

# Editorial

It is now more than a year since the last issue of *Development Dialogue* appeared and the mail requesting an explanation of this state of affairs has been increasing daily since the autumn of 1982. We have replied to these inquiries as they have reached us, but we owe the majority of our readers a full explanation of the delay in the publication of the journal. It is as follows.

On April 20, 1982, the historic building accommodating the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, in Swedish cultural history known as Geijersgården and situated in the heart of the university area of the city of Uppsala, was ravaged by fire. The fire completely destroyed the interior of one third of the building while the remaining part was seriously damaged by smoke and water.

All correspondence files, other working papers and manuscripts dating from the period 1977 to 1982 were totally destroyed. Some of the institutions and individuals collaborating with the Foundation have kindly supplied us with copies of correspondence or other materials from their files, but there are still enormous gaps to be filled. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to request all those institutions and individuals possessing copies of letters to and from the Foundation (for the period January 1977 to April 1982) to make them available to us.

It should, however, be noted that the accounting records, the annual financial reports and the documents relating to the work of the Board of Trustees were largely preserved, although part of this material was also damaged and has proved difficult to restore. It has been possible to reconstruct the card indexes of the recipients of *Development Dialogue* and other publications of the Foundation.

Soon after the fire, Uppsala University, the owner of the house, decided that the building should be restored to its former state. Restoration has proved a very demanding undertaking, but is now approaching completion. The secretariat of the Foundation therefore expects to be able to leave its present provisional offices and move back in July this year.

The destruction of the Dag Hammarskjöld Centre with its excellent facilities has meant a severe set-back for the work of the Foundation's secretariat; it is estimated that about one third of the working time of its staff has been absorbed in solving problems caused by the fire. It has, therefore, been very encouraging to receive from policy-makers



The Dag Hammarskjöld Centre was all in flames before the fire brigade arrived

and scholars, friends and colleagues, and development institutions all over the world, cables and letters testifying to the consternation with which they received the news about the fire and expressing their appreciation and support for the activities undertaken under the auspices of the Foundation.

This double issue of *Development Dialogue* is largely devoted to the publication of a selection of the papers arising from the 1982 Dakar Seminar on 'Another Development with Women'. The Seminar was jointly organized by the Association of African Women for Research



Carina Ari's bust of Dag Hammarskjöld in front of the burnt-out building

and Development (AAWORD/AFARD) and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, and directed by the President of AAWORD, the Senegalese sociologist Marie-Angélique Savané, who, *inter alia*, serves as Project Leader of the research programme on Food Systems and Society in Africa at UNRISD and who also has behind her a distinguished career as editor-in-chief of the Francophone African journal *Famille et Développement*. The selection of the papers represented here has been made with a view to the interests of the global readership of *Development Dialogue* and therefore features experience gained not only in Africa but also in Asia, Latin America and Europe.

In addition, this issue contains a number of articles on cultural and political developments in Africa which reflect some of the main concerns of the Foundation over the last decade and point to future ones.

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# *The Dakar Seminar on 'Another Development with Women'*



Marie-Angélique Savané,  
President of AAWORD

## **Introduction**

The seminar on 'Another Development with Women' was held in Dakar, Senegal, from 21 to 25 June, 1982. It was jointly organized by the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD/AFARD) and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

The purpose of the Seminar, like that of others organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation on, for example, health, education, information and communication, was to extend further the discussion of possible development alternatives, which were first treated in a comprehensive manner in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, *What Now: Another Development*. The Dag Hammarskjöld Report is an attempt to contribute to the elaboration of a new vision of development, 'Another Development', which would be:

1. Geared to the satisfaction of needs, beginning with the eradication of poverty.
2. Endogenous and self-reliant, that is, relying on the strength of the societies, which undertake it.
3. In harmony with the environment.  
Furthermore,
4. Another Development requires structural transformations.
5. Immediate action is possible and necessary.

The Report is based on the premise that the present world crisis is the result of a process of maldevelopment originating from a growth model geared to the use of resources for private profit and power. This kind of development fails to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of the majority of the world's peoples and it penetrates all political and economic systems, even if it does express itself in different forms and with varying intensity.

