How Europe Underdeveloped AFRICA

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eighteenth century and subsequently in the nineteenth century. Today, our main preoccupation is with the differences in wealth between, on the one hand Europe and North America, and on the other hand Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In comparison with the first, the second group can be said to be backward or underdeveloped. At all times, therefore, one of the ideas behind underdevelopment is a comparative one. It is possible to compare the economic conditions at two different periods for the same country and determine whether or not it had developed; and (more importantly) it is possible to compare the economics of any two countries at any given period in time.

A second and even more indispensable component of modern underdevelopment is that it expresses a particular relationship of exploitation: namely, the exploitation of one country by another. All of the countries named as "underdeveloped" in the world are exploited by others; and the underdevelopment with which the world is now preoccupied is a product of capitalist, imperialist, and colonialist exploitation. African and Asian societies were developing independently until they were taken over directly or indirectly by the capitalist powers. When that happened, exploitation increased and the export of surplus ensued, depriving the societies of the benefit of their natural resources and labor. That is an integral part of underdevelopment in the contemporary sense.

In some quarters, it has often been thought wise to substitute the term "developing" for "underdeveloped." One of the reasons for so doing is to avoid any unpleasantness which may be attached to the second term, which might be interpreted as meaning underdeveloped mentally, physically, morally, or in any other respect. Actually, if "underdevelopment" were related to anything other than comparing economies, then the most underdeveloped country in the world would be the U.S.A., which practices external oppression on a massive scale, while internally there is a blend of exploitation, brutality, and psychiatric disorder. However, on the economic level, it is best to remain with the word "underdeveloped" rather than "developing," because the latter creates the impression that all the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are escaping from a state of economic backwardness relative to the industrial nations of the world, and that they are emancipating themselves from the relationship of exploitation. That is certainly not true, and many underdeveloped countries in Africa and elsewhere are becoming more underdeveloped in comparison with the world's great powers, because their exploitation by the metropoles is being intensified in new ways.

Economic comparisons can be made by looking at statistical tables or indices of what goods and services are produced and used in the societies under discussion. Professional economists speak of the national income of countries and the national income per capita. These phrases have already become part of the layman's language, by way of the newspapers, and no detailed explanation will be offered here. It is enough to note that the national income is a measurement of the total wealth of the country, while the per capita income is a figure obtained by dividing the national income by the number of inhabitants in order to get an idea of the "average" wealth of each inhabitant. This "average" can be misleading where there are great extremes of wealth. A young Ugandan put it in a very personal form when he said that the per capita income of his country camouflaged the fantastic difference between what was earned by his poor peasant father and what was earned by the biggest local capitalist, Madhvani. In considering the question of development away from the state of underdevelopment, it is of supreme importance to realize that such a process demands the removal of the gross inequalities of land distribution, property holding, and income, which are camouflaged behind national income figures. At one stage in history, advance was made at the cost of entrenching privileged groups. In our times, development has to mean advance which liquidates present privileged groups with their corresponding unprivileged groups. Nevertheless, the per capita income is a useful statistic for comparing one country with another; and the developed countries all have per capita incomes several times higher than any one of the recently independent African nations.

The following table gives a clear picture of the gap between Africa and certain nations measured in per capita incomes. It is the gap that allows one group to be called "developed" and another "underdeveloped." (The information was obtained from United Nations statistical publications, and applies to the year 1968 unless otherwise stated.)

The gap that can be seen from the evidence is not only great, but it is also increasing. Many people have come to realize that the developed countries are growing richer quite rapidly, while underdeveloped countries for the most part show stagnancy or slow rates of growth. In each country, a figure can be calculated to represent the rate at which the economy grows. The growth rate is highest in socialist countries, followed by the big capitalist countries, and with the colonies and ex-colonies trailing far behind. The proportion of international trade which is in the hands of the underdeveloped countries is declining. That proportion was roughly 30 per cent in 1938 and went down to less than 20 per cent in the 1960s. This is an important indicator because trade is both a reflection of the quantity of goods produced and a way of obtaining goods not locally produced.

Countries	Per Capita Income in U.S. Dollars
Canada	2,247
U.S.A.	3,578
France	1,738 (1967)
United Kingdom	1,560 (1967)
AFRICA as a whole	140 (1965)
Congo	52
Ghana	198
Kenya	107
Malawi	52
Morocco	185
South Africa	543
Tanzania	62
U.A.R.	156
Zambia	225

Developed economies have certain characteristics which contrast with underdeveloped ones. The developed countries are all industrialized. That is to say, the greater part of their working population is engaged in industry rather than agriculture, and most of their wealth comes out of mines, factories, and other industries. They have a high output of labor per man in industry because of their advanced technology and skills. This is well known, but it is also striking that the developed countries have a much more advanced agriculture than the rest of the world. Their agriculture has already become an industry, and the agricultural part of the economy produces more even though it is small. The countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are called agricultural countries because they rely on agriculture and have little or no industry; but their agriculture is unscientific and the yields are far less than those of the developed countries. In several of the largest underdeveloped nations, there was stagnation and fall in agricultural output in and after 1966. In Africa, the output of food per person has been falling in recent years. Because the developed countries have a stronger industrial and agricultural economy than the rest of the world, they produce far more goods than the poor nations—in the category of necessities as well as luxuries. It is possible to draw up statistical tables showing the production of grain, milk, steel, electric power, paper, and a wide range of other goods; and showing at the same time how much of each commodity is made available to each citizen (on

the average). Once again, the figures are highly favorable to a few privileged countries in the world.

The amount of steel used in a country is an excellent indicator of the level of industrialization. At one extreme, one finds that the U.S.A. consumes 685 kilograms of steel per person, Sweden 623, and East Germany 437. At the other extreme, one finds that Zambia consumes 10 kilograms, East Africa 8, and Ethiopia 2. When the same kind of calculation is made for sugar, a sample of the results shows Australia with 57 kilograms and North America and the Soviet Union with 45 to 50 on the average. Africa, however, consumes only 10 kilograms of sugar per person per year, and this is better than Asia with 7.

An even more gloomy set of statistics relates to basic food requirements. Each individual needs a certain quantity of food per day, measured in calories. The desirable amount is 3,000 calories per day; but no African country comes anywhere near that figure. Algerians consume on average only 1,870 calories per day, while Ivory Coast can consider itself very well off within an African context with 2,290 calories as the national average. Furthermore, one also has to judge the protein content of the food; and many parts of Africa suffer from "protein famine"—which means that even when calories are available from starchy foods, little protein is to be found. Persons in developed capitalist and socialist countries consume twice as much protein food as those in underdeveloped countries. Such differences help to make it clear which countries are developed and which are underdeveloped.

The social services provided by a country are of importance equal to that of its material production in bringing about human well-being and happiness. It is universally accepted that the state has the responsibility to establish schools and hospitals, but whether these are provided by the government or by private agencies, their numbers can be established in relation to the size of the population. The extent to which basic goods and social services are available in a country can also be measured indirectly by looking at the life expectancy, the frequency of deaths among children, the amount of malnutrition, the occurrence of diseases which could be prevented by inoculation and public health services, and the proportion of illiterates. In all these respects, the comparison between the developed and underdeveloped countries shows huge and even frightening differences. For every 1,000 children who are born alive in Cameroon, 100 never live to see their first birthday, and out of every 1,000 African children born alive in rural Sierra Leone, 160 die before reaching one year. Yet the comparable figures for the United Kingdom and Holland are only 12 and 18 respectively. Besides, many more African children die before they reach the age of five. Lack of doctors is a major drawback. In Italy, there is one doctor for every 580 Italians, and in Czechoslovakia, there is one doctor for every 510 citizens. In Niger, one doctor must do for 56,140 persons; in Tunisia, one doctor for every 8,320 Tunisians; and in Chad, one doctor for 73,460 persons.

It takes a large number of skilled people to make an industrial economy function; while the countries of Africa have a woefully insufficient number of highly qualified personnel. The figures on doctors just given confirm this, and the same problem exists with engineers, technicians, agriculturalists, and even administrators and lawyers in some places. Middle-level skills in fields such as welding are also lacking. To make matters worse, there is at present a "brain drain" from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Western Europe. This is to say, professionals, technicians, high-level administrators, and skilled workers emigrate from their homes, and the small number of skilled people available to the underdeveloped world is further depleted by the lure of better pay and opportunities in the developed world.

This lopsided nature of the present international economy is strikingly brought home by the fact that the underdeveloped countries must in turn recruit foreign experts at fantastic cost.

Most of the data presented so far can be described as "quantitative." It gives us measurements of the quantity of goods and services produced in various economies. In addition, certain qualitative assessments have to be made concerning the way that a given economy is put together. For economic development it is not enough to produce more goods and services. The country has to produce more of those goods and services which in turn will give rise spontaneously to future growth in the economy. For example, the food-producing sector must be flourishing so that workers would be healthy, and agriculture on the whole must be efficient so that the profits (or savings) from agriculture would stimulate industry. Heavy industry, such as the steel industry and the production of electrical power, must be present so that one is capable of making machinery for other types of industry and for agriculture. Lack of heavy industry, inadequate production of food, unscientific agriculture—those are all characteristics of the underdeveloped economies.

It is typical of underdeveloped economies that they do not (or are not allowed to) concentrate on those sectors of the economy which in turn will generate growth and raise production to a new level altogether, and there are very few ties between one sector and another so that (say) agriculture and industry could react beneficially on each other.

Furthermore, whatever savings are made within the economy are mainly sent abroad or are frittered away in consumption rather than being redirected to productive purposes. Much of the national income which remains within the country goes to pay individuals who are not directly involved in producing wealth but only in rendering auxiliary services—civil servants, merchants, soldiers, entertainers. What aggravates the situation is that more people are employed in those jobs than are really necessary to give efficient service; and to crown it all, these people do not reinvest in agriculture or industry. They squander the wealth created by the peasants and workers by purchasing cars, whisky, and perfume.

It has been noted with irony that the principal "industry" of many underdeveloped countries is administration. Not long ago, 60 per cent of the internal revenue of Dahomey went into paying salaries of civil servants and government leaders. The salaries given to the elected politicians are higher than those given to a British Member of Parliament, and the number of parliamentarians in the underdeveloped African countries is also relatively high. In Gabon, there is one parliamentary representative for every six thousand inhabitants, compared to one French parliamentary representative for every hundred thousand Frenchmen. Many more figures of that sort indicate that in describing a typical underdeveloped economy it is essential to point out the high disproportion of the locally distributed wealth that goes into the pockets of a privileged few.

Members of the privileged groups inside Africa always defend themselves by saying that they pay the taxes which keep the government going. At face value this statement sounds reasonable, but on close examination it is really the most absurd argument and shows total ignorance of how the economy functions. Taxes do not produce national wealth and development. Wealth has to be produced out of nature—from tilling the land or mining metals or felling trees or turning raw materials into finished products for human consumption. These things are done by the vast majority of the population who are peasants and workers.

There would be no incomes to tax if the laboring population did not work.

The incomes given to civil servants, professionals, merchants, come from the store of wealth produced by the community. Quite apart from the injustices in the distribution of wealth, one has to dismiss the argument that "the taxpayers' " money is what develops a country. In pursuing the goal of development, one must start with the producers and move on from there to see whether the products of their labor are being rationally utilized to bring greater independence and well-being to the nation.

By paying attention to the wealth created by human labor out of nature, one can immediately appreciate that very few underdeveloped countries are lacking in the natural resources which could go into making a better life, and in those cases it is usually possible for two or three territories to combine together for their mutual benefit. In fact, it can be shown that the underdeveloped countries are the ones with the greatest wealth of natural resources and yet the poorest in terms of goods and services presently provided by and for their citizens.

The United Nations *Survey of Economic Conditions in Africa* up to 1964 had this to say about the continent's natural resources:

> Africa is well endowed with mineral and primary energy resources. With an estimated 9 per cent of the world's population the region accounts for approximately 28 per cent of the total value of world mineral production and 6 per cent of its crude petroleum output. In recent years, its share of the latter is increasing. Of sixteen important metallic and non-metallic minerals the share of Africa in ten varies from 22 to 95 per cent of the world production.

Actually, African potential is shown to be greater every day with new discoveries of mineral wealth. On the agricultural side, African soil is not as rich as the picture of tropical forests might lead one to believe; but there are other climatic advantages so that with proper irrigation crops can be grown all the year round in most parts of the continent.

The situation is that Africa has not yet come anywhere close to making the most of its natural wealth, and most of the wealth now being produced is not being retained within Africa for the benefit of Africans. Zambia and Congo produce vast quantities of copper, but that is for the benefit of Europe, North America, and Japan. Even the goods and services which are produced inside of Africa and which remain in Africa nevertheless fall into the hands of non-Africans. Thus, South Africa boasts of having the highest per capita income in Africa; but as an indication of how this is shared out, one should note that while the apartheid regime assures that only 24 white babies die out of every 1,000 live births, they are quite happy to allow 128 African babies to die out of every 1,000 live births. In order to understand present economic conditions in Africa, one needs to know why it is that Africa has realized so little of its natural potential, and one also needs to know why so much of its present wealth goes to non-Africans who reside for the most part outside of the continent.

In a way, underdevelopment is a paradox. Many parts of the world that are naturally rich are actually poor and parts that are not so well off in wealth of soil and sub-soil are enjoying the highest standards of living. When the capitalists from the developed parts of the world try to explain this paradox, they often make it sound as though there is something "God-

given" about the situation. One bourgeois economist, in a book on development, accepted that the comparative statistics of the world today show a gap that is much larger than it was before. By his own admission, the gap between the developed and the underdeveloped countries has increased by at least 15 to 20 times over the last 150 years. However, the bourgeois economist in question does not give a historical explanation, nor does he consider that there is a relationship of exploitation which allowed capitalist parasites to grow fat and impoverished the dependencies. Instead, he puts forward a biblical explanation! He says:

> It is all told in the Bible:
>
> *For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.* (St. Matthew, xxv, 29)
>
> The story of the "hath nots" is the story of the modern underdeveloped countries.

Presumably, the only comment which one can make on that is "Amen."

The interpretation that underdevelopment is somehow ordained by God is emphasized because of the racist trend in European scholarship. It is in line with racist prejudice to say openly or to imply that their countries are more developed because their people are innately superior, and that the responsibility for the economic backwardness of Africa lies in the generic backwardness of the race of black Africans. An even bigger problem is that the people of Africa and other parts of the colonized world have gone through a cultural and psychological crisis and have accepted, at least partially, the European version of things. That means that the African himself has doubts about his capacity to transform and develop his natural environment. With such doubts, he even challenges those of his brothers who say that Africa can and will develop through the efforts of its own people. If we can determine when underdevelopment came about, it would dismiss the lingering suspicion that it is racially or otherwise predetermined and that we can do little about it.

When the "experts" from capitalist countries do not give a racist explanation, they nevertheless confuse the issue by giving as causes of underdevelopment the things which really are consequences. For example, they would argue that Africa is in a state of backwardness as a result of lacking skilled personnel to develop. It is true that because of lack of engineers Africa cannot on its own build more roads, bridges, and hydroelectric stations. But that is not a cause of underdevelopment, except in the sense that causes and effects come together and reinforce each other. The fact of the matter is that the most profound reasons for the economic backwardness of a given African nation are not to be found inside that nation. All that we can find inside are the symptoms of underdevelopment and the secondary factors that make for poverty.

Mistaken interpretations of the causes of underdevelopment usually stem either from prejudiced thinking or from the error of believing that one can learn the answers by looking inside the underdeveloped economy. The true explanation lies in seeking out the relationship between Africa and certain developed countries and in recognizing that it is a relationship of exploitation.

Man has always exploited his natural environment in order to make a living. At a certain point in time, there also arose the exploitation of man by man, in that a few people grew rich and lived well through the labor of others. Then a stage was reached by which people in one community called a nation exploited the natural resources and the labor of another nation and its people. Since underdevelopment deals with the comparative economics of nations, it is the last kind of exploitation that is of greatest interest here—i.e., the exploitation of nation by nation. One of the common means by which one nation exploits another and one that is relevant to Africa's external relations is exploitation through trade. When the terms of trade are set by one country in a manner entirely advantageous to itself, then the trade is usually detrimental to the trading partner. To be specific, one can take the export of agricultural produce from Africa and the import of manufactured goods into Africa from Europe, North America, and Japan. The big nations establish the price of the agricultural products and subject these prices to frequent reductions. At the same time the price of manufactured goods is also set by them, along with the freight rates necessary for trade in the ships of those nations. The minerals of Africa also fall into the same category as agricultural produce as far as pricing is concerned. The whole import-export relationship between Africa and its trading partners is one of unequal exchange and of exploitation.

More far-reaching than just trade is the actual ownership of the means of production in one country by the citizens of another. When citizens of Europe own the land and the mines of Africa, this is the most direct way of sucking the African continent. Under colonialism the ownership was complete and backed by military domination. Today, in many African countries the foreign ownership is still present, although the armies and flags of foreign powers have been removed. So long as foreigners own land, mines, factories, banks, insurance companies, means of transportation, newspapers, power stations, then for so long will the wealth of Africa flow outwards into the hands of those elements. In other words, in the absence of direct political control, foreign investment insures that the natural resources and the labor of Africa produce economic value which is lost to the continent.

Foreign investment often takes the form of loans to African governments. Naturally, these loans have to be repaid; and in the 1960s the rate of repayment (amortization) on official loans in underdeveloped countries rose from $400 million per year to about $700 million per year, and it is constantly on the increase. Besides, there is interest to be paid on these loans as well as profits which come from the direct investment in the economy. These two sources accounted for the fact that over $500 million flowed outwards from the underdeveloped countries in 1965. The information on these matters is seldom complete, for the obvious reason that those making the profit are trying to keep things quiet, so the figures given above are likely to be underestimates. They are meant to give some idea of the extent to which the wealth of Africa is being drained off by those who invest in, and thereby own, a large part of the means of production of wealth in Africa. Furthermore, in more recent times the forms of investment have become more subtle and more dangerous. They include so-called aid and the management of local African companies by international capitalist experts.

Africa trades mainly with the countries of Western Europe, North America, and Japan. Africa is also diversifying its trade by dealing with socialist countries, and if that trade proves disadvantageous to the African economy, then the developed socialist countries will also have joined the ranks of the exploiters of Africa. However, it is very essential at this stage to draw a clear distinction between the capitalist countries and the socialist ones, because socialist countries have never at any time owned any part of the African continent nor do they invest in African economies in such a way as to expatriate profits from Africa. Therefore, socialist countries are not involved in the robbery of Africa.

Most of the people who write about underdevelopment and who are read in the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are spokesmen for the capitalist or bourgeois world. They seek to justify capitalist exploitation both inside and outside their own countries. One of the things which they do to confuse the issue is to place all underdeveloped countries in one camp and all developed countries in another camp irrespective of different social systems; so that the terms capitalist and socialist never enter the discussion. Instead, one is faced with a simple division between the industrialized nations and those that are not industrialized. It is true that both the United States and the Soviet Union are industrialized and it is true that when one looks at the statistics, countries such as France, Norway, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania are much closer together than any one of them is to an African country. But it is absolutely necessary to determine whether the standard of living in a given industrialized country is a product of its own internal resources or whether it stems from exploiting other countries. The United States has a small proportion of the world's population and exploitable natural wealth but it enjoys a huge percentage of the wealth which comes from exploiting the labor and natural resources of the whole world.

The erroneous views about underdevelopment and the oversimplified distinction between rich and poor nations are opposed by socialist scholars both inside and outside the socialist countries. Those erroneous views are also being exposed by economists in underdeveloped countries who are discovering that the explanations offered by bourgeois scholars are explanations which suit the interests of those countries which exploit the rest of the world through trade and investment. One French socialist writer, Pierre Jalée, proposes that to obtain a proper perspective of relations between developed countries and underdeveloped ones, two categories should be set up, namely, imperialist and socialist. The socialist camp includes all countries big and small which have decided to break away from international capitalism. The imperialist camp contains not only the capitalist giants like the U.S.A., France, West Germany, and Japan but also the weak nations in which those industrial nations have investments. Therefore, the imperialist camp can be subdivided into exploiting and exploited countries. For the most part, the nations of Africa fall into the group of exploited countries inside the capitalist/imperialist system. Roughly one-third of the world's peoples are already living under some form of socialism. The other two-thirds constitute the capitalist/imperialist camp, with the majority being in the exploited section.

It is interesting to notice that in spite of their efforts to confuse the situation, the bourgeois writers often touch on the truth. For example, the United Nations (which is dominated by Western capitalist powers) would never stress the exploitation by capitalist nations, but their economic reviews refer on the one hand to "the centrally planned economies," which means the socialist countries, and on the other hand they speak of "the market economies," which means in effect the imperialist sector of the world. The latter is subdivided into "the developed market economies" and "the developing market economies," disguising the fact that the market means capitalist market. This study is concerned with analyzing the relations between those countries which are together within the capitalist market system.

The things which bring Africa into the capitalist market system are trade, colonial domination, and capitalist investment. Trade has existed for several centuries; colonial rule began in the late nineteenth century and has almost disappeared; and the investment in the African economy has been increasing steadily in the present century. Throughout the period that Africa has participated in the capitalist economy, two factors have brought about underdevelopment. In the first place, the wealth created by African labor and from African resources was grabbed by the capitalist countries of Europe; and in the second place, restrictions were placed upon African capacity to make the maximum use of its economic potential—which is what development is all about. Those two processes represent the answer to the two questions raised above as to why Africa has realized so little of its potential and why so much of its present wealth goes outside of the continent.

African economies are integrated into the very structure of the developed capitalist economies; and they are integrated in a manner that is unfavorable to Africa and insures that Africa is dependent on the big capitalist countries. Indeed, structural dependence is one of the characteristics of underdevelopment. Most progressive writers divide the capitalist/imperialist system into two parts. The first is the dominant or metropolitan section, and the countries in the second group are often called satellites because they are in the orbit of the metropolitan economies. The same idea is conveyed by simply saying that the underdeveloped countries are dependencies of the metropolitan capitalist economies.

When a child or the young of any animal species ceases to be dependent upon its mother for food and protection, it can be said to have developed in the direction of maturity. Dependent nations can never be considered developed. It is true that modern conditions force all countries to be mutually interdependent in order to satisfy the needs of their citizens; but that is not incompatible with economic independence because economic independence does not mean isolation. It does, however, require a capacity to exercise choice in external relations, and above all it requires that a nation's growth at some point must become self-reliant and self-sustaining. Such things are obviously in direct contradiction to the economic dependence of numerous countries on the metropoles of Western Europe, North America, and Japan.

It is also true that metropoles are dependent on the wealth of the exploited portions of the world. This is a source of their strength and a potential weakness within the capitalist/imperialist system, since the peasants and workers of the dependencies are awakening to a realization that it is possible to cut the tentacles which imperialism has extended into their countries. However, there is a substantial difference between the dependence of the metropoles on the colonies and the subjugation of the colonies under a foreign capitalist yoke. The capitalist countries are technologically more advanced and are therefore the sector of the imperialist system which determined the direction of change. A striking example of this effect is the fact that synthetic fabrics manufactured in the capitalist metropoles have begun to replace fabrics made from raw material grown in the colonies. In other words, (within certain limits) it is the technologically advanced metropoles who can decide when to end their dependence on the colonies in a particular sphere. When that happens, it is the colony or neo-colony which goes begging cap in hand for a reprieve and a new quota. It is for this reason that a formerly colonized nation has no hope of developing until it breaks effectively with the vicious circle of dependence and exploitation which characterizes imperialism.

At the social and cultural level, there are many features which aid in keeping underdeveloped countries integrated into the capitalist system and at the same time hanging on to the apron strings of the metropoles. The Christian church has always been a major instrument for cultural penetration and cultural dominance, in spite of the fact that in many instances Africans sought to set up independent churches. Equally important has been the role of education in producing Africans to service the capitalist system and to subscribe to its values. Recently, the imperialists have been using new universities in Africa to keep themselves entrenched at the highest academic level.

Something as basic as language has come to serve as one of the mechanisms of integration and dependence. The French and English that are so widely used in Africa are more for the purpose of African communication with the exploiters than for African with African. Actually, it would be difficult to find a sphere which did not reflect the economic dependence and structural integration. At a glance, nothing could be less harmful and more entertaining than music, and yet this too is used as a weapon of cultural domination. The American imperialists go so far as to take the folk music, jazz, and soul music of oppressed black people and transform this into American propaganda over the Voice of America beamed at Africa.

During the colonial period, the forms of political subordination in Africa were obvious. There were governors, colonial officials, and police. In politically independent African states, the metropolitan capitalists have to insure favorable political decisions by remote control. So they set up their political puppets in many parts of Africa, who shamelessly agree to compromise with the vicious apartheid regime of South Africa when their masters tell them to do so. The revolutionary writer, Frantz Fanon, has dealt scorchingly and at length with the question of the minority in Africa which serves as the transmission line between the metropolitan capitalists and the dependencies in Africa. The importance of this group cannot be underestimated. The presence of a group of African sell-outs is part of the definition of underdevelopment. Any diagnosis of underdevelopment in Africa will reveal not just low per capita income and protein deficiencies, but also the gentlemen who dance in Abidjan, Accra, and Kinshasa when music is played in Paris, London, and New York.

Political instability is manifesting itself in Africa as a chronic symptom of the underdevelopment of political life within the imperialist context. Military coups have followed one after the other, usually meaning nothing to the mass of the people, and sometimes representing a reactionary reversal of the efforts at national liberation. This trend was well exemplified in Latin American history, so that its appearance in neo-colonial South Vietnam or in neo-colonial Africa is not at all surprising. If economic power is centered outside national African boundaries, then political and military power in any real sense is also centered outside until, and unless, the masses of peasants and workers are mobilized to offer an alternative to the system of sham political independence. All of those features are ramifications of underdevelopment and of the exploitation of the imperialist system. In most analyses of this question, they are either left out entirely or the whole concept of imperialism and neo-colonialism is dismissed as mere rhetoric—especially by "academics" who claim to be removed from "politics." During the remainder of this study, a great deal of detail will be presented to indicate the grim reality behind the so-called slogans of capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the like. For the present moment, the position to be adopted can be stated briefly in the following terms:

The question as to who, and what, is responsible for African underdevelopment can be answered at two levels. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth and by making it impossible to develop more rapidly the resources of the continent. Secondly, one has to deal with those who manipulate the system and those who are either agents or unwitting accomplices of the said system. The capitalists of Western Europe were the ones who actively extended their exploitation from inside Europe to cover the whole of Africa.

