreign capital, relations with socialist countries, the harnessing of the internal economic resources under state ownership or control, and the extension of state ownership and of co-operative methods of production.

Where European minority rule remains, economic development is on capitalist lines—and these countries get the biggest share of foreign capital investment. The European settlers are the ruling class, and are concerned mainly with maintaining their profits, power and privilege. In South Africa the white

ruling class is even neo-imperialist. It has already annexed south-west Africa, and has its eyes on the British Protectorates of Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland.

This is the capitalist path. The independent African states have to decide whether they adopt this path, or whether they will translate their belief in socialism into practice. Even if they chose capitalism it is extremely doubtful whether they could advance on a path similar to the settler territories in southern Africa. They do not have the economic resources or the skilled manpower to do so. In any case, they would have to become "client states" of foreign imperialists if they chose this path. It would meet with the determined opposition of all African national movements and the mass of the people. To achieve economic independence the struggle against imperialism must be raised to a higher level than was ever reached in the struggle for political independence.

Among the thirty-six independent African states (most of which have some kind of "socialist" aim) those which have taken the most decisive measures to transform the economy are Ghana (until the recent military coup), Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, and Mali. Far-reaching measures were taken in Zanzibar after the revolution of January 1964, and since the formation of the union of Tanzania impressive steps are being taken in what was formerly Tanganyika.

It is not surprising that the trend towards scientific socialism is more pronounced in these six countries. This underlines the Marxist emphasis that unity of theory and practice gives the best experience, gives rise to new ideas, and makes for the most rapid progress.

All these African countries have their economic plans. They began at different times, extend over varying periods, and have a variety of objectives. The Soviet Union was the first country in the world to plan its economy. It is significant that most of the newly-independent states have been inspired by the Soviet Union in drawing up their economic plans.

This does not mean that all these plans are socialist in character. In a certain sense the new African states are poised between pre-capitalist society and the alternative of choosing

capitalism or socialism. Some of them lean more towards capitalism, and others more towards socialism. What will emerge in the end will be different in many respects from the economic and political pattern in the existing socialist countries or the capitalist countries of the world.

When the military coup took place Ghana was engaged in carrying through its seven-year plan launched in April 1963, and revised in 1965. The cost of achieving its development target in 1970 was fixed at £1,016 million, of which roughly one half was to come from government and the other half from private investment. The biggest share of the total is to provide capital goods. This indicates the decisive steps being taken to modernise the economy.

Though the plan made clear that Ghana had "chosen the socialist form of society as the objective of her social and economic development" the pattern of the economy was by no means uniform. Dr. Nkrumah himself described it as a "mixed economy", five-fold in character: (1) state, (2) co-operative, (3) mixed enterprise, (4) foreign, (5) internal private sector. The whole strategy was to expand the first two sectors more rapidly than the others.

The term "mixed economy" will raise many eyebrows among those in Britain who were extremely critical of the Labour Government of 1945, which boasted of its "mixed economy" (80 per cent private, 20 per cent state) as a new version of socialism. However, there are basic differences. The proportion of the state sector was far bigger in Ghana, and the government was on guard against the danger of monopoly concerns (as in Britain) undermining the state enterprises while taking full advantage of their cheap services.

Even more significant was the political composition and outlook of the Ghana government, its firm pledges to strive to build socialism. This was far different from the "mixed economy" in imperialist Britain, where there is no basic difference between the imperialists and the official Labour leaders.

Together with new state enterprises Ghana had taken over many of those formerly owned by overseas monopoly firms. These include shipping, cable and wireless, civil aviation,

five out of seven British-owned diamond mines, a Dutch diamond firm, and the big Leventis store.

It had also broken the virtual monopoly of the United Africa Company (subsidiary of the giant Unilever) in the buying of cocoa from the farmers. The cocoa-farmers formed their own co-operative society for transporting (as well as producing) cocoa, with the sale of cocoa centred in Ghana instead of London and New York.

With the aid of the socialist countries all kinds of new enterprises sprang up in recent years (rubber-processing, shoe factories, bleaching, dyeing, glass, fish canning, furniture, cocoa-processing, sugar refineries). All these may have seemed insignificant in contrast to what exists in the big capitalist countries, but they represented a great transformation from pre-independence days, when all these products had to be imported even processed cocoa.

Perhaps even more significant is the Volta Dam. This will go a long way to transform Ghana's economy, with its plentiful supply of electrical power and the basis which will be provided for other industries. The Tema refinery (costing £8½ million) is soon likely to provide raw materials for a big petro-chemical industry, and Ghana is now producing its own steel—though not yet in sufficient quantity.

Significant changes also took place in agriculture in Ghana. In 1965 there were over 100 state farms (though many of them are still experimental), and over 1,000 co-operative farms. They included cocoa, mixed dairy farms, rubber, and others—though there were many big cocoa farmers who employed wage-labour.

The basic aim of the seven-year plan was to abolish the remnants of a colonial economy, and to develop a new state apparatus to assist in building the foundations of socialism by 1970, and then to proceed to the creation of a socialist society. In the first stage its aim was for Ghana to process its own products instead of depending so greatly on the export of raw materials to be processed abroad. After 1970 the main emphasis was on machine and other heavy industry as part of plans for massive industrialisation.

Algeria is moving forward on similar lines as did Ghana, but from a different background. Its people had to wage a seven-year war of liberation before they could start transforming the old backward economy, held back by a million French settlers, big overseas firms, and their own Algerian landlords, big traders, and commercial elements. When victory was won in 1961, over 900,000 French settlers returned to France. The land and enterprises they left behind enabled the Algerian government to embark on a massive transformation in land-ownership and transformation of the backward economy.

Of the total 25 million acres of agricultural land, 15 million acres were taken over. Half of this belonged to former French landlords and half to Algerian landlords. More than 500 industrial enterprises were taken over, and these are now managed by Workers' Councils.

Much remains to be achieved before the legacy of French colonial rule is overcome in Algeria. There are still 8,500 private farms of more than 100 hectares each, and another 15,000 of more than 10 acres. This compares with 600,000 smaller farms.

Ben Bella was not only conscious of continued pressure from French imperialism, but also of the growth of capitalist elements within Algeria. At the F.L.N. Congress in April 1964 the main resolution emphasised that :

“National capitalism is entrenched primarily in the two sectors of the economy—the privately owned agricultural estates and the big commercial enterprises.”

However, there are no illusions that Algeria's path towards socialism will be easy. The arrest and detention of Ben Bella in 1964, and the seizing of power by Colonel Boumedienne, does not seem to have changed the basic socialist objectives, but it may have slowed down the pace of advance, and possibly weakened the democratic opportunities within that country.

Within the past three years gigantic advances have been made in Egypt. Though still a long way from having achieved an internal democratic system, there can be no doubt of Egypt's



consistent opposition to imperialism, especially after the 1956 invasion.

The nationalisation of banks and all the main industries was accomplished in 1963-5. Agrarian reform has been speeded up on a big scale, and President Nasser and the government have publicly declared the aim of building socialism.

Similar steps are being taken in Mali and Guinea. In both countries former French enterprises have been taken over, co-operative farms developed on a big scale, and the whole people (through their village communities) drawn into the administration of affairs. In both countries also the aim of achieving socialism is constantly being emphasised.

In the countries of East Africa no significant steps have been put into operation to take over the enterprises of big overseas monopoly firms—except in Zanzibar after the revolution of January 1964. On the contrary, the main emphasis of most African leaders in this region is to give pledges to foreign governments that they will not embark on any form of nationalisation.

However, big advances are being made in the share of African peasant farmers in agricultural production. In Tanganyika (now Tanzania) most of the sisal, tea and tobacco is grown on European farms and plantations. But African peasant farmers produce nearly all the cotton (valued at £9 million in 1963) and a big share of the coffee, oil, seeds and nuts. Since independence in 1961, registered African co-operative societies have increased from 760 to 968, and in 1963 they handled goods to the value of more than £14 million—nearly one-third of total exports. These societies now have their own Co-operative Bank.

In Uganda, the coffee and cotton are grown almost entirely by African peasant farmers, and this accounts for almost 80 per cent of total exports. In 1963, Africans owned and operated 22 cotton ginneries, and 29 coffee processing factories producing 27,000 tons of coffee. Among these is a growing proportion of wealthy peasants, who are likely to develop into employers of labour and investors in industry, or both.

In 1962, there were 1,700 co-operative societies in Uganda,

with 292,000 members, 25 per cent more than in 1961. Apart from these producers' societies the African marketing societies in 1961 handled goods valued at more than £9 million. Now the government is going ahead to establish co-operative *group* farms.

Main changes in Kenya's agricultural production arise from the buying-out of European farmers (given generous sums by the British government) and the growth of co-operatives. In 1964 there were more than 200,000 African smallholders in Kenya. They grew 42,000 tons of coffee valued at nearly £3 million on 70,000 acres of land. Tea was also grown on 6,000 acres of land. Total production of African peasants and smallholders in 1964 provided 20 per cent of Kenya's export income. There are now 540 co-operative societies of all types, and with an annual turnover of £30 million. Steps are now being taken to form a Kenya Federation of Co-operatives.

These new patterns of production (and different forms of ownership and control) are likely to make a big impact on the kind of socialist societies that will come into being in these African countries. Based on the traditional system of communal land ownership, the absence of a landlord class, and only a weak and small indigenous capitalist element, these co-operative methods of production are more likely to speed the process towards socialism.

In the existing socialist countries the growth of co-operation came only *after* socialism was achieved. In many African countries it is paving the way to socialism. The pattern of socialism, when achieved in Africa, may well differ from that already in existence in the socialist world. But it can also provide useful lessons for the existing socialist countries. At the same time Africans can learn a great deal from those countries which have already achieved socialism.