In the Third World, the crisis is particularly acute, manifesting itself in famines and misery among large masses of the people, while a small westernized élite lives in enclaves of relative affluence. As a reaction to this deepening crisis, wars of national liberation and armed resistance to dictatorial governments are becoming more frequent. It is, furthermore, in this context that one must see how not only nations but also

oppressed groups increasingly assert their specific cultural identity, challenging the *status quo*.

In the industrialized countries, whether market-oriented or centrally planned, rising unemployment, continuing inflation, pockets of poverty, the nuclear threat, the armaments race and moral decline are among the factors giving rise to vast protest movements and the toppling of governments. This situation poses a constant threat to world peace and creates anxiety and frustration among the people.

Thus, because of the gravity of this situation, there is a strong moral obligation to rethink and reassess the problems of development since there exists at the present moment the means to grant to each individual, female or male, a life without material deprivation; to each people the foundations for an outflow of its creativity and endogenous culture.

It was against this background that the seminar on 'Another Development with Women' attempted to extend the discussion initiated by the publication of *What Now*. In fact, the specific problems of women had largely been kept outside the discussion originating from *What Now*.

Let us state some basic facts established by the United Nations World Conference of Women. While women make up 50 per cent of the world's population and constitute one third of its work force, they put in nearly two-thirds of the world's total working hours while receiving only one tenth of the world's income and owning less than one hundredth of the world's real estate.

A thorough understanding of what these facts reveal about the unjust situation prevailing in the world must form the basis for any attempt to reconsider the existing economic and social systems and to promote alternative solutions. To do so was the major objective of the Dakar Seminar and also the reason why AAWORD, whose purpose it is to contribute through research to the improvement of the situation of women and a change in their status, decided to organize it jointly with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

The Seminar brought together women and a few men from South and North. Many of them were professional researchers. Others were development workers responsible for different women's projects. Still others were planners and communicators. The participants, who differed widely in cultural background, professional training and political

outlook, shared a common commitment to the cause of social justice and to the right to communicate within a framework of cultural pluralism, and a conviction that women should play a decisive role in changing world development.

The fact that the majority of the participants came from Africa meant that the discussions focused mainly on problems affecting women in this continent. The perspectives provided by the participants from Asia, Europe and Latin America showed some different forms of the subordination of women and its organization.

The keynote speech on 'Another Development with Women', given by Krishna Ahooja-Patel, set the tone for the seminar. It was time to move beyond simple truisms about the situation of women to a more profound analysis of the mechanisms perpetuating the subordination of women in society. The aim of the discussion was, therefore, not to focus exclusively on women but to look both into male-female relationships in society and into how the system of economic organization affects these relationships. This, in turn, raised the issue of the nature of established political systems, be they capitalist or socialist, and, in the case of the Third World, the issue of imperialism. Hence there were apprehensions concerning the concept of Another Development. To some of the participants, the concept seemed vague and confused and did not allow for an empirical examination of the social forces which were its carriers or of the nature of the system directing it.

The debates which followed the presentations highlighted the complexity of the women's issue. And since it was conceived as a dialectical relationship between economics and culture, participants felt it should be viewed in a historical perspective and in both a national and international context. For although the oppression of women is universal in nature, it expresses itself in different forms in different nations. It is this which justifies the national character of women's struggles and choice of methods used in the struggle. Another Development should therefore be the result of a complex process of radical socio-economic and cultural transformations, which would create a basis for genuine changes in the ways men and women relate to one another and to society.

In the area of economics, rural development and industrialization in Africa were the subject of two papers. The paper on rural development, 'Women as Food Producers and Suppliers in the Twentieth

Century: The Case of Zambia', put the emphasis on female access to resources, especially to land. Since land is the principal means of production, it should—in conformance with the emphasis on need-orientation characteristic of Another Development—be equitably shared between all those—women and men—who till it.

The discussion also made it clear that legal safeguards were needed to secure women's land holding and land tenure rights while, at the same time, pointing out that such rights would remain hollow unless women were provided with the means to make their work fruitful: credit, extension services, access to seeds and technology, marketing possibilities, etc.