In recent times, they were joined, and to some extent replaced, by capitalists from the United States; and for many years now even the workers of those metropolitan countries have benefited from the exploitation and underdevelopment of Africa. None of these remarks are intended to remove the ultimate responsibility for development from the shoulders of Africans. Not only are there African accomplices inside the imperialist system, but every African has a responsibility to understand the system and work for its overthrow.

Brief Guide to Reading

There is a great deal of literature on "development" and "underdevelopment," although less than one would expect in view of the importance of the subjects. Most of that which is available seeks to justify capitalism. Hence, there is a narrow concentration on "economic development," and particularly on capitalist economies, rather than any analysis of human social development. That approach is challenged by Marxist writers in the metropoles and increasingly by scholars from the underdeveloped world.

FREDERICK ENGELS, *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State.* Chicago: C. H. Kerr and Co., 1902.
KARL MARX, *Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy.*
KARL MARX, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, edited by E. J. Hobsbawm. New York: International Publishers, 1964.

These three works are samples of writing by the founders of what is now called Marxism. Most of the publications of Marx and Engels have a relevance to the theme of development, with particular emphasis on feudal and capitalist times.

RICHARD T. GILL, *Economic Development: Past and Present.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967.
RAGNAR NURKSE, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries.* Oxford University Press, 1953.

These are typical examples of bourgeois metropolitan views on development and underdevelopment—the first being a text for North American college students by a Canadian economist and the second being a frequently reprinted work of one of the most prominent bourgeois advocates of the "vicious circle of poverty" theory. Unfortunately, these are also examples of the kind of book which dominates the shelves of any university or public library in Africa. The reader is invited to test this generalization.

J. D. BERNAL, *Science in History.* (4 vol.) Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972.
JOSEPH NEEDHAM, *Science and Civilization in China.* Cambridge University Press, 1954.

Both of these are lengthy, but they should be tackled. Science and technology derive from the effort to understand and control the natural environment. Familiarity with the history of science is essential to an awareness of the development of society. Needham's book is cited here as a corrective to the fairly common view that science is something peculiarly European.

CELSO FURTADO, *Development and Underdevelopment.* Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1964.
A. GUNDER FRANK, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967.
TAMÁS SZENTES, *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment.* Budapest: Center for Afro-Asian Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1971.

The first writer is from Brazil, a country with a long history of dependence on and exploitation by the metropoles of Europe and North America. Frank's book reflects the thinking of many progressive Latin American intellectuals and it has now become well entrenched as a view of Marxists inside the metropoles. Szentes is a Hungarian economist systematically applying Marxist insights to the actual data and processes of the underdeveloped world and imperialism as a whole.

SAMIR AMIN, *The Class Struggle in Africa.* Cambridge, Mass.: Africa Research Group, n.d.

Samir Amin is a North African. He stands out with regard both to the volume of his productions and the quality of his insights. The text cited above is very general—covering in outline the period of the roots of development in ancient Africa right up to the present and the projected socialist future. It is likely that more of his work will be translated into English (French being his working language).

roughly similar, there were considerable differences. However, it is possible to distinguish between what was uniquely "African" and what was universal in the sense of being characteristic of all human societies at a given stage of development. It is also essential to recognize the process of dialectical evolution from lower to higher forms of social organization; and, in looking at the most advanced social formations, one would appreciate the potential of the continent as a whole and the direction of change.

The moment that the topic of the pre-European African past is raised, many individuals are concerned for various reasons to know about the existence of African "civilizations." Mainly, this stems from a desire to make comparisons with European "civilizations." This is not the context in which to evaluate the so-called civilizations of Europe. It is enough to note the behavior of European capitalists from the epoch of slavery through colonialism, fascism, and genocidal wars in Asia and Africa. Such barbarism causes suspicion to attach to the use of the word "civilization" to describe Western Europe and North America. As far as Africa is concerned during the period of early development, it is preferable to speak in terms of "cultures" rather than civilizations.

A culture is a total way of life. It embraces what people ate and what they wore; the way they walked and the way they talked; the manner in which they treated death and greeted the newborn. Obviously, unique features came into existence in virtually every locality with regard to all social details. In addition, the continent of Africa south of the great Sahara desert formed a broad community where resemblances were clearly discernible. For example, music and dance had key roles in "uncontaminated" African society. They were ever present at birth, initiation, marriage, death, as well as at times of recreation. Africa is the continent of drums and percussion. African peoples reached the pinnacle of achievement in that sphere.

Because of the impact of colonialism and cultural imperialism (which will be discussed later), Europeans and Africans themselves in the colonial period lacked due regard for the unique features of African culture. Those features have a value of their own that cannot be eclipsed by European culture either in the comparable period before 1500 or in the subsequent centuries. They cannot be eclipsed because they are not really comparable phenomena. Who in this world is competent to judge whether an Austrian waltz is better than a Makonde Ngoma? Furthermore, even in those spheres of culture that are more readily comparable, such as "the fine arts," it is known that African achievements of the pre-European period stand as contributions to man's heritage of beautiful creations. The art of

Egypt, the Sudan, and Ethiopia was known to the rest of the world at an early date. That of the rest of Africa is still being "discovered" and rediscovered by Europeans and present-day Africans. The verdict of art historians on the Ife and Benin bronzes is well known. Since they date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they are very relevant to any discussion of African development in the epoch before the contacts with Europe. Nor should they be regarded as unusual, except with regard to the material in which the sculptures were executed. The same skill and feeling obviously went into sculpture and art-work in non-durable materials, especially wood.

African dance and art were almost invariably linked with a religious world-outlook in one way or another. As is well known, traditional African religious practices exist in great variety, and it should also be remembered that both Islam and Christianity found homes on the African continent almost from their very inception. The features of the traditional African religions help to set African cultures apart from those in other continents; but in this present context it is more important to note how much African religion had in common with religion elsewhere and how this can be used as an index to the level of development in Africa before European impact in the fifteenth century.

Religion is an aspect of the superstructure of a society, deriving ultimately from the degree of control and understanding of the material world. However, when man thinks in religious terms, he starts from the ideal rather than with the material world (which is beyond his comprehension). This creates a non-scientific and metaphysical way of viewing the world, which often conflicts with the scientific materialist outlook and with the development of society. African ancestral religions were no better or worse than other religions as such. But by the end of feudalism, Europeans began to narrow the area of human life in which religion and the church played a part. Religion ceased to dominate politics, geography, medicine. To free those things from religious restraints, it had to be argued that religion had its own sphere and the things of this world had their own secular sphere. This secularization of life speeded up the development of capitalism and later socialism. In contrast, in the period before the coming of the whites, religion pervaded African life just as it pervaded life in other pre-feudal societies, such as those of the Maoris of Australia or the Afghans of Afghanistan or the Vikings of Scandinavia.

Religion can play both a positive and a negative role as an aspect of the superstructure. In most instances in early Africa, religious beliefs were associated with the mobilization and discipline of large numbers of people to form states. In a few instances, religion also provided concepts in the struggle for social justice. The negative aspects usually arose out of the tendency of religion to persist unchanged for extremely long periods, especially when the technology of earning a living changes very slowly. This was the case in African societies, as in all other pre-capitalist societies. At the same time, the religious beliefs themselves react upon the mode of production, further slowing up progress in that respect. For instance, belief in prayer and in the intervention of ancestors and various gods could easily be a substitute for innovations designed to control the impact of weather and environment.

The same kind of two-sided relationship also exists between the means of earning a living and the social patterns that arise in the process of work. In Africa, before the fifteenth century, the predominant principle of social relations was that of family and kinship associated with communalism. Every member of an African society had his position defined in terms of relatives on his mother's side and on his father's side. Some societies placed greater importance on matrilineal ties and others on patrilineal ties. Those things were crucial to the daily existence of a member of an African society, because land (the major means of production) was owned by groups such as the family or clan—the head of which were parents and those yet unborn. In theory, this pattern was explained by saying that the residents in any community were all direct descendants of the first person who settled the land. When a new group arrived, they often made a pretense that they too had ancestry dating back to the settling of the land or else they insured that members of the earliest kin groups continued to perform the ceremonies related to the land and water of the region.

Similarly, the labor that worked the land was generally recruited on a family basis. A single family or household would till its own plots and it would also be available to share certain joint farming activities with other members of the extended family or clan. Annual hunts and river fishing were also organized by a whole extended family or village community. In a matrilineal society such as that of the Bemba (Zambia), the bridegroom spent a number of years working for the father of his bride; and many young men who had married daughters of the same household often formed work teams to help each other. In Dahomey, a young man did not go to live with his wife's family, but the *dokpwe*, or work team, allowed a son to participate in carrying out a task of some magnitude for the father of his wife. In both of those examples, the right of the father-in-law to acquire labor and the obligations of the son-in-law to give labor were based on kinship. This can be contrasted with capitalism where money buys labor, and with feudalism where the serf provides labor in order to have access to a portion of land which belongs to the landlord.

Having been produced on land that was family property and through family labor, the resultant crops and other goods were distributed on the basis of kinship ties. If a man's crops were destroyed by some sudden calamity, relatives in his own village helped him. If the whole community was in distress, people moved to live with their kinsmen in another area where food was not scarce. In Akan country (Ghana), the clan system was highly organized, so that a man from Brong could visit Fante many hundreds of miles away and receive food and hospitality from a complete stranger who happened to be of his own clan.

Numerous examples could be brought forward to show the dominance of the family principle in the communal phase of African development. It affected the two principal factors of production—land and labor—as well as the system of distributing goods. European anthropologists who have studied African societies have done so mainly from a very prejudiced and racist position, but their researchers can nevertheless provide abundant facts relating to family homesteads and compounds, to the extended family (including affinal members who join by association rather than by birth), and to lineages and clans which carried the principles of kinship alliances over large areas. However, while the exact details might have differed, similar social institutions were to be found among the Gauls of eleventh-century France, among the Viet of Indochina at the same date, and virtually everywhere else in the world at one time or another—because communalism is one phase through which all human society passed.

In all African societies during the early epoch, the individual at every stage of life had a series of duties and obligations to others in the society as well as a set of rights: namely, things that he or she could expect or demand from other individuals. Age was a most important factor determining the extent of rights and obligations. The oldest members of the society were highly respected and usually in authority; and the idea of seniority through age was reflected in the presence of age-grades and age-sets in a great many African societies. Circumcision meant initiation into the society and into adulthood. From that moment, a man was placed with others in his own age-group and a woman likewise. Usually, there were at least three age-grades, corresponding roughly to the young, the middle-aged, and the old.

In large parts of Europe, when communalism broke down it gave way to widespread slavery as the new form in which labor was mobilized. This slavery continued throughout the European Middle Ages, with the Crusades between Christians and Moslems giving an added excuse for enslaving people. Slavery in turn gave way to serfdom, whereby the laborer was tied to the land and could no longer be sold and transported. Because it took many years for the transition from slavery to feudalism to take place in Europe, it was common to find that feudal society still retained numbers of slaves. Parts of China, Burma, and India also had considerable numbers of slaves as the society moved away from elementary communalism, but there was never any time-span when slavery was the dominant mode of production in Asia. In Africa, there were few slaves and certainly no epoch of slavery. Most of the slaves were in North African and other Moslem societies, and in those instances a man and his family could have the same slave status for generations, within the overall feudal structure of the society. Elsewhere in Africa, communal societies were introduced to the concept of owning alien human beings when they took captives in war. At first, those captives were in a very disadvantaged position, comparable to that of slaves, but very rapidly captives or their offspring became ordinary members of the society, because there was no scope for the perpetual exploitation of man by man in a context that was neither feudal nor capitalist.

~~Both Marxists and non-Marxists alike (with different motivations) have~~ pointed out that the sequence of modes of production noted in Europe were not reproduced in Africa. In Africa, after the communal stage there was no epoch of slavery arising out of internal evolution. Nor was there a mode of production which was the replica of European feudalism. Marx himself recognized that the stages of development in Asia had produced a form of society which could not easily be fitted into a European slot. That he called "the Asian mode of production." Following along those lines, a number of Marxists have recently been discussing whether Africa was in the same category as Asia or whether Africa had its own "African mode of production." The implications of the arguments are very progressive, because they are concerned with the concrete conditions of Africa rather than with preconceptions brought from Europe. But the scholars concerned seem to be bent on finding a single term to cover a variety of social formations which were existing in Africa from about the fifth century A.D. to the coming of colonialism. The assumption that will underlie this study is that most African societies before 1500 were in a transitional stage between the practice of agriculture (plus fishing and herding) in family communities and the practice of the same activities within states and societies comparable to feudalism.

In a sense, all history is transition from one stage to another, but some historical situations along the line have more clearly distinguishable characteristics than others. Thus under communalism there were no classes, and there was equal access to land, and equality in distribution—at a low level of technology and production. Feudalism involved great inequality in distribution of land and social products. The landlord class and its bureaucracy controlled the state and used it as an instrument for oppressing peasants, serfs, slaves, and even craftsmen and merchants. The movement from communalism to feudalism in every continent took several centuries, and in some instances the interruption of internal evolution never allowed the process to mature. In Africa, there is no doubt that the societies which eventually reached feudalism were extremely few. So long as the feudal state was still in the making, elements that were communal coexisted with elements that were feudal and with some peculiarities due to African conditions. The transition was also characterized by a variety of social formations: There were pastoralists and cultivators, fishing societies and trading societies, raiders and nomads. They were all being progressively drawn into a relationship with the land, with each other, and with the state, through the expansion of productive forces and the network of distribution.

In feudal societies, there were clashes between the landlord and peasant classes and later on between the landlord and merchant classes. Under capitalism, the principal class contradiction inside Europe was between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Those hostile class relations provided the motive force within the respective societies. African communal societies had differences such as age-grades and differences between ordinary members and religious leaders such as rainmakers. However, those were not exploitative or antagonistic relations. The concept of class as a motive force in social development had not yet come about; and in the communal phase one must look at the fundamental forces of production to understand the process of change.

Using a number of methods and concepts, it is possible to reconstruct the most likely manner in which isolated family living was broken down and production increased. For instance, the rise of age-grades can be seen as responding to the need for greater solidarity, because age-grades included and cut across many families. Similarly, communal labor was entered into by cross sections of the community to make work more efficient. The *dokpwe* work group of Dahomey mentioned above had a wider application in serving the whole community to perform such heavy tasks as clearing land and housebuilding. With the offer of some food and beer or palm wine, a work team or "work bee" could be mobilized in a short time in most African communities, including those of the light-skinned Berbers of North Africa.

Of course, while the organization of labor might have helped to produce more, the principal change in the productive forces was that which comprised new techniques—using the word in its broadest sense to include

Through North Africa, Europeans became familiar with a superior brand of red leather from Africa which was termed "Moroccan leather." In fact, it was tanned and dyed by Hausa and Mandinga specialists in northern Nigeria and Mali. When direct contact was established between Europeans and Africans on the East and West coasts, many more impressive items were displayed. As soon as the Portuguese reached the old kingdom of Kongo, they sent back word on the superb local cloths made from bark and palm fiber—and having a finish comparable to velvet. The Baganda were also expert barkcloth makers. Yet, Africa had even better to offer in the form of cotton cloth, which was widely manufactured before the coming of the Europeans. Well into the present century, local cottons from the Guinea coast were stronger than Manchester cottons. Once European products reached Africa, Africans too were in a position to make comparisons between their commodities and those from outside. In Katanga and Zambia, the local copper continued to be preferred to the imported items, while the same held true for iron in a place like Sierra Leone.

It was at the level of scale that African manufactures had not made a breakthrough. That is to say, the cotton looms were small, the iron smelters were small, the pottery was turned slowly by hand and not on a wheel. Yet some changes were taking place in this context. Under communalism, each household met its own needs by making its own clothes, pots, mats, and such. That was true of every continent. However, economic expansion from there on was associated with specialization and localization of industry—people's needs being met by exchange. This trend was displayed in the principal African manufactures, and notably in the cloth industry. Cotton fiber had to be ginned (separated from the seed), then carded and spun into yarn, before being woven. Either the yarn or the woven cloth had to be dyed, and the making of the dye itself was a complex process. There was a time when all these stages would be performed by a single family or rather by the women in a single family, as in Yorubaland. But economic development was reflected in the separation of dyeing from cloth-making, and the separation of spinning from weaving. Each separation marked greater specialization and quantitative and qualitative changes in output.

European industry has been intensively studied, and it is generally recognized that in addition to new machinery a most decisive factor in the growth of industry was the changeover from domestic production to the factory system, with the guild marking an intermediary stage. The guild was an association of specialists, passing on their skills by training apprentices and working in buildings set aside for that purpose. Africa, too, had elements of the guild system. At Timbuktu, there were tailoring guilds,

while in Benin guilds of a very restricted caste type controlled the famous brass and bronze industry. In Nupe (now northern Nigeria) the glass and bead industry operated on a guild basis. Each Nupe guild had a common workshop and a master. The master obtained contracts, financed the guild, and disposed of the product. Both his own relatives as well as strangers were free to enter the guild and learn the various specialized tasks within the glass industry. What this amounted to was simply that there was increasing specialization and division of labor.

Traditional African economies are usually called "subsistence" economies. Often, small villages farmed, hunted, fished, and looked after themselves independently with little reference to the rest of the continent. Yet, at the same time, the vast majority of African communities fulfilled at least a few of their needs by trade. Africa was a continent of innumerable trade routes. Some extended for long distances, like the routes across the Sahara or the routes connected with Katanga copper. But in the main, it was trade between neighboring or not too far distant societies. Such trade was always a function of production. Various communities were producing surpluses of given commodities which could be exchanged for items which they lacked. In that way, the salt industry of one locality would be stimulated while the iron industry would be encouraged in another. In a coastal, lake, or river area, dried fish could become profitable, while yams and millet would be grown in abundance elsewhere to provide a basis for exchange. The trade so readily distinguishable in every part of the continent between the tenth and fifteenth centuries was an excellent indicator of economic expansion and other forms of development which accompanied increasing mastery over the environment.

As part of the extension of trade, it was noticeable that barter was giving way to some forms of money exchange. Barter was generally practiced when the volume of trade was small and when only a few commodities were involved. However, as trade became more complicated, some items began to be used as the standards for measuring other goods. Those items could be kept as a form of wealth easily transformed into other commodities when the need arose. For example, salt, cloth, iron hoes, and cowry shells were popular forms of money in Africa—apart from gold and copper, which were much rarer and therefore restricted to measuring things of great value. In a few places, such as North Africa, Ethiopia, and the Kongo, the monetary systems were quite sophisticated, indicating that the economy was far removed from simple barter and subsistence.

There were many other changes of a socio-political nature accompanying the expansion of the productive forces. Indeed, things such as agricultural practices, industry, trade, money, and political structures were inseparable—each interacting with the others. The most developed areas of Africa were those where all the elements converged, and the two sociopolitical features which were the outstanding indices to development were the increase of stratification and the consolidation of states.

The principles of family and deferment to age were slowly breaking down throughout the centuries preceding the arrival of Europeans in their sailing ships. Changes in technology and in the division of labor made that inevitable. The introduction of iron, for example, gave economic and military strength to those who could make and acquire it. Better tools meant more food and a greater population, but the latter tended to outrun the supplies of material goods, and the possibilities of wealth opened up by the possession of iron were seized upon by a few to their own advantage. Skilled workers in iron, cloth, pottery, leather, or salt-making tended to pass on their skills in closed groups known as castes. That insured that the division of labor operated in their favor, because their position was privileged and strategic. Ironworkers were particularly favored in some African societies in which they either became the ruling groups or were very close to the top of the social hierarchy. The division of labor also carried over into non-material spheres, producing professional minstrels and historians. They too had certain special rights and privileges, notably the ability to criticize freely without fear of reprisal. In some circumstances, skilled castes were reduced to very low status. But that was rare, and in any case it does not contradict the general assertion that the tendency was for communalism to give rise to more and more stratification.

Social stratification was the basis for the rise of classes and for social antagonisms. To some extent, this was a logical follow-up of the previous non-antagonistic differences in communal society. For instance, old men could use their control over land allocation, over bride-price, and over other traditional exchanges to try to establish themselves as a privileged economic stratum. Secret societies arose in the area that is now Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, and they permitted knowledge, power, and wealth to pass into the hands of the elders and ultimately to the elders of particular lineages.

The contradiction between young men and their elders was not the type that caused violent revolution. But young men clearly had reasons for resenting their dependence on elders, especially when it came to such vital personal matters as the acquisition of wives. When disgruntled, they could either leave their communities and set up for themselves or they could challenge the principles within the society. In either case, the trend was

that some individuals and families were more successful than others, and those families established themselves as permanent rulers. Then age ceased to matter as much because even a junior could succeed to his father, once the notion of royal blood or royal lineage was established.

In the period of transition, while African society retained many features that were undisputably communal, it also accepted the principle that some families or clans or lineages were destined to rule and others were not. This was true not only of cultivators but of pastoralists as well. In fact, livestock became unevenly distributed much more readily than land; and those families with the largest herds became socially and politically dominant.

An even more important aspect of the process of social stratification was that brought about by contact between different social formations. Fishermen had to relate to cultivators and the latter to pastoralists. There were even social formations such as bands of hunters and food-gatherers who had not yet entered the phase of communal cooperation. Often the relationship was peaceful. In many parts of the African continent, there arose what is known as "symbiosis" between groups earning their living in different ways—which really means that they agreed to exchange goods and coexist to their mutual advantage. However, there was also room for considerable conflict; and when one group imposed itself by force on another, the result was invariably the rise of social classes with the conquerors on top and the conquered at the bottom.

The most common clashes between different social formations were those between pastoralists and cultivators. In some instances, the cultivators had the upper hand, as for instance in West Africa where cultivators like the Mandinga and Hausa were the overlords of the Rulani cattlemen right up to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The reverse situation was found in the Horn of Africa and most of East Africa. Another type of clash was that in which raiding peoples took power over agriculturalists, as happened in Angola and in and around the Sahara, where the Moors and Tuareg exacted tribute from and even enslaved more peaceful and sedentary peoples. The result in each case was that a relatively small faction held control of the land and (where relevant) cattle, mines, and long-distance trade. It meant also that the minority group could make demands on the labor of their subjects—not on the basis of kinship but because a relationship of domination and subordination existed.

In truly communal societies, the leadership was based on religion and family ties. The senior members of the society shared the work with others and received more or less the same share of the total product. Certainly, no one starved while others stuffed themselves and threw away the excess.

However, once African societies began to expand by internal evolution, conquest, or trade, the style of life of the ruling group became noticeably different. They consumed the most and the best that the society offered. Yet, they were least directly involved in the production of wealth by farming, cattle herding, or fishing. The ruling class and the kings in particular had the right to call upon the labor of the common man for certain projects and for a given number of days per year. This is known as *corvée* labor, from a similar procedure followed in feudal France. Such a system meant greater exploitation and at the same time greater development of productive resources.

Social stratification as outlined above went hand in hand with the rise of the state. The notion of royal lineages and commoner clans could not have any meaning except in a political state with a concrete geographical existence. It is significant that the great dynasties of the world ruled over feudal states. To the European or European-trained ear, the names of the Tudors, Bourbons, Hohenzollerns, and Romanovs would already be familiar. Japan had its Kamakuras and its Tokugawas; China had its T'ang and its Ming; India had its Guptas and its Marathas; and so on. All of those were feudal dynasties existing in a period some centuries after the birth of Christ, but in addition there were dynasties which ruled in each of those countries before feudal land tenure and class relations had fully crystalized. It means that the transition to feudalism in Europe* and Asia saw the rise of ruling groups and the state as interdependent parts of the same process. In that respect, Africa was no different.

From a political perspective, the period of transition from communalism to feudalism in Africa was one of state formation. At the beginning (and for many centuries), the state remained weak and immature. It acquired definite territorial boundaries, but inside those boundaries subjects lived in their own communities with scarcely any contact with the ruling class until the time came to pay an annual tax or tribute. Only when a group within the state refused to pay the tribute did the early African states mobilize their repressive machinery in the form of an army to demand what it considered as its rights from subjects. Slowly, various states acquired greater power over their many communities of citizens. They exacted *corvée* labor, they enlisted soldiers, and they appointed regular tax collectors and local administrators. The areas of Africa in which labor relations were breaking out of communal restrictions corresponded to areas in which sophisticated political states were emerging. The rise of states

* In Europe, communalism gave way to slavery, and therefore dynasties and strong states were present on the eve of the slavery epoch.

was itself a form of development, which increased the scale of African politics and merged small ethnic groups into wider identities suggestive of nations.

In some ways, too much importance is attached to the growth of political states. It was in Europe that the nation-state reached an advanced stage, and Europeans tended to use the presence or absence of well-organized polities as a measure of "civilization." That is not entirely justified, because in Africa there were small political units which had relatively advanced material and non-material cultures. For instance, neither the Ibo people of Nigeria nor the Kikuyu of Kenya ever produced large centralized governments in their traditional setting. But both had sophisticated systems of political rule based on clans and (in the case of the Ibo) on religious oracles and "Secret Societies." Both of them were efficient agriculturalists and ironworkers, and the Ibo had been manufacturing brass and bronze items ever since the ninth century A.D., if not earlier.

However, after making the above qualification, it can be conceded that on the whole the larger states in Africa had the most effective political structures and greater capacity for producing food, clothing, minerals, and other material artifacts. It can readily be understood that those societies which had ruling classes were concerned with acquiring luxury and prestige items. The privileged groups in control of the state were keen to stimulate manufactures as well as to acquire them through trade. They were the ones that mobilized labor to produce a greater surplus above subsistence needs, and in the process they encouraged specialization and the division of labor.

Scholars often distinguish between groups in Africa which had states and those which were "stateless." Sometimes, the word "stateless" is carelessly or even abusively used; but it does describe those peoples who had no machinery of government coercion and no concept of a political unit wider than the family or the village. After all, if there is no class stratification in a society, it follows that there is no state, because the state arose as an instrument to be used by a particular class to control the rest of society in its own interests. Generally speaking, one can consider the stateless societies as among the older forms of socio-political organization in Africa, while the large states represented an evolution away from communalism—sometimes to the point of feudalism.

~~Again, it must be emphasized that a survey of the scene in Africa before~~ the coming of Europeans would reveal considerable unevenness of development. There were social formations representing hunting bands, communalism, feudalism, and many positions intermediate between the last

Ethiopia

Ethiopia, too, at the start of its history as a great power was ruled over by foreigners. The kingdom of Axum was one of the most important of the nuclei around which feudal Ethiopia eventually emerged, and Axum was founded near the Red Sea coast by a dynasty of Sabean origin from the other side of the Red Sea. But the kings of Axum were never agents of foreign powers, and they became completely Africanized. The founding of Axum goes back to the first century A.D. and its ruling class was Christianized within a few centuries. After that they moved inland and participated in the development of the Christian feudal Ethiopian state.