## SOCIALIST CONCEPTS

Under the general umbrella of "African Socialism" all kinds of strange notions are being peddled in many parts of Africa as to the nature of a socialist society. Together with Presidents Senghor, Nyerere, and Kenyatta (each of whom makes a different emphasis) there has also been put forward the concept of an "Arab Socialism", even "Muslim Socialism", and in Tunisia (another Arab country) the concept of a "Neo-Destour Socialism"—Neo-Destour (new life) being the name adopted by the ruling party.

In Nigeria the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.) led by Dr. Okpara projected the concept of "Pragmatic Socialism"; the Action Group advocated "Democratic Socialism", and in the Nigerian General Election (boycotted outside the North) even the Northern Peoples' Congress (N.P.C.), the voice of the feudal emirs, had the effrontery to advocate "African Socialism".

What is one to make of all these strange concepts? It seems that most of them spring from the desire for Africa to be *different*—different from the capitalist countries, and different from the socialist countries. It is an expression of African pride, a challenge that Africa owes nothing to capitalism and imperialism (except colonial rule and exploitation) and that it does not need to travel on the same path as those countries which have already achieved socialism.

This standpoint is a positive factor in arousing African political consciousness, promoting a sense of African unity, and encouraging the African masses to find their own road to

socialism. On the other hand, it serves to conceal the nature of a socialist society, creates political confusion, and gives no guiding line on the precise and practical steps to achieve socialism. Moreover, many African leaders use the words "African Socialism" as a cover for a policy which in reality is based on co-operation with imperialism.

Socialism is a science—the science of social change, and of the necessary steps to build a classless society. The sciences of mathematics, chemistry, biology and physics have universal laws, not separated into geographical compartments. Noone advocates African mathematics, African chemistry, African physics, or African biology. Science is universal, but the *application* of scientific laws and the most suitable *methods* may differ in different conditions.

Similarly, there is only one kind of socialism—scientific socialism—and this applies to the whole world, not to one continent or one country. One may rightly argue that serious blunders have been made in several socialist countries, and it is perfectly correct that countries aiming to achieve socialism should learn to avoid these blunders. In the development of the natural sciences many experiments led to serious blunders, but only by the process of trial and error was it possible to achieve the best maximum results.

In the advance to socialism, and in its construction after winning political power, it seems clear there will also be many serious blunders in Africa. The important thing is to learn from these lessons, and seek the path which brings the greatest benefit with the minimum suffering to those who are engaged in the struggle to achieve it.

The boundless confusion associated with the term "African Socialism" was evident at a "Colloquium" on this subject organised at Dakar, capital of Senegal, jointly by the Government and the Mediterranean Congress of Culture in December 1962. Those who were invited were as interesting a collection as the actual content of the papers read at this gathering. Among them was Lord Listowel (former Governor-General of Ghana), Guy Mollet (Secretary-General of the French Socialist Party), Harris Wofford (special adviser to

President Kennedy), and Fenner Brockway, M.P. (now Lord Brockway).

When it was over, a well-known British journal *West Africa* commented :

“Who is a socialist in Africa? . . . it is difficult to acquit some of the delegates of a subtle complacency in paying lip-service to an ideal which is not, in fact, pursued in their countries.” (29.12.62. p. 1449)

One of the contributors to a symposium on “African Socialism” (Aristide R. Zollberg) puts it in a different way :

“Whether or not this approach to the problem of development can properly be called ‘socialist’ is irrelevant except to the countries themselves. Some African nations which shun the word, such as the Ivory Coast, would, nevertheless, endorse all the planks of the doctrinal platforms erected at Dakar.” (ibid., p. 127)

One may recall the remarks of President Modiba Keita of Mali. No one can accuse him of not striving for a socialist solution for Africa’s problems :

“If we are not careful the word ‘socialism’ will be emptied of its meaning, and bourgeois systems of the most reactionary kind will be able to camouflage themselves under the sign of socialism.”

The hundredth issue of *The Spark* (November 13, 1964) printed a message from Dr. Nkrumah on this subject :

“With the general acceptance, even if grudgingly given in some quarters, of the socialist path of development, it becomes necessary to spell out the content of socialism. This is the second front of the ideological battle. The many erroneous and deceitful concepts of socialism currently put out have to be exposed and destroyed. Concepts like African socialism pragmatic socialism, traditional African socialism, Arab socialism, etc., all these have to be analysed and carefully examined so as not to confuse the African people as to the

real meaning of socialism and the correct way to set about achieving it.

"Here we have had to wage an unflagging battle for the general acceptance of the principles of scientific socialism. Socialism, in its basic principles is a science. And science has no geographical limitations. The duty of Africa is to embrace these universal principles of socialism while giving the institutional forms that take into account our African background and heritage."

Even earlier, in a comment on the Dakar "Colloquium", *The Spark* had made its position clear :

"Socialist orientation does not mean preaching a hotch-potch of pragmatism-cum-humanism-cum-metaphysics plastered over with idiosyncrasies and passed over as African socialism. African socialism can mean no more than the basic tenets of socialism in an African setting." (29.12.62)

Marxists recognise that many Africans with genuine socialist aims use the term "African Socialism", and are critical only of the reactionary trends which use this term to distort the real meaning of socialism. At Dakar there were also several non-Marxist critics. One speaker from Tunisia (M. Chakar) strongly contested the view that African traditional society had any positive aspects which could be preserved in the advance towards a new society :

"It is an established historical fact that traditional political, economic, and social structures have plunged our respective countries into decadence, regression, fetishism, and finally colonisation. . . They constitute the main obstacle to our advancement, and if we seriously intend to blaze our path toward socialism we must attack these structures" (*African Socialism*, p. 123).

At the same time, M. Chaker did not want to destroy *all* the traditions of past African society. He denied that he favoured "a crusade against traditions", and asserted that the traditional "moral values and individual genius will be jealously guarded".

On the other hand, there were those who were extremely sceptical as to whether old traditions had any value at all in the modern situation. One contributor (Fred G. Burke) expressed support for every essential step to build a modern society, but declared :

“Not only is there a contradiction between the organisational demands of nation-building and the revival of traditional culture, but it is questionable whether traditional values are in fact conducive to national development. The attributes of traditional society held by Dr. Nyerere and others to be unique—communal obligations, consensus, democratic decision-making, etc., are characteristic of small-scale societies” (ibid., p. 207).

Other contributors to the “Colloquium” argued that “the nation-state and its sub-divisions are territorial units where communal responsibilities and relationships depend not on kinship groupings but upon a common residential area”. The grouping of individual homesteads into villages (which I saw in operation during my visit to Tanganyika in December 1963) means in practice the weakening of kinship ties, and to the extent this is developed will lead to the dissolution of families and clans in their present form.

Mr. Burke was convinced this process would mean “fundamental alterations in customary institutions”, and finds it difficult to believe that “villagisation is derived from, or consistent with, Ujamaa”.<sup>1</sup> This contributor claims that :

“Development programmes are proceeding to dismantle the very institutions with which their pristine virtues (Ujamaa) are expressed. . . Ujamaa is more the product of an attitude of mind growing out of a colonial experience than it is the indigenous foundation of contemporary political theory.” (ibid., p. 219).

However, even many of those who question the validity of a past “golden age” and the virtues of the old traditional African society, still feel that the concept of a *past* communal society

<sup>1</sup> Ujamaa means the pattern of the “extended family” in Africa.

is useful to mould African mass opinion in favour of a *future* socialist society. William H. Friedland, joint editor of *African Socialism*, after declaring that "The many tendencies which exist today in African Socialism make it appear as a potpourri of ideas having little coherence", was still hopeful that :

"Just as African Socialism is a relatively empty ideological vessel into which a great variety of ideas can be poured, it can be expected that the ideology will be as malleable in the future as it has been in the past—the brief past that African Socialism has experienced" (*ibid.*, p. 34).

A similar hope is expressed by another contributor to the Dakar "Colloquium", believing that realities can come out of myths :

"The myth of traditional socialism is already being elaborated, and its wider dissemination will shape the readiness of the population at large to accept socialist forms when new institutions, serving new functions, are created, or when old institutions are made to serve new functions" (*ibid.*, p. 62).

This certainly seems a risky way to expect the African people to understand socialist principles, far less to take an active part in building the new society. There are so many contradictions in the concept of "African Socialism" that many aspects of capitalist society are presented as "socialism" and accepted even by the big capitalist tycoons.

Mr. Tom Mboya was not among the earlier advocates of "African Socialism", but he has lately been busy spreading his conception of what it means. In the Uganda journal *Transition* (March 1963) he explains :

"When I talk of 'African Socialism' I refer to those proven codes of conduct in the African societies, which have, over the ages, conferred dignity on our people and afforded them security regardless of their station in life. I refer to universal charity which characterised our societies and I refer to the African thought processes and cosmological ideas, which regard man, not as a social means, but as an end and entity in the society."



What a lot of meaningless phrases! True, the early communal societies were full of dignity in the sense that no one exploited another, everyone had the benefit of communal wealth, and possessed a limited sense of security. There can be heated arguments as to the extent this was true in Kenya's past history. It certainly is not true of Kenya today.

At the moment when Mboya was boasting of "security regardless of their station in life" there were at least 300,000 unemployed in Kenya, many thousands of landless peasants, and Mboya himself had to admit that "hungry men have to steal in order to live" (*London Times*, 19.7.62). When he refers to "universal charity which characterised our societies" it is well to remember there was widespread charity under the feudal system, but it did not end feudal exploitation. The imperialists are pastmasters in praising charity to the skies and even practising it to some extent! What is there uniquely African in these features?

One has the impression that all these phrases are put forward simply to give the impression that socialism in Africa must be different. Mboya wants it to be different from the "Socialism of the Western type" and also the "Marxian type of Socialism". In fact, Mboya's definition is precisely the "Socialism of the Western type", of the right-wing Labour leaders, to which no capitalist, no Tory or Liberal in Britain, could object.