In the discussion of the paper on 'African Women, Industrialization and Another Development: A Global Perspective', the transnationalization of the industrial production processes attracted particular attention. As is well known, most Third World countries offer the transnational corporations highly favourable guarantees and conditions. In this context, women often appear as the most docile form of labour with the lowest reproduction costs—a rationalization for their low wages. Thus the drift of industries such as textiles and electronics towards the South aggravates the conflicts between women of the North and South, and creates a formidable obstacle to attempts to form a policy of solidarity between the workers of the North and South.

The seminar session dealing with culture and religion were very lively and penetrating. For although there was broad general agreement on the economic aspects of the women's situation, there were sharp divergencies within the South and within the North and between the South and North with respect to how the oppression of women expresses itself ideologically and otherwise.

The part played by religion and tradition in justifying the oppression of women is a controversial issue. Some argue that it is only in the interpretation and practice of religions and traditions that obstacles have arisen to block women's liberation. Others, however, maintain that the roots of women's oppression are to be traced to the most basic tenets of these religions and traditions.

Westernization and religious fundamentalism were seen as two sides of the same coin or parts of the same process. For it is under foreign influences that the women of the Third World import alien consumption patterns, which destroy traditional habits and values and prepare

the ground for the emergence of religious fundamentalism and traditionalism as a self-defensive reflex against this type of westernization.

Another Development which permits the release of new creativity should be central to the development of an endogenous culture favouring possibilities for self-expression of minorities and generating and justifying mutual understanding between the different partners (men and women) in society.

The perspectives provided by the participants from the other Third World regions and Europe sparked off a lively debate on feminism and on the need for an active policy of solidarity between the women of the North and South. In Europe, women have mainly concentrated their efforts on such problems as the equality between the sexes, the organization of household work and child care and the right to have or not to have children. In the Third World, women's demands have been more explicitly political, with work, education and health as major issues *per se*, and not necessarily so linked to their specific impact on women. In addition, women of the Third World perceive imperialism as the main enemy of their continents and especially of women—something which is rarely fully understood in the North.

Feminism as a movement is, however, still in a formative stage in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Attempts to work out a comprehensive underpinning of Third World feminism have proved difficult since the subordination of women is partly due to traditional, partly to modern factors and inserted in a context of economic and political dependence. This raises a question of priorities: should priority be given to women's issues in a more strict sense or should these be integrated into a more comprehensive political struggle? What are or should be the links between these two approaches? Should women have their own autonomous organizations or should they become integrated within existing political parties or structures?

Such is the dilemma facing feminists in the Third World!

The treatment of these problems as well as many others that were equally stimulating on account of the new ideas put forward, contributed to making the Seminar an event of historic importance at which women and men from the South and North came together to think afresh, with passion, lucidity and originality, about their common future.

*Marie-Angélique Savané*



# The Dakar Declaration on Another Development with Women

In the present crisis of the world system, which has increased inequalities between nations and within nations as well as between women and men at the local level, we, as concerned women and men from both the South and the North, have come together to protest against present economic and political trends, and to work towards an alternative conception of development.

We are deeply concerned about the constant intensification of both overt and covert efforts to further entrench international capitalism under the guise of development, leading to a worsening of the conditions prevailing in the Third World. The following consensus as to the current problems and alternatives facing us was reached at the Seminar 'Another Development with Women', held in Dakar, Senegal, June 21-25, 1982, jointly organized by the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD/AFARD) and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation.

The crises of capitalism as well as of existing socialist models of social progress have deepened in the last decade, increasing the threat of nuclear war and of the imposition of narrow national political interests by force of arms. These crises have also contributed to the expansion of poverty in the Third World and to the growth of unemployment and social unrest in the industrial countries. Growing political tensions and economic inequalities affect the whole of the population but women are particularly acutely affected; therefore women are no longer willing to play a passive role in defining development priorities and actions in our countries today.