The Ethiopian, Tigrean, and Amharic ruling class was a proud one, tracing its descent to Solomon. As a state which incorporated several other smaller states and kingdoms, it was an empire in the same sense as feudal Austria or Prussia. The emperor of Ethiopia was addressed as "Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God, Emperor of Ethiopia, King of Kings." In practice, however, the "Solomonic" line was not unbroken. Most of the consolidation of the inland Ethiopian plateau was carried out in the twelfth century by an intruding dynasty, the Zagwe, who made claims to descent from Moses. The Zagwe kings distinguished themselves by building several churches cut out of solid rock. The architectural achievements attest to the level of skill reached by Ethiopians as well as the capacity of the state to mobilize labor on a huge scale. Such tasks could not have been achieved by voluntary family labor but only through the labor of an exploited class.

A great deal is known of the superstructure of the Ethiopian empire, especially its Christianity and its literate culture. History was written to glorify the king and the nobility, especially under the restored "Solomonic" dynasty which replaced the Zagwe in 1270 A.D. Fine illuminated books and manuscripts became a prominent element of Amharic culture. Equally fine garments and jewelry were produced for the ruling class and for the church. The top ecclesiastics were part of the nobility, and the institution of the monastery grew to great proportions in Ethiopia. The association of organized religion with the state was implicit in communal societies, where the distinction between politics, economics, religion, medicine, was scarcely drawn. Under feudalism everywhere, church and state were in close alliance. The Buddhists were pre-eminent in feudal Vietnam, Burma, Japan, and to a lesser extent in China. In India, a limited Buddhist influence was overwhelmed by that of the Hindus and Moslems; and of course in feudal Europe it was the Catholic church which played the role paralleled by the Orthodox church in Ethiopia.

The wealth of Ethiopia rested on an agricultural base. The fertile uplands supported cereal growing and there was considerable livestock raising, including the rearing of horses. Craft skills were developed in a number of spheres, and foreign craftsmen were encouraged. For instance, early in the fifteenth century, Turkish artisans settled in the country and made coats of mail and weapons for the Ethiopian army. Coptics from Egypt were also introduced to help run the financial administration. No one denies that the word "feudal" can be applied to Ethiopia in those centuries, because there existed a clear-cut class contradiction between the landlords and the peasants. Those relations grew out of the communalism that had characterized Ethiopia, like other parts of Africa, much earlier.

Feudal Ethiopia included lands that were communally owned by village and ethnic communities as well as lands belonging directly to the crown; but in addition large territories were conferred by the conquering Amharic dynasties on members of the royal family and on soldiers and priests. Those who received huge areas of land became *Ras*, or provincial princes, and they had judges appointed by the emperor attached to them. The peasants in their domain were reduced to tenants who could earn their living only by offering produce to the landlord and taxes to the state (also in produce). The landlords exempted themselves from tax—a typical situation in feudal societies, and one which fed the fires of revolution in Europe when the bourgeois class grew powerful enough to challenge the fact that the feudalists were using political power to tax everyone but themselves. Ethiopia, of course, never reached that stage of transition to capitalism. What is clear is that the transition to feudalism had been made.

Nubia

Nubia was another Christian region in Africa, but one which is not so famous as Ethiopia. In the sixth century A.D., Christianity was introduced into the middle Nile in the districts once ruled by the famous state of Kush, or Meroë. In the period before the birth of Christ, Kush was a rival to Egypt in splendor, and it ruled Egypt for a number of years. Its decline in the fourth century A.D. was completed by attacks from the then expanding Axum. The three small Nubian states which arose some time afterwards were to some extent the heirs of Kush, although after their conversion to Christianity it was this religion which dominated Nubian culture.

The Nubian states (which had consolidated to two by about the eighth century) achieved most from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, in spite

BRITISH TRADE IS A MAGNIFICENT SUPERSTRUCTURE OF AMERICAN COMmerce and naval power on an African foundation.

—MALACHI POSTLETHWAYT, *The African Trade, the Great Pillar and Support of the British Plantation Trade in North America, 1745.*

If you were to lose each year more than 200 million livres that you now get from your colonies: if you had not the exclusive trade with your colonies to feed your manufactures, to maintain your navy, to keep your agriculture going, to repay for your imports, to provide for your luxury needs, to advantageously balance your trade with Europe and Asia, then I say it clearly, the kingdom would be irretrievably lost.

—BISHOP MAURY (of France): *Argument against France's ending the slave trade and giving freedom to its slave colonies.* Presented in the French National Assembly, 1791.

How Europe Became the Dominant Section of a World-Wide Trade System

Because of the superficiality of many of the approaches to "underdevelopment," and because of resulting misconceptions, it is necessary to re-emphasize that development and underdevelopment are not only comparative terms, but that they also have a dialectical relationship one to the other: that is to say, the two help produce each other by interaction. Western Europe and Africa had a relationship which insured the transfer of wealth from Africa to Europe. The transfer was possible only after trade became truly international; and that takes one back to the late fifteenth century when Africa and Europe were drawn into common relations for the first time—along with Asia and the Americas. The developed and underdeveloped parts of the present capitalist section of the world have been in continuous contact for four and a half centuries. The contention here is that over that period Africa helped to develop Western Europe in the same proportion as Western Europe helped to underdevelop Africa.

The first significant thing about the internationalization of trade in the fifteenth century was that Europeans took the initiative and went to other parts of the world. No Chinese boats reached Europe, and if any African canoes reached the Americas (as is sometimes maintained) they did not establish two-way links. What was called international trade was nothing but the extension overseas of European interests. The strategy behind international trade and the production that supported it was firmly in European hands, and specifically in the hands of the sea-going nations from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. They owned and directed the great majority of the world's sea-going vessels, and they controlled the financing of the trade between four continents. Africans had little clue as to the tri-continental links between Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Europe had a monopoly of knowledge about the international exchange system seen as a whole, for Western Europe was the only sector capable of viewing the system as a whole.

Europeans used the superiority of their ships and cannon to gain control of all the world's waterways, starting with the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic coast of North Africa. From 1415, when the Portuguese captured Ceuta, near Gibraltar, they maintained the offensive against the Maghreb. Within the next sixty years, they seized ports such as Arzila, El-Ksar-es-Seghir, and Tangier, and fortified them. By the second half of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese controlled the Atlantic coast of Morocco and used its economic and strategic advantages to prepare for further navigations which eventually carried their ships round the Cape of Good Hope in 1495. After reaching the Indian Ocean, the Portuguese sought with some success to replace Arabs as the merchants who tied East Africa to India and the rest of Asia. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Portuguese carried most of the East African ivory which was marketed in India; while Indian cloth and beads were sold in East and West Africa by the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and French. The same applied to cowry shells from the East Indies. Therefore, by control of the seas, Europe took the first steps towards transforming the several parts of Africa and Asia into economic satellites.

When the Portuguese and the Spanish were still in command of a major sector of world trade in the first half of the seventeenth century, they engaged in buying cotton cloth in India to exchange for slaves in Africa to mine gold in Central and South America. Part of the gold in the Americas would then be used to purchase spices and silks from the Far East. The concept of metropole and dependency automatically came into existence when parts of Africa were caught up in the web of international commerce. On the one hand, there were the European countries who decided on the role to be played by the African economy; and on the other hand, Africa formed an extension to the European capitalist market. As far as foreign trade was concerned, Africa was dependent on what Europeans were prepared to buy and sell.

X Europe exported to Africa goods which were already being produced and used in Europe itself—Dutch linen, Spanish iron, English pewter, Portuguese wines, French brandy, Venetian glass beads, German muskets. Europeans were also able to unload on the African continent goods which had become unsalable in Europe. Thus, items like old sheets, cast-off uniforms, technologically outdated firearms, and lots of odds and ends found guaranteed markets in Africa. Africans slowly became aware of the possibility of demanding and obtaining better imported goods, and pressure was exerted on the captains of European ships; but the overall range of trade goods which left the European ports of Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Liverpool was determined almost exclusively by the pattern of production and consumption within Europe.

From the beginning, Europe assumed the power to make decisions within the international trading system. An excellent illustration of that is the fact that the so-called international law which governed the conduct of nations on the high seas was nothing else but European law. Africans did not participate in its making, and in many instances, African people were simply the victims, for the law recognized them only as transportable merchandise. If the African slave was thrown overboard at sea, the only legal problem that arose was whether or not the slave ship could claim compensation from the insurers! Above all, European decision-making power was exercised in selecting what Africa should export—in accordance with European needs.

The ships of the Portuguese gave the search for gold the highest priority, partly on the basis of well-known information that West African gold reached Europe across the Sahara and partly on the basis of guesswork. The Portuguese were successful in obtaining gold in parts of West Africa and in eastern Central Africa; and it was the Gold Coast which attracted the greatest attention from Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The number of forts built there was proof to that effect, and the nations involved included the Scandinavians and the Prussians (Germans) apart from other colonial stalwarts like the British, Dutch, and Portuguese.

Europeans were anxious to acquire gold in Africa because there was a pressing need for gold coin within the growing capitalist money economy. Since gold was limited to very small areas of Africa, as far as Europeans were then aware, the principal export was human beings. Only in a very few places at given times was the export of another commodity of equal or greater importance. For instance, in the Senegal there was gum, in Sierra Leone camwood, and in Mozambique ivory. However, even after taking those things into account, one can say that Europe allocated to Africa the role of supplier of human captives to be used as slaves in various parts of the world.

When Europeans reached the Americas, they recognized its enormous potential in gold and silver and tropical produce. But that potential could not be made a reality without adequate labor supplies. The indigenous Indian population could not withstand new European diseases such as smallpox, nor could they bear the organized toil of slave plantations and slave mines, having barely emerged from the hunting stage. That is why. in islands like Cuba and Hispaniola, the local Indian population was virtually wiped out by the white invaders. At the same time, Europe itself had a very small population and could not afford to release the labor required to tap the wealth of the Americas. Therefore, they turned to the nearest continent, Africa, which incidentally had a population accustomed to settled agriculture and disciplined labor in many spheres. Those were the objective conditions lying behind the start of the European slave trade, and those are the reasons why the capitalist class in Europe used their control of international trade to insure that Africa specialized in exporting captives.

Obviously, if Europe could tell Africans what to export, that was an expression of European power. However, it would be a mistake to believe that it was an overwhelming military power. Europeans found it impossible to conquer Africans during the early centuries of trade, except in isolated spots on the coast. European power resided in their system of production which was at a somewhat higher level than Africa's at that time. European society was leaving feudalism and was moving towards capitalism; African society was then entering a phase comparable to feudalism.

The fact that Europe was the first part of the world to move from feudalism towards capitalism gave Europeans a headstart over humanity elsewhere in the scientific understanding of the universe, the making of tools, and the efficient organization of labor. *European technical superiority did not apply to all aspects of production, but the advantage which they possessed in a few key areas proved decisive.* For example, African canoes on the river Nile and the Senegal coast were of a high standard, but the relevant sphere of operations was the ocean, where European ships could take command. West Africans had developed metal casting to a fine artistic perfection in many parts of Nigeria, but when it came to the meeting with Europe, beautiful bronzes were far less relevant than the crudest cannon. African wooden utensils were sometimes works of great beauty, but Europe produced pots and pans that had many practical advantages. Literacy, organizational experience, and the capacity to produce on an ever expanding scale also counted in the European favor.

European manufactures in the early years of trade with Africa were often of poor quality, but they were of new varieties and were found

attractive. Estaban Montejo, an African who ran away from a Cuban slave plantation in the nineteenth century, recalled that his people were enticed into slavery by the color red. He said:

> It was the scarlet which did for the Africans; both the kings and the rest surrendered without a struggle. When the kings saw that the whites were taking out these scarlet handkerchiefs as if they were waving, they told the blacks, "Go on then, go and get a scarlet handkerchief" and the blacks were so excited by the scarlet they ran down to the ships like sheep and there they were captured.

That version by one of the victims of slavery is very poetic. What it means is that some African rulers found European goods sufficiently desirable to hand over captives which they had taken in warfare. Soon, war began to be fought between one community and another for the sole purpose of getting prisoners for sale to Europeans, and even inside a given community a ruler might be tempted to exploit his own subjects and capture them for sale. A chain reaction was started by European demand for slaves (and only slaves) and by their offer of consumer goods—this process being connected with divisions within African society.

It is often said for the colonial period that vertical political divisions in Africa made conquest easy. This is even truer of the way that Africa succumbed to the slave trade. National unification was a product of mature feudalism and of capitalism. Inside Europe, there were far fewer political divisions than in Africa where communalism meant political fragmentation with the family as the nucleus, and there were only a few states that had real territorial solidity. Furthermore, when one European nation challenged another to obtain captives from an African ruler, Europe benefited from whichever of the two nations won the conflict. Any European trader could arrive on the coast of West Africa and exploit the political differences which he found there. For example, in the small territory that the Portuguese later claimed as Guinea-Bissau, there were more than a dozen ethnic groups. It was so easy to set one off against another that Europeans called it a "slave trader's paradise."

Although class divisions were not pronounced in African society, they too contributed to the ease with which Europe imposed itself commercially on large parts of the African continent. The rulers had a certain status and authority, and when bamboozled by European goods they began to use that position to raid outside their societies as well as to exploit internally by victimizing some of their own subjects. In the simplest of societies where there were no kings, it proved impossible for Europeans to strike up the alliance which was necessary to carry on a trade in captives on the coast. In those societies with ruling groups, the association with

Europeans was easily established; and afterwards Europe hardened the existing internal class divisions and created new ones.

In effect, particular aspects of African society became weaknesses when Europeans arrived as representatives of a different phase of development. And yet the subjugation of the African economy through slave trade was a slow process at the outset, and in some instances African opposition or disinterest had to be overcome. In the Congo, the slave trade did not get under way without grave doubts and opposition from the king of the state of Kongo at the beginning of the sixteenth century. He asked for masons, priests, clerks, physicians; but instead he was overwhelmed by slave ships sent from Portugal, and a vicious trade was opened up by playing off one part of the Kongo kingdom against another. The king of the Kongo had conceived of possibilities of mutually beneficial interchange between his people and the European state, but the latter forced him to specialize in the export of human cargo. It is also interesting to note that while the *Oba* (king) of Benin was willing to sell a few female captives, it took a great deal of persuasion and pressure from Europeans to get him to sell male African prisoners of war, who would otherwise have been brought into the ranks of Benin society.

Once trade in slaves had been started in any given part of Africa, it soon became clear that it was beyond the capacity of any single African state to change the situation. In Angola, the Portuguese employed an unusual number of their own troops and tried to seize political power from Africans. The Angolan state of Matamba on the river Kwango was founded around 1630 as a direct reaction against the Portuguese. With Queen Nzinga at its head, Matamba tried to coordinate resistance against the Portuguese in Angola. However, Portugal gained the upper hand in 1648, and this left Matamba isolated. Matamba could not forever stand aside. So long as it opposed trade with the Portuguese, it was an object of hostility from neighboring African states which had compromised with Europeans and slave trading. So in 1656, Queen Nzinga resumed business with the Portuguese—a major concession to the decision-making role of Europeans within the Angolan economy.

Another example of African resistance during the course of the slave trade comes from the Baga people in what is now the Republic of Guinea. The Baga lived in small states, and in about 1720 one of their leaders (Tomba by name) aimed at securing an alliance to stop the slave traffic. He was defeated by local European resident-traders, mulattos, and other slave trading Africans. It is not difficult to understand why Europeans should have taken immediate steps to see that Tomba and his Baga followers did not opt out of the role allocated to them by Europe. A parallel which presents itself is the manner in which Europeans got together to wage the "Opium War" against China in the nineteenth century to insure that Western capitalists would make profit while the Chinese were turned into dope addicts.

Of course, it is only as a last resort that the capitalist metropoles need to use armed force to insure the pursuit of favorable policies in the dependent areas. Normally, economic weapons are sufficient. In the 1720s, Dahomey opposed European slave traders, and was deprived of European imports—some of which had become necessary by that time. Agaja Trudo, Dahomey's greatest king, appreciated that European demand for slaves and the pursuit of slaving in and around Dahomey was in conflict with Dahomey's development. Between 1724 and 1726, he looted and burned European forts and slave camps; and he reduced the trade from the "Slave Coast" to a mere trickle, by blocking the paths leading to sources of supply in the interior. European slave dealers were very bitter, and they tried to sponsor some African collaborators against Agaja Trudo. They failed to unseat him or to crush the Dahomean state, but in turn Agaja failed to persuade them to develop new lines of economic activity, such as local plantation agriculture; and, being anxious to acquire firearms and cowries through the Europeans, he had to agree to the resumption of slave trading in 1730.

After 1730, Dahomean slaving was placed under royal control and was much more restricted than previously. Yet, the failure of this determined effort demonstrated that a single African state at that time could not emancipate itself from European control. The small size of African states and the numerous political divisions made it so much easier for Europe to make the decisions as to Africa's role in world production and trade.

Many guilty consciences have been created by the slave trade. Europeans know that they carried on the slave trade, and Africans are aware that the trade would have been impossible if certain Africans did not cooperate with the slave ships. To ease their guilty consciences, Europeans try to throw the major responsibility for the slave trade on to the Africans. One European author of a book on the slave trade (appropriately entitled *Sins of Our Fathers*) explained how many other white people urged him to state that the trade was the responsibility of African chiefs, and that Europeans merely turned up to buy the captives—as though without European demand there would have been captives sitting on the beach by the millions! Issues such as those are not the principal concern of this study, but they can be correctly approached only after understanding that Europe became the center of a world-wide system and that it was European capitalism which set slavery and the Atlantic slave trade in motion.

The trade in human beings from Africa was a response to *external factors*. At first, the labor was needed in Portugal, Spain, and in Atlantic islands such as São Tomé, Cape Verde, and the Canaries; then came the period when the Greater Antilles and the Spanish-American mainland needed replacements for the Indians who were victims of genocide; and then the demands of Caribbean and mainland plantation societies had to be met. The records show direct connections between levels of exports from Africa and European demand for slave labor in some part of the American plantation economy. When the Dutch took Pernambuco, in Brazil in 1634, the director of the Dutch West Indian Company immediately informed their agents on the Gold Coast that they were to take the necessary steps to pursue the trade in slaves on the adjacent coast east of the Volta—thus creating for that area the infamous name of the "Slave Coast." When the British West Indian islands took to growing sugar cane, Gambia was one of the first places to respond. Examples of this kind of external control can be cited right up to the end of the trade, and this embraces Eastern Africa also, since European markets in the Indian Ocean islands became important in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and since demand in places like Brazil caused Mozambicans to be shipped around the Cape of Good Hope.

Africa's Contribution to the Economy and Beliefs of Early Capitalist Europe

The kinds of benefits which Europe derived from its control of world commerce are fairly well known, although it is curious that the recognition of Africa's major contribution to European development is usually made in works devoted specifically to that subject; while European scholars of Europe often treat the European economy as if it were entirely independent. European economists of the nineteenth century certainly had no illusions about the interconnections between their national economies and the world at large. J. S. Mill, as spokesman for British capitalism, said that as far as England was concerned, "the trade of the West Indies is hardly to be considered as external trade, but more resembles the traffic between town and country." By the phrase "trade of the West Indies" Mill meant the commerce between Africa, England, and the West Indies, because without African labor the West Indies were valueless. Karl Marx also commented on the way that European capitalists tied Africa, the West Indies, and Latin America into the capitalist system; and (being the most bitter critic of capitalism) Marx went on to point out that what was good for Europeans was obtained at the expense of untold suffering by Africans and American Indians. Marx noted that "the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the turning of Africa into a commercial warren for the hunting of black skins signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production."

Some attempts have been made to quantify the actual monetary profits made by Europeans from engaging in the slave trade. The actual dimensions are not easy to fix, but the profits were fabulous. John Hawkins made three trips to West Africa in the 1560s, and stole Africans whom he sold to the Spanish in America. On returning to England after the first trip, his profit was so handsome that Queen Elizabeth I became interested in directly participating in his next venture; and she provided for that purpose a ship named the *Jesus*. Hawkins left with the *Jesus* to steal some more Africans, and he returned to England with such dividends that Queen Elizabeth made him a knight. Hawkins chose as his coat of arms the representation of an African in chains.

Of course, there were inevitably voyages that failed, slave ships that were lost at sea. Sometimes trade in Africa did well, while at other times it was the profit in the Americas that was really substantial. When all the ups and downs are ironed out, the level of profit had to be enough to justify continued participation in that particular form of trade for centuries. A few bourgeois scholars have tried to suggest that the trade in slaves did not have worthwhile monetary returns. They would have us believe that the same entrepreneurs whom they praise in other contexts as the heroes of capitalist development were so dumb with regard to slavery and slave trade that for centuries they absorbed themselves in a non-profit venture! This kind of argument is worth noting more as an example of the distortions of which white bourgeois scholarship is capable than as something requiring serious consideration. Besides, quite apart from capital accumulation, Europe's trade with Africa gave numerous stimuli to Europe's growth.

Central and South American gold and silver—mined by Africans—played a crucial role in meeting the need for coin in the expanding capitalist money economy of Western Europe, while African gold helped the Portuguese to finance further navigations around the Cape of Good Hope and into Asia from the fifteenth century on. African gold was also the main source for the mintage of Dutch gold coin in the seventeenth century, helping Amsterdam to become the financial capital of Europe in that period; and further it was no coincidence that when the English struck a new gold coin in 1663, they called it the "guinea." The Encyclopaedia Britannica explains that the guinea was "a gold coin at one time current in the United Kingdom. It was first coined in 1663, in the reign of Charles II, from gold imported from the Guinea Coast of West Africa by a company of merchants trading under charter from the British crown—hence the name."

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and for most of the nineteenth century, the exploitation of Africa and African labor continued to be a source for the accumulation of capital to be reinvested in Western Europe. The African contribution to European capitalist growth extended over such vital sectors as shipping, insurance, the formation of companies, capitalist agriculture, technology, and the manufacture of machinery. The effects were so wide-ranging that many are seldom brought to the notice of the reading public. For instance, the French Saint-Malo fishing industry was revived by the opening up of markets in the French slave plantations; while the Portuguese in Europe depended heavily on dyes like indigo, camwood, Brazil wood, and cochineal brought from Africa and the Americas. Gum from Africa also played a part in the textile industry, which is acknowledged as having been one of the most powerful engines of growth within the European economy. Then there was the export of ivory from Africa, enriching many merchants in London's Mincing Lane, and providing the raw material for industries in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and North America—producing items ranging from knife handles to piano keys.

Africa's being drawn into the orbit of Western Europe speeded up the latter's technological development. For example, the evolution of European shipbuilding from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century was a logical consequence of their monopoly of sea commerce in that period. During that time, the North Africans were bottled up in the Mediterranean, and although it was from them that Europeans initially borrowed a great deal of nautical instrumentation, the North Africans made no further worthwhile advances. Where the original European advantage was not sufficient to assure supremacy, they deliberately undermined other people's efforts. The Indian navy, for instance, suffered from the rigid enforcement of the English Navigation Laws. Yet, the expenses involved in building new and better European ships were met from the profits of overseas trade with India and Africa. The Dutch were pioneers in improving upon the caravels which took the Spanish and Portuguese out across the Atlantic, and the successive Dutch trading companies operating in Asia, Africa, and America were the ones responsible for experimentation. By

the eighteenth century, the British were using Dutch know-how as a basis for surpassing the Dutch themselves, and the Atlantic was their laboratory. It used to be said that the slave trade was a training ground for British seamen. It is probably more significant to note that the Atlantic trade was the stimulator of consistent advances in naval technology.

The most spectacular feature in Europe which was connected with African trade was the rise of seaport towns—notably, Bristol, Liverpool, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Seville. Directly or indirectly connected to those ports, there often emerged the manufacturing centers which gave rise to the Industrial Revolution. In England, it was the county of Lancashire which was the first center of the Industrial Revolution, and the economic advance in Lancashire depended first of all on the growth of the port of Liverpool through slave trading.

The connections between slavery and capitalism in the growth of England is adequately documented by Eric Williams in his well-known book *Capitalism and Slavery*. Williams gives a clear picture of the numerous benefits which England derived from trading and exploiting slaves, and he identified by name several of the personalities and capitalist firms who were the beneficiaries. Outstanding examples are provided in the persons of David and Alexander Barclay, who were engaging in slave trade in 1756 and who later used the loot to set up Barclays Bank. There was a similar progression in the case of Lloyds—from being a small London coffee house to being one of the world's largest banking and insurance houses, after dipping into profits from slave trade and slavery. Then there was James Watt, expressing eternal gratitude to the West Indian slave owners who directly financed his famous steam engine, and took it from the drawing board to the factory.

A similar picture would emerge from any detailed study of French capitalism and slavery, given the fact that during the eighteenth century the West Indies accounted for 20 per cent of France's external trade—much more than the whole of Africa in the present century. Of course, benefits were not always directly proportionate to the amount of involvement of a given European state in the Atlantic trade. The enormous profits of Portuguese overseas enterprise passed rapidly out of the Portuguese economy into the hands of the more developed Western European capitalist nations who supplied Portugal with capital, ships, and trade goods. Germany was included in this category, along with England, Holland, and France.

Commerce deriving from Africa helped a great deal to strengthen transnational links within the Western European economy, bearing in mind that American produce was the consequence of African labor. Brazilian dyewoods, for example, were re-exported from Portugal into the Mediterranean, the North Sea, and the Baltic, and passed into the continental cloth industry of the seventeenth century. Sugar from the Caribbean was re-exported from England and France to other parts of Europe to such an extent that Hamburg in Germany was the biggest sugar-refining center in Europe in the first half of the eighteenth century. Germany supplied manufactures to Scandinavia, Holland, England, France, and Portugal for resale in Africa. England, France, and Holland found it necessary to exchange various classes of goods the better to deal with Africans for gold, slaves, and ivory. The financiers and merchants of Genoa were the powers behind the markets of Lisbon and Seville; while Dutch bankers played a similar role with respect to Scandinavia and England.

Western Europe was that part of Europe in which by the fifteenth century the trend was most visible that feudalism was giving way to capitalism. (In Eastern Europe, feudalism was still strong in the nineteenth century.) The peasants were being driven off the land in England, and agriculture was becoming technologically more advanced—producing food and fibers to support a larger population and to provide a more effective basis for the woolen and linen industries in particular. The technological base of industry, as well as its social and economic organization, was being transformed. African trade speeded up several aspects, including the integration of Western Europe, as noted above. That is why the African connection contributed not merely to economic growth (which relates to quantitative dimensions) but also to real development in the sense of increased capacity for further growth and independence.