The journal *Transition* goes on to expound Mboya's ideas in these words: "Socialism is a mental conditioning or an attitude of mind established in order to achieve rational relationships and harmony in society." Substitute the word "capitalism" for "socialism" and any capitalist in the world would accept this. Even when this definition is given in more detail no capitalist in Britain would quarrel with it:

"Socialism stands for equality of opportunity, security of income and employment, equality before the law, individual freedom, universal franchise, state regulation of economic life, state control of vital means of production and distribution . . ."

In *imperialist* Britain 20 per cent of the economy was nationalised nearly twenty years ago. There is considerable "state regulation of economic life" and "state control of vital means of production and distribution". Capitalist monopolies in Britain have no objection to "state regulation" and "state control" as long as they benefit from cheap public services provided by nationalised industries.

"African Socialism" has now been adopted as the official aim of the Kenya Government. Mr. Tom Mboya, as Minister for Economic Planning and Development, seems to have been involved in the preparation of a policy statement, *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya*. For this he was warmly praised by President Kenyatta in Parliament and also in a special Foreword.

This new booklet, printed in April 1965, makes it clear that a great deal of thought has been devoted by its authors on how to present the concept of "African Socialism" and combine this with a specific programme for the years ahead. The detailed programme itself includes many useful and practical measures for economic and social advance in Kenya.

However, it is extremely difficult to gather what the programme itself has to do with the concept of "African Socialism," for it would be equally suitable without it. It seems that this title has simply been thrown in. The booklet makes frequent reference to Marx (and his *supposed* teachings) all of which make clear that the authors know little or nothing of Marx's writings—except what they have gleaned from sources hostile to Marxism. We are informed that :

"Marxian socialism and *laissez-faire* capitalism are both theoretical economic organisations designed to ensure the use of resources for the benefit of society."

Marxism has been interpreted in many ways, but this is surely the first time that his basic socialist theory has been described as an "economic organisation". Equally it is a surprise to be told that early (*laissez-faire*) capitalism, which Marx so sharply exposed, had the same aims as Marx himself in wanting "the use of resources for the benefit of society"!

We are informed that: "Capitalism did not evolve into Marxian socialism, as Marx predicted, but was indeed modified in directions that Marx might well have approved." It seems Marx would have been delighted to have been proved wrong, and would have even approved of modern capitalism!

There is more of this kind of rubbish about Marxism. More than likely the booklet was originally drafted by some left-over British civil servants and young members of the United States "Peace Corps". It would certainly be rejected by the most elementary student of Marxism.

The booklet came under heavy fire in a long review of one and a half pages by "Critic" in *The Nationalist*, the daily newspaper in Tanzania, in the two days 28th and 29th June, 1965. In the first instalment the writer expresses a strong suspicion that the author of the booklet "is neither an African nor a Socialist", and that:

"Far from being a policy for socialism, all the arguments advanced are AGAINST socialism and FOR capitalism."

The journal of the South African Communist Party *The African Communist* (No. 22. Third Quarter 1965) also made a critical review of this booklet, expressing the view that it "stems from an incorrect characterisation of western capitalism, and appears to have been influenced by many of the false theories of the British brand of social democracy: the Labour Party".

Equally devastating in its criticism is a review by Patrick McAuslan in *Venture* (September 1965), a most moderate monthly journal of the Fabian Society in Britain. The writer starts off by expressing a serious doubt whether the policy outlined "could lead to a socialist society, African or otherwise," and reaches the conclusion that:

"The overwhelming impression one gains from the paper is that the Kenya government have opted for the capitalist direction of economic development."

Bearing all this in mind it is not surprising that a new English edition of the Kenya version of "African Socialism", was

recently published by the Roman Catholic centre in London. Indeed, those who put forward this concept are highly praised by the Catholic Church authorities, and the most recent book on this subject, entitled *The Elements of African Socialism*, published in 1965, was written by Father Bede Onouha, an African priest of the Catholic Church in Nigeria.

In bringing out the similarity of the Catholic religious outlook with the concept of "African Socialism", this book is more profound than any others on this subject. For it expounds the real philosophical and political basis for these ideas.

The foreword is written by Father John Francis Maxwell, to whom the author pays great tribute. He is (or was) the Diocesan Director of the Catholic Social Guild in Southwark (London) and the book takes copious extracts from a monograph written by him in 1962 in the *Law Journal* of the University of Detroit.

Though critical of *laissez-faire* capitalism, the essence of this new doctrine is that workers should become shareholders, and so become integrated with a "reformed" capitalist system—one of the basic features of the Kenya plan. The author describes this as an "ingenuous scheme", and points out that :

"Following this plan we need no longer to nationalise all industry. Private enterprise can prosper and at the same time be socially responsible. By bold and scientific legislation, we can *take the sting out of capitalism* and render it harmless; we can turn capitalist corporations into a form of equitable co-operation between investors, managers and employees, reduce common shares to preferred shares with fixed dividends, keep membership in industrial companies open to all citizens and put an end to the selfish accumulation of unlimited profits" (p. 82).

The author "triumphantly" describes this as "socialised capitalism—the capitalist monster subdued, purified and rendered marriageable to socialism . . . it provides us with a brand new approach to socialism, away from class conflict and and totalitarianism . . ." (p. 83). But it's not really so new! It has been a feature of pronouncements by Catholic Popes for decades.

Still, there are gems of good sense in this book. It stresses that history is full of examples" . . . of political revolutions that have proved disappointing through failure to go on to the economic and social revolutions. . . The people rested on their laurels after the fighting was over while the new masters took its spoils for themselves. Will this be Africa's fate, too?" (p. 122.)

It certainly will if the ideas expressed in this book are put into practice. Apart from being extremely remote from the reality of the actual struggle in Africa, what it really advocates is the building of a capitalist system without classes !

"There is only one way to save Africa from splitting into closed social classes and that is by uniting the interests of workers and investors; this, in turn can only be done by a socialist system of obligatory worker-shareholding. This must be the basis of true, constructive socialism" (p. 125).

And so we are taken back to the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 in which Marx and Engels tore into shreds the immature ideas of their predecessors whose "chief accusation against the bourgeoisie amounts to this, that under the bourgeois regime a class is being developed, which is destined to cut up root and branch the old order of society" and went on to declare : "Christian socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat."

Of the utopians of that time the *Manifesto* explains that : "The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. . . They, therefore, endeavour, and that constantly, to deaden the class struggle and to reconcile class antagonism . . . by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effect of their social science."

It is not only African leaders who tend to be mesmerised by the words "African Socialism", but also sincere and well-meaning Labour leaders, like Fenner Brockway, who has a long and honoured record as a fighter against imperialism. It is therefore rather unexpected to find that Lord Brockway, in the first part of his book, goes out of his way to give unwar-

ranted credit to the effect of British colonial rule as “. . . the most enlightened”. The European colonisers are praised for paving the way to modern towns and cities, constructing roads and railways, and embarking upon a modern educational system. True, it is admitted that :

“. . . the motive was sometimes, though not always, to serve primarily the European population and European interests, but even so the Africans have also reaped some of the benefits and are inheriting the basis on which they can build their new states and societies” (p. 12).

In striking the balance between “the rights and wrongs of colonialism” Lord Brockway concludes it “must be placed on the credit side”. No indication is given as to whether economic, social, and cultural advance would have been far greater had it not been for the colossal slave trade, colonial rule, the deliberate restriction of economic development (except for minerals), and the gigantic robbery of Africa’s resources under colonial rule.

Few Africans would agree with Lord Brockway’s rather magnanimous tribute to the colonial rulers and the implication that whatever advances were achieved in Africa before political independence were due mainly to the Europeans, whatever their motives.

Brockway gives unmerited tribute to British and American universities for influencing African students at the end of the war in a socialist direction. Not a word is written about the effect of the victory over fascism, the influence of the Soviet Union, and the expansion of the socialist world.

The tendency to ignore the socialist world as if it did not exist goes a long way to explain Lord Brockway’s almost tacit acceptance of any brand of socialism which is different from Marxism. Tunisia, Senegal and Dahomey are included among the “socialist” countries in Africa, though the most elementary study of these countries reveals the strong economic grip of imperialism as well as the growth of indigenous capitalist elements .

Lord Brockway sums up the “four trends in socialist theory”

in Africa as "Marxism-Leninism, African Marxism, Pragmatic Socialism, and African Democratic Socialism" (p. 19).

The Marxist-Leninists appear to "come into conflict with the general socialist flow in Africa because they insist that their "scientific socialism" is authoritative under all conditions, and that its theory and method must be universally accepted" (p. 20).

No evidence is given for this assertion. True, Marxist-Leninists believe that the principles of scientific socialism are universal, but they have also constantly emphasised that the *forms* of socialism and the *methods* of achieving it depend on the specific conditions in each country and the relation of class forces.

Lord Brockway mixes up the universal political *content* with its many possible *forms* and various methods of achieving it. For this reason he seems to imagine that socialism already exists in several African countries, like Tunisia, Senegal and Dahomey, which are included along with Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Algeria, the U.A.R., and Tanganyika in "The Socialist Sector of Africa."

In the first three there was not the slightest evidence of any advance towards socialism at that time, and even now they are foremost among those African countries still under the economic and political domination of imperialism. The other countries mentioned have certainly made impressive advances towards breaking the economic and political grip of imperialism and taken decisive measures which can stimulate the advance towards socialism.

No African leader has yet claimed that socialism has been achieved in his country. President Nkrumah himself declared most emphatically that socialism had not yet been achieved in Ghana. From this standpoint, Dr Nkrumah had far more in common with scientific socialism than the hazy ideas expressed by Lord Brockway.

## NKRUMAISM

Whatever the final outcome of the February military coup in Ghana it cannot blot out Dr. Nkrumah's outstanding record of leadership in the African revolution, the economic and social advances in Ghana, and his contribution to socialist theory in Africa. Nkrumaism was not only the guiding ideology in Ghana but was making a big impact on socialist ideas throughout Africa.