In spite of attempts to achieve a more equal partnership for Third World countries in the world trade and financial system, international terms of exchange continue to affect negatively the living standards and health conditions of the large majority of people in these countries. As an example, we can cite how the

This document represents the broad consensus of the participants, though none of them necessarily agrees with all points in the analysis or recommendations. It should also be noted that the participants attended in their personal capacities.

position of women as traditional producers and providers of food has been undermined in many regions of the world.

Firstly, women's customary rights to land have been suppressed—even within most agrarian reforms exclusive ownership of land is given to men; secondly, national governments' policies of maintaining cheap food prices for urban dwellers lead to low prices for the crops women cultivate; and finally, women cultivators rarely reap the benefits of modernized production since agricultural extension services, technological inputs and technical assistance are directed mainly towards men.

Giving women ownership of land is a first step toward structural transformation and this must be backed up by adequate training and a fair pricing system.

As a result of loss of income from subsistence agriculture, crafts and petty trade, rural women increasingly become wage labourers in export-oriented agriculture and in agro-industries—many of them owned by transnationals—for wages not only lower than those of men but also frequently below the legal minimum, as well as under conditions which do not meet minimum legal standards.

Industrialization, although essential to the elimination of the dependency of Third World countries on the manufactured products of the North, has increased their debt burden, mainly because of the high cost of capital goods and patents. Capital-intensive forms of production have not generated sufficient employment for men—and far less for women. High levels of unemployment increase tensions between men and women, as they both search for salaried work and feel the effects of destitution. In the industrialized countries of the centre, where women suffer higher rates of job loss and unemployment than men, trade unions are beginning to react to the contraction in salaried jobs by opposing both women's employment and the exporting of jobs to countries of the South. Workers of both sexes and of countries of the North and the South have a common interest in

opposing tactics which seek to create divisions and foment bitter struggles among them. In particular, attention must be drawn to the fact that transnationals are moving into Third World countries in order to make use of young rural women's labour in low-paid, unstable, short-term jobs with no future. Similarly, the creation of Free Trade Zones and the growth of tourism tends to increase prostitution.

Another predominant and oppressive manifestation of the global crisis is to be found in the realm of culture, where trends such as cultural nationalism and religious fundamentalism tend to reinstate obsolete patriarchal systems and restrict social progress by both physically and mentally demobilizing women. Women are expected to become the custodians of traditional culture, given their primary role as educators. At the same time, the new culture of consumerism, which the transnationals direct through the media towards the female image, creates artificial needs, distorts the female image, legitimizes pornography and leads to a fragmentation of women's consciousness.

Finally, tensions at the national and international level are fostering the militarisation of states, which results in high levels of expenditure on arms and military training, thereby distorting development priorities and restricting the democratic and personal rights of citizens both within military dictatorships and civilian regimes.

### **Toward Another Development with Women**

We believe that the most fundamental and underlying principle of Another Development should be that of structural transformation, a notion which challenges the economic, political and cultural forms of domination mentioned above, which are found at the international, national and household level.

Accordingly, at the international level, Another Development should replace the forms of dependent development and unequal terms of exchange with that of mutually beneficiary and negotiated interdependence. We support attempts to create a

new international economic and social order, but not a North–South dialogue which excludes issues of social development from the debates or which is based on narrow economic concepts.

Nationally, models of development have to be based on the principle of self-reliance; the development of internal and regional markets; the creation of endogenous patterns of consumption and production; and the building of genuinely democratic institutions and practices. Such a model would ensure wide general participation—including that of women—in the definition and actual provision of the basic needs of all citizens, regardless of their race, creed, gender or age. Such a model, based on the development of one's own resources, both material and human, and on an interdependence which is negotiated on the principle of the equality of all countries and peoples, is a prerequisite for an alternative development.

At the local and household level, the vision of Another Development ought to reject existing structures that create or reinforce a sexual division of labour that is oppressive, primarily to women and children, but also any other structures which constitute major constraints on self-reliant development.