In speaking of the European slave trade, mention must be made of the U.S.A., not only because its dominant population was European but also because Europe transferred its capitalist institutions more completely to North America than to any other part of the globe, and established a powerful form of capitalism—after eliminating the indigenous inhabitants and exploiting the labor of millions of Africans. Like other parts of the New World, the American colonies of the British crown were used as means of accumulating primary capital for re-export to Europe. But the Northern colonies also had direct access to benefits from slavery in the American South and in the British and French West Indies. As in Europe, the profits made from slavery and slave trade went firstly to commercial ports and industrial areas, which meant mainly the northeastern seaboard district known as New England and the state of New York. The Pan-Africanist, W. E. B. Du Bois, in a study of the American slave trade, quoted a report of 1862 as follows:

> The number of persons engaged in the slave trade and the amount of capital embarked in it exceed our powers of calculation. The city of New York has been until of late (1862) the principal port of the world for this infamous commerce; although the cities of Portland and Boston are only second to her in that distribution.

American economic development up to mid-nineteenth century rested squarely on foreign commerce, of which slavery was a pivot. In the 1830s, slave-grown cotton accounted for about half the value of all exports from the United States of America. Furthermore, in the case of the American colonies of the eighteenth century, it can again be observed that Africa contributed in a variety of ways—one thing leading to another. For instance, in New England, trade with Africa, Europe, and the West Indies in slaves and slave-grown products supplied cargo for their merchant marine, stimulated the growth of their shipbuilding industry, built up their towns and their cities, and enabled them to utilize their forests, fisheries, and soil more effectively. Finally, it was the carrying trade between the West Indian slave colonies and Europe which lay behind the emancipation of the American colonies from British rule, and it was no accident that the struggle for American independence started in the leading New England town of Boston. In the nineteenth century, the connection with Africa continued to play an indirect role in American political growth. In the first place, profits from the slave activities went into the coffers of political parties, and even more important the African stimulation and black labor played a vital role in extending European control over the present territory of the United States—notably in the South, but including also the "Wild West," where black cowboys were active.

Slavery is useful for early accumulation of capital, but it is too rigid for industrial development. Slaves had to be given crude non-breakable tools which held back the capitalist development of agriculture and industry. That explains the fact that the northern portions of the U.S.A. gained far more industrial benefits from slavery than the South, which actually had slave institutions on its soil; and ultimately the stage was reached during the American Civil War when the Northern capitalists fought to end slavery within the boundaries of the U.S.A. so that the country as a whole could advance to a higher level of capitalism.

In effect, one can say that within the U.S.A. the slave relations in the South had by the second half of the nineteenth century come into conflict with the further expansion of the productive base inside the U.S.A. as a whole, and a violent clash ensued before the capitalist relations of legally free labor became generalized. Europe maintained slavery in places that were physically remote from European society; and therefore inside Europe itself, capitalist relations were elaborated without being adversely affected by slavery in the Americas. However, even in Europe there came a moment when the leading capitalist states found that the trade in slaves and the use of slave labor in the Americas was no longer in the interest of their further development. Britain made this decision early in the nineteenth century, to be followed later by France.

Since capitalism, like any other mode of production, is a total system which involves an ideological aspect, it is also necessary to focus on the effects of the ties with Africa on the development of ideas within the superstructure of European capitalist society. In that sphere, the most striking feature is undoubtedly the rise of racism as a widespread and deeply rooted element in European thought. The role of slavery in promoting racist prejudice and ideology has been carefully studied in certain situations, especially in the U.S.A. The simple fact is that no people can enslave another for centuries without coming out with a notion of superiority, and when the color and other physical traits of those peoples were quite different it was inevitable that the prejudice should take a racist form. Within Africa itself, the same can be said for the situation in the Cape Province of South Africa where white men have been establishing military and social superiority over non-whites since 1650.

It would be much too sweeping a statement to say that all racial and color prejudice in Europe derived from the enslavement of Africans and the exploitation of non-white peoples in the early centuries of international trade. There was also anti-Semitism at an even earlier date inside Europe and there is always an element of suspicion and incomprehension when peoples of different cultures come together. However, it can be affirmed without reservations that the white racism which came to pervade the world was an integral part of the capitalist mode of production. Nor was it merely a question of how the individual white person treated a black person. The racism of Europe was a set of generalizations and assumptions, which had no scientific basis, but were rationalized in every sphere from theology to biology.

Occasionally, it is mistakenly held that Europeans enslaved Africans for racist reasons. European planters and miners enslaved Africans for *economic* reasons, so that their labor power could be exploited. Indeed, it would have been impossible to open up the New World and to use it as a constant generator of wealth, had it not been for African labor. There were no other alternatives: the American (Indian) population was virtually wiped out and Europe's population was too small for settlement overseas at that time. Then, having become utterly dependent on African labor, Europeans at home and abroad found it necessary to rationalize that exploitation in racist terms as well. Oppression follows logically from exploitation, so as to guarantee the latter. Oppression of African people on purely racial grounds accompanied, strengthened, and became indistinguishable from oppression for economic reasons.

C. L. R. James, noted Pan-Africanist *and* Marxist, once remarked that:

> The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental.

It can further be argued that by the nineteenth century white racism had become so institutionalized in the capitalist world (and notably in the U.S.A.) that it sometimes ranked above the maximization of profit as a motive for oppressing black people.

In the short run, European racism seemed to have done Europeans no harm, and they used those erroneous ideas to justify their further domination of non-European peoples in the colonial epoch. But the international proliferation of bigoted and unscientific racist ideas was bound to have its negative consequences in the long run. When Europeans put millions of their brothers (Jews) into ovens under the Nazis, the chickens were coming home to roost. Such behavior inside of "democratic" Europe was not as strange as it is sometimes made out to be. There was always a contradiction between the elaboration of democratic ideas inside Europe and the elaboration of authoritarian and thuggish practices by Europeans with respect to Africans. When the French Revolution was made in the name of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," it did not extend to black Africans who were enslaved by France in the West Indies and the Indian Ocean. Indeed, France fought against the efforts of those people to emancipate themselves, and the leaders of their bourgeois revolution said plainly that they did not make it on behalf of black humanity.

It is not even true to say that capitalism developed democracy at home in Europe and not abroad. At home, it was responsible for a talk or certain rhetoric of freedom, but it was never extended from the bourgeoisie to the oppressed workers; and the treatment of Africans must surely have made such hypocrisy a habit of European life, especially within the ruling class. How else can one explain the fact that the Christian church participated fully in the maintenance of slavery and still talked about saving souls! The hypocrisy reached its highest levels inside the U.S.A. The first martyr in the American national war of liberation against the British colonialists in the eighteenth century was an African descendant, Crispus Attucks; and both slave and free Africans played a key role in Washington's armies. And yet, the American Constitution sanctioned the continued enslavement of Africans. In recent times, it has become an object of concern to some liberals that the U.S.A. is capable of war crimes of the order of My Lai in Vietnam. But the fact of the matter is that the My Lais began with the enslavement of Africans and American Indians. Racism, violence, and brutality were the concomitants of the capitalist system when it extended itself abroad in the early centuries of international trade.

Brief Guide to Reading

~~The subject of Africa's contribution to European development reveals several of the factors which limit a writer's representation of reality. Language and nationality, for instance, are effective barriers to communication. Works in English seldom take account of the effect brought about in France, Holland, or Portugal by participation in slaving and other forms of commerce which exploited Africa in the pre-colonial period. The ideological gulf is responsible for the fact that most bourgeois scholars write about phenomena such as the Industrial Revolution in England without once mentioning the European slave trade as a factor in primary accumulation of capital. Marx himself had laid great emphasis on sources of overseas capital accumulation. But even Marxists (as prominent as Maurice Dobb and E. J. Hobsbawm) for many years concentrated on examining the evolution of capitalism out of feudalism inside Europe, with only marginal reference to the massive exploitation of Africans, Asians, and American Indians.~~

ERIC WILLIAMS, *Capitalism and Slavery*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944.
OLIVER COX, *Capitalism as a System*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964.
Cox, an African American, makes the basic point that capitalism has from very early times been an international system. Eric Williams, a West Indian, is very precise and very detailed in illustrating the connection between British capitalism and the enslavement of Africans.

W. E. B. DU BOIS, *The Suppression of the Atlantic Slave-Trade to the United States of America—1638–1870*. New York: Social Science Press, 1954.
RICHARD PARES, *Yankees and Creoles: the Trade between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution*. London: Longmans Green, 1956.
Both of these provide data on the contribution of African labor to the development of capitalism in the U.S.A. in the epoch of slavery.

LEO HUBERMAN, *Man's Worldly Goods: The Story of the Wealth of Nations*. New York and London: Harper Bros., 1936.

F. CLAIREMONTE, *Economic Liberalism and Underdevelopment*.
Huberman's book is an excellent overall treatment of the development of capitalism out of feudalism in Europe. It includes a section in which the role of slavery is highlighted. Clairemonte's study accords recognition to the role played by the subcontinent of India in building Europe.

PHILIP D. CURTIN, *The Image of Africa*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.
WINTHROP JORDAN, *White Over Black: American Attitudes towards the Negro*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, 1968.
These two texts are relevant to the question of the rise of white racism, although neither of the two makes sufficiently explicit the connection between racism and capitalism.

political innovator, who went further than the others in setting up a political administration where a sense of loyalty could prevail over the above clans, localities, and ethnic groups.

Zimbabwe, too, progressed, with only slight interference from Europeans. Locally, the center of power shifted from Mutapa to Changamire; and eventually in the nineteenth century Nguni groups (fleeing from the power of the Zulu) overran Zimbabwe. So long as the Nguni were warrior bands on the march, they obviously proved destructive; but by the middle of the nineteenth century the Nguni had already spread their own *state-building* techniques to Mozambique and to what is now Southern Rhodesia, and had joined with the local population to establish new and larger kingdoms—infused with a sense of nationality, as was the case in Zululand.

Meanwhile, across vast areas of Central Africa, striking political change was also taking place. Up to the fifteenth century, the level of social organization was low in the area between Kongo and Zimbabwe. Precisely in that area, there arose the group of states known as the Luba-Lunda complex. Their political structures rather than their territorial size made them significant; and their achievements were registered in the face of constantly encroaching slaving activities.

On the large island of Madagascar, the several small states of an earlier epoch had by the late eighteenth century given way to the powerful feudal Merina kingdom. More often than not, Madagascar is ignored in general assessments of the African continent, although (both in the physical and the cultural sense) Africa is writ large on the Malagasy people. They, too, suffered from loss of population through slave exports; but the Merina kingdom did better than most slaving states, because more intensive cultivation of high-yielding swamp rice and the breeding of cattle offset the loss of labor. This situation should serve as a reminder that development *accompanied by* slave trading must not be superficially and illogically *attributed to* the export of the population and the dislocation attendant upon slave raiding. The bases of the political development of the Merina kingdom and of all others (whether or not engaged in slaving) lay in their own environment—in the material resources, human resources, technology, and social relations. So long as any African society could at least maintain its inherited advantages springing from many centuries of evolutionary change, then for so long could the superstructure continue to expand and give further opportunities to whole groups of people, to classes, and to individuals.

At the beginning of this section, attention was drawn to the necessity for reconciling a recognition of African development up to 1885 with an

awareness of the losses simultaneously incurred by the continent in that epoch, due to the nature of the contact with capitalist Europe. That issue must also be explicitly alluded to at this point. It is clearly ridiculous to assert that contacts with Europe built or benefited Africa in the precolonial period. Nor does it represent reality to suggest (as President Leopold Senghor once did) that the slave trade swept Africa like a bush fire, leaving nothing standing. The truth is that a developing Africa went into slave trading and European commercial relations as into a gale-force wind, which shipwrecked a few societies, set many others off course, and generally slowed down the rate of advance. However (pursuing the metaphor further) it must be noted that African captains were still making decisions before 1885, though already forces were at work which caused European capitalists to insist on, and succeed in taking over, command.

The Coming of Imperialism and Colonialism

In the centuries before colonial rule, Europe increased its economic capacity by leaps and bounds, while Africa appeared to have been almost static. Africa in the late nineteenth century could still be described as part communal and part feudal, although Western Europe had moved completely from feudalism to capitalism. To elucidate the main thesis of this study, it is necessary to follow not only the development of Europe and the underdevelopment of Africa, but also to understand how those two combined in a single system—that of capitalist imperialism.

The European economy was producing far more goods by making use of their own resources and labor, as well as the resources and labor of the rest of the world. There were many qualitative changes in the European economy, which accompanied and made possible the increase in the quantity of goods. For example, machines and factories rather than land provided the main source of wealth; and labor had long since ceased to be organized on a restricted family basis. The peasantry had been brutally destroyed and the labor of men, women, and children was ruthlessly exploited. Those were the great social evils of the capitalist system, which must not be forgotten; but, on the issue of comparative economics, the relevant fact is that what was a slight difference when the Portuguese sailed to West Africa in 1444 was a huge gap by the time that European robber statesmen sat down in Berlin 440 years later to decide who should steal which parts of Africa. It was that gap which provided both the necessity and the opportunity for Europe to move into the imperialist epoch, and to colonize and further underdevelop Africa.

The growing technological and economic gap between Western Europe and Africa was part of the trend within capitalism to concentrate or polarize wealth and poverty at two opposite extremes.

Inside Western Europe itself, some nations grew rich at the expense of others. Britain, France, and Germany were the most prosperous nations. Poverty prevailed in Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and southern Italy. Inside the British, French, and German economies, the polarization of wealth was between the capitalists on the one hand and the workers and a few peasants on the other. The big capitalists got bigger and the little ones were eliminated. In many important fields, such as iron and steel manufacture, textiles, and particularly banking, it was noticeable that two or three firms monopolized most of the business. The banks were also in a commanding position within the economy as a whole, providing capital to the big monopoly industrial firms.

European monopoly firms operated by constantly fighting to gain control over raw materials, markets, and means of communications. They also fought to be the first to invest in new profitable undertakings related to their line of business—whether it be inside or outside their countries. Indeed, after the scope for expansion became limited inside their national economies, their main attention was turned to those countries whose economies were less developed and who would therefore offer little or no opposition to the penetration of foreign capitalism. That penetration of foreign capitalism on a world-wide scale from the late nineteenth century onwards is what we call "imperialism."

Imperialism meant capitalist expansion. It meant that European (and North American and Japanese) capitalists were forced by the internal logic of their competitive system to seek abroad in less developed countries opportunities to control raw material supplies, to find markets, and to find profitable fields of investment. The centuries of trade with Africa contributed greatly to that state of affairs where European capitalists were faced with the *necessity* to expand in a big way outside their national economies.

There were certain areas of Africa in which European investment was meant to get immediate superprofits. The mines of South Africa, the loans to North African governments, and the building of the Suez Canal also insured the greater profitability of European investment in and trade with India. However, Africa's greatest value to Europe at the beginning of the imperialist era was as a source of raw materials such as palm products, groundnuts, cotton, and rubber. The need for those materials arose out of Europe's expanded economic capacity, its new and larger machines, and its increasing wage-earning population in towns. All of those things had developed over the previous four centuries; and again it needs to be repeated

that one of the important factors in that process was the unequal trade with Africa.

Imperialism is essentially an economic phenomenon, and it does not necessarily lead to direct political control or colonization. However, Africa was the victim of colonization. In the period of the notorious "Scramble for Africa," Europeans made a grab for whatever they thought spelled profits in Africa, and they even consciously acquired many areas not for immediate exploitation but with an eye to the future. Each European nation that had these short-term and long-term economic interests ran up its own flag in different parts of Africa and established colonial rule. The gap that had arisen during the period of pre-colonial trade gave Europe the *power* to impose political domination on Africa.

Pre-colonial trade in slaves, ivory, gold, and other things was conducted from the coasts of Africa. On the coasts, European ships could dominate the scene, and if necessary forts could be built. Before the nineteenth century, Europe was incapable of penetrating the African continent, because the balance of force at their disposal was inadequate. But the same technological changes which created the need to penetrate Africa also created the power to conquer Africa. The firearms of the imperialist epoch marked a qualitative leap forward. Breech-loading rifles and machine guns were a far cry from the smooth-bored muzzle loaders and flintlocks of the previous era. European imperialists in Africa boasted that what counted was the fact that they had the Maxim machine gun and Africans did not.

Curiously, Europeans often derived the moral justification for imperialism and colonialism from features of the international trade as conducted up to the eve of colonial rule in Africa. The British were the chief spokesmen for the view that the desire to colonize was largely based on their good intentions in wanting to put a stop to the slave trade. True enough, the British in the nineteenth century were as opposed to slave trading as they were once in favor of it. Many changes inside Britain had transformed the seventeenth-century necessity for slaves into the nineteenth-century necessity to clear the remnants of slaving from Africa so as to organize the local exploitation of land and labor. Therefore, slaving was rejected in so far as it had become a fetter on further capitalist development; and it was particularly true of East Africa, where Arab slaving persisted until late in the nineteenth century. The British took special self-righteous delight in putting an end to Arab slave trading, and in deposing rulers on the grounds that they were slave traders. However, in those very years, the British were crushing political leaders in Nigeria, like Jaja and Nana, who had by then ceased the export of slaves, and were concentrating instead on products like palm oil and rubber. Similarly, the Germans in

East Africa made a pretense of being most opposed to rulers like Bushiri who were engaged in slave trading, but the Germans were equally hostile to African rulers with little interest in slaving. The common factor underlying the overthrow of African rulers in East, West, Central, North, and South Africa was that they stood in the way of Europe's imperial needs. It was the only factor that mattered, with anti-slaving sentiments being at best superfluous and at worst calculated hypocrisy.

King Leopold II of Belgium also used the anti-slavery excuse to introduce into Congo forced labor and modern slavery. Besides, all Europeans had derived ideas of racial and cultural superiority between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, while engaged in genocide and the enslavement of non-white peoples. Even Portugal, an impoverished and backward European nation in the imperialist era, could still presume that it had a destiny to civilize the natives in Africa!

There is a curious interpretation of the Scramble and African partition which virtually amounts to saying that colonialism came about because of Africa's needs rather than those of Europe. Africa, they say, required European colonization if it were to advance beyond the stage it had reached in the late nineteenth century. Clearly, they do not appreciate that such a line of reasoning was suggesting that Africa would develop if it were given bigger doses of the European concoction that had already started its underdevelopment—that it would develop if it lost the last remnants of its freedom of choice, which had clearly been seriously undermined by the pre-colonial trade—that it would develop if its economy became more integrated with Europe's on terms that were entirely dictated by Europe. Those implications and their fallacies would be plain to anyone who tries to understand the development process before making pronouncements on any particular epoch of human development in Africa.

~~Throughout the fourteenth century, African rulers were displaying great~~ initiative in pursuit of the broadest forms of cultural contact with Europe. In the case of West Africa, that meant seeking substitutes for trade in slaves. Dahomey, one of the most embroiled in slave trading, was among those states that used many of the last years of its independence to find a healthy basis for cultural exchange with Europeans.

In 1850, the reigning Dahomean king, Gezo, proclaimed an edict whereby all young oil palms were to be freed from parasites surrounding them, and severe penalties were to be imposed for cutting palm trees. Gezo, who ruled from 1818 to 1857, was a reformer, and he made sincere efforts to meet criticisms of his policies by groups such as missionaries and anti-slavery campaigners; but it soon became clear that Europeans were not bent on seeing Dahomey re-emerge as a strong state, but were rather

creating excuses and the subjective conditions to justify their proposed colonization of the people of Dahomey. Under those circumstances, the last Dahomean monarch, Glele, fell back on his capital at Abomey, and pursued the policies which he considered most consistent with the dignity and independence of Dahomey. Glele raided Abeokuta, which contained converts who were already "British protected persons"; he told the French to get the hell out of Porto-Novo; and he generally resisted until defeated militarily by the French in 1889.

African groups who had little or nothing to do with slave exports also intensified their efforts to integrate into a wider world in the nineteenth century. Gungunhana, the Nguni ruler of Gaza in Mozambique, asked for a Swiss missionary doctor and maintained him at his court for several years until the Portuguese conquered his kingdom in 1895. After the Portuguese imposed colonial rule, it was a long time before Africans saw another doctor!

It is particularly instructive to turn to the example of Egypt under Mohammed Ali, who ruled from 1805 to 1849. Capitalist Europe had left feudal North Africa behind over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mohammed Ali was aware of that, and consciously aimed at catching up with Europe. He instituted a series of reforms, the most important of which were of an economic nature. Egypt grew and manufactured its own cotton, and it made glass, paper, and other industrial goods. Egypt was not to be used as a dumping ground for European goods which would undermine local industry, so that protective tariff walls were set up around Egypt's "infant industries." That did not mean that Egypt became isolated from the rest of the world. On the contrary, Mohammed Ali borrowed experts from Europe, and he increased Egypt's foreign trade.

The ideals of Mohammed Ali could be related in the idiom of modern social science as being the creation of a viable, self-propelling economy to provide the basis for national independence. Such ideals were diametrically opposed to the needs of European capitalism. British and French industrialists wanted to see Egypt not as a textile manufacturer but as a producer of raw cotton for export, and an importer of European manufactures. European financiers wanted Egypt to be a source of investment, and in the second half of the eighteenth century they turned the sultan of Egypt into an international beggar, who mortgaged the whole of Egypt to international monopoly financiers. Finally, European statesmen wanted Egyptian soil to serve as a base for exploiting India and Arabia. Therefore, the Suez Canal was dug out of Egyptian soil by Egyptians, but it was owned by Britain and France, who then extended political domination over Egypt and Sudan.

Education is undeniably one of the facets of European life which had grown most appreciably during the capitalist epoch. Through education and extensive use of the written word, Europeans were in a position to pass on to the others the scientific principles of the material world which they had discovered, as well as a body of varied philosophical reflections on man and society. Africans were quick to appreciate advantages deriving from a literate education. In Madagascar, the Merina kingdom did a great deal to sponsor reading and writing. They used their own language and an Arabic script, and they welcomed the aid of European missionaries. That conscious borrowing from all relevant sources was only possible when they had the freedom to choose. Colonization, far from springing from Malagasy needs, actually erected a barrier to the attainment of the "modernization" initiated by the Merina kings in the 1860s and 1870s. A similar example can be found in the history of Tunisia before the ax of partition fell.

In many parts of the world, capitalism in its imperialist form accepted that some measure of political sovereignty should be left in the hands of the local population. This was so in Eastern Europe, in Latin America, and to a more limited extent in China. However, European capitalists came to the decision that Africa should be directly colonized. There is evidence to suggest that such a course of action was not entirely planned. Britain and France up to the 1850s and 1860s would have preferred to divide Africa into informal "spheres of influence." That means that there would have been a gentlemen's agreement that (say) Nigeria would be exploited by the British merchants while Senegal would be exploited by Frenchmen. At the same time both Englishmen and Frenchmen would trade in a minor way in each other's informal empire. But, firstly, there was disagreement over who should suck which pieces of Africa (especially since Germany wanted to join the grabbing); and, secondly, the moment that one European power declared an area of Africa as a protectorate or a colony, it put up tariffs against European traders of other nationalities, and in turn forced their rivals to have colonies and discriminatory tariffs. One thing led to another, and soon six European capitalist nations were falling over each other to establish direct political rule over particular sections of Africa. Make no mistake about it, gentlemen like Carl Peters, Livingstone, Stanley, Harry Johnston, De Brazza, General Gordon, and their masters in Europe were literally scrambling for Africa. They barely avoided a major military conflagration.

In addition to the factors that caused the chain reaction of the Scramble as described above, Europeans were also racially motivated to seek political domination over Africa. The nineteenth century was one in which white racism was most violently and openly expressed in capitalist societies, with

the U.S.A. as a focal point, and with Britain taking the lead among the Western European capitalist nations. Britain accepted granting dominion status to its old colonies of white settlers in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; but it withdrew self-government from the West Indies when the white planters were ousted from the legislative assemblies by black (or brown) people. As far as Africa is concerned, Englishmen violently opposed black self-government such as the Fante Confederation on the Gold Coast in the 1860s. They also tried to erode the authority of black Creoles in Sierra Leone. In 1874, when Fourah Bay College sought and obtained affiliation with Durham University, the *Times* newspaper declared that Durham should next affiliate with the London Zoo! Pervasive and vicious racism was present in imperialism as a variant independent of the economic rationality that initially gave birth to racism. It was economics that determined that Europe should invest in Africa and control the continent's raw materials and labor. It was racism which confirmed the decision that the form of control should be direct colonial rule.

Africans everywhere fought against alien political rule, and had to be subdued by superior force. But a sizable minority did insist that their trade connections with Europe should remain unbroken, for that was a measure of the extent to which they were already dependent on Europe. The most dramatic illustration of that dependence was the determination with which some Africans fought the end of the European slave trade.

For most European capitalist states, the enslavement of Africans had served its purpose by the middle of the nineteenth century; but for those Africans who dealt in captives the abrupt termination of the trade at any given point was a crisis of the greatest magnitude. In many areas, major social changes had taken place to bring the particular regions effectively into the service of the European slave trade—one of the most significant being the rise of "domestic slavery" and various forms of class and caste subjugation. African rulers and traders who found their social existence threatened by the earliest legal edicts such as the 1807 British act against the trade in slaves found ways of making contact with Europeans who still wanted slaves.

In sub-Saharan Africa and especially in West Africa, the export of slaves declined most rapidly where Europeans were prepared to buy other commodities. As soon as inhabitants of any region found that they had a product which Europeans were accepting in place of the former slave trade, those inhabitants put tremendous effort into organizing the alternatives: namely, ivory, rubber, palm products, groundnuts. ~~Once more, those efforts demonstrated the determination of a small but~~ decisive proportion of Africans. It was a determination based on the desire to obtain European

THE COLONIES HAVE BEEN CREATED FOR THE METROPOLE BY THE METROPOLE.

—FRENCH SAYING

Sales operations in the United States and management of the fourteen (Unilever) plants are directed from Lever House on New York's fashionable Park Avenue. You look at this tall, striking, glass-and-steel structure and you wonder how many hours of underpaid black labour and how many thousands of tons of underpriced palm oil and peanuts and cocoa it cost to build it.

—W. ALPHEUS HUNTON

Expatriation of African Surplus under Colonialism

Capital and African Wage Labor

Colonial Africa fell within that part of the international capitalist economy from which surplus was drawn to feed the metropolitan sector. As seen earlier, exploitation of land and labor is essential for human social advance, but only on the assumption that the product is made available within the area where the exploitation takes place. Colonialism was not merely a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits to the so-called mother country. From an African viewpoint, that amounted to consistent expatriation of surplus produced by African labor out of African resources. It meant the development of Europe as part of the same dialectical process in which Africa was underdeveloped.