Dr. Nkrumah is not a recent convert to Marxism. As a student in Britain twenty years ago, he expressed the view that "the most searching and penetrating analysis of economic imperialism has been given by Marx and Lenin". What he wrote at that time has been published in a book *Towards Colonial Freedom* (1962) without alteration, revealing an unbroken line of Marxist thought.

During the last two decades his political stature has grown immensely, together with his grasp of the character of the struggle which still lies ahead. In his foreword to this book he points out :

"Twenty years ago my ideas on African unity, important as I considered them even at that time, were limited to West African unity. Today, as I sit at my desk in Accra and glance at the several maps of Africa surrounding me, I see the wider horizon of the immense possibilities open to Africans—the only guarantee, in fact, for our survival—in a total continental political union of Africa."

Dr. Nkrumah set himself this aim even before Ghana's independence in 1957, but only after this was achieved was it



possible for him to set the pace towards this goal. The initial step was the convening of the first All-African Peoples' Conference at Accra in December 1958; then came the second conference at Tunis in January 1960; and the third in Cairo in March 1961. All these gatherings endorsed the aim of a "United States of Africa", with one political union for the whole continent.

There is always a vast difference between setting an aim of this magnitude and actually achieving it. It has met with formidable obstacles from the beginning. Many African leaders who accepted it in principle in 1958 did so because it was popular to give the perspective of a united Africa, but had no serious intention of taking any serious step towards its achievement. Moreover, the imperialist strategy of neo-colonialism was designed to prevent this at all costs.

The result is that neo-colonialism has encouraged sharp divisions between independent African states and national leaders, and many of them have succumbed to the temptation of putting their supposed separate interests before the interests on Africa as a whole. On particular issues and on various occasions Africa has spoken out with a united voice, as on the apartheid system in South Africa, majority rule in Southern Rhodesia, Commonwealth immigration, and other matters. But on the basic issue of African political union little advance has been made.

Dr. Nkrumah has always stressed that : "The independence of Ghana is meaningless until it is linked with the total liberation of Africa", and his book *Africa Must Unite* (1963) was widely distributed in advance for the African conference of heads of states held that year. This gave a searching analysis of the effect of neo-colonialist strategy in Africa, its success in the continued exploitation of the continent and in aggravating divisions in the continent.

"Imperialism is still a most powerful force to be reckoned with in Africa. It controls our economies. It operates on a world-wide scale in combinations of many different kinds : economic, political, cultural, educational and military; and

through intelligence and information services. In the context of the new independence mounting in Africa, it has begun, and will continue, to assume new forms and subtler disguises. It is already making use, and will continue to make use of the different cultural and economic associations which colonialism forced between erstwhile European masters and African subjects. It is creating client states, which it manipulates from the distance. It will distort and play upon, as it is already doing, the latent fears of burgeoning nationalism and independence. It will, as it is already doing, fan the fires of sectional interests, of personal greed and ambition among leaders and contesting aspirants to power."

Reading this passage today (three years after it was written) it is almost prophetic! Dr. Nkrumah did not foresee precisely what steps would be taken to overthrow him, or when they would be applied, but he was certainly aware of the forces ranged against him.

In the battle for the economic transformation of Ghana, it was constantly emphasised by Dr. Nkrumah that "socialism will continue to remain a slogan until industrialisation has been achieved", and that :

"As long as we are able to make our own machine tools, the instruments for the manufacture of all the myriad commodities, large and small, we at present import, we shall be at the mercy of outside sources of supply. We shall continue to be economically dependent, and all talk of socialist progress will be so much chatter."

That is why the 1964-70 economic plan laid stress on the need for "the complete transformation of Ghana into a strong, industrialised socialist economy and society".

The plan put the perspective of building the *foundations* of socialism during the next decade, and then to proceed to build socialism. Whether this could have been achieved depended not only on developments in Ghana, but on closer co-operation with the other independent African States, and a change in the existing conditions of the world market in which

the prices of primary goods from countries like Ghana are constantly declining. It will certainly *not* be achieved under the present regime.

Dr. Nkrumah himself was certainly conscious of the fact that Ghana was still far from achieving socialism. But there could be no doubt that he was perfectly clear on what socialism means and what must be done to make this transformation :

“For socialism assumes the public ownership of the means of production, the land and its resources, and the use of those means in fulfilment of the people’s needs.

“Socialism, above all, is predicted upon the ability to satisfy those needs. It is obvious, therefore, that Ghana at this time is not possessed of the socialist means. Indeed, we still have to lay the actual foundations on which they can be built, the modernisation of our agriculture and the industrialisation of our country. We have to transfer to the hands of our people the major means of production and distribution.” (*Africa Must Unite*, pp. 119-120).

He also made clear this would not be achieved by the wave of a magic wand, or the presentation of blue-print plans. It was above all a matter of winning the mass of the people for socialist ideas, and mobilising tens of thousands of active socialists :

“We cannot build socialism without socialists and we must take positive steps to ensure that the party and the country produce the men and women who can handle a socialist programme” (*Address to C.P.P. Study Group*, April 1961).

This is why there was so much emphasis in Ghana on the study of socialist theory. It’s not surprising that one of the first places taken over during the military coup was the Winneba Institute of Political Science, at which between 200 to 300 Ghanaians (and students from other parts of Africa) were given a two-year course in Nkrumaism (the Ghanaian version of Marxism), to fit them to lead in the construction of socialism. The main aim was to equip them to assist in teaching the

basic tenets of socialism to the people in the factories, on the farms, and in the offices and workshops all over Ghana.

Dr. Nkrumah was most emphatic in insisting that democratic centralism must be the guiding principle of organisation and leadership.

“It means simply that at every level the people freely elect all organs of the party. And flowing from this, all lower organs of the party must follow the directives of the higher organs; and the entire membership must follow the directives of the Central Committee of the Party” (*Some Essentials of Nkrumalism*, p. 40).

The decisive part which a political party has to play in the transformation from the old African society to the new was given high priority by Dr. Nkrumah, who pointed out :

“Just as political independence could not have been attained without the leadership of a strong, disciplined party, so Ghana’s economic independence and the objective of socialism cannot be attained without decisive party leadership. I am convinced that the Convention Peoples’ Party, based as it is on the support of the overwhelming majority of the people, is best able to carry through our economic plans and build a socialist state” (*Africa Must Unite*, pp. 128-29).

It will be seen that the C.P.P. owes a great deal to Lenin’s writings on the organisation and functioning of a political party aiming to achieve socialism, and Dr. Nkrumah himself lays great emphasis on the principles of democratic centralism. At the same time, it is always made clear that the C.P.P. is certainly not a copy of the existing Communist Parties :

“The structure of the C.P.P. has been built up out of our own experiences, conditions and environment. It is entirely Ghanaian in content and African in outlook, though imbued with Marxist socialist philosophy” (*ibid.*, p. 129).

Dr. Nkrumah’s ambition was to transform the C.P.P. into a well-organised political party based on socialist aims, and

adopting the principles of democratic centralism in its organisation and leadership. However, it was clear that these principles were not applied in practice. The one-party system tended more and more to become a one-way system, with commands from the top leadership instead of a two-way process of democratic expression from the bottom and general guidance from the top.

In contrast to these weaknesses Dr. Nkrumah made a creative contribution in the field of philosophy, in the application of Marxism to the specific conditions in Africa. This is revealed in one of his latest books *Consciencism* (1964), which is described as the "philosophy and ideology for decolonisation and development with particular reference to the African revolution."

Without this definition one may question whether so unusual a title conveys anything except a vague abstraction, but its contents make clear that its aim is to work out a new philosophy for Africa. A series of articles in *The Spark* explained :

"Philosophical consciencism upholds the ideology of socialism. Its social milieu is Africa but its application is universal to all dependent countries or emerging nations. Its foundation is materialism impregnated with egalitarianism and an ethical view of man. Its approaches are positive and its methods are dialectical. It is both revolutionary and evolutionary in content, revolutionary if juxtaposed with colonialism and capitalism from which it recoils; evolutionary if considered in relation to the traditional African society whose guiding principles of egalitarianism and the concern of all for each it seeks to re-assert and enthrone, and regards as fundamental to any society or social order" (*Some Essential Features of Nkrumaism*, pp. 44-45).

In his book Dr. Nkrumah defines three main segments in Africa. The first is traditional African society; the second the presence of the Islamic tradition; and the third the infiltration of the Christian tradition and culture of Western Europe—the last of which uses "colonialism and neo-colonialism as its primary vehicles".

It is argued that these different segments are animated by competing ideologies, but that since society implies a certain dynamic unity there needs to emerge" . . . an ideology which, genuinely catering for the needs of all, will take the place of the competing ideologies, and so reflect the dynamic unity of society, and be the guide to society's continual progress" (*Consciencism*, p. 68).

Traditional African society is presented as being egalitarian in character, with basic principles identical with those of socialism :

"Socialism, therefore, can be and is the defence of the principles of communalism in a modern setting. Socialism is a form of social organisation which, guided by the principles underlying communism, adopts procedures and measures made necessary by demographic and technological developments" (*ibid.*, 73).

Communalism is described as the "social-political ancestor of socialism", and because their underlying principles are identical, in the African independent states the passage from the "ancestral line of communalism" to socialism lies in reform.

From its inception in December 1962, Ghana's weekly socialist journal *The Spark*, consistently explained Nkrumaism as the application of Marxism to African conditions. It waged a consistent battle against the false conception of "African Socialism", and insisted that the principles of scientific socialism are universal.

In the first of a series of articles on "The Socialist Revolution in Africa", the journal sought to deal with all aspects of this theme. From the outset it struck the keynote in these words :

"Scientific socialism is a developing science. It is an outlook, a philosophy which enables us to understand the laws of social change. . . From being a product of the blind historical forces, social change becomes the outcome of conscious action on the part of the people. Marxism is not merely a method of analysis. It generalises the total experience of mankind in its struggle for liberation."