Analogous to the establishment of a negotiated interdependence at the international level, a vision of Another Development will only be possible if patriarchal relations and practices are eliminated. The first step toward achieving this is to redefine men's and women's roles in the family, with both having equal rights and responsibilities for shared parenthood. Secondly, there must be a profound revalorization of the day-to-day work of household and family maintenance. The equal participation of men and women in domestic work and family and kinship relations implies a restructuring of the so-called working day in the wage labour sector. Inherent in such a change is the right of women to control their own sexuality and decisions as to pregnancy and childbirth. Such social progress means not only improving the situation of women but also changing it by opposing

all ideologies that define women's role as subordinate, dependent or passive. Feminism provides the basis for this new consciousness and for cultural resistance to all forms of domination. Such resistance by women to domination has been present in many countries throughout the centuries, and has provided the women's movement with continuity in its active struggle for equality.

Feminism is international in defining as its aim the liberation of women from all types of oppression and in providing solidarity among women of all countries; it is national in stating its priorities and strategies in accordance with particular cultural and socio-economic conditions.

We consider that national and ethnic traditions must be respected and maintained so as to create a genuine sense of nationhood. However, aspects of our cultures which discriminate, restrict and devalue women's physical, psychological and political development must be eliminated. To achieve this, women must be mobilized politically for action.

In order to create an alternative culture, responsive to national needs and open to international solidarity, we women defend our right to speak from a women's perspective and to express this in writings and through action. We demand that society give and maintain value and respect for women's contributions in their roles within the labour force, in the family and culturally. At the same time, as individuals, as citizens, as mothers, and as wives, we women deplore the loss of resources and of lives in the present senseless resistance to change towards a more equal and just society. Equally, we condemn discrimination and injustice based on race or ethnicity just as much as that based on gender. We believe our hope lies in joining with those progressive forces which will achieve a future human society in harmony with the environment and free of discrimination and inequality between men and women, black and white, believer and unbeliever.

*Participants in the AAWORD/DHF Seminar on 'Another Development with Women', Dakar, June 21-25, 1982:*

Krishna Ahooja-Patel (India), Isabelle Amin (France), Lourdes Arizpe (Mexico), Anna Bathily (Senegal), Alya Bafoun (Tunisia), Mamadou Idy Carras Nyane (Senegal), Fatoumata Agnès Diarra (Niger), Marie-Louise Diouf (Senegal), Marie Claude Flous (France), Belkis Wolde Giorgis (Ethiopia), Lelia Gonzales (Brazil), Fama Hane Ba (Senegal), Annika Johansson (Sweden), Kirsten Jørgensen (Denmark), Scholastica Kimaryo (Tanzania), Rita Liljeström (Sweden), Marianne Lindström (Sweden), Marie José Le Magourou (France), Vina Mazumdar (India), Patricia Mc Fadden (Swaziland), Fatima Mernissi (Morocco), Thandika Mkandawire (Malawi), Olivia Muchena (Zimbabwe), Shimwaayi Muntamba (Zambia), Ngugi wa Thiongo (Kenya), Omolara Ogundipe Leslie (Nigeria), Okello Oculi (Uganda), Fatima Oussedik (Algeria), Marcia Rivera (Puerto Rico), Najma Rizvi (Bangladesh), Nawal el Saadawy (Egypt), Filomina Steady (Sierra Leone), Diana Senghor (Senegal), Mame Sow (Senegal), Frej Stambouli (Tunisia), Marie Hélène Sylla (Senegal), Zene Tadesse (Ethiopia), Awa Thiongane (Senegal), Aud Talle (Sweden), Aminata Traoré (Ivory Coast), Aïssatou Wane (Senegal), Kate Young (UK), Soon Young Yoon (USA).

*Organizers:* Marie-Angélique Savané, Seminar Director (Senegal), Oumou Kaïry Ly (Senegal), Sven Hamrell, Olle Nordberg, Ing-Charlotte Elfström (Sweden).