By any standards, labor was cheap in Africa, and the amount of surplus extracted from the African laborer was great. The employer under colonialism paid an extremely small wage—a wage usually insufficient to keep the worker physically alive—and, therefore, he had to grow food to survive. This applied in particular to farm labor of the plantation type, to work in mines, and to certain forms of urban employment. At the time of the imposition of European colonial rule, Africans were able to gain a livelihood from the land. Many retained some contact with the land in the years ahead, and they worked away from their *shambas* in order to pay taxes or because they were forced to do so. After feudalism in Europe had ended, the worker had absolutely no means of sustenance other than through the sale of his labor to capitalists. Therefore, to some extent the employer was responsible for insuring the physical survival of the worker by giving him a "living wage." In Africa, this was not the case. Europeans offered the lowest possible wages and relied on legislation backed by force to do the rest.

There were several reasons why the African worker was more crudely exploited than his European counterpart in the present century. Firstly, the alien colonial state had a monopoly of political power, after crushing all opposition by superior armed force. Secondly, the African working class was small, very dispersed, and very unstable owing to migratory practices. Thirdly, while capitalism was willing to exploit all workers everywhere, European capitalists in Africa had additional racial justifications for dealing unjustly with the African worker. The racist theory that the black man was inferior led to the conclusion that he deserved lower wages; and interestingly enough, the light-skinned Arab and Berber populations of North Africa were treated as "blacks" by the white racist French. The combination of the above factors in turn made it extremely difficult for African workers to organize themselves. It is only the organization and resoluteness of the working class which protects it from the natural tendency of the capitalist to exploit to the utmost. That is why in all colonial territories, when African workers realized the necessity for trade union solidarity, numerous obstacles were placed in their paths by the colonial regimes.

Wages paid to workers in Europe and North America were much higher than wages paid to African workers in comparable categories. The Nigerian coal miner at Enugu earned one shilling per day for working underground and nine pence per day for jobs on the surface. Such a miserable wage would be beyond the comprehension of a Scottish or German coal miner, who could virtually earn in an hour what the Enugu miner was paid for a six-day week. The same disparity existed with port workers. The records of the large American shipping company, Farrell Lines, show that in 1955, of the total amount spent on loading and discharging cargo moving between Africa and America, five-sixths went to American workers and one-sixth to Africans. Yet, it was the same amount of cargo loaded and unloaded at both ends. The wages paid to the American stevedore and the European coal miners were still such as to insure that the capitalists made a profit. The point here is merely to illustrate how much greater was the rate of exploitation of African workers.

When discrepancies such as the above were pointed out during the colonial period and subsequently, those who justified colonialism were quick to reply that the standard and cost of living was higher in capitalist

countries. The fact is that the higher standard was made possible by the exploitation of colonies, and there was no justification for keeping African living standards so depressed in an age where better was possible and in a situation where a higher standard was possible because of the work output of Africans themselves. The kind of living standard supportable by African labor within the continent is readily illustrated by the salaries and the life-style of the whites inside Africa.

Colonial governments discriminated against the employment of Africans in senior categories; and, whenever it happened that a white and a black filled the same post, the white man was sure to be paid considerably more. This was true at all levels, ranging from civil service posts to mine workers. African salaried workers in the British colonies of Gold Coast and Nigeria were better off than their brothers in many other parts of the continent, but they were restricted to the "junior staff" level in the civil service. In the period before the last world war, European civil servants in the Gold Coast received an average of 40 pounds per month, with quarters and other privileges. Africans got an average salary of 4 pounds. There were instances where one European in an establishment earned as much as his twenty-five African assistants put together. Outside the civil service, Africans obtained work in building projects, in mines, and as domestics—all low-paying jobs. It was exploitation without responsibility and without redress. In 1934, forty-one Africans were killed in a gold mine disaster in the Gold Coast, and the capitalist company offered only 3 pounds to the dependents of each of these men as compensation.

Where European settlers were found in considerable numbers, the wage differential was readily perceived. In North Africa, the wages of Moroccans and Algerians were from 16 percent to 25 percent those of Europeans. In East Africa, the position was much worse, notably in Kenya and Tanganyika. A comparison with white settler earnings and standards brings out by sharp contrast how incredibly low African wages were. While Lord Delamere controlled 100,000 acres of Kenya's land, the Kenyan had to carry a *kipande* pass in his own country to beg for a wage of 15 or 20 shillings per month. The absolute limit of brutal exploitation was found in the southern parts of the continent; and in Southern Rhodesia, for example, agricultural laborers rarely received more than 15 shillings per month. Workers in mines got a little more if they were semi-skilled, but they also had more intolerable working conditions. Unskilled laborers in the mines of Northern Rhodesia often got as little as 7 shillings per month. A truck driver on the famous copper belt was in a semi-skilled grade. In one mine, Europeans performed that job for 30 pounds per month, while in another, Africans did it for 3 pounds per month.

In all colonial territories, wages were reduced during the period of crisis which shook the capitalist world during the 1930s, and they were not restored or increased until after the last capitalist world war. In Southern Rhodesia in 1949, Africans employed in municipal areas were awarded minimum wages from 35 to 75 shillings per month. That was a considerable improvement over previous years, but white workers (on the job for 8 hours per day compared to the Africans' 10 or 14 hours) received a minimum wage of 20 shillings *per day* plus free quarters and other benefits.

The Rhodesians offered a miniature version of South Africa's apartheid system, which oppressed the largest industrial working class on the continent. In the Union of South Africa, African laborers worked deep underground, under inhuman conditions which would not have been tolerated by miners in Europe. Consequently, black South African workers recovered gold from deposits which elsewhere would be regarded as noncommercial. And yet it is the white section of the working class which received whatever benefits were available in terms of wages and salaries. Officials have admitted that the mining companies could pay whites higher than miners in any other part of the world because of the superprofits made by paying black workers a mere pittance.*

In the final analysis, the shareholders of the mining companies were the ones who benefited most of all. They remained in Europe and North America and collected fabulous dividends every year from the gold, diamonds, manganese, uranium, etc., which were brought out of the South African subsoil by African labor. For years, the capitalist press itself praised Southern Africa as an investment outlet returning superprofits on capital invested. From the very beginning of the Scramble for Africa, huge fortunes were made from gold and diamonds in Southern Africa by people like Cecil Rhodes. In the present century, both the investment and the outflow of surplus have increased. Investment was mainly concentrated in mining and finance where the profits were greatest. In the mid-1950s, British investments in South Africa were estimated at 860 million pounds and yielded a stable profit of 15 percent, or 129 million pounds every year. Most mining companies had returns well above that average. De Beers Consolidated Mines made a profit that was both phenomenal and consistently high—between $26 million and $29 million throughout the 1950s.

The complex of Southern African mining concerns operated not just in South Africa itself, but also in South-West Africa, Angola, Mozambique,

* As is well known, those conditions still operate. However, this chapter presents matters in the past tense to picture the colonial epoch.

Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and the Congo. Congo was consistently a source of immense wealth for Europe, because from the time of colonization until 1906, King Leopold II of Belgium made at least $20 million from rubber and ivory. The period of mineral exploitation started quite early, and then gained momentum after political control passed from King Leopold to the Belgium state in 1908. Total foreign capital inflow into the Congo between 1887 and 1953 was estimated by the Belgians to have been 5,700 million pounds. The value of the outflow in the same period was said to have been 4,300 million pounds, exclusive of profits retained within the Congo. As was true everywhere else on the continent, the expatriation of surplus from Congo increased as the colonial period wore on. In the five years preceding independence the net outflow of capital from Congo to Belgium reached massive proportions. Most of the expatriation of surplus was handled by a major European finance monopoly, the *Société Générale*. The *Société Générale* had as its most important subsidiary the *Union Minière de Haute-Katanga,* which has monopolized Congolese copper production since 1889 (when it was known as the *Compagnie de Katanga*): *Union Minière* has been known to make a profit of 27 million pounds in a single year.

It is no wonder that of the total wealth produced in Congo in any given year during the colonial period, more than one-third went out in the form of profits for big business and salaries for their expatriate staffs. But the comparable figure for Northern Rhodesia under the British was one-half. In Katanga, *Union Minière* at least had a reputation for leaving some of the profits behind in the form of things like housing and maternity services for African workers. The Rhodesian Copper Belt Companies expatriated profits without compunction.

It should not be forgotten that outside Southern Africa there were also significant mining operations during the colonial period. In North Africa, foreign capital exploited natural resources of phosphates, oil, lead, zinc, manganese, and iron ore. In Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, there were important workings of gold, diamonds, iron ore, and bauxite. To all that should be added the tin of Nigeria, the gold and manganese of Ghana, the gold and diamonds of Tanganyika, and the copper of Uganda and Congo Brazzaville. In each case, an understanding of the situation must begin with an inquiry into the degree of exploitation of African resources and labor, and then must proceed to follow the surplus to its destination outside Africa—into the bank accounts of the capitalists who control the majority shares in the huge multinational mining combines.

The African working class produced a less spectacular surplus for export with regard to companies engaged in agriculture. Agricultural plantations were widespread in North, East, and South Africa; and they also appeared in West Africa to a lesser extent. Their profits depended on the incredibly low wages and harsh working conditions imposed on African agricultural laborers and on the fact that they invested very little capital in obtaining the land, which was robbed wholesale from Africans by colonial powers and then sold to whites at nominal prices. For instance, after the Kenya highlands had been declared "Crown Land," the British handed over to Lord Delamere 100,000 acres of the best land at a cost of a penny per acre. Lord Francis Scott purchased 350,000 acres, the East African Estates Ltd. got another 350,000 acres, and the East African Syndicate took 100,000 acres adjoining Lord Delamere's estate—all at giveaway prices. Needless to say, such plantations made huge profits, even if the rate was lower than in a South African gold mine or an Angolan diamond mine.

During the colonial era, Liberia was supposedly independent; but to all intents and purposes, it was a colony of the U.S.A. In 1926, the Firestone Rubber Company of the U.S.A. was able to acquire one million acres of forest land in Liberia at a cost of 6 cents per acre and 1 percent of the value of the exported rubber. Because of the demand for and the strategic importance of rubber, Firestone's profits from Liberia's land and labor carried them to 25th position among the giant companies of the U.S.A.

European Trading Companies versus the African Peasant

So far, this section has been dealing with that part of the surplus produced by African wage earners in mines and plantations. But the African working class under colonialism was extremely small and the vast majority of Africans engaged in the colonial money economy were independent peasants. How then can it be said that these self-employed peasants were contributing to the expatriation of African surplus? Apologists for colonialism argue that it was a positive benefit for such farmers to have been given the opportunity to create surplus by growing or collecting produce such as cocoa, coffee, palm oil. It is essential that this misrepresentation be clarified.

A peasant growing a cash crop or collecting produce had his labor exploited by a long chain of individuals, starting with local businessmen. Sometimes, those local businessmen were Europeans. Very rarely were they Africans, and more usually they were a minority group brought in from outside and serving as intermediaries between the white colonialists and the exploited African peasant. In West Africa, the Lebanese and Syrians played this role; while in East Africa the Indians rose to this

position. Arabs were also in the middleman category in Zanzibar and a few other places on the East African coast.

Cash-crop peasants never had any capital of their own. They existed from one crop to another, depending on good harvests and good prices. Any bad harvest or fall of prices caused the peasants to borrow in order to find money to pay taxes and buy certain necessities. As security, they mortgaged their future crops to moneylenders in the middleman category. Non-payment of debts could and did lead to their farms' being taken away by the moneylenders. The rate of interest on the loans was always fantastically high, amounting to what is known as "usury." In East Africa, things were so bad that even the British colonial government had to step in and enact a "Native Credit Ordinance" to protect Africans from Asian businessmen.

However, in spite of some minor clashes between the colonialists and the middlemen, the two were part and parcel of the same apparatus of exploitation. On the whole, the Lebanese and Indians did the smaller jobs which Europeans could not be bothered with. They owned things such as cotton gins which separated the seed from the lint; while of course Europeans concentrated on the cotton mills in Europe. The middlemen also went out to the villages, while Europeans liked to stay in towns. In the villages, the Indians and Lebanese took over virtually all buying and selling, channeling most of the profits back to Europeans in the towns and those overseas.

The share of profits which went to middlemen was insignificant in comparison to those profits reaped by big European business interests and by the European governments themselves. The capitalist institution which came into most direct contact with African peasants was the colonial trading company: that is to say, a company specializing in moving goods to and from the colonies. The most notorious were the French concerns, *Compagnie Française d'Afrique Occidentale* (CFAO) and *Société Commerciale Ouest Africaine* (SCOA), and the British-controlled United Africa Company (UAC). These were responsible for expatriating a great proportion of Africa's wealth produced by peasant toil.

Several of the colonial trading companies already had African blood on their hands from participation in the slave trade. Thus, after French merchants in Bordeaux made fortunes from the European slave trade, they transferred that capital to the trade in groundnuts from Senegal and Gambia in the middle of the nineteenth century. The firms concerned continued to operate in the colonial period, although they changed hands and there were a lot of mergers. In Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali, the names of Maurel & Prom, Maurel Brothers, Buhan & Teyssere, Delmas &

Clastre, were all well known. Several of them were eventually incorporated into SCOA, which was dominated by a consortium of French and Swiss financiers. A parallel process in the French port of Marseilles led to the transfer of slave-trade capital into direct trade between Africa and France. After the end of the First World War, most of the small Marseilles firms were absorbed into the massive CFAO, which imported into French West Africa whatever European goods the market would take, and exported in turn the agricultural produce that was largely the consequence of peasant labor. CFAO also had British and Dutch capital, and its activities extended into Liberia and into British and Belgian colonies. It is said that SCOA and CFAO made a profit of up to 90 per cent in good years and 25 per cent in bad years.

In Britain, the notorious slave trading port of Liverpool was the first to switch to palm oil early in the nineteenth century when the trade in slaves became difficult or impossible. This meant that Liverpool firms were no longer exploiting Africa by removing its labor physically to another part of the world. Instead, they were exploiting the labor and raw materials of Africa *inside* Africa. Throughout the nineteenth century and right into the colonial era, Liverpool concentrated largely on importing African peasant produce. Backed by the industrial districts of Manchester and Cheshire, this British port was in control of a great proportion of Britain's and Europe's trade with Africa in the colonial period—just as it had done in the slave trade period. Glasgow also had a keen interest in the colonial trade, and so did the merchants and big business interests of London. By 1929, London replaced Liverpool as the chief port dealing with African import and export.

As indicated, the UAC was the British company which was best known among the commercial concerns. It was a subsidiary of the giant Anglo-Dutch monopoly, Unilever; and its agencies were found in all the British colonies of West Africa and on a smaller scale in East Africa. Unilever also controlled the *Compagnie du Niger Français,* the *Compagnie Française de la Côte d'Ivoire,* SCKN in Chad, NOSOCO in Senegal, NSCA in Portuguese Guinea, and John Walken & Co. Ltd. in Dahomey. Certain other British and French firms were not found in every colony, but they did well in the particular area in which they were entrenched. For example, there was John Holt in Nigeria.

In East Africa, the import-export business tended to have smaller firms than in West Africa, but even so there were five or six which were much larger than the rest and appropriated the largest amounts. One of the oldest was Smith Mackenzie, which was an offshoot of the Scottish company of Mackinnon and Mackenzie which had spearheaded British colonization in East Africa and which also had interests in India. Other notable commercial firms were those of A. Baumann, Wigglesworth and Company, Dalgetty, Leslie & Anderson, Ralli Bros., Michael Cotts, Jos. Hansen, the African Mercantile and Twentsche Overseas Trading Co. Some of them amalgamated before colonial rule was over, and they all had several other subsidiaries, as well as themselves being related to bigger companies in the metropoles. The UAC also had a slice of the East African import trade, having brought up the firm of Gailey and Roberts which was started by white settlers in 1904.

The pattern of appropriation of surplus in East Africa was easy to follow, in that there was centralization of the extractive mechanisms in Nairobi and the port of Mombasa. All the big firms operated from Nairobi, with important offices in Mombasa to deal with warehousing, shipping, insuring. Uganda and Tanganyika were then brought into the picture via their capital cities of Kampala and Dar es Salaam, where the big firms had branches. Up to the start of the last war, the volume of trade from East Africa was fairly small, but it jumped rapidly after that. For instance, the value of Kenya imports rose from 4 million pounds in 1938 to 34 million in 1950 and to 70 million in 1960. The value of exports was of course rising at the same time, and the commercial firms were among the principal beneficiaries of the growth in foreign trade.

Trading companies made huge fortunes on relatively small investments in those parts of Africa where peasant cash-crop farming was widespread. The companies did not have to spend a penny to grow the agricultural raw materials. The African peasant went in for cash-crop farming for many reasons. A minority eagerly took up the opportunity to continue to acquire European goods, which they had become accustomed to during the pre-colonial period. Many others in every section of the continent took to earning cash because they had to pay various taxes in money or because they were forced to work. Good examples of Africans literally being forced to grow cash crops by gun and whip were to be found in Tanganyika under German rule, in Portuguese colonies, and in French Equatorial Africa and the French Sudan in the 1930s.* In any event, there were very few cases where the peasant was wholly dependent on the cash for his actual sustenance. The trading companies took full advantage of that fact. Knowing that an African peasant and his family would keep alive by their own food *shambas,* the companies had no obligation to pay prices sufficient

* These facts came most dramatically to the attention of the outside world when Africans resorted to violence. For example, forced cultivation of cotton was a major grievance behind the outbreak of Maji Maji wars in Tanganyika and behind the nationalist revolt in Angola as late as 1960.

for the maintenance of a peasant and his family. In a way, the companies were simply receiving tribute from a conquered people, without even the necessity to trouble themselves as to how the tributary goods were produced.

Trading companies also had their own means of transport inside Africa, such as motor vessels and trucks. But, usually they transferred the burden of transport costs on to the peasant via the Lebanese or Indian middlemen. Those capitalist companies held the African farmer in a double squeeze, by controlling the price paid for the crop and by controlling the price of imported goods such as tools, clothing, and bicycles to which peasants aspired. For example, prices of palm products were severely reduced by the UAC and other trading companies in Nigeria in 1929, while the cost of living was rising owing to increased charges for imported goods. In 1924, the price for palm oil had been 14 shillings per gallon. This fell to 7 in 1928 and to slightly over one shilling in the following year. Although the trading companies received less for every ton of palm oil during the depression years, their profit margin increased—showing how brazenly surplus was being pounded out of the peasant. In the midst of the depression the UAC was showing a handsome profit. The profits in 1934 were 6,302,875 pounds and a dividend of 15 per cent was paid on ordinary shares.

In every part of colonial Africa, the depression years followed the same pattern. In Sukumaland (Tanganyika) the price of cotton dropped in 1930 from 50 cents to 10 cents per pound. The French colonies were hit a little later, because the depression did not make its impact on the French monetary zone until after 1931. Then, prices of Senegalese groundnuts were cut by more than half. Coffee and cocoa dropped even further, since they were relative luxuries to the European buyer. Again, it can be noted that French firms such as CFAO and SCOA faced lower prices when they sold the raw materials in Europe, but they never absorbed any losses. Instead, African peasants and workers bore the pressure, even if it meant forced labor. African peasants in French territories were forced to join so-called cooperative societies which made them grow certain crops like cotton and made them accept whatever price was offered.

Hardly had the depression ended when Europe was at war. The Western powers dragged in the African people to fight for freedom! The trading firms stepped up the rate of plunder in the name of God and country. On the Gold Coast, they paid 10 pounds per ton for cocoa beans as compared to 50 pounds before the war. At the same time, the price of imported goods doubled or trebled. Many necessities passed beyond the reach of the ordinary man. On the Gold Coast, a piece of cotton print which had

sold before the war for 12½ shillings was 90 shillings in 1945. In Nigeria, a yard of khaki which was 3 shillings in prewar days went up to 16; a bundle of iron sheets formerly costing 30 went up to 100.

Urban workers were hardest hit by rising prices, since they had to purchase everyday necessities with money, and part of their food was imported. Worker dissatisfaction highlighted this exploitative postwar situation. There were several strikes, and in the Gold Coast, the boycott of imported goods in 1948 is famous as the prelude to self-government under Nkrumah. However, peasants were also restless under low prices and expensive imports. In Uganda, the cotton-growing peasants could stand things no longer by 1947. They could not get their hands on the big British import-export firms, but they could at least deal with the Indian and African middlemen. So they marched against the Indian-owned cotton gins and demonstrated outside the palace of the Kabaka—the hereditary ruler who often functioned as a British agent in Uganda.

To insure that at all times the profit margin was kept as high as possible, the trading firms found it convenient to form "pools." The pools fixed the price to be paid to the African cultivator, and kept the price down to the minimum. In addition, the trading companies spread into several other aspects of the economic life of the colonies, in such a way as to introduce several straws for the sucking out of surplus. In Morocco, to give one example, the *Compagnie Générale du Maroc* owned large estates, livestock farms, timber workings, mines, fisheries, railways, ports, and power stations. The giants like CFAO and UAC also had their fingers in everything. CFAO's interests ranged from groundnut plantations to shares in the Fabre & Frassinet shipping line. The people of Ghana and Nigeria met the UAC everywhere they turned. It controlled wholesale and retail trade, owned butter factories, sawmills, soap factories, singlet factories, cold storage plants, engineering and motor repair shops, tugs, coastal boats. Some of those businesses directly exploited African wage labor, while in one way or another all operations skimmed the cream produced by peasant efforts in the cash-crop sector.

Sometimes, the firms which purchased agricultural products in Africa were the same concerns which manufactured goods based on those agricultural raw materials. For instance, Cadbury and Fry, the two foremost English manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate, were buyers on the West African coast, while in East Africa the tea manufacturing concern of Brooke Bond both grew and exported tea. Many of the Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Liverpool trading companies were also engaged in manufacturing items such as soap and margarine in their home territories. This applied fully to the UAC, while the powerful Lesieur group processing oils and fats in France had commercial buyers in Africa. However, it is possible to separate the trading operations from the industrial ones. The latter represented the final stage in the long process of exploiting the labor of African peasants—in some ways the most damaging stage.

Peasants worked for large numbers of hours to produce a given cash crop, and the price of the product was the price of those long hours of labor. Since primary produce from Africa has always received low prices, it follows that the buyer and user of the raw material was engaging in massive exploitation of the peasants.

The above generalization can be illustrated with reference to cotton, which is one of the most widely encountered cash crops in Africa. The Ugandan farmer grew cotton which ultimately made its way into an English factory in Lancashire or a British-owned factory in India. The Lancashire factory owner paid his workers as little as possible, but his exploitation of their labor was limited by several factors. His exploitation of the labor of the Ugandan peasant was unlimited because of his power in the colonial state, which insured that Ugandans worked long hours for very little. Besides, the price of the finished cotton shirt was so high that when re-imported into Uganda, cotton in the form of a shirt was beyond the purchasing power of the peasant who grew the cotton.

The differences between the prices of African exports of raw materials and their importation of manufactured goods constituted a form of unequal exchange. Throughout the colonial period, this inequality in exchange got worse. Economists refer to the process as one of deteriorating terms of trade. In 1939, with the same quality of primary goods colonies could buy only 60 per cent of manufactured goods which they bought in the decade 1870–80 before colonial rule. By 1960, the amount of European manufactured goods purchasable by the same quantity of African raw materials had fallen still further. There was no objective economic law which determined that primary produce should be worth so little. Indeed, the developed countries sold certain raw materials like timber and wheat at much higher prices than a colony could command. The explanation is that the unequal exchange was forced upon Africa by the political and military supremacy of the colonizers, just as in the sphere of international relations unequal treaties were forced upon small states in the dependencies, like those in Latin America.

The unequal nature of the trade between the metropole and the colonies was emphasised by the concept of the "protected market," which meant even an inefficient metropolitan producer could find a guaranteed market in the colony where his class had political control. Furthermore, as in the preceding era of pre-colonial trade, European manufacturers built up useful sidelines of goods which would have been substandard in their own markets, especially in textiles. The European farmer also gained in the same way by selling cheap butter, while the Scandinavian fisherman came into his own through the export of salted cod. Africa was not a large market for European products, compared to other continents, but both buying-prices and selling-prices were set by European capitalists. That certainly allowed their manufacturers and traders more easy access to the surplus of wealth produced in Africa than they would have had if Africans were in a position to raise the price of their own exports.

Shipping and Banking Services

Channels for the exploitation of surplus were not exhausted by the trading companies and the industrial concerns. The shipping companies constituted an exploitative channel that cannot be overlooked. The largest shipping companies were those under the flags of the colonizing nations, especially the British. The shippers were virtually a law unto themselves, being very favorably regarded by their home governments as earners of superprofits, as stimulators of industry and trade, as carriers of mail, and as contributors to the navy when war came. African peasants had absolutely no control over the freight rates which were charged, and actually paid more than citizens in other lands. The rate for flour from Liverpool to West Africa was 35 shillings per ton as compared with only 7½ shillings from Liverpool to New York (a roughly equivalent distance). Freight rates normally varied with the volume of cargo carried, but the rate for cocoa was established at 50 shillings per ton when amounts exported were small at the beginning of this century, and the same high figure remained when exports increased. Coffee carried from Kenya to New York in the 1950s earned the shippers 280 shillings per ton ($40 at the rate of exchange then). Theoretically, it was the merchant who paid the shipper the freight charges, but in practical terms it meant that peasant production was bearing all the costs, since the merchants paid out of profits made by buying cheaply from the peasants. Alternatively, white settler planters paid the costs as in Kenya, and then regained their profits through exploitation of rural wage labor.

Shipping companies retained a high profit margin by a practice similar to the "pools" of the commercial firms. They established what were known as "Conference Lines" which allowed two or more shippers to share the freight loads between themselves on the most favorable basis possible. Their returns on investment were so high and their greed so uncontrollable that even the merchants of the colonizing powers protested. From 1929 to of a British bank operating in India. It later came to be called the National & Grindlays. In neighboring Tanganyika the Germans established the German East African Bank in 1905, but after the First World War the British had a near monopoly of East African banking. Altogether nine foreign banks were in existence in East Africa during the colonial period, out of which the big three were National & Grindlays, the Standard Bank, and Barclays.

East Africa provides an interesting example of how effectively foreign banks served to dispossess Africa of its wealth. Most of the banking and other financial services were rendered to white settlers whose conception of "home" was always Britain. Consequently, when the white settlers felt threatened towards the end of the colonial period, they rushed to send their money home to Britain. For example, when the decision to concede self-government to Kenya was taken by the British in 1960, a sum amounting to over 5½ million dollars was immediately transferred to "safety" in London by whites in Tanganyika. That sum, like all other remittances by colonial banks, represented the exploitation of African land resources and labor.