Far from being a rigid dogma this series of articles set out to emphasise that scientific socialism (which is Marxism in practice) is extremely flexible in its application :

“Marxism generalises from practice, from the practice of millions. It is not a dogma, a set of rules to be learned by heart and then applied mechanically to all circumstances. Indeed one of its most essential features is that it should help us to recognise what is new in any situation and to assess the relative importance of what is growing and developing and what is disappearing and dying away.”

This does not mean that Marxists are infallible and never make blunders. If they do make blunders, this is not due to the failure of Marxism as a science, but because of inadequate and faulty application of the methods of analysis in a given situation. Whatever mistakes may be made by Nkrumaism, they were at least a serious attempt to apply the method of Marxism to analyse and understand African problems in the context of the present world situation, and to advance the socialist revolution in that vast continent.

Because Nkrumah sought to translate Marxism into African terms it gave the African peoples something which *belonged to them*, a *scientific outlook* which can guide them on the march towards socialism. This was the great merit of Nkrumaism. Not only was it an enrichment of Marxism. It also served to demonstrate that Marxism is not a rigid dogma, but a guide to action, and a beacon light which illuminates the path to socialism.

## ROADS TO SOCIALISM

Just as science has proved that nothing in nature is static, so has Marxism made clear that society is in a constant state of change and that this makes its impact on the ideas of human beings. This is a world-wide phenomenon which has no geographical boundaries. Precisely due to the rapid political and social changes in Africa in the past two decades, the ideological ferment has been most pronounced.

The changes in Africa have taken place against the background of the increasing sharp contrast between the neo-colonialist strategy of a more desperate imperialism and the striking advances in the socialist world, with its growing positive support to all countries struggling for complete liberation from imperialism.

All this is making a strong ideological impact on African national leaders, so that former political concepts are now being abandoned in favour of a more positive approach to scientific socialism. Though there are still many versions of "African Socialism" and "Arab Socialism", former exponents of these concepts are changing their views. President Nasser's speech to the National Assembly over a year ago is evidence of this :

"There is another point : scientific socialism as we perceive it and as defined by the Charter, is the proper formula for further progress. It has been said that scientific socialism and Marxism is heresy. I have heard it myself and I think many of you have heard it, too. 'What does scientific social-



ism mean?' some people ask. 'Ours is an Arab Socialism, not scientific socialism . . .'

If we want to have a proper and successful socialism it must be applied scientifically. The opposite means chaos. It is not at all a material socialism. We have never said that it was, nor have we said it is a Marxist one" (Speech to National Assembly, November 12, 1964).

It is evident that President Nasser has not yet been converted to Marxism, but equally that new world developments and changes within Egypt itself are making an impact on his thinking. Though always anti-imperialist, and especially after the 1956 Suez invasion, Egypt still lacked a democratic system. Since 1963, big changes have taken place, and decisive steps have been taken to weaken and destroy the power of capitalist elements in Egypt, and to give more emphasis to the aspirations of the workers and peasants.

"I personally believe that the success of socialism is contingent on the development and consolidation of democracy. This is the democracy of the working powers of the people as stipulated in the National Charter. The working powers of the people represent the political and social powers in Egypt. It is the alliance of the workers, the farmers, the educated people, the armed forces with national capital. Egypt has undergone a great social and political development, not only in eliminating the exploiting class, but in the new position of the working class. Before the revolution, the working class was still small, and was being exploited. It has since greatly increased, and it is the working class which represents the socialist system. It has secured leadership, as proved by the fact that half of the elected councils are workers and peasants, and half of the members of the National Assembly are workers and peasants" (National Assembly, November 12, 1964).

One may disagree on the extent to which these changes exist in practice, but what is significant is the new political emphasis made by President Nasser in contrast to the former concept

of "Arab Socialism", and the denial of class differences within Egypt. What is more, this speech made clear that socialism would not be achieved without struggle; that Egypt was "not a socialist country yet", but "in a state of transition from capitalism to socialism".

Similarly, there was a significant change in 1965 in President Nyerere's view, that tribal society was itself an expression of socialism. Neither does this mean that President Nyerere has been converted to Marxism, but it *does* signify a departure from his earlier emphasis on "African Socialism" :

" . . . All countries calling themselves socialist or communist had one common aim, that is, the building of society without classes. We have the same aim, but the methods to achieve it are different. By means of this policy the government is going to form more organisations on state level. Socialism means popular ownership of the means of production. The land in Tanzania belongs to the nation. Today power energy belongs to the people. We have got our own co-operatives which work for the benefit of the people. With support of the National Development Corporation we are going to build industries" (May 2, 1965).

This new ferment of ideas is also expressed by African national leaders in Uganda. Examples are two articles in the progressive Uganda journal *African Pilot*, by John Kakonge (then General Secretary of the Uganda People's Congress). The first article on February 8, 1964, under the title "African Socialism—A Myth" pointed out :

"What is strikingly odd is that no single complete theory of the concept of African socialism exists whatsoever. Each individual advocate of African socialism has his own idea about it and gives a different meaning to this concept."

In the second article on February 15, 1964, a clear warning was given against false concepts of socialism which "become a veiled apology for the capitalist way of development" and the "crippling effect of the cold war", which has as one of its

aims preventing the former colonial countries from "taking the socialist line of development". The article ends with its emphasis on scientific socialism :

"Scientific socialism does not imply that we should make the transition to socialism in faithful imitation of everything that has been done in the Soviet Union. To sum up, I feel that we have every prospect of building socialist societies in Africa which are economically and culturally progressive by adopting the basic theory of scientific socialism to the form of our traditional society with no doubt substantial modifications to it, but without radical departure from the underlying spirit."

What becomes clear from all these expressions (and there are many more from different parts of Africa), is that the former theories of African Exceptionalism are now being replaced with a firm grasp of the basic principles of scientific socialism. At the same time, there is a clear recognition that the advance to socialism in Africa, and the forms of socialism, may differ a great deal from what took place in the present socialist countries.

Is this an entirely new conception for Marxists? Did Marxism ever lay down some kind of immutable law that every country advancing to socialism must travel on exactly the same road as that which led Tsarist Russia to socialism, or that which led feudal China to the present Chinese People's Republic?

This has never been the Marxist standpoint, no matter how often this assertion is made by those well-paid "experts" who spend so much time distorting Marxism. It was never the standpoint either of Marx or Engels that every country would inevitably travel the same road to socialism. Lenin, the first great leader who led the victorious struggle to achieve socialism, was certainly most emphatic that the transition from capitalism to socialism would take many forms. His well-known work *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*, written after the 1905 revolution in Tsarist Russia, is equally apposite today for many new states which have achieved political independence, and

are now faced with the essential steps to transform the national revolution into a socialist revolution.

Arising from the experience of the 1905 revolution, Lenin perceived the advance of the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution as an *intermediate* stage to socialism. The bourgeoisie was no longer in a position to advance the revolution. In countries like Tsarist Russia it depended on the leadership of the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry".

This terminology (unusual outside Marxist circles) should not divert political thinkers from the essence of Lenin's teachings. Its main emphasis was that the transition from capitalism to socialism would not be achieved at one stroke, but would pass through intermediate stages, depending on the actual conditions in particular countries, the relation of class forces, and the changes taking place on a world scale.

To put it more simply, Lenin emphasised that the working class and peasantry should not stand aloof from the bourgeois revolution which the capitalist class tried to restrict to bourgeois aims (without changing the basis of bourgeois society), but should strive to win the leadership of the national bourgeois revolution as a stage towards the achievement of socialism:

"The Russian revolution will assume its real sweep, and will really assume the widest revolutionary sweep possible in the epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution, only when the bourgeoisie deserts it and when the masses of the peasantry come out as active revolutionaries side by side with the proletariat" (Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*).

Nor was it simply a matter of waiting for the bourgeoisie to desert, but of striving to win from them the leadership of the revolution:

"While absolutely recognising the bourgeois character of the revolution, which cannot *immediately* go beyond the boundaries of a merely democratic revolution, our slogan *pushes forward* this particular revolution and strives to mould it into forms most advantageous to the proletariat; conse-

quently, it strives for the utmost utilisation of the democratic revolution for a most successful further struggle of the proletariat for socialism" (ibid.).

In the conditions of Tsarist Russia the Bolsheviks strongly emphasised that a "peasant revolution" alone would still be a bourgeois revolution, and that "without a series of transitions, transitional stages, it cannot be transformed into a socialist revolution in a backward country" (Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution*).

In the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, the impact of class differentiation among the peasantry expresses itself. Lenin put this most clearly in these words :

"With the peasantry (as a whole) to the end of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and with the poorest, the proletarian and semi-proletarian section of the peasantry, *forward* to the socialist revolution. Such has been the policy of the Bolsheviks, and such only is the Marxian policy" (ibid.).

In this way the Bolsheviks took into account the difference between the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist revolution, and by carrying the first to its logical end they opened the door for passing to the second. It was for this reason that Lenin was able to write four years after the 1917 revolution that :

"We have *consummated* the bourgeois-democratic revolution as nobody has done before. We are *advancing* towards the Socialist revolution, consciously, deliberately, unswervingly, knowing that it is not separated from the bourgeois-democratic revolution by a Chinese wall, and knowing too that (in the last analysis) struggle alone will determine how far we shall advance, what portion of this immense and lofty task we shall accomplish, and to what extent we shall succeed in consolidating our victories" (*Pravda*, October 18, 1921).

Fifteen years after the death of Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung gave a basically similar perspective for the advance of the Chinese

Revolution, but in the context of the specific conditions which existed in that vast country, and against the background of the long struggle of the Chinese people for liberation from foreign imperialism.

Writing in December 1939, Mao Tse-Tung stressed that the Chinese revolution at that stage was a "new-democratic revolution", different from the "bourgeois-democratic" revolutions of the previous epoch. It was directed against imperialism and feudalism, and :

"China must go through this revolution before she can advance to a socialist society, otherwise she cannot advance to socialism."