# Another Development with Women

By Krishna Ahooja-Patel

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*Krishna Ahooja-Patel delivered the keynote address to the 1982 Dakar Seminar on 'Another Development with Women'. Having demonstrated from personal experience how difficult it was for women to voice their views in the development debate as late as the mid-seventies, she went on to provide an overview of the contribution women have made and are making in agriculture, industry, health and education. In concluding her thought-provoking address, Krishna Ahooja-Patel raised the question: 'Can we afford to trace any path of development without pooling the untapped resources of women?'*

*Dr Krishna Ahooja-Patel joined the ILO in Geneva in 1969. At present she is assigned to the Office for Women Workers' Questions and is an editor of the bulletin Women at work. Dr Ahooja-Patel's keynote address was delivered in her personal capacity and does not bind the ILO.*

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It is probable, however, that both in life and in art, the values of women are not the values of a man. Thus ... she will find that she is perpetually wishing to alter the established values—to make serious what appears insignificant to a man, and trivial what appears to him important ...

Virginia Woolf (*Women and Fiction*)

The story of this seminar goes back some seven years. In 1975, when 'What Now' was being put together at the Dag Hammarskjöld Centre, one question kept knocking at the door: in what way should a 'women's dimension' be introduced into the vast arena of alternative development strategy? At that time, the subject was to be found under the general title of 'Women and Development', and was often given a 'no admission' ticket in grand assemblies. Nor did it make a *grande entrée* at Uppsala! In fact, it had some difficulties in getting a seat among the 16 wise men who were searching hard for 'Another Development' within the seminar. Towards the end, when its grand outline gradually appeared on the horizon, 'women and development' was hurriedly assembled and telegraphically communicated to the partici-

pants. Later, as often happens to subjects connected with women, there were a few technical hitches in finding a proper place for it.

Such a situation is not new: multiple examples can be found nationally and internationally. Since that time the subject has moved invisibly, rather like a glacier. We are trapped in transition: between the formation of the new and the erosion of the old norms, values and systems. In many important meetings, where major questions of life and death are examined; where North-South postures are taken; where agenda items on ECDC, TCDC and LDCs are analysed; where monetary reforms are advocated; where food strategies are formulated—the 'women's dimension' still often faces those with 'intellectual' difficulties in considering it a legitimate subject in its own right.

Why is it necessary to climb the same steep mountains over and over again? What are the deeply rooted reasons which prevent 'women's issues' being considered an integral part of development questions? Why are the doors behind which the major questions of this century are being debated soundproof, heavy and hermetically sealed? The collective voices of women do not yet appear to penetrate them. This global resistance, which effectively excludes women at so many levels, from international and national to community and the family, has deep roots—roots which are buried in the inner conscience of mankind. And strands of these roots are intertwined with every discipline; in every human science. Where does one begin?

#### **'The view from below and within'**

While entry has been repeatedly denied to 'women and development' as a subject within the 'corridors of power', outside in the wider world, where daily 'strategies of survival' are being practised, the bridge connecting these two vast concepts has been transformed out of recognition. Since the 1970s, both subjects have travelled a long and unpaved road, not always along parallel lines; a parting of the ways has occurred more than once. While 'development' has been placed at the centre of the stage in international and national discussions, 'women' have remained behind the scenes, looking on as bystanders.

This alienation is analogous to the situation in the 1950s, when the problems of 'underdeveloped' or 'pre-industrial' economies were being shuffled about within the United Nations and elsewhere. We are still at the primary stages of

introducing the 'women's dimension'—although the conjunction 'and' of 'women *and* development' has been replaced by 'women *in* development'. This small and often hazy change in vocabulary nevertheless represents a landmark in the journey towards a new understanding and a new perception with which to analyse women's relationship to society. Yet historians, politicians and developmentalists still repeatedly throw the ball back at women, simply asking them to supply more information, more data, more evidence, a better analytical framework or a more cogent argument.