The Colonial Administration as Economic Exploiter

In addition to private companies, the colonial state also engaged directly in the economic exploitation and impoverishment of Africa. The equivalent of the colonial office in each colonizing country worked hand in hand with their governors in Africa to carry out a number of functions, the principal ones being as follows:

(1) To protect national interests against competition from other capitalists.
(2) To arbitrate the conflicts between their own capitalists.
(3) To guarantee optimum conditions under which private companies could exploit Africans.

The last-mentioned objective was the most crucial. That is why colonial governments were repeatedly speaking about "the maintenance of law and order," by which they meant the maintenance of conditions most favorable to the expansion of capitalism and the plunder of Africa. This led the colonial governments to impose taxes.

One of the main purposes of the colonial taxation system was to provide requisite funds for administering the colony as a field of exploitation. European colonizers insured that Africans paid for the upkeep of the governors and police who oppressed them and served as watchdogs for private capitalists. Indeed, taxes and customs duties were levied in the

nineteenth century with the aim of allowing the colonial powers to recover the costs of the armed forces which they dispatched to conquer Africa. In effect, therefore, the colonial governments never put a penny into the colonies. All expenses were met by exploiting the labor and natural resources of the continent; and for all practical purposes the expense of maintaining the colonial government machinery was a form of alienation of the products of African labor. The French colonies were especially victimized in this respect. Particularly since 1921, the local revenue raised from taxation had to meet all expenses as well as build up a reserve.

Having set up the police, army, civil service, and judiciary on African soil, the colonizing powers were then in a position to intervene much more directly in the economic life of the people than had been the case previously. One major problem in Africa from a capitalist viewpoint was how to induce Africans to become laborers or cash-crop farmers. In some areas, such as West Africa, Africans had become so attached to European manufactures during the early period of trade that, on their own initiative, they were prepared to go to great lengths to participate in the colonial money economy. But that was not the universal response. In many instances, Africans did not consider the monetary incentives great enough to justify changing their way of life so as to become laborers or cash-crop farmers. In such cases, the colonial state intervened to use law, taxation, and outright force to make Africans pursue a line favorable to capitalist profits.

When colonial governments seized African lands, they achieved two things simultaneously. They satisfied their own citizens (who wanted mining concessions or farming land) and they created the conditions whereby landless Africans had to work not just to pay taxes but also to survive. In settler areas such as Kenya and Rhodesia the colonial government also prevented Africans from growing cash crops so that their labor would be available directly for the whites. One of the Kenya white settlers, Colonel Grogan, put it bluntly when he said of the Kikuyu: "We have stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs. Compulsory labor is the corollary of our occupation of the country."

In those parts of the continent where land was still in African hands, colonial governments forced Africans to produce cash crops no matter how low the prices were. The favorite technique was taxation. *Money* taxes were introduced on numerous items—cattle, land, houses, and the people themselves. Money to pay taxes was got by growing cash crops or working on European farms or in their mines. An interesting example of what colonialism was all about was provided in French Equatorial Africa, where French officials banned the Mandja people (now in Congo Brazzaville) from hunting, so that they would engage solely in cotton cultivation. The French enforced the ban although there was little livestock in the area and hunting was the main source of meat in the people's diet.

Finally, when all else failed, colonial powers resorted widely to the physical coercion of labor—backed up of course by legal sanctions, since anything which the colonial government chose to do was "legal." The laws and by-laws by which peasants in British East Africa were required to maintain minimum acreages of cash crops like cotton and groundnuts were in effect forms of coercion by the colonial state, although they are not normally considered under the heading of "forced labor."

The simplest form of forced labor was that which colonial governments exacted to carry out "public works." Labor for a given number of days per year had to be given free for these "public works"—building castles for governors, prisons for Africans, barracks for troops, and bungalows for colonial officials. A great deal of this forced labor went into the construction of roads, railways, and ports to provide the infrastructure for private capitalist investment and to facilitate the export of cash crops. Taking only one example from the British colony of Sierra Leone, one finds that the railway which started at the end of the nineteenth century required forced labor from thousands of peasants driven from the villages. The hard work and appalling conditions led to the death of a large number of those engaged in work on the railway. In the British territories, this kind of forced labor (including juvenile labor) was widespread enough to call forth in 1923 a "Native Authority Ordinance" restricting the use of compulsory labor for porterage, railway and road building. More often than not, means were found of circumventing this legislation. An international Forced Labor Convention was signed by all colonial powers in 1930, but again it was flouted in practice.

The French government had a cunning way of getting free labor by first demanding that African males should enlist as French soldiers and then using them as unpaid laborers. This and other forced labor legislation known as "prestation" was extensively applied in vast areas of French Sudan and French Equatorial Africa. Because cash crops were not well established in those areas, the main method of extracting surplus was by taking the population and making it work in plantation or cash-crop regions nearer the coast. Present-day Upper Volta, Chad, and Congo Brazzaville were huge suppliers of forced labor under colonialism. The French got Africans to start building the Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire railway in 1921, and it was not completed until 1933. Every year of its construction, some ten thousand people were driven to the site—sometimes from more than a thousand kilometers away. At least 25 per cent of the labor force

died annually from starvation and disease, the worst period being from 1922 to 1929.

Quite apart from the fact that the "public works" were of direct value to the capitalists, the colonial government also aided private capitalists by providing them with labor recruited by force. This was particularly true in the early years of colonialism, but continued in varying degrees up to the Second World War, and even to the end of colonialism in some places. In British territories, the practice was revived during the economic depression of 1929–33 and during the subsequent war. In Kenya and Tanganyika, forced labor was reintroduced to keep settler plantations functioning during the war. In Nigeria, it was the tin companies which benefited from the forced-labor legislation, allowing them to get away with paying workers 5 pence per day plus rations. For most of the colonial period, the French government performed the same kind of service for the big timber companies who had great concessions of territory in Gabon and Ivory Coast.

The Portuguese and Belgian colonial regimes were the most brazen in directly rounding up Africans to go and work for private capitalists under conditions equivalent to slavery. In Congo, brutal and extensive forced labor started under King Leopold II in the last century. So many Congolese were killed and maimed by Leopold's officials and police that this earned European disapproval even in the midst of the general pattern of colonial outrages. When Leopold handed over the "Congo Free State" to the Belgian government in 1908, he had already made a huge fortune; and the Belgian government hardly relaxed the intensity of exploitation in Congo.

The Portuguese have the worst record of engaging in slavery-like practices, and they too have been repeatedly condemned by international public opinion. One peculiar characteristic of Portuguese colonialism was the provision of forced labor not only for its own citizens but also for capitalists outside the boundaries of Portuguese colonies. Angolans and Mozambicans were exported to the South African mines to work for subsistence, while the capitalists in South Africa paid the Portuguese government a certain sum for each laborer supplied. (The export of Africans to South Africa is still continuing.)

In the above example, the Portuguese colonialists were cooperating with capitalists of other nationalities to maximize the exploitation of African labor. Throughout the colonial period, there were instances of such cooperation, as well as competition between metropolitan powers. Generally speaking, a European power was expected to intervene when the profits of its national bourgeoisie were threatened by the activities of other nations. After all, the whole purpose of establishing colonial governments in

Africa was to provide protection to national monopoly economic interests. Thus, the Belgian government legislated to insure that freight to and from the Congo would be mainly carried by Belgian shipping lines; and the French government placed high taxes on groundnuts brought into France by foreign ships, which was another way of insuring that groundnuts from French Africa would be exported in French ships. In a sense, this meant that Africans were losing their surplus through one straw rather than another. But it also meant that the sum total of exploitation was also greater, because if competition among Europeans were allowed, it would have brought down the cost of services and raised the price paid for agricultural products.

Africans suffered most from exclusive trade with the "mother country" in cases where the "mother country" was backward. African peasants in Portuguese colonies got lower prices for their crops and paid more for imported items. Yet, Britain, the biggest of the colonialists in Africa, was also faced with competition from the more vigorous capitalists of Germany, the U.S.A., and Japan. British merchants and industrialists lobbied their government to erect barriers against competition. For example, Japanese cloth exports to British East Africa rose from 25 million yards in 1927 to 63 million yards in 1933; and this led Walter Runciman, president of the British Board of Trade, to get Parliament to impose heavy tariffs on Japanese goods entering British colonies in Africa. This meant that Africans had to pay higher prices for a staple import, since British cloth was more expensive. From the viewpoint of the African peasant, that amounted to further alienation of the fruits of his labor.

A perfect illustration of the identity of interests between the colonial governments and their bourgeois citizens was provided by the conduct of Produce Marketing Boards in Africa. The origins of the Boards go back to the Gold Coast "cocoa hold-up" of 1937. For several months, cocoa farmers refused to sell their crop unless the price was raised. One apparently favorable result of the "hold-up" was that the British government agreed to set up a Marketing Board to purchase cocoa from the peasants in place of the big business interests like the UAC and Cadbury which had up until then been the buyers. A West African Cocoa Control Board was set up in 1938, but the British government used this as a bush to hide the private capitalists and to allow them to continue making their exorbitant profits.

In theory, a Marketing Board was suppose to pay the peasant a reasonable price for his crop. The Board sold the crop overseas and kept a surplus for the improvement of agriculture and for paying the peasants a stable price if world market prices declined. In practice, the Boards paid peasants a low fixed rate during many years when world prices were rising. None of the benefits went to Africans, but rather to the British government itself and to the private companies, which were used as intermediaries in the buying and selling of the produce. Big companies like the UAC and John Holt were given quotas to fulfill on behalf of the Boards. As agents of the government, they were no longer exposed to direct attack, and their profits were secure.

The idea of the Marketing Boards gained support from top British policy makers because the war came just at that time, and the British government was anxious to take steps to secure certain colonial products in the necessary quantities and at the right times, given the limited number of ships available for commercial purposes during war. They were also anxious to save private capitalists who were adversely affected by events connected with the war. For example, East African sisal became of vital importance to Britain and her war allies after the Japanese cut off supplies of similar hard fibers from the Philippines and Dutch East Indies. Actually, even before fighting broke out, sisal was bought in bulk by the British government to help the non-African plantation owners in East Africa who had lost markets in Germany and other parts of Europe. Similarly, oil seeds (such as palm produce and groundnuts) were bought by a Board from September 1939, in preparation for shortages of butter and marine oils.

With regard to all peasant cash crops, the Produce Marketing Boards made purchases at figures that were way below world market prices. For instance, the West African Produce Board paid Nigerians a bit under 17 pounds for a ton of palm oil in 1946 and sold that through the Ministry of Food for 95 pounds, which was nearer the world market price. Groundnuts which received 15 pounds per ton when bought by the Boards were later sold in Britain at 110 pounds per ton. Furthermore, export duties were levied on the Boards' sales by the colonial administrators, and that was an indirect tax on the peasants. The situation reached a point where many peasants tried to escape from under the Boards. In Sierra Leone in 1952, the price for coffee was so low that growers smuggled their crop into nearby French territories. At about the same time, Nigerian peasants were running away from palm oil into rubber collection or timber felling which did not come under the jurisdiction of the Produce Boards.

If one accepts that the government is always the servant of a particular class, it is perfectly understandable that the colonial governments should have been in collusion with capitalists to siphon off surplus from Africa to Europe. But even if one does not start from that (Marxist) premise, it would be impossible to ignore the evidence of how the colonial administrareached 60 million pounds; while in 1955 the British government was holding 210 million derived from the sale of cocoa and minerals from Gold Coast. Egypt and the Sudan were also heavy contributors to Britain. Africa's total contribution to Britain's sterling balances in 1945 was 446 million pounds, which went up to 1,446 million by 1955—more than half the total gold and dollar reserves of Britain and the Commonwealth, which then stood at 2,120 million. Men like Arthur Creech-Jones and Oliver Lyttleton, major figures in British colonial policy-making, admitted that in ~~the early 1950s Britain was living on the dollar earnings of the colonies.~~

The British government was surpassed by its Belgian counterpart in exacting tribute from its colonies, especially during and after the last war. After Belgium was overrun by the Germans, a government-in-exile was set up in London. The Colonial Secretary of that exiled regime, Mr. Godding, admitted:

> During the war, the Congo was able to finance all the expenditure of the Belgian government in London, including the diplomatic service as well as the cost of our armed forces in Europe and Africa, a total of some 40 million pounds. In fact, thanks to the resources of the Congo, the Belgian government in London had not to borrow a shilling or a dollar, and the Belgian gold reserve could be left intact.

Since the war, surplus of earnings by the Congo in currencies other than the Belgian franc have all accrued to the National Bank of Belgium. Therefore, quite apart from all that the private capitalists looted from Congo, the Belgian government was also a direct beneficiary to the tune of millions of francs per annum.

To discuss French colonialism in this context would be largely to repeat remarks made with reference to the British and Belgians. Guinea was supposedly a "poor" colony, but in 1952 it earned France one billion (old) francs, or about 5.6 million dollars in foreign exchange, based on the sale of bauxite, coffee, and bananas. French financial techniques were slightly different from those of other colonial powers. France tended to use the commercial banks more, rather than set up separate currency boards. France also squeezed more out of Africans by imposing levies for military purposes. The French government dressed Africans in French army uniforms and used them to fight other Africans, to fight other colonized peoples like the Vietnamese, and to fight in European wars. The colonial budgets had to bear the cost of sending these African "French" soldiers to die, but if they returned alive they had to be paid pensions out of African funds.

To sum up briefly, colonialism meant a great intensification of exploitation within Africa—to a level much higher than that previously in existence

under communalism or feudal-type African societies. Simultaneously, it meant the export of that surplus in massive proportions, for that was the central purpose of colonialism.

The Strengthening of the Technological and Military Aspects of Capitalism

A Preliminary Examination of the Non-monetary Benefits of Colonialism to Europe

There are still some bourgeois propagandists who assert that colonialism was not a paying concern for Europeans, just as there are those who say that the slave trade was not profitable to Europeans. It is not worthwhile to engage in a direct refutation of such a viewpoint, since it consumes time which could otherwise be more usefully employed. The foregoing section was a statement on the level of actual monetary profits made by colonialist powers out of Africa. But, Africa's contribution to European capitalism was far greater than mere monetary returns. The colonial system permitted the rapid development of technology and skills within the metropolitan sectors of imperialism. It also allowed for the elaboration of the modern organizational techniques of the capitalist firm and of imperialism as a whole. Indeed, colonialism gave capitalism an added lease of life and prolonged its existence in Western Europe, which had been the cradle of capitalism.

At the beginning of the colonial period, science and technology as applied to production already had a firm base inside Europe—a situation which was itself connected to overseas trade, as previously explained. Europe then was entering the age of electricity, of advanced ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, and of the proliferation of manufactured chemicals. All of these were carried to great heights during the colonial period. Electrical devices were raised to the qualitatively new level of electronics, incorporating miniaturization of equipment, fantastic progress in telecommunications, and the creation of computers. Chemical industries were producing a wide range of synthetic substitutes for raw materials, and a whole new branch of petrochemicals had come into existence. The combination of metals by metallurgical innovations meant that products could be offered to meet far-reaching demands of heat resistance, lightness, tensile strength. At the end of colonialism (say 1960), Europe was on the verge of another epoch—that of nuclear power.

It is common knowledge that the gap between the output of the metropoles and that of the colonies increased by at least fifteen to twenty times during the epoch of colonialism. More than anything else, it was the advance of scientific technique in the metropoles which was the cause of the great gulf between African and Western European levels of productivity by the end of the colonial period. Therefore, it is essential to understand the role of colonialism itself in bringing about the scientific progress in the metropoles, and its application to industry.

It would be extremely simple-minded to say that colonialism in Africa or anywhere else *caused* Europe to develop its science and technology. The tendency towards technological innovation and renovation was inherent in capitalism itself, because of the drive for profits. However, it would be entirely accurate to say that the colonization of Africa and other parts of the world formed an indispensable link in a chain of events which made possible the technological transformation of the base of European capitalism. Without that link, European capitalism would not have been producing goods and services at the level attained in 1960. In other words, our very yardsticks for measuring developed and underdeveloped nations would have been different.

Profits from African colonialism mingled with profits from every other source to finance scientific research. This was true in the general sense that the affluence of capitalist society in the present century allowed more money and leisure for research. It is also true because the development of capitalism in the imperialist epoch continued the division of labor *inside the capitalist metropoles* to the point where scientific research was a branch of the division of labor, and indeed one of its most important branches. European society moved away from scientific research as an *ad hoc,* personal, and even whimsical affair to a situation where research was given priority by governments, armies, and private capitalists. It was funded and guided. Careful scrutiny reveals that the source of funding and the direction in which research was guided were heavily influenced by the colonial situation. Firstly, it should be recalled that profits made by Europe from Africa represented *investible surpluses.* The profit was not merely an end in itself. Thus, the East and West African Currency Boards invested in the British government stock, while the commercial banks and insurance companies invested in government bonds, mortgages, and industrial shares. These investment funds acquired from the colonies spread to many sectors in the metropoles and benefited industries that had nothing to do with processing of colonial products.

However, it is easier to trace the impact of colonial exploitation on industries directly connected with colonial imports. Such industries had to improvise that kind of machinery which most effectively utilized colonial raw materials. That led for example to machinery for crushing palm kernels and to a process for utilizing the less delicately flavored coffee by turning it into a soluble powder, namely "instant coffee." Merchants and industrialists also considered ways in which colonial raw materials could be modified to meet specifications of European factories in quality and quantity. An example of this type would be the care taken by the Dutch in Java and by the Americans in Liberia to breed and graft new varieties of rubber plants yielding more and being more resistant to disease. Ultimately, the search for better-quality raw materials merged with the search for sources of raw material which would make European capitalism less dependent on colonial areas—and that led to synthetics.

In the sphere of shipping, it can readily be appreciated that certain technological modifications and innovations would be connected with the fact that such a high proportion of shipping was used to tie together colonies and metropoles. Ships had to be refrigerated to carry perishable goods; they had to make special holds for bulky or liquid cargoes such as palm oil; and the transport of petroleum from the Middle East, North Africa, and other parts of the world led to oil tankers as a special class of ships. The design of ships and the nature of their cargoes in turn affected the kind of port installations in the metropoles.

Where connections were remote or even apparently non-existent, it can still be claimed that colonialism was a factor in the European technological revolution. As science blossomed in the present century, its interconnections became numerous and complex. It is impossible to trace the origin of every idea and every invention, but it is well understood by serious historians of science that the growth of the body of scientific knowledge and its application to everyday life is dependent upon a large number of forces operating within the society as a whole, and not just upon the ideas within given branches of science. With the rise of imperialism, one of the most potent forces within metropolitan capitalist societies was precisely that emanating from colonial or semi-colonial areas.

The above considerations apply fully to any discussion of the military aspects of imperialism, the protection of empire being one of the crucial stimulants added to the science of armaments in a society that was already militaristically inclined ever since the feudal era. The new colonial dimension to European military preoccupation was particularly noticeable in the sharp naval rivalry among Britain, Germany, France, and Japan before and during the First World War. That rivalry over colonies and for spheres of capitalist investment produced new types of armed naval vessels, such as destroyers and submarines. By the end of the Second World War, military research had become the most highly organized branch of scientific research, and one that was subsidized by the capitalist states from the profits of international exploitation.

During the inter-war years, Africa's foremost contribution to the evolution of organizational techniques in Europe was to the strengthening of monopoly capital. Before the war of 1914, the Pan-Africanists Duse Mohammed Ali and W. E. B. Du Bois recognized that monopoly capital was the leading element in imperialist expansion. The most thorough and the best-known analysis of this phenomenon was made by the Russian revolutionary leader, Lenin. Lenin was virtually prophetic, because as the colonial age advanced it became more and more obvious that those who stood to benefit most were the monopoly concerns, and especially those involved in finance.

Africa (plus Asia and Latin America) contributed to the elaboration of the strategies by which competition among small companies gave way to domination by a small handful of firms in various economic activities. It was on the India trade routes that shipping companies first started the "Conference Lines" in 1875. This monopoly practice spread rapidly to the South African trade and reached a high pitch in West Africa in the early years of this century. On the commercial side, it was in West Africa that both the French and the English derived considerable experience in pooling and market-sharing, apart from the fact that little companies were steadily being gobbled up by bigger ones from the beginning to the end of colonialism.

It was in Southern Africa that there emerged the most carefully planned structures of interlocking directorates, holding companies, and giant corporations which were multinational both in their capital subscriptions and through the fact that their economic activities were dispersed in many lands. Individual entrepreneurs like Oppenheimer made huge fortunes from the Southern African soil, but Southern Africa was never really in the era of individual and family businesses, characteristic of Europe and America up to the early part of this century. The big mining companies were impersonal professional things. They were organized in terms of personnel, production, marketing, advertising, and they could undertake long-term commitments. At all times, inner productive forces gave capitalism its drive towards expansion and domination. It was the system which expanded. But in addition, one can see in Africa and in Southern Africa in particular the rise of a capitalist superstructure manned by individuals capable of consciously planning the exploitation of resources right into the next century, and aiming at racist domination of the black people of Africa until the end of time.

Ever since the fifteenth century, Europe was in strategic command of world trade and of the legal and organizational aspects of the movement of goods between continents. Europe's power increased with imperialism, because imperialism meant investments, and investments (with or without colonial rule) gave European capitalists control over production within each continent. The amount of benefits to capitalism increased accordingly, since Europe could determine the quantity and quality of different raw material inputs which would need to be brought together in the interests of capitalism as a whole, and of the bourgeois class in particular. For instance, sugar production in the West Indies was joined in the colonial period by cocoa production within Africa, so that both merged into the chocolate industry of Europe and North America. In the metallurgical field, iron ore from Sweden, Brazil, or Sierra Leone could be turned into different types of steel with the addition of manganese from the Gold Coast or chrome from Southern Rhodesia. Such examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely to cover the whole range of capitalist production in the colonial period.

As John Stuart Mill said, the trade between England and the West Indies in the eighteenth century was like the trade between town and country. In the present century, the links are even closer and it is more marked that the town (Europe) is living off the countryside (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). When it said that colonies should exist for the metropoles by producing raw materials and buying manufactured goods, the underlying theory was to introduce an *international division of labor* covering working people everywhere. That is to say, up to that point each society had allocated to its own members particular functions in production—some hunted, some made clothes, some built houses. But with colonialism, the capitalists determined what types of labor the workers should carry on in the world at large. Africans were to dig minerals out of the subsoil, grow agricultural crops, collect natural products, and perform a number of other odds and ends such as bicycle repairing. Inside Europe, North America, and Japan, workers would refine the minerals and the raw materials and make the bicycles.

The international division of labor brought about by imperialism and colonialism insured that there would be the maximum increase in the level of skills in the capitalist nations. It took mainly physical strength to dig the minerals from and to farm the African soil, but the extraction of the metals from the ores and the subsequent manufacture of finished goods in Europe promoted more and more technology and skills there as time went on. Take the iron and steel industry as an example. Modern steel manufacture derives from the Siemens open-hearth system and the Bessemer process, which were both already in existence in the second half of the last century. They both underwent major modifications, transforming steel manufacture from intermittent operations to something requiring huge continuous electrical furnaces. In more recent years, skilled workmen have been replaced by automation and computerization, but altogether the gains in technology and skills were immense, as compared with the years before imperialism got under way.

Iron ore was not one of Africa's major exports in the colonial days and it may therefore appear to be an irrelevant example. However, iron was very significant in the economy of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and North Africa. It can be used to illustrate the trend by which the international division of labor allowed technology and skills to grow in the metropoles. Furthermore, it must be recalled that Africa was an important source of the minerals that went into making steel alloys, notably manganese and chrome. Manganese was essential in the Bessemer process. It was mined in several places in Africa, with the Nouta mine on the Gold Coast having the largest single manganese deposit in the world. American companies owned the Gold Coast and North African mines and used the product in the steel industry of the U.S.A. Chrome from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia also played a similar role in steel metallurgy, being essential for the manufacture of stainless steel.

Columbite was another of the African minerals valuable for the creation of steel alloys. Being highly heat-resistant, one of its principal uses was in making steel for jet engines. First of all, it was the rapid development of European industry and technology which caused columbite to assume value. It had been a discarded by-product of tin mining in Nigeria up to 1952. Then, once it was utilized, it gave further stimulus to European technology in the very sophisticated sphere of airplane engines.

Obviously, according to the international division of labor prevailing under colonialism, it was the American, Canadian, British, and French workers who had access to the skills involved in working with columbite, rather than the Nigerian worker who dug the ore out of the ground. For certain reasons, columbite fell off sharply in demand after a few years, but during that time it had contributed towards making the European metallurgist even more proficient and experienced. In that way, it was helping to promote self-sustained growth and to produce the gap which is evident in any comparison of the developed and underdeveloped countries.

Copper, too, fell neatly into the category under discussion. Unskilled production by Africans was required to get the ore for export, followed by refinement in a European capitalist plant. Copper was Africa's chief mineral export. Being an excellent conductor of electricity, it became an indispensable part of the capitalist electrical industry. It is an essential component of generators, motors, electric locomotives, telephones, telegraphs, light and power lines, motor cars, buildings, ammunition, radios,

refrigerators, and a host of other things. A technological era tends to be defined by the principal source of power. Today, we speak of a Nuclear Age, since the potential of nuclear power is shown to be immense. The Industrial Revolution in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteeth centuries was the Age of Steam. In a parallel manner, the colonial epoch was the Age of Electricity. Therefore, the vital copper exports from Congo, Northern Rhodesia, and other parts of Africa were contributing to the leading sector of European technology. From that strategic position, its multiplier effects were innumerable and were of incalculable benefit to capitalist development.

In the context of a discussion of raw materials, special reference must again be made to the military. African minerals played a decisive role both with regard to conventional weapons and with regard to the breakthrough to atomic and nuclear weapons. It was from the Belgian Congo during the Second World War that the U.S.A. began getting the uranium that was a prerequisite to the making of the first atomic bomb. In any case, by the end of the colonial period, industry and the war machine in the colonizing nations had become so interwined and inseparable that any contribution to one was a contribution to the other. Therefore, Africa's massive contribution to what initially appears as peaceful pursuits such as the making of copper wire and steel alloys ultimately took the shape of explosive devices, aircraft carriers, and so on.

It was only after European firearms reached a certain stage of effectiveness in the nineteenth century that it became possible for whites to colonize and dominate the whole world. Similarly, the invention of a massive array of new instruments of destruction in the metropoles was both a psychological and a practical disincentive to colonized peoples seeking to regain power and independence. It will readily be recalled that a basic prop to colonialism in Africa and elsewhere was the "gunboat policy," which was resorted to every time that the local police and armed forces seemed incapable of maintaining the metropolitan law and the colonial order of affairs. From the viewpoint of the colonized, the strengthening of the military apparatus of the European powers through colonial exploitation was doubly detrimental. Not only did it increase the overall technological gap between metropole and colony, but it immeasurably widened the gap in the most sensitive area, which had to do with concepts such as power and independence.