It was made perfectly clear that at this stage the objective was *not* to achieve socialism, but to advance to the first stage of a "democratic republic with a revolutionary alliance of the workers, the peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie and all other anti-imperialist and anti-feudal people". Moreover, the revolution was not directed against the "national capitalists", and it welcomed the collaboration of "any capitalist sections which can still take part in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggles."

Mao Tse-Tung took extreme care to bring out the two-fold character of the Chinese revolution, and argued against those who could see only the democratic revolution and those on the other hand who saw the process as already that of the socialist revolution. The two-fold process was described in these words :

". . . a complete revolutionary movement embracing the two revolutionary stages, democratic and socialist, which are two revolutionary processes differing in character, and that the socialist stage can be reached only after the democratic stage is completed. The democratic revolution is the necessary preparation for the socialist revolution, and the socialist revolution is the inevitable trend of the democratic revolution. And the ultimate aim of all Communists is to strive for the final building of socialist society and communist society. We can give correct leadership to the Chinese revolution only in the basis of a clear understanding of both

the differences between the democratic and socialist revolutions and their inter-connections.”

In a later statement Mao Tse-Tung went on to expand this theme, stressing that the aim of the democratic revolution was *not* to establish “democracy in a general sense, but democracy of the Chinese type, a new and special type—New Democracy”. Moreover, this first stage had “long become part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution and its great ally”.

These earlier concepts of a transitional stage to socialism have been re-fashioned in recent years within the international Communist movement to conform to the new situation in the world today. At the Moscow conference of 81 Communist and Workers’ Parties held in November 1960, there was considerable emphasis on the new character of the world-wide struggle for national liberation, and its relation to the advance towards socialism :

“The urgent tasks of national rebirth facing the countries that have shaken off the colonial yoke, cannot be effectively accomplished unless a determined struggle is waged against imperialism and the remnants of feudalism by all the patriotic forces of the nations united in a single national-democratic front.”

This can only be achieved if there is the maximum unity against imperialism and the remnants of feudalism, and the chief necessary condition for this is :

“The alliance of the working class and the peasantry . . . the most important force in winning and defending national independence, accomplishing far-reaching democratic transformations and ensuring social progress. This alliance forms the basis of a broad national front.”

In many African countries (Guinea, Mali, Egypt and Tanzania), the broad national front is expressed in the one-party system. But to give clear political direction to the anti-imperialist struggle, and to advance to socialism, experience has proved the need for a more tightly-knit organised body of the most conscious elements to lead the broad movement. In

Ghana this was supposed to be the function of the "Vanguard Activists", and in Egypt there is growing within the Arab Socialist Union an organised vanguard of dedicated socialists.

The one-party system has never been presented by Marxists as some kind of sacred principle to be applied everywhere and in all conditions. Certainly, the achievement of a classless society presupposes ultimately a one-party system. But in the advance towards this aim there can be close co-operation between different friendly political parties.

After the 1917 revolution the Mensheviks were invited (but refused) to join the new government, and the "Left" Social Revolutionaries accepted, and held high positions, until both parties were made illegal after their counter-revolutionary activities in July 1918. In most socialist countries there are several political parties, working in friendly co-operation with the Communist Party. In its programme "The British Road to Socialism" the Communist Party in Britain also puts forward the concept of a "popular alliance" whose main force rests on Communist-Labour unity based on a socialist programme.

In all cases the Communists lay great stress on building a broad democratic front as an expression of the interests of the masses, as with the Soviets in the Soviet Union, the Fatherland Fronts in Bulgaria and the German Democratic Republic, and similar broad fronts in other socialist countries.

The Moscow Declaration made clear that political conflicts would arise in the new states after achieving national independence, and that as social contradictions arise "the national bourgeoisie inclines more and more to compromising with domestic reaction and imperialism". At the same time, it made clear that :

"In the present situation, favourable domestic and international conditions arise in many countries for the establishment of an independent national democracy, that is, a state which consistently upholds its political and economic independence, fights against imperialism and its military blocs, against military bases on its territory; a state which fights against the new forms of colonialism and the penetration of



imperialist capital; a state which rejects dictatorial and despotic methods of government; a state in which the people are assured broad democratic rights and freedoms . . .”

From the Marxist standpoint the actual stage which even the most progressive new states in Africa are striving for at present is the “national-democratic state”. Many of them have not yet reached this, and when they do, it will still represent only the *transitional* stage to socialism. To build the foundations of socialism a necessary condition is an advanced form of modern industry, large-scale agriculture, a skilled working class, and the elimination of all forms of private ownership in industry and agriculture.

It means also the creation of a new state apparatus, with workers and peasants in key positions in state industry, co-operative farms, and in the civil service and armed forces. This does not mean that the advance from the national-democratic revolution to socialism will be identical for the whole of Africa. Far from it. There is a vast contrast between the economic pattern of South Africa and Tanzania and Ghana. Indeed, each of the independent African states has its own specific economic pattern, together with varying relations between class and social groupings, and a different political emphasis on their conceptions of socialism.

However, what is common to all (except possibly South Africa), is the possibility that they will be able to advance to socialism without the necessity of going through the complete process of capitalist development. Some may be able to bypass the capitalist road, while others will shorten the life of capitalist development on their road to socialism.

The precise form of the transition to socialism may well differ from one country to another in many respects, and this was clearly visualised long ago by Lenin :

“History in general and the history of revolution in particular is always richer in content, more multiform, diversified, dynamic and ‘knotty’ than the best parties, the most conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes, can visualise.”

In the first few years of the Soviet Union several of the eastern republics were still in the pre-capitalist stage of development, and Lenin stressed the need to study the specific conditions in these regions and avoid copying the precise methods for socialist development in the European and more developed regions of the Soviet Union.

Taking this situation into account, the Soviet Union was able to concentrate upon the economic and cultural development of these regions, while taking into account their historical traditions and special problems. Like the Mongolian People's Republic they were able to by-pass or shorten the process of capitalist development, and today have reached the same level of socialist development as anywhere in the Soviet Union.

True, this was possible because these eastern republics were part of the Soviet Union, while Mongolia had a common frontier with it, and all of them were able to depend on the economic and political might of Soviet power. The new states in Africa are not in this favourable situation, since they are not adjacent to the Soviet Union.

At the same time, socialism is immeasurably stronger today than it was in 1921—when decisive measures were being taken to stimulate socialist development in the eastern republics of the Soviet Union. At that time socialism ruled over one-sixth of the world. Today it has expanded to one-third of the world. Moreover, the Soviet economy has a firm socialist basis and is expanding rapidly, speeding the transition from socialism to communism. The socialist countries are now able to extend valuable economic aid to the newly independent states of Africa to help them transform their backward economies, and to extend solidarity in the political struggle against imperialism.

Moreover, the imperialist world has been seriously weakened and undermined, not only by the growth of the socialist world, but also by the sweeping advance of the anti-imperialist movement throughout the world. This is shown by the existence of more than 50 newly independent states since the second world war, which were formerly under colonial rule and in the grip of imperialism.

Nor is the winning of political independence the end of the

process. Many of the new states are in the process of going forward towards economic independence, and this means sharper struggle against imperialism and the strategy of neo-colonialism. From their own experience they realise that they have to travel a different road from that of capitalism, and in this struggle arises a new ideology which looks forward to a new path of development.

Though the concept of socialism may differ, and roads of advance are bound to be rugged and difficult, the struggle against imperialism cannot stop. There may be different roads to socialism, but everywhere in Africa it is only by consistent struggle against imperialism, against the strategy of neo-colonialism, against the remnants of feudalism, against the pro-imperialist forces in their own countries that it will be achieved in the independent African states.

What is the attitude of the Communist Parties which exist in Africa on the next steps in the march forward on the non-capitalist road to socialism? All are in agreement on the basic strategy of a national democratic front, and the advance towards a national democratic state as a stage in the transition to socialism. But the precise method of achieving this aim differs according to the specific conditions and the relation of forces within the individual countries.

Illegal Communist Parties exist in South Africa, Morocco and Tunisia. In Basutoland and Sudan they have a precarious legal existence. In Nigeria the Socialist Workers' and Farmers' Party (S.W.A.F.P.) is based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, as is the Party of National Independence (P.A.I.) in Senegal, except that S.W.A.F.P. is still legal and P.A.I. is declared illegal.

In Algeria there was a strong Communist Party, one which had a proud record of struggle in the seven-year liberation war. Soon after achieving independence the National Liberation Front (F.L.N.) decided that no separate political party would be recognised. The Communist Party was dissolved, and accepted the invitation that all its members would become active within the F.L.N. to assist in the struggle to achieve their common aims.

In somewhat different conditions the Egyptian Communist Party decided in April 1965 to dissolve itself as an independent political organisation. Communists in Egypt had always worked in illegal conditions, before and after the 1952 national revolution. They were persecuted, arrested and imprisoned without trial (though some were given a court trial) and tortured in the desert camps.

Up to 1961 there was a striking contrast between President Nasser's external policy of anti-imperialism and the internal policy of repression against Communists and other progressive fighters. In that year President Nasser and his government moved towards a more democratic system. Experience had proved there could be no advance to socialism in Egypt without the full co-operation of all convinced socialists, among whom the Communists were the most outstanding and consistent fighters. Indeed, President Nasser himself was forced to recognise that the National Charter adopted in July 1961, and the efforts of the Arab Socialist Union, were useless unless there were convinced socialists within the ranks. So in 1964 the Communists were released from the prisons and detention camps.

In the conditions of a one-party system in Egypt, and bearing in mind that the Arab Socialist Union set the aim of achieving socialism, the released Communists had to face the alternative of trying to maintain a separate illegal organisation with a similar basic political aim, or becoming active members of the Arab Socialist Union. They chose the second alternative, in the belief this would be more successful in welding together both Marxists and non-Marxists in a stronger socialist front uniting workers, peasants, progressive intelligentsia and the armed forces in marching forward on the road to socialism.

While all African countries sooner or later are bound to achieve socialism, they will most likely march forward along different roads and will have their own specific method to achieve this aim. In present conditions it seems unlikely it will be achieved in South Africa without armed struggle. Unless there are far-reaching changes, violent clashes cannot be ruled out in Nigeria, or even in Morocco, Tunisia, and Kenya. There

are better prospects of a comparative peaceful advance in Egypt, Sudan, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Tanzania, and the former French Congo. But recent experience in these countries makes it clear that armed clashes cannot be ruled out even in some of these countries.

There may be many different roads to socialism, but the basic principles which govern a socialist society are universal in character. These were outlined by Marx and Engels over a century ago, and have been applied by different methods in the already existing socialist countries. It can be argued, as already noted, that serious blunders have been made from time to time in the application of these principles, and that new problems have arisen to which new solutions have had to be applied. This does not change the basic character of socialism, whose main principles are :

1. Common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange; and production for use, and not for profit.
2. Planned methods of production (through the state and co-operatives) based on large-scale modern industry and agriculture, with the aim of raising living standards and overcoming the inequality between town and country.
3. The application of scientific methods in all spheres of production, unleashing the inventive genius of human beings, and making machines the servants (not the masters) of men and women.
4. Political power in the hands of the people, based on the alliance of the working class and peasantry, led by a Marxist party, and with full democracy in all spheres of economic and social life.
5. Friendship with all nations and positive steps to ensure world peace, based on the principle of internationalism and not on narrow bourgeois nationalism.
6. Equal rights for women, and promotion of young people to key positions of leadership.

7. Positive measures to enable the arts and sciences to flourish, for scientific and technical education and the teaching of socialist principles, and to encourage the creative ability of human beings in all spheres.

These basic principles are neither African, European, Asiatic, nor American. They are universal in character. They cannot be confined to a continent or any one country. They apply to the whole human race irrespective of colour, climate, language or religion. There is only one socialism, though it may be reached by different roads.

One must distinguish between the basic *content* of a socialist society and its particular *form* in different conditions and different parts of the world, and the *methods* to achieve it. It is not even a matter of *one* road to socialism in Africa. Most likely there will be different roads to socialism within that vast continent.

## PROSPECTS IN AFRICA

After the momentous changes of the past ten years (and especially the recent military coups) who would dare to be bold enough to prophesy the precise pattern of the new Africa at the end of the next decade? There is no guarantee of an unbroken line of development of political and economic changes anywhere in the world, least of all in Africa. There will be many an ebb and flow in the struggle for complete liberation, but it seems to be obvious that the scope and intensity of the changes will be greater than ever before.

The central aim set by the succession of All-African Conferences since 1958 of a "Commonwealth of Free African States" has not yet been achieved. On the surface it would appear that the main obstacle has been the differences between the independent African states. It is certainly clear that there are striking contrasts between the political attitudes of the governments of Nigeria and Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania, and Senegal and Guinea. But these differences do not arise primarily from within these African countries. *Basically, they are an expression of the success or failure of imperialism in its strategy of neo-colonialism. Its success in any African country means holding it back from the path of African unity and the advance to socialism. Its failure means better prospects for African unity and the advance to socialism.*

The main reason for the failure to achieve African unity is chiefly the external pressure of neo-colonialism, and the internal obstacles arise only from this. The age-old imperialist strategy is "divide and rule". Imperialism shudders at the prospect of a United Africa. By economic and political pressure, and by

exerting its ideological influence, it seeks to prevent this at all costs. The most advanced African countries have strongly resisted this pressure, but in many of them those who hold the reins of government have made considerable concessions to imperialism.

The speed with which Africa will advance to the next stage will depend on a number of factors, both of an external and an internal character—though the internal factors are greatly influenced by the extent of external pressure. These factors can be summarised in five main categories :

1. Neo-colonialist strategy.
2. White settler minority rule.
3. African bourgeois elements allied with imperialism.
4. Reactionary tribal chiefs.
5. Cold war and anti-communism.

The neo-colonialist strategy of foreign imperialism still exercises considerable economic, political and ideological pressure throughout Africa. The winning of political independence was a direct blow against the colony-owning powers in Africa, but for the United States "the attainment of independence by nineteen African states in 1960-61 opened more doors to American private investment" (Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics*).

Moreover, it paved the way for the growth of international financial consortia to exploit the rich natural and mineral resources of Africa. Under direct colonial rule individual African countries were exploited mainly by one particular imperialist power which exercised political control. Now the monopoly firms of several imperialist countries are joined together in what the Africans term "collective colonialism". Dr. Nkrumah, in his book, *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*, gives a startling picture of their interlocking operations.

"And neo-colonialism is fast entrenching itself within the body of Africa today through the consortia and monopoly combinations that are the carpet-baggers of the African revolt against colonialism and the urge for continental unity" (p. 31).



Neo-colonialism does not stop at economic domination. It is inseparable from the exercise of political domination and ideological influence. Having lost the power of direct colonial rule it is still possible to exert political pressure on the new African states unless their governments do their utmost to resist it. As Dr. Nkrumah puts it :

“For the methods of the neo-colonialists are subtle and varied. They operate not only in the economic field, but also in the political, religious, ideological, and cultural spheres” (p. 239).

This assertion cannot be dismissed as just “propaganda”. True, no official admission can be expected from the governments of the United States, Britain, West Germany and others. But the U.S. State Department has concentrated so much attention on Africa in recent years that its “specialists” cannot avoid boasting of the scope of their operations. Most revealing in this respect is a large-size book *Africa in World Politics* by Vernon McKay, which appeared in 1963. Summarising a State Department document entitled “International Educational, Cultural and Related Activities for African Countries South of the Sahara” (August 1961) he points out :

“About 600 organisations are listed—223 business companies, 203 missionary agencies, and 173 educational, philanthropic, civic, and other private agencies. These groups participate in American policy towards Africa in two ways. Their behaviour *influences* African opinion and therefore affects our relations with Africa; and their views influence policy makers in Washington. Although specialised groups exert pressure of one type or another, they vary considerably in that some of them *openly* attempt to bring pressure on governments while others deny any attempt to influence policy” (p. 247, my emphasis).

Since 1961 there has been a considerable increase in the number of U.S. “agencies” and personnel at work in Africa.

Together with these emissaries there was launched in 1961 the "Peace Corps", which by 1964 numbered more than 10,000, most of whom have since been active in Africa. In the past two years they have become extremely unpopular in the African countries to which they have been sent.

Not satisfied with this vast army of agents in Africa, the State Department itself has its own vast force of diplomats and "advisers" in Africa. Their total number rose from 664 in October 1957, to 1,359 in July 1961, and is now estimated at over 2,000. It also set up a special Bureau of African Affairs in 1958. The number of its officers rose from 44 in 1960 to 97 in 1962, and is now likely to be in the region of over 200.

What applies to the United States is also true in a lesser degree for Britain, West Germany and other imperialist countries—though the form of the machinery and method of operation may differ in many respects. *All this serves to underline that imperialism is as active as ever in most parts of Africa, and that its strategy of neo-colonialism strives to achieve the same aims as when Africa was under direct colonial rule.*

Secondly, neo-colonialist strategy does its utmost to advance the interests of the white settler minority in the African countries, before and after they have won political independence. It was only after a seven-year liberation war that settler domination was broken in Algeria.

For more than five years tribal conflicts in the Congo (former Belgian colony) have been exploited to advance the separate interests of rival imperialist powers, as part of their struggle for economic and political supremacy.

Kenya's independence was not the direct result of the "Mau Mau" struggle, but there can be no doubt that "Mau Mau" paved the way for the successful advance of the liberation struggle which achieved independence in December 1963. Though white settler rule has since been broken, it is significant that the British Government has been most lavish in its grants to Kenya to buy out the white settler farms for the Africans to take over.

Even in face of world-wide indignation against the hated apartheid system in South Africa, and the pressure in Britain and throughout Africa which drove South Africa out of the Commonwealth, British imperialism (under both Tory and Labour rule) refuses to take any decisive steps to end this vicious dictatorship. Their gestures of disapproval mean little or nothing, and British and U.S. economic and financial interests are greater than ever in South Africa.

The most recent proof of imperialism's reluctance to end white settler minority rule is the crisis which arose in November 1965, when Ian Smith, the Rhodesian white settler premier, made a unilateral declaration of independence (U.D.I.) in defiance of all the pleadings of the British Government. Forced to recognise the overwhelming opposition all over Africa against white minority rule, and the rising pressure in Britain itself against it, all the British Government was prepared to do was to impose limited economic sanctions, refusing to apply any decisive measures to ensure African majority rule.

Similarly, in the Portuguese colonies of Africa there is no semblance of democratic rights for the African population, and the rickety structure of Portuguese colonialism is only bolstered up by the support of Britain and the U.S. and other imperialist powers.

The third obstacle to African unity and the advance to socialism is the growth of indigenous capitalist elements within Africa itself. Among the African bourgeoisie there are many who associate themselves with the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, both from the standpoint of self-interest (since imperialist economic domination is a barrier to their development), and also because they are genuinely concerned with African liberation. But among them also are big capitalist traders who collaborate with foreign imperialist firms, and whose main aim is to secure a bigger share from the exploitation of the African masses. It is from these sections that imperialism rallies its strongest supporters to bar the way to African unity and its advance towards socialism.

Fourthly, the strategy of neo-colonialism is to encourage

reactionary feudal and tribal interests who serve to create divisions within the African countries. It is significant that the tribal chiefs in Southern Rhodesia are well-paid Government servants, and that the white settler minority pretend they are the true expression of African opinion in Rhodesia!

Similar efforts are being made in Bechuanaland and Basutoland, as well as in South Africa, to elevate reactionary tribal chiefs to privileged positions and to use them as a barrier to African advancement. Even in independent Nigeria, it is well-known that British strategy was to encourage the feudal emirs and reactionary chiefs of the North as the chief instruments of imperialism in Nigeria.