The international division of labor of the colonial period also insured that there would be growth of employment opportunities in Europe, apart from the millions of white settlers and expatriates who earned a livelihood in and from Africa. Agricultural raw materials were processed in such a way as to form by-products, constituting industries in their own right. The number of jobs created in Europe and North America by the import of mineral ores from Africa, Asia, and Latin America can be seen from the massive employment roll of institutions such as steel works, automobile factories, alumina and aluminum plants, copper wire firms. Furthermore, those in turn stimulated the building industry, the transport industry, the munitions industry, and so on. The mining that went on in Africa left holes in the ground, and the pattern of agricultural production left African soils impoverished; but, in Europe, agricultural and mineral imports built a massive industrial complex.

In the earliest phases of human organization, production was scattered and atomized. That is to say, families preserved a separate identity while working for their upkeep. Over time, production became more social and interrelated in character. The making of a pair of shoes in a mature feudal trading economy involved the cattle rearer, a tanner of the leather, and a shoemaker—instead of one peasant killing an animal and making himself a pair of shoes, as under self-sufficient communalism. The extent to which a society achieves this social interdependence in making commodities is an index of its development, through specialization and coordination.

Undoubtedly, European capitalism achieved more and more a social character in its production. It integrated the whole world; and with colonial experience as an important stimulus, it integrated very closely every aspect of its own economy—from agriculture to banking. But *distribution* was not social in character. The fruits of human labor went to a given minority class, which was of the white race and resident in Europe and North America. This is the crux of the dialectical process of development and underdevelopment, as it evolved over the colonial period.

The Example of Unilever as a Major Beneficiary of African Exploitation

Just as it was necessary to follow African surplus through the channels of exploitation such as banks and mining companies, so the non-monetary contribution which Africa made to European capitalism can also be accurately traced by following the careers of the said companies. We offer below a brief outline of the relevant features of the development of a single firm—that of Unilever—in relationship to its exploitation of African resources and people.

In 1885, while Africa was being carved up at the conference table, one William H. Lever started making soap on the Merseyside near Liverpool in England. He called his soap "Sunlight" and in the swamps where his factory stood, the township of Port Sunlight grew up. Within ten years, the

firm of Lever was selling 40,000 tons of soap per year in England alone and was building an export business and factories in other parts of Europe, America, and the British colonies. Then came Lifebuoy, Lux, Vim, and within another ten years, Lever was selling 60,000 tons of soap in Britain, and in addition had factories producing and selling in Canada, the U.S.A., South Africa, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium. However, soap did not grow in any of those countries. The basic item in its manufacture was stearin, obtained from oils and fats. Apart from animal tallow and whale oil, the desirable raw materials all came from the tropics: namely, palm oil, palm-kernel oil, groundnut oil, and copra. West Africa happened to be the world's great palm produce zone and was also a major grower of groundnuts.

In 1887, the Austrian firm of Schicht, which was later to be incorporated in the Unilever combine, built the first palm-kernel crushing mill in Austria, supplied with raw materials by a Liverpool firm of oil merchants. That was not simply coincidence, but part of the logic of imperialism and the opening up of Africa as the raw material reservoir for Europe. As early as 1902, Lever sent out his own "explorers" to Africa, and they came to the decision that the Congo would be the most likely place to get palm produce, because the Belgian government was willing to offer huge concessions of land with innumerable palm trees. Lever obtained the necessary concessions in Congo and brought in machinery to extract oil from palm kernels.

But the main palm-oil experts came from areas on the coast to the north of the Congo. Therefore, in 1910, Lever purchased W. B. McIver, a small Liverpool firm in Nigeria. That was followed by acquisitions of two small companies in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Indeed, Lever (at that time called Lever Bros.) got a foothold in every colony in West Africa. The first major breakthrough occurred when Lever bought the Niger Company in 1920 for 8 million pounds. Then, in 1929, the African and Eastern, the last big rival trading concern, was brought into partnership; and the result of the merger was called the United Africa Company (UAC).

During the 1914–18 war, Lever had begun making margarine, which required the same raw materials as soap; namely, oils and fats. The subsequent years were ones in which such enterprises in Europe were constantly getting bigger through takeovers and mergers. The big names in soap and margarine manufacture on the European continent were two Dutch firms, Jurgens and Van der Bergh, and the Austrian firms of Schicht and Centra. The Dutch companies first achieved a dominant position; and then in 1929 there was a grand merger between their combine and Lever's, who in the meantime had been busy buying off virtually all

~~fostered and multiplied scientific techniques.~~ The reverse side of the coin was presented in Africa: no industry meant no generation of skills. Even in the mining industry, it was arranged that the most valuable labor should be done outside Africa. It is sometimes forgotten that it is labor which adds value to commodities through the transformation of natural products. For instance, although gem diamonds have a value far above their practical usefulness, the value is not simply a question of their being rare. Work had to be done to locate the diamonds. That is the skilled task of a geologist, and the geologists were of course Europeans. Work had to be done to dig the diamonds out, which involves mainly physical labor. Only in that phase were Africans from South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Tanganyika, and Sierra Leone brought into the picture. Subsequently, work had to be done in cutting and polishing the diamonds. A small portion of this was performed by whites in South Africa, and most of it by whites in Brussels and London. It was on the desk of the skilled cutter that the rough diamond became a gem and soared in value. No Africans were allowed to come near that kind of technique in the colonial period.

Much of the dynamism of capitalism lay in the way that growth created more opportunities for further growth. Major industries had by-products, they stimulated local raw-material usage, they expanded transport and the building industry—as was seen in the case of Unilever. In the words of the professional economists, those were the beneficial "backward and forward linkages." Given that the industries using African raw materials were located *outside* Africa, then there could be no beneficial backward and forward linkages *inside* Africa. After the Second World War, Guinea began to export bauxite. In the hands of French and American capitalists, the bauxite became aluminum. In the metropoles, it went into the making of refactory material, electrical conductors, cigarette foil, kitchen utensils, glass, jewel bearings, abrasives, light-weight structures, and aircraft. Guinean bauxite stimulated European shipping and North American hydro-electric power. In Guinea, the colonial bauxite mining left holes in the ground.

With regard to gold, the financial implications in Europe were enormous, and African gold played its part in the development of the monetary system and of industry and agriculture in the metropoles. But, like bauxite and other minerals, gold is an exhaustible resource. Once it is taken out of a country's soil, that is an absolute loss that cannot be replaced. That simple fact is often obscured so long as production continues, as in South Africa; but it is dramatically brought to attention when the minerals have actually disappeared during the colonial epoch. For instance, in the south of Tanganyika, the British mined gold as fast as they could from 1933

onwards at a place called Chunya. By 1953, they had gobbled it all up and exported it abroad. By the end of the colonial period, Chunya was one of the most backward spots in the whole of Tanganyika, which was itself known as the poor Cinderella of East Africa. If that was modernization, and given the price paid in exploitation and oppression, then Africans would have been better off in the bush.

Industrialization does not only mean factories. Agriculture itself has been industrialized in capitalist and socialist countries by the intensive application of scientific principles to irrigation, fertilizers, tools, crop selection, stock breeding. The most decisive failure of colonialism in Africa was its failure to change the technology of agricultural production. The most convincing evidence as to the superficiality of the talk about colonialism having "modernized" Africa is the fact that the vast majority of Africans went into colonialism with a hoe and came out with a hoe. Some capitalist plantations introduced agricultural machinery, and the odd tractor found its way into the hands of African farmers; but the hoe remained the overwhelmingly dominant agricultural implement. Capitalism could revolutionize agriculture in Europe, but it could not do the same for Africa.

In some districts, capitalism brought about technological backwardness in agriculture. On the reserves of Southern Africa, far too many Africans were crowded onto inadequate land, and were forced to engage in intensive farming, using techniques that were suitable only to shifting cultivation. In practice, that was a form of technical retrogression, because the land yielded less and less and became destroyed in the process. Wherever Africans were hampered in their use of their ancestral lands on a wide-ranging shifting basis, the same negative effect was to be found. Besides, some of the new cash crops like groundnuts and cotton were very demanding on the soil. In countries like Senegal, Niger, and Chad, which were already on the edge of the desert, the steady cultivation led to soil impoverishment and encroachment of the desert.

White racist notions are so deep-rooted within capitalist society that the failure of African agriculture to advance was put down to the inherent inferiority of the African. It would be much truer to say that it was due to the white intruders, although the basic explanation is to be found not in the personal ill-will of the colonialists or in their racial origin, but rather in the organized viciousness of the capitalist/colonialist system.

Failure to improve agricultural tools and methods on behalf of African peasants was not a matter of a bad decision by colonial policy-makers. It was an inescapable feature of colonialism as a whole, based on the understanding that the international division of labor aimed at skills in the metropoles and low-level manpower in the dependencies. It was also a result of the considerable use of force (including taxation) in African labor relations. People can be forced to perform simple manual labor, but very little else. This was proven when Africans were used as slaves in the West Indies and America. Slaves damaged tools and carried out sabotage, which could only be controlled by extra supervision and by keeping tools and productive processes very elementary. Slave labor was unsuitable for carrying out industrial activity, so that in the U.S.A. the North went to war in 1861 to end slavery in the South, so as to spread true capitalist relations throughout the land. Following the same line of argument, it becomes clear why the various forms of forced agricultural labor in Africa had to be kept quite simple, and that in turn meant small earnings.

Capitalists under colonialism did not pay enough for an African to maintain himself and family. This can readily be realized by reflecting on the amounts of money earned by African peasants from cash crops. The sale of produce by an African cash-crop farmer rarely brought in 10 pounds per year and often it was less than half that amount. Out of that, a peasant had to pay for tools, seeds, and transport and he had to repay the loan to the middleman before he could call the remainder his own. Peasants producing coffee and cocoa and collecting palm produce tended to earn more than those dealing with cotton and groundnuts, but even the ordinary Akwapim cocoa farmer or Chagga coffee farmer never handled money in quantities sufficient to feed, clothe, and shelter his family. Instead, subsistence farming of yams or bananas continued as a supplement. That was how the peasant managed to eat, and the few shillings earned went to pay taxes and to buy the increasing number of things which could not be obtained without money in the middlemen's shops—salt, cloth, paraffin. If he was extremely lucky, he would have access to zinc sheets, bicycles, radios, and sewing machines, and would be able to pay school fees. It must be made quite clear that those in the last category were extremely few.

One reason why the African peasant got so little for his agricultural crops was that his labor was unskilled. That was not the whole explanation, but it is true that a product such as cotton jumped in value during the time it went through the sophisticated processes of manufacture in Europe. Karl Marx, in clarifying how capitalists appropriated part of the surplus of each worker, used the example of cotton. He explained that the value of the manufactured cotton included the value of the labor that went into growing the raw cotton, plus part of the value of the labor that made the spindles, plus the labor that went into the actual manufacture. From an African viewpoint, the first conclusion to be drawn is that the peasant working on African soil was being exploited by the industrialist who used

African raw material in Europe or America. Secondly, it is necessary to realize that the African contribution of unskilled labor was valued far less than the European contribution of skilled labor.

It has been observed that one hour of work of a cotton peasant in Chad was equivalent to less than one centimeter of cotton cloth, and he needed to work fifty days to earn what was needed to buy three meters of the cloth made from his own cotton in France. Yet, the French textile worker (using modern spindles) ran off three meters of cloth in a matter of minutes! Assuming that the Frenchman was not closer to God (who made the whole world in only six days and rested on the seventh), then there must be factors in the capitalist/colonialist system which permitted the great disparity in the relative value of labor in Chad and France. In the first place, the Chad peasant was defrauded through trade so that he sold cheap and bought dear, and therefore received a minute proportion of the value that he created with his labor. This was possible not because of mysterious "market forces" as bourgeois economists would like us to believe, but because of political power being vested entirely in the hands of the colonialists. It was a consequence of monopolistic domination, both economically and politically. Secondly, the quantity of time spent by the Chad peasant was longer because colonialism did not permit him to acquire the tools to shorten the hours required to produce a given quantity of raw cotton.

To a certain extent, it would have been in the interests of the colonial powers to have had better agricultural techniques in Africa, leading to increased volume and quality of production. All colonial regimes sponsored some scientific research into tropical agriculture. However, the research was almost entirely devoted to cash crops, it was limited in scope, and it was more easily adaptable by plantations than by African peasants who had no capital. The pitiable amount devoted to agricultural improvement in Africa during the colonial period contrasts sharply with the increasingly huge sums that were devoted to research in Europe over the same period—with enormous benefits to both industry and agriculture in the metropoles.

Side by side with the ill-founded claims about socio-economic modernization went the claims by colonial apologists that European rule brought political uplift and emancipation. One of the long-standing arguments in this connection is that Africa was in chaos in the nineteenth century, and that "tribes" like the Ngoni and the Yao and Samori's *sofas* were killing left, right, and center. Consequently, Africa was saved by Livingstone and Stanley. For the most part, such wild statements have no place in the works of the present generation of European scholars of Africa, since they are known to have no resemblance to reality. However, some writers still no relation one to another, so that, even though the volume of commercial activity within each compartmentalized colony may have increased, there was no development comparable to that which linked together the various ~~states of the U.S.A.~~

In recent times, economists have been recognizing in colonial and post-colonial Africa a pattern that has been termed "growth without development." That phrase has now appeared as the title of books on Liberia and Ivory Coast. It means that goods and services of a certain type are on the increase. There may be more rubber and coffee exported, there may be more cars imported with the proceeds, and there may be more gasoline stations built to service the cars. But the profit goes abroad, and the economy becomes more and more a dependency of the metropoles. In no African colony was there economic integration, or any provision for making the economy self-sustained and geared to its own local goals. Therefore, there was growth of the so-called enclave import-export sector, but the only things which developed were dependency and underdevelopment.

A further revelation of growth without development under colonialism was the overdependence on one or two exports. The term "monoculture" is used to describe those colonial economies which were centered around a single crop. Liberia (in the agricultural sector) was a monoculture dependent on rubber, Gold Coast on cocoa, Dahomey and southeast Nigeria on palm produce, Sudan on cotton, Tanganyika on sisal, and Uganda on cotton. In Senegal and Gambia, groundnuts accounted for 85 to 90 per cent of money earnings. In effect, two African colonies were told to grow nothing but peanuts!

Every farming people have a staple food, plus a variety of other supplements. Historians, agronomists, and botanists have all contributed to showing the great variety of such foods within the pre-colonial African economy. There were numerous crops which were domesticated within the African continent, there were several wild food species (notably fruits), and Africans had shown no conservatism in adopting useful food plants of Asian or American origin. Diversified agriculture was within the African tradition. Monoculture was a colonialist invention.

Those who justify the colonial division of labor suggest that it was "natural" and respected the relative capacities for specialization of the metropoles and colonies. Europe, North America, and Japan were capable of specializing in industry and Africa in agriculture. Therefore, it was to the "comparative advantage" of one part of the world to manufacture machines while another part engaged in simple hoe-culture of the soil. That kind of arrogant partition of the world was not new. In the fifteenth century, the feudal monarchies of Portugal and Spain wanted the whole world for themselves, and they got the Pope to draw a line around the globe, making the allocations. But Britain, Holland, and France suggested that they were not at all convinced that Adam had left a will which gave the earth to Portugal and Spain. In like manner, it can be questioned whether there is any testament which stated that the river Gambia should inherit groundnut growing while the river Clyde (of Scotland) should become a home of shipbuilding.

There was nothing "natural" about monoculture. It was a consequence of imperialist requirements and machinations, extending into areas that were politically independent in name. Monoculture was a characteristic of regions falling under imperialist domination. Certain countries in Latin America such as Costa Rica and Guatemala were forced by United States capitalist firms to concentrate so heavily on growing bananas that they were contemptuously known as "banana republics." In Africa, this concentration on one or two cash crops for sale abroad had many harmful effects. Sometimes, cash crops were grown to the exclusion of staple foods—thus causing famines. For instance, in Gambia rice farming was popular before the colonial era, but so much of the best land was transferred to groundnuts that rice had to be imported on a large scale to try to counter the fact that famine was becoming endemic. In Asante, concentration on cocoa raised fears of famine in a region previously famous for yams and other foodstuff.

Yet the threat of famine was a small disadvantage compared to the extreme vulnerability and insecurity of monoculture. When the crop was affected by internal factors such as disease, that amounted to an overwhelming disaster, as in the case of Gold Coast cocoa when it was hit by swollen-shoot disease in the 1940s. Besides, at all times, the price fluctuations (which were externally controlled) left the African producer helpless in the face of capitalist maneuvers.

From a capitalist viewpoint, monocultures commended themselves most because they made colonial economies entirely dependent on the metropolitan buyers of their produce. At the end of the European slave trade, only a minority of Africans were sufficiently committed to capitalist exchange and sufficiently dependent upon European imports to wish to continue the relationship with Europe at all costs. Colonialism increased the dependence of Africa on Europe in terms of the numbers of persons brought into the money economy and in terms of the number of aspects of socio-economic life in Africa which derived their existence from the connection with the metropole. The ridiculous situation arose by which European trading firms, mining companies, shipping lines, banks, insurance houses, and plantations all exploited Africa and at the same time caused Africans to feel that without those capitalist services no money or European goods would be forthcoming, and therefore Africa was in debt to its exploiters!

The factor of dependency made its impact felt in every aspect of the life of the colonies, and it can be regarded as the crowning vice among the negative social, political, and economic consequences of colonialism in Africa, being primarily responsible for the *perpetuation* of the colonial relationship into the epoch that is called neo-colonialism.

Finally, attention must be drawn to one of the most important consequences of colonialism on African development, and that is the stunting effect on Africans as a physical species. Colonialism created conditions which led not just to periodic famine but to chronic undernourishment, malnutrition, and deterioration in the physique of the African people. If such a statement sounds wildly extravagant, it is only because bourgeois propaganda has conditioned even Africans to believe that malnutrition and starvation were the *natural* lot of Africans from time immemorial. A black child with a transparent rib cage, huge head, bloated stomach, protruding eyes, and twigs as arms and legs was the favorite poster of the large British charitable operation known as Oxfam. The poster represented a case of *kwashiorkor*—extreme malignant malnutrition. Oxfam called upon the people of Europe to save starving African and Asian children from *kwashiorkor* and such ills. Oxfam never bothered their consciences by telling them that capitalism and colonialism created the starvation, suffering, and misery of the child in the first place.

There is an excellent study of the phenomenon of hunger on a world scale by a Brazilian scientist, Josue de Castro. It incorporates considerable data on the food and health conditions among Africans in their independent pre-colonial state or in societies untouched by capitalist pressures; and it then makes comparisons with colonial conditions. The study convincingly indicates that African diet was previously more varied, being based on a more diversified agriculture than was possible under colonialism. In terms of specific nutritional deficiencies, those Africans who suffered most under colonialism were those who were brought most fully into the colonial economy: namely, the urban workers.

For the sake of the doubters, several of De Castro's observations are listed below (occasionally supplemented by other data).

(1) Investigators who have studied the nutritional conditions of "primitive" Africans in tropical Africa are unanimous in stating that they show no clinical signs of dietary deficiency. One of the most striking indications of the superiority of indigenous African diet is the

magnificent condition of the teeth. One researcher among six ethnic groups in Kenya could not find a single case of tooth decay, not a single deformation of dental arch. But when those same people were transplanted and put on the "civilized" diet available under colonialism, their teeth began to decay at once.

(2) In Egypt, the peasants, or fellahin, had always suffered from periodic famines, but under colonialism this deteriorated to become chronic hunger. It was the intervention of the British which upset the balance of the peasants' diet; and comparison with early accounts shows that there was once a much greater variety of legumes and fruits.

(3) The *kwashiorkor* (of the Oxfam posters) is itself noticeable wherever the African's contact with the European was prolonged. A Committee on Nutrition in the Colonial Empire found a noticeable absence of animal fat and protein in the Gambia. The absence of proteins of good quality is one of the principal contributors to *kwashiorkor;* and once again comparison with what Europeans saw in the Gambia ever since the fifteenth century would indicate that a change had come about after the coming of the whites. The Gambia not only grew a variety of food in the early period, but it was stock-raising country where meat was consumed in considerable quantity. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, cattle hides were sold by the thousands to European buyers every year, and the local population ate the meat. How then could they have suffered from an absence of animal fat!

(4) Studies in Equatorial Africa have revealed frequent signs of dietary deficiencies caused by the absence of fresh foods among Africans entering the service of the colonizers. These include beriberi, rickets, and scurvy. Rickets is a typical temperate climate disease, to which lack of sun contributes. But after colonialism had so destroyed the pattern of judicious food consumption in tropical Africa, even the sun was not enough to keep children's bones straight. As for scurvy, that is so closely identified with the English sailor that he was nicknamed "Limey," from eating limes to prevent scurvy while lacking access to fresh food on long sea voyages. However, a scurvy epidemic broke out in the middle of Tanganyika in the colonial epoch—among workers in the goldfields, whose wages and conditions of work did not permit them to get fresh citrus and other nourishment.

(5) In South Africa, white settlement and capitalism transformed African diet from meat and cereal to dependence on mealy-meal

vicious circle of poverty." Yet, the same people boast proudly that they ~~have educated Africa. It is difficult to see how they can have it both ways.~~ If independent Africa is still without the benefits of modern education (as it is), then seventy-five years of colonial exploitation undoubtedly have something to do with the state of affairs; and the absurdity is so much the greater when one contemplates how much Africa produced in that period and how much of that went to develop all aspects of European capitalist society, including their educational institutions. Cecil Rhodes could afford to leave a legacy of lavish scholarships to white students for study at Oxford University, having made a fortune from exploiting Africa and Africans.

Those Africans who had access to education were faced with certain qualitative problems. The quality was poor by prevailing European standards. The books, the methods of teaching, and the discipline were all brought to Africa in the nineteenth century; and, on the whole, colonial schools remained sublimely indifferent to the twentieth century. New ideas that were incorporated in the capitalist metropoles never reached the colonies. In particular, the fantastic changes in science did not reach African classrooms, for there were few schools where science subjects were taught. Similarly, the evolution of higher technical education did not have any counterpart in colonial Africa.

There were numerous absurdities in the transplantation of a version of European education into Africa. When the Bemba children mentioned above went to school, they had no program of instruction relating to the plant life with which they would otherwise have familiarized themselves. Instead, they were taught about flowers—and about European roses at that. Dr. Kofi Busia some years ago made the following admission:

> At the end of my first year at secondary school (Mfantsipim, Cape Coast, Ghana), I went home to Wenchi for the Christmas vacation. I had not been home for four years, and on that visit, I became painfully aware of my isolation. I understood our community far less than the boys of my own age who had never been to school. Over the years, as I went through college and university, I felt increasingly that the education I received taught me more and more about Europe and less and less about my own society.

Eventually, Busia knew so little about African society that he proposed that independent Africans should "dialogue" with the fascist/racist white minority that maintains apartheid in South Africa.

Some of the contradictions between the content of colonial education and the reality of Africa were really incongruous. On a hot afternoon in some tropical African school, a class of black shining faces would listen to their geography lesson on the seasons of the year—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. They would learn about the Alps and the river Rhine but nothing about the Atlas Mountains of North Africa or the river Zambezi. If those students were in a British colony, they would dutifully write that "we defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588"—at a time when Hawkins was stealing Africans and being knighted by Queen Elizabeth I for so doing. If they were in a French colony, they would learn that "the Gauls, our ancestors, had blue eyes," and they would be convinced that "Napoleon was our greatest general"—the same Napoleon who reinstituted slavery in the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, and was only prevented from doing the same in Haiti because his forces were defeated by an even greater strategist and tactician, the African Toussaint L'Ouverture.

To some extent Europeans thoughtlessly applied their own curricula without reference to African conditions; but very often they deliberately did so with intent to confuse and mystify. As late as 1949, a Principal Education Officer in Tanganyika carefully outlined that the Africans of that colony should be bombarded in primary school with propaganda about the British royal family. "The theme of the [British] king as father should be stressed throughout the syllabus and mentioned in every lesson," he said. He further urged that African children should be shown numerous pictures of the English princesses and their ponies at Sandringham and Windsor Castle.

Whatever little was discussed about the African past in colonial schools was about European activities in Africa. That trend is now sufficiently reversed to allow the present generation of African pupils to smile at the thought that Europeans "discovered" Mount Kenya or the river Niger. But in the colonial period, the paradox was that whoever had an opportunity to be educationally misguided could count himself lucky, because that misguidance was a means of personal advance within the structure created by European capitalists in and for Africa.

The French, Portuguese, and Belgians made it clear that education at any level was designed "to civilize the African native," and of course only a civilized native could hope to gain worthwhile employment and recognition from the colonialists. According to the French, an African, after receiving French education, stood a chance of becoming an *assimilée*—one who could be assimilated or incorporated into the superior French culture. The Portuguese used the word *assimilado,* which means exactly the same; and Portuguese colonial law distinguished sharply between a native and an *assimilado*. The latter was sometimes called a *civilisado* because of being able to read and write Portuguese. That sort of African was rewarded with certain privileges. One great irony was that in Portugal up to 1960, nearly half the population was illiterate, and therefore if they had been put to the same test, they would have been judged uncivilized! Meanwhile, the Belgians were parading around with the same system. They called their "educated Bantu" in Congo the *évolués* ("those who have evolved" from savagery to civilization, thanks to the Belgians).

Somehow, the British avoided hard and fast legal distinctions between the educated and uneducated African, but they encouraged cultural imitation all the same. Governor Cameron of Tanganyika in the 1920s was known as a "progressive" governor. But when he was attacked for trying to preserve the African personality in the educational system, he denied the charge and declared that his intention was that the African should cease to think as an African and instead should become "a fair-minded Englishman." Students who came out of Livingstonia or Blantyre Mission in Malawi were known as black Scotsmen, because of the effort of Scottish missionaries. In Sierra Leone, the white cultural influence went back to the eighteenth century, and Sierra Leone Creoles stood out even from the rest of miseducated black people. The Creoles were not satisfied with an English Christian name or even with one European surname: they had to choose two European surnames and connect them with a hyphen. Of course, in practical terms, the education with all its warped values meant that the educated handful went as far as colonialism would allow Africans to go in the civil service or in the employ of private capitalist firms.

During the colonial epoch and afterwards, criticism was justly leveled at the colonial educational system for failing to produce more secondary school pupils and more university graduates. And yet, it can be said that among those who had the most education were to be found the most alienated Africans on the continent. Those were the ones who evolved and were assimilated. At each further stage of education, they were battered by and succumbed to the values of the white capitalist system; and, after being given salaries, they could then afford to sustain a style of life imported from outside. Access to knives and forks, three-piece suits, and pianos then further transformed their mentality. There is a famous West Indian calypsonian who in satirizing his colonial school days, remarked that had he been a bright student he would have learned more and turned out to be a fool. Unfortunately, the colonial school system educated far too many fools and clowns, fascinated by the ideas and way of life of the European capitalist class. Some reached a point of total estrangement from African conditions and the African way of life, and like Blaise Diagne of Senegal they chirped happily that they were and would always be "European."

~~There is no getting away from the conclusion reached by the African~~

educationalist Abdou Moumini that "colonial education corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of the African and filled him with abnormal complexes." It followed that those who were Europeanized were to that extent de-Africanized, as a consequence of the colonial education and the general atmosphere of colonial life. Many examples are cited in present-day Africa of the insulting treatment of aspects of African culture in the colonial period, based on cultural imperialism and white racism. What is seldom commented upon is the fact that many Africans were the victims of fascism at the hands of the Portuguese and Spanish, at the hands of the Italians and the Vichy French regime for a brief period in the late 1930s and the early 1940s, and at the hands of the British and Boers in South Africa throughout this century. The fascist colonial powers were retarded capitalist states, where the government police machinery united with the Catholic church and the capitalists to suppress Portuguese and Spanish workers and peasants and to keep them ignorant. Understandably, the fascist colonialists wanted to do the same to African working people, and in addition they vented their racism on Africans, just as Hitler had done on the Jews.

Like most colonial administrations, that of the Italians in Libya disregarded the culture of the Africans. However, after the fascist Mussolini came to power, the disregard gave way to active hostility, especially in relation to the Arabic language and the Moslem religion. The Portuguese and Spanish had always shown contempt for African language and religion. Schools of kindergarten and primary level for Africans in Portuguese colonies were nothing but agencies for the spread of the Portuguese language. Most schools were controlled by the Catholic church, as a reflection of the unity of church and state in fascist Portugal. In the little-known Spanish colony of Guinea (Rio Muni), the small amount of education given to Africans was based on eliminating the use of local languages by the pupils and on instilling in their hearts "the holy fear of God." Schools in colonial Africa were usually blessed with the names of saints or bestowed with the names of rulers, explorers, and governors from the colonizing power. In Spanish Guinea, that practice was followed, resulting in the fact that Rio Muni children had to pass by the José Antonio school—the equivalent of saying the Adolf Hitler school if the region were German, for the school was named in honor of José Antonio, the founder of the Spanish fascist party.

Another aspect of the colonial educational and cultural patterns which needs investigation is the manner in which European racism and contempt was expressed not only by hostility to African culture but by paternalism and by praise of negative and static social features. There were many

Much has been written about the trend in colonial Africa known as the Independent church movement. It was a trend in which thousands of African Christians participated by breaking away from European churches (especially Protestant churches), and setting up their own places of worship under Christian African leadership. The motives were varied. Some Independent churches were highly nationalistic, like that established by John Chilembwe, who led an armed nationalist uprising in Nyasaland (Malawi) in 1917. Others developed as a response of those Africans aspiring to be priests or pastors to the discrimination practiced against them by white missionaries. One constant factor was disgust with the way that Europeans forced Africans to identify as Europeans. Revolting against that concept, one Zulu Independent church put the question to the local population: "Are you a Jew or a Zulu? Were you there when they crucified their Lord?" Nevertheless, many Africans came to accept the dehumanizing principle of alienation from self. African identification with Europeans (be they Gentile or Jew) was a pillar of the informal education of the colonial epoch.

In the final analysis, perhaps the most important principle of colonial education was that of capitalist individualism. Like many aspects of the superstructure of beliefs in a society, it had both its negative and positive sides, viewed historically. The European bourgeoisie were progressive when they defended the individual from the excessive control of the father in the family and against the collective regulations of the church and feudal society. However, the capitalist system then went on to champion and protect the rights of the individual property owners against the rights of the mass of exploited workers and peasants. When capitalism had its impact on Africa in the colonial period, the idea of individualism was already in its reactionary phase. It was no longer serving to liberate the majority but rather to enslave the majority for the benefit of a few.

When individualism was applied to land, it meant that the notions of private ownership and the transfer of land through sale became prevalent in some parts of the continent. Much more widespread was the new understanding that individual labor should benefit the person concerned and not some wider collective, such as the clan or ethnic group. Thus, the practice of collective labor and egalitarian social distribution gave way to accumulative tendencies. Superficially, it appeared that individualism brought progress. Some individuals owned large coffee, cocoa, or cotton *shambas,* and others rose to some prominence in the colonial administration through education. As individuals, they had improved their lot, and they became models of achievement within the society. Any model of achievement is an educational model, which directs the thoughts and actions of young and old in the society. The model of personal achievement under colonialism was really a model for the falling apart and the underdevelopment of African society taken as a whole.

It is a common myth within capitalist thought that the individual through drive and hard work can become a capitalist. In the U.S.A., it is usual to refer to an individual like John D. Rockefeller, Sr., as someone who rose "from rags to riches." To complete the moral of the Rockefeller success story, it would be necessary to fill in the details on all the millions of people who had to be exploited in order for one man to become a multimillionaire. The acquisition of wealth is not due to hard work alone, or the Africans working as slaves in America and the West Indies would have been the wealthiest group in the world. The individualism of the capitalist must be seen against the hard and unrewarded work of the masses.

The idea of individualism was more destructive in colonial Africa than it was in metropolitan capitalist society. In the latter, it could be said that the rise of the bourgeois class indirectly benefited the working classes, through promoting technology and raising the standard of living. But, in Africa, colonialism did not bring those benefits—it merely intensified the rate of exploitation of African labor and continued to export the surplus. In Europe, individualism led to entrepreneurship and adventurism of the type which spearheaded Europe's conquest of the rest of the world. In Africa, both the formal school system and the informal value system of colonialism destroyed social solidarity and promoted the worst form of alienated individualism without social responsibility. That delayed the political process through which the society tried to regain its independence. Up to this point, it has consistently been held that development is rooted in the material environment, in the techniques of production, and in the social relations deriving from people's work. There are what are known as "conspiracy theories of history" by which the happenings of whole epochs are presented as being the secret scheming of one group or another. Such an approach is not to be recommended in the study of Africa's relations with Europe. However, with regard to colonial educational policy, one comes closest to finding the elements of conscious planning by a group of Europeans to control the destiny of millions of Africans over a considerable period of time extending into the future. The planning of colonial education for the subjugation of Africa was most fully displayed by the French, because French politicians and administrators had the habit of openly expressing their thoughts on Africa. Therefore, the words of the French colonialists themselves will be cited here to illustrate how the colonial educational system did not leave vital political matters to chance, but was consciously carrying out policies hostile to the regaining of freedom by African peoples.

Ever since the period of the imperialist Scramble for Africa, French leaders realized that it was imperative to start some schools in the parts of Africa claimed by France, so that French language and culture might be accepted by some Africans, who would then identify with France rather than Britain or Portugal or some other European rival. This was particularly true in disputed frontier zones. Eugène Etienne, a French minister at the start of the colonial era, stated that the extension of the French language was necessary as "a measure of national defense." As early as 1884, there was set up the *Alliance Française* as an instrument of educational and cultural imperialism, recognized and supported by the French government. The reports of the *Alliance Française* show clearly that they thought of themselves as an arm of French imperialism, fighting so that France could entrench itself. For example, the *Alliance Française* wrote of French schools in Upper Guinea in the late nineteenth century:

> They have to combat the redoubtable influence of the English schools of Sierra Leone in this region. The struggle between the two languages becomes more intense as one moves to the south, invaded by English natives and by their Methodist pastors.

As seen earlier in the case of Portugal and Spain, the spread of the language of the European colonizing power was considered of major importance. Belgium on the other hand encouraged local languages as a means of division and retardation. Only in Tanganyika, under German rule, was there a positive reaction to the potentialities of Swahili as a teaching language, so that there was a further impetus to that language, which had already spread by trade, political relations, and personal contacts.

Apart from language, the pillar of cultural imperialism in most colonies was religion. The church never played as important a role in French colonies as it did in other parts of Africa colonized by predominantly Catholic countries, and the Protestant churches in British colonies also had a much more vital role than the church in French Africa. The explanation is that the French bourgeois revolution of the eighteenth century was more thoroughly anti-clerical than any other bourgeois revolution, and the Catholic church was completely separated from government in France by 1905, after many years of poor relations. Nevertheless, when the French saw that mission schools were helping England to entrench itself in Africa, the French government asked the aid of their own Catholic church to secure national interests.

From the viewpoint of the colonizers, once the frontiers of a colony were

firmly decided, the major problem remained that of securing African compliance in carrying out policies favorable to the metropoles. There was always the possible use of force for that purpose, but naked force was best kept in reserve, rather than utilized for everyday affairs. Only education could lay the basis for a smooth-functioning colonial administration. In the first place, there was the elementary language problem of Europeans communicating with Africans. Most of the time, Europeans used translators to pass on orders, but it was known that African translators seized the opportunity to promote themselves and to modify or even sabotage orders. There was a saying in French colonial Africa that "translation is equal to treason," and the only way to avoid that was to teach the mass of the people French.

Then there was the practical aspect of educating Africans to be better workers, just as in Europe the workers received education so that they would be more efficient and produce extra surplus for the capitalists. In colonial Africa, the European bourgeoisie realized that some education would maximize the value of labor. Albert Sarraut, a French Colonial Minister, stressed in 1914 what he termed "the economic utility of educating the [African] masses." Several years earlier the French had made a specific statement to the same effect on Madagascar. An ordinance of 1899 indicated that the purpose of schooling was

> . . . to make the young Malagasy faithful and obedient subjects of France and to offer an education which would be industrial, agricultural and commercial, so as to ensure that the settlers and various public services of the colony can meet their personnel requirements.

In practice, it was not necessary to educate the masses because only a minority of the African population entered the colonial economy in such a way that their performance could be enhanced by education. Indeed, the French concentrated on selecting a small minority, who would be thoroughly subjected to French cultural imperialism, and who would aid France in administering its vast African colonial possessions. William Ponty, an early Governor-General of French West Africa, spoke in terms of forming "an elite of young people destined to aid our own efforts." In 1919, Henry Simon (then Colonial Minister) outlined a program for secondary education in Africa with a view to "making the best indigenous elements into complete Frenchmen."

The best expressions of the political implications of French colonial educational policy came in the 1930s; and, by that time, some action was also matching the words. Brevié, the Governor-General of French West Africa in 1930, urged the extension of the higher levels of primary schooling for Africans "to help us in our work of colonization." Brevié was encouraged by the fact that by then there had appeared "a native elite, of whose zeal for a thorough and exclusive French culture signs are already visible." So with the support of the Inspector-General of education, that governor went on to outline plans for African students to attend secondary school, so as to become colonial cadres. Any socio-political system needs its cadres. That was the role played by the youngest age-grades in Shaka's armies and it was the role played by the Komsomol or Young Communists in the Soviet Union. Being a cadre involved not just training for a practical job but also political orientation to serve as a leading element in the system. The French and other colonialists understood this very well. This is how Brevié expressed it:

> It is in no wise merely a matter of turning out batches of apprentices, clerks and officials according to the fluctuating needs of the moment. The role of these native cadres is much wider.

Only in North Africa, with its heavy white settler population, did the French find it unnecessary to encourage a local elite to run affairs under the direction of the metropolis and the governor; although even in Algeria there emerged a number of subjects called the *Beni Oui Oui*—literally the "Yes, Yes men," who always assented to carrying out French instructions in opposition to the interests of most of their brothers. Another farsighted aspect of French political policy in the education sphere is the manner in which they forced the sons of chiefs to acquire education. It was a deliberate attempt to capture the loyalty of those persons who had previously held political power in independent Africa, and it was an attempt at continuity with the pre-colonial phase. As the French themselves put it, by educating the sons of traditional rulers, "a bond is thus established between the native cadres formed by us and those that the native community recognizes."

In 1935, a team of British educationalists visited French Africa, and they admitted with a mixture of jealousy and admiration that France had succeeded in creating an elite of Africans in the image of Frenchmen—an elite that was helping to perpetuate French colonial rule. To greater or lesser extent, all colonial powers produced similar cadres to manage and buttress their colonial empires in Africa and elsewhere.

After the Second World War, it became obvious that colonial rule could not forever be maintained in the same form in Africa; Asia already having broken loose and Africa being restless. When the awareness that the end was in sight became generalized, the metropolitan powers turned to their colonial cadres and handed to them the reins of policy in politically in-

dependent Africa. It should be emphasized that the choice that Africa should be free was not made by the colonial powers but by the people of Africa. Nevertheless, the changeover from colonialism to what is known as neo-colonialism did have the element of conspiracy in it. In 1960, the then British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, made the oft-quoted statement that "a wind of change was blowing across Africa." That was the bourgeois way of expressing what Chinese Premier Chou En-Lai was soon to assert: namely, that "Africa was ripe for Revolution." In order to delay or hijack the African revolution, the colonizing powers turned to a group which they had already created for a different purpose—the elite of colonially educated Africans, from among whom were selected wherever possible those who were most suitable for elevation to political leadership, and the administration and military apparatus were left in the hands of similar trustworthy cadres.

There were a few farsighted Europeans who all along saw that the colonial educational system would serve them if and when political independence was regained in Africa. For instance, Pierre Foncin, a founder of the *Alliance Française,* stated at the beginning of this century that "it is necessary to attach the colonies to the metropole by a very solid psychological bond, against the day when their progressive emancipation ends in a form of federation as is probable—that they be and they remain French in language, thought and spirit." Yet, it was the British who firsh appreciated that they should bow to the inevitable and grant African independence. While the French introduced a few African representatives into their own Parliament in France so as to try and keep African territories tied to France, the British began to prepare to hand over to certain selected Africans.

In the metropolitan capitalist countries, there were (and still are) elite schools which provided the bulk of the political and other leadership. The English public schools of Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and Winchester are well known as training grounds of the British ruling class, and by many authorities they are considered more important that the universities to which the students of such secondary schools invariably go. In France at the secondary level, it was, and still is, usual to find that students emerging from places like the Lycée Louis le Grand and the École Normal Superieure Rue d'Ulm are the future cabinet ministers and top executives of that country. In the U.S.A., in spite of the myth that everyone can reach the top, a high proportion of the ruling class went to exclusive schools like the private boys' schools of Groton, St. Paul's, St. Mark's, and Philips Exeter.

Under African conditions, anyone who went to school in the colonial period virtually entered the elite, because the numbers enjoying that privilege even at the primary level were so small. In addition, within each colony there tended to be at least one secondary school or higher institute which played the role of furnishing the politico-administrative personnel of Africa in the era of political independence. The names of cabinet ministers and permanent secretaries of individual African countries can be found on the school rolls of Gordon College (Sudan), Alliance High School (Kenya), King's College Budo (Uganda), Tabora Secondary School (Tanzania), Livingstonia (Malawi), William Ponty (Senegal), Sierra Leone Grammar School, Mfantsipim (Ghana), the Lycée Gallieni (Madagascar), and a few others. Besides, there were Makerere, Fourah Bay, and Achimota, as long standing university or near-university institutions.

In retrospect, it is now very clear that one of the most significant aspects of the colonial educational system was that provided by the armed forces and police. Colonial armies such as the King's African Rifles, the French Free Army, and the Congolese Force Publique produced sergeants who later became the majors and generals of independent Africa, and in several instances the heads of states. Policemen also achieved similar rapid promotion, although their political position has been rather weaker than the military proper. Like their civilian counterparts, the future police and military elite were at one time trained to be simply low-level assistants to the colonial overlords; but once independence was in sight they were judged by the colonizers to have the requisite qualities of colonial cadres—fit to be part of the ruling class of neo-colonial Africa. In a few instances, the colonial powers towards the latter part of the colonial period rushed to train a few Africans at the metropolitan higher institutions of scientific violence, notably Sandhurst Military Academy and Hendon Police School in Britain and St. Cyr Military Academy in France. Those few who were selected for such training became the cream of the military elite, corresponding to those African civilians who went to university either in Africa or abroad.

Most of what emerged from the colonial educational system was not unique. Educational systems are designed to function as props to a given society, and the educated in the young age groups automatically carry over their values when their turn comes to make decisions in the society. In Africa, the colonialists were training low-level administrators, teachers, NCOs, railroad booking clerks, for the preservation of colonial relations; and it is not surprising that such individuals would carry over colonial values into the period after independence was regained. The colonialists meanwhile took action wherever possible to insure that persons most favorable to their position continued to man African administrations and assumed new political and state police powers. Such a presentation of events

would be termed one-sided by many Europeans and Africans, too. In a sense, that is true, and the one-sidedness is deliberate. It is a presentation of what the colonial educational system achieved *in terms of what it set itself to achieve*. The other side of the matter is not the good with which colonial educators can be credited, but rather the good that emerged in spite of the efforts and intentions of the colonizers and because of the struggles of African people.

Development by Contradiction

The only positive development in colonialism was when it ended. It is the purpose of this section to sketch briefly how that development came about, with particular reference to the role of the educated sector.

In contrast to a subjective interpretation of what was good about colonialism on the one hand and what was bad on the other hand, there is the approach which follows closely the aims and achievements of the colonizers and the *counter* aims and achievements of the African people. Sometimes, Africans were restricted merely to manipulating colonial institutions as best they could; but, in addition, certain fundamental contradictions arose within colonial society, and they could only be resolved by Africans' regaining their sovereignty as a people.

Analysis based on the perception of contradictions is characteristic of Marxism. Thus, Soviet historians approach the disintegration of colonialism within the following framework:

> Colonialism fettered the development of the enslaved peoples. To facilitate colonial exploitation, the imperialists deliberately hampered economic and cultural progress in the colonies, preserved and restored obsolete forms of social relations, and fomented discord between nationalities and tribes. However, the drive for super profits dictated development of the extractive industry, plantations and capitalist farms, and the building of ports, railways and roads in the colonies. In consequence, social changes took place in the colonies, irrespective of the will of the colonialists. New social forces emerged—an industrial and agricultural proletariat, a national bourgeoisie and intelligentsia.

Among the different segments of the African population within the so-called modern sector produced by capitalist activity, the cash-crop peasantry was the largest. African cash-crop farmers had profound grievances against the colonialist, centering on the low price for African products and sometimes on land alienation. Agricultural wage earners and urban workers had definitely lost their land, and were resisting wage slavery. They did so by organizing as the European proletariat had been doing since its never wanted to be counted, nor did they want their chickens to be counted, because bitter experience had shown them that that was how the colonialists assessed taxes. Similarly, on educational issues, there was no confidence in colonial plans to provide different versions of education, because such plans almost invariably meant an even more inferior education, and one ~~that was more blatantly intended to be education for under-development.~~ The most extreme example of a colonial education system designed to train Africans to fill their "natural" role of manual laborers was that in South Africa, after the introduction of the Bantu Education Act in 1953. However, the earlier attempts by the British and French to set up what they called "farm schools" or "initiation schools" were along the same lines as have since been ruthlessly pursued by the racists in South Africa. The non-literary education had the superficial appearance of being more relevant to Africa, but it was really inferior education for a people who were supposedly inferior in order to make them accept their own exploitation and oppression. As Abdou Moumini put it, "colonial education was 'cut-rate' education." It offered by European standards low-quality substitutes to suit what was described as the limited intellectual capacity of Africans. In French colonial Africa, the diplomas were seldom equal to those in the metropoles at comparable levels, and in British East Africa one official asked educators to bear in mind the gap between themselves and the "grubby savages" whom Britain was attempting to civilize. It is in this context that agricultural education in particular revealed itself as an exercise in deception.

Consequently, the struggle against agricultural or rural schools was one of the most bitter struggles waged by African nationalists, and helped heighten consciousness at all levels of African society, with regard to the fundamentally exploitative and racist nature of colonialism. In French West Africa, for example, the farm schools were determinedly opposed after the last war, and the French colonial government had to abolish them. In Tanganyika and Nyasa, the confrontation between the colonialists and the African people was much bigger, because opposition to agricultural education was associated with opposition to colonial agricultural innovations (such as terracing) which were forced upon people without consultation and without taking into account the varying conditions in different localities.

In East Africa the British made a few determined efforts to introduce what they considered as relevant agricultural education. One pilot scheme was at Nyakato in Tanganyika, which involved transforming a secondary school into an agricultural school in 1930. It lasted for nine years with tutors recruited from Britain and South Africa, but in the end the attempt

failed because of protest by students and the population of the region. Although the school claimed to be offering new agricultural skills, it was readily recognized that it was part of a program defining the "correct attitudes" and "natural place" which Europeans thought fit for the natives.

In the 1940s, as Africans sought to change features of the educational system, they naturally had to demand a voice in councils that formulated educational policy. That was in itself a revolutionary demand, because colonial people are supposed to be ruled, not to participate in decision-making. Besides, on the issue of educational policy-making, Africans not only alarmed the administrators, but they trod on the corns of the missionaries, who generally felt that they inherited education at the partition of Africa. All of those clashes were pointing in the direction of freedom for colonial peoples, because in the background there was always the question of political power.

It would be erroneous to suggest that educated Africans foresightedly moved with the intention of regaining African independence. There would have been very few indeed who, as early as 1939, would have joined Chief Essien of Calabar in asserting:

> Without education it will be impossible for us to get to our destination, which is Nigeria's economic independence and Nigeria's political independence.

However, education (both formal and informal) was a powerful force which transformed the situation in postwar Africa in such a way as to bring political independence to most of colonized Africa within two decades.

There were also a few Europeans who foresaw what were called the "dangers" of giving Africans a modern education: namely, the possibility of its leading towards freedom. Certainly, Europeans were not at all happy with any schools which were of the European type, but which were not under direct colonialist control. For example, the Independent schools of Kenya were disliked by white settlers in that colony and by other Europeans outside Kenya. One Catholic mission report from nearby Tanganyika in 1933 warned against allowing Tanganyika Africans to set up schools controlled by themselves. It noted that: "Independent schools are causing difficulties in Kenya. Such schools may easily become hotbeds of sedition."

When the Mau Mau war for land and liberation broke out in Kenya, one of the first things the British government did was to close the 149 schools of the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association, 21 schools of the Kikuyu Karinga Education Association, and 14 other Independent schools. They were considered "training grounds for rebellion"—a term which essentially captures the fear expressed in the Catholic mission report just cited. Europeans knew well enough that if they did not control the minds of Africans, they would soon cease to control the people physically and politically.

Similarly, in North Africa, the French colonial power and the white *colons*, or settlers, did not take kindly to the self-help schools of the colonized Algerians and Tunisians. The purpose of the schools set up by the Society of Reformist Ulema in Algeria was that they should be modern and scientific, but at the same time present learning in the context of Arab and Algerian culture. Pupils at the Ulema schools began their lessons by singing together: "Arabic is my language, Algeria is my country, Islam is my religion." It was no wonder, therefore, that the colonialists victimized pupils and parents, and took repressive measures on the grounds that those schools were also hotbeds of sedition.

The missionaries asked for control of schools, because that was one of their drawing cards for the church itself and because they considered themselves as experts on the side of cultural imperialism (which they called "civilizing"). However, there were other Europeans both within and without the colonies who were absolutely opposed to schools—be they Christian, Independent, government, or Islamic. Starting from a racist position, they asserted that offering education to Africans was like throwing pearls before swine. Some of the most violent expressions of racism were directed against educated Africans. Starting from the time of individuals like Lord Lugard and through to the days of the last colonial administrators like Sir Alan Burns, many colonialists demonstrated hostility to educated Africans. Educated Africans made colonialists extremely uneasy, because they did not conform to the image which Europeans liked to harbor of the "unspoiled African savage."

But, if one goes to the heart of the matter, it can be discerned that the white racists did not seriously believe that Africans could not master knowledge then in the possession of Europeans. On the contrary, the evidence of educated Africans was before their eyes; and the white settlers especially feared that, given an opportunity, far too many Africans would master white bourgeois knowledge too thoroughly. Such Africans would, therefore, refuse to work as agricultural laborers for 12 shillings per month; they would compete with Europeans in semi-skilled categories; and above all they would want to govern themselves.

In the records of colonialism, it is not uncommon to encounter the following type of remark: "What need is there to educate the natives? You will give them the weapons to destroy you!"

In one sense, those Europeans were simply dreamers, because giving education to Africans was not an option which could have been avoided; it was an objective necessity to keep colonialism functioning. P. E. Mitchell,

who later became Governor of Uganda, remarked in 1928 that "*regret it as he may*, no Director of Education can resist the demand for clerks, carpenters, shoemakers and so on—trained in European methods to meet European needs. These men are not being trained to fit into any place in the life of their own people, but to meet the economic needs of a foreign race." At the same time, the available education was also a consequence of the irrepressible actions of the African people, who hoped to move forward within the alien system. So, those Europeans who were absolutely opposed to giving education to Africans did not understand the contradictions of their own colonial society. But in another sense they were defending the interests of colonialism. Firstly, however much the colonialists tried, they could not succeed in shaping the minds of *all* Africans whom they educated in schools. The exceptions were the ones who were going to prove most dangerous to colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism. And secondly, the most timid and the most brainwashed of educated Africans harbored some form of disagreement with the colonialists; and, in the pursuit of their own group or individual interests, the educated elite helped to expose and undermine the structure of colonial rule.

~~Keeping the above distinction in mind, one can consider both these~~ contradictions which arose between the colonizers and the African educated as a whole, and those which arose between the colonizers and particular individuals among the African educated.

As already noted, insufficient educational facilities and inadequate jobs were the complaints raised by the lower echelons of those who were educated in Africa during the colonial period. Those who went to secondary school or institutions of higher learning found little access to remunerative and responsible posts, because they were destined to fill the lower ranks of the civil and business administration. After working for twenty years, an African in the civil service would have been extremely lucky to have become "head clerk," or in the police to have become a sergeant. Meanwhile, to add insult to injury, any European doing the same job as an African got higher pay; and whites who were less qualified and experienced were placed above Africans, who did the jobs their superiors were paid to do. In the colonial civil service to be a European was enough. It did not matter whether the white person was ignorant and stupid, he would be assured of drawing a fat salary and enjoying wide privileges. The Guinea-Bissau leader, Amilcar Cabral, gave an example of that type.

> I was an agronomist working under a European who everybody knew was one of the biggest idiots in Guinea; I could have taught him his job with my eyes shut but he was the boss; this is something which counts a lot, this is the confrontation which really matters.