Finally, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the chief ideological instrument of the neo-colonialists is anti-communism, and the intensification of the cold war. This arises from their undying opposition to socialism, but also serves as a cover for their own intervention in African affairs. As Dr. Nkrumah puts it :

“Alongside the battle for imperialist supremacy, there wages the fight against the ideological camp of socialism, into which the warring imperialists make an all-out effort to trail the developing countries as their appendages. In this way the anti-communist campaign is used to further imperialist aims” (*Neo-Colonialism*, p. 54).

This is not surprising. For the first great blow against imperialism was the 1917 Russian socialist revolution, which in Dr. Nkrumah's words : “. . . achieved a signal success in withdrawing a sixth of the earth's surface from monopoly capitalism's field of operations, a fact which it has never and will never forgive.” This became even more obvious after the second world war, when “socialism emerged as a much more threatening challenge to imperialism than ever before”.

It was the advance of socialism which undermined the basis of imperialism and encouraged still further the colonial struggle

for liberation, so that today they are both waging a mighty struggle to end imperialism :

“Challenged thus by anti-colonialism and socialism, imperialism is now engaged in a “to-the-death” trial for survival against the forces that are antagonistic to it and that are building up across the globe even while the internecine struggle within itself is becoming more and more brutal” (p. 39).

No one should be in any doubt that African unity and the march towards socialism will be a rough and thorny path. There are formidable obstacles to overcome and it may well entail a great deal of sacrifice and bloodshed before the end of the road. It might be comforting to believe that it will be a smooth and easy path, but experience has proven that this kind of illusion can lead to even greater disasters.

No sane person will throw aside any opportunity to advance towards the new Africa by peaceful means, and in some countries the onwards march may take place without serious internal conflict. But until the whole of Africa has won freedom, those countries which have achieved political independence cannot contract out of the struggle to win freedom for those remaining under direct colonial rule or white minority domination. This is an all-African struggle, not simply one for individual countries.

The march towards African continental unity is confronted with formidable obstacles, and the problems of advancing towards socialism are even greater. It would be tempting to look only at the barriers, and to seriously doubt whether these aims can ever be achieved.

Certainly, these obstacles and barriers cannot simply be wished away. They can be overcome only by conscious and determined struggle. Victory will not come by one stroke, but by a continual series of battles, each stage of advance preparing for the next, and with the final aims clearly in mind.

For most of Africa the winning of socialism is not the next immediate step. It is to break the grip of imperialism and end

its domination in all parts of the continent. Involved in this is the abolition of white minority rule in Southern Africa.

Even in the face of many serious divergencies between the independent states of Africa (and some reluctance to speed up advance towards ousting imperialism from Africa), there is among them a united response on many immediate issues. This is evident in their determination to oppose apartheid rule in South Africa, their open condemnation of the failure of the British Government during the Rhodesian crisis of November 1965 to take decisive measures against white minority rule, and their consistent united fight before and after the United Nations Trade and Development (UNTAD) Conference at Geneva during April-June 1964 for more equitable prices for their goods on the world market.

Whatever differences exist between the African states, that which unites them is far greater and more potent than the issues which divide them. The historical concept of tribal unity is moving slowly forward to the concept of national unity, and among the more advanced African leaders is now reaching out towards continental unity. The establishment of an African Continental Bank is one of the first steps, and the Rhodesian crisis may well lead to the formation of an African High Command to co-ordinate their separate armed forces. These could be fore-runners of the Union Government for Africa. At the conference of African heads of states (the Organisation for African Unity—O.A.U.) held at Accra in October 1965, it was also decided that all member states should study the Ghana proposal for an O.A.U. Executive Council.

One-party systems in Africa may distress those whose concept of "democracy" is confined to the pattern which exists in capitalist countries. In the context of Africa's historical traditions and vastly different relations of class forces, the one-party system is not so surprising. It serves to harness and solidify all those forces opposed to imperialism, who are striving to transform the old backward economy and to build the foundations for a new and better life.

True, not all one-party systems are progressive. When it suits the interests of the imperialists they support them. There

are one-party systems in Africa whose sharp edge is directed, not against the imperialists, but against the workers and peasantry who demand effective measures to end all forms of imperialist exploitation and domination. The real test is not the form, but the content and aims of the one-party system. On this Dr. Nkrumah has made his position quite clear :

“It is folly to believe that a one-party State, in itself, is a guarantee of political and social progress. It is only the rule of a socialist party, unswerving in its path towards a socialist society, that can ensure that a one-party State will become the highest form of democracy. It is the workers above all who have the duty of making a socialist reality out of the present conditions in Africa and in all its one-party States” (May Day Broadcast, April 30, 1965).

Despite this emphasis on the workers as the leading force, the key positions in the C.P.P. and the government were held by the bourgeois “elite”. The failure to translate these words into practice was one of the factors which made possible the success of the recent military coup.

Though the working class will still be a small minority in Africa for many years to come, it is inevitably the advance guard of the national democratic front, the struggle against imperialism, and the march towards socialism. Every step taken to wipe out the remnants of the old colonial system and build up a new and balanced economy in the independent African states means that the working class will become a bigger proportion of the total population. But it cannot win victory on its own. Every advance depends on its alliance with the African peasantry and the unity of all the forces opposed to imperialism.

Within the framework of the all-African struggle for liberation, for a Commonwealth of Free African States, for economic advance and social progress, it seems inevitable that some will move forward more rapidly than others. A great deal will depend on the political concepts which guide the policy and programme of the new states. The term “African Socialism” is attractive because it encourages the view that this is



something distinctively African, owing nothing to imperialism or to the existing socialist countries of the world.

Attractive labels can also be deceptive. When the Fabian Society in Britain put forward proposals eighty years ago for the municipal ownership and control of gas, water, sewage, and other social amenities, there was little or no opposition from those who gave their allegiance to the capitalist system. Indeed, Sir William Harcourt, one of the great pillars of British imperialism, declared that "we are all socialists now". Far from achieving socialism, Britain is still the centre of a vast imperialist system.

Imperialism is by no means frightened by concepts of "African Socialism". Based as these concepts are on capitalist principles, and the adaptation of capitalism to the specific conditions of Africa, the imperialists have no need to be frightened. On the contrary, they regard those concepts as a most useful disguise for advancing their imperialist interests in Africa.

What they really fear is the all-round advance towards African continental unity, the ending of all forms of imperialist exploitation and domination, the building of balanced economies no longer dependent on imperialism, and the closer cooperation of African states with the socialist countries of the world.

Africa cannot live in a political vacuum and ignore the rest of the world. This is already evident in the impact African states are already making on world affairs, within the United Nations, and in their positive contributions towards securing world peace. Conversely, the conflict between imperialism and the growing forces of socialism and national liberation on a world scale has had its repercussions in Africa. If U.S. aggression in Vietnam and south-east Asia is unchallenged, and if Britain maintains powerful military bases "east of Suez", there can be no guarantee that Africa will be immune from attack.

The anti-imperialist struggle in Asia, in the Arab countries of the Middle East, and in Latin America, together with the struggle for socialism in the capitalist countries, is inseparable from Africa's fight for freedom. The socialist world is the main



bulwark of this world-wide movement, and is the chief target of imperialism.

The imperialists are fully conscious that it is Marxism, the concept of scientific socialism, which has ended imperialism and capitalist exploitation over one-third of the world. That is why they are so busy in Africa with their anti-communist propaganda and cold war campaigns. This also serves to emphasise that Marxism and scientific socialism, applied in the specific and infinite variety of conditions in that vast continent, is the only sure way forward for Africa.



**Africa**

## INDEPENDENT AFRICAN STATES

Name	Area (in sq. miles)	Population	Capital
Algeria	856,000	10,453,000	Algiers
Burundi	10,700	3,000,000	Bujumbura
Cameroon	432,000	5,550,000	Yaoundé
Central African Republic	234,000	1,227,000	Bangui
Chad	488,000	2,675,000	Fort Lamy
Congo (B)	130,000	864,000	Brazzaville
Congo (L)	906,000	14,150,000	Leopoldville
Dahomey	47,000	1,934,000	Porto Novo
Egypt	386,000	26,059,000	Cairo
Ethiopia	400,000	21,800,000	Addis Ababa
Gabon	101,400	440,000	Libreville
Gambia	4,000	330,000	Bathurst
Ghana	92,000	7,637,000	Accra
Guinea	97,000	3,500,000	Conakry
Ivory Coast	189,000	3,300,000	Abidjan
Kenya	225,000	8,626,000	Nairobi
Liberia	43,000	1,250,000	Monrovia
Libya	810,000	1,195,000	Tripoli
Malagasy	228,000	5,658,000	Tananarive
Malawi	46,000	2,921,000	Zomba
Mali	465,000	4,485,000	Bamako
Mauretania	322,000	880,000	Nouakchott
Morocco	180,000	13,100,000	Rabat
Niger	484,000	2,870,000	Niamey
Nigeria	357,000	55,000,000	Lagos
Rwanda	10,000	3,000,000	Kigali
Senegal	78,000	3,110,000	Dakar
Sierra Leone	28,000	2,183,000	Freetown
Somalia	246,000	1,990,000	Mogadishu
Sudan	977,000	12,109,000	Khartoum
Tanzania	343,000	10,299,000	Dar-es-Salaam
Togo	21,000	1,579,000	Lomé
Tunisia	45,000	4,198,000	Tunis
Uganda	94,000	6,538,000	Kampala
Upper Volta	100,000	3,635,000	Ouagadougou
Zambia	291,000	3,733,000	Lusaka
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>9,456,100</b>	<b>253,278,000</b>	
<b>AFRICA TOTALS</b>	<b>11,699,000</b>	<b>300,000,000</b>	

(1) This list (with the figures) is taken from Whitaker's Almanack 1966.  
 (2) Independence dates have also been fixed for Basutoland in April 1966 and Bechuanaland in September 1966. The former will now be known as "Lesotho" and the latter as "Botswana".

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