This paper cannot attempt to fill in these gaps nor can it even aim to present such an analytical framework or test a hypothesis or link variables to a development model or a development theory. This work is underway: a seed here, a flower or a plant there. Currently several ideas and notions in research centres within the UN system and elsewhere are being examined, including in the universities, where women's studies are appearing in the curricula. The aim of this paper is modest: to add some thoughts to the 'scientific approach', which combines survey techniques and computer style data analysis (measurability, detachment and objectivity). Its purpose is to tilt the balance of the development process a bit further towards women. It proposes to introduce another element into the discussion on development with women—that of 'experiential knowledge' (knowledge based on collective experience)—the result of identification, of 'becoming and being what is to be known rather than remaining totally the outside spectator'. Women researchers, it has been suggested, have '... a double consciousness, similar to that of

the Black or other discriminated minority, an awareness of the motives and strategies of the oppressor as well as the inner view of the oppressed, who must respond constantly to the demands made upon them'.<sup>2</sup>

If we were to focus our vision temporarily on how women live and what women do—a process taking place daily in our lives—we may be struck by a simple fact: that of the two pillars of development—men and women—the latter is structurally weak. Hardly surprising that the superstructure is unbalanced! It is the reason why today we have 'limping' development—only one leg functions. In order to find some answers to the question why the development debate is sometimes obscure, sometimes sterile and usually frustrating, and in order to understand why the goals of development remain distant oases, we must briefly turn our attention to the actual contribution women are making to development—only then will it be possible to strengthen the limping leg. So, what are 'women's perspectives' in development?

### **The three immobilities**

Human history has seen diverse visions of and perspectives on the role of women in society and its relationship with values and lifestyles. The significant point is that the collective effect of these perceptions, values and lifestyles has distorted woman's personality and stunted her growth, reducing her to the size of a 'crippled tree'. The result of the historical twisting of women's reality and the combination of traditional beliefs and industrial values has been the placing of limitations on women's time, space and energy. They have circumscribed her mo-

bility in polity, economy and society. The narrowing of women's time horizons, restricting them to smaller spaces and placing limits on their energies, has transformed their status into a non-status.

This non-status is tied to two poles of their immobility: in the work-cycle (production) and in the life-cycle (reproduction). These, in turn, have led to an overall third immobility: that of being marginalized in both decision-making and decision-taking. In the current studies on women, whether on their work, their health or their status, the distinction between these two cycles is rarely observed. While demographic patterns vary, the duration of their life-cycle is about 50 to 80 years, while that of their work-cycle is about 25 to 40 years, or half the life-cycle. The three immobilities of women spring from their place in the family and in the labour market and from their relationships to society (the public connection).<sup>3</sup> Their lack of freedom of movement in these three respects is to a large extent responsible for the shrunken image of women in life. The totality of the diverse restrictions acts as a dead weight to a woman's movement. The extent and degree of restrictions vary: the difference between one and another, within one society and another, may be the distance that women travel, or are allowed to travel, on the road of life. Economic and social norms, or systems of belief or political structures, reduce their space either within the four walls of a 'house' (which could be a hut without light or fresh air); or within specially designed women's courtyards (structured like a prison in many countries); or within a small clan (with fixed traditions to keep women 'at home'); or within the boundaries of a country

(in some cases travel outside the country requires the permission of a male).

Restrictions on people's freedom of movement are not new in history. They take several forms: for example, those restrictions during the period of slavery and later of bonded or serf labour, or their current embodiment in a neat system called apartheid, practised in its extreme form in South Africa. Indeed, there is a whole spectrum of variations on the theme. Within this spectrum, pinning down woman to smaller spaces, or physically restricting their movement by tying their feet, or preventing their sexual expression by mutilating their reproductive parts, are but a few of the refined devices evolved by society. Again, in this spectrum, to be a woman, to be black and to be poor is to be humiliated beyond recognition of being human. There are many words for subjugation in the dictionary; there are many systems of oppression: but no matter which variety, its many forms all have the same effect—that of insulting the dignity and integrity of human beings and suppressing their creativity.

### **Work and non-work**

What are the economic and social indicators by which the health and wealth of nations are measured in development literature? What is the barometer? How are 'quality of life' indicators formulated? How do the social indicators reflect infant or maternal mortality? What is the set of criteria on which lifestyles are determined? What particular place is accorded to women in all these calculations?

Even after conceptual classifications are carried out, statistical adjustments made, method-

ologies compared, variations among continents, regions and sub-regions taken into account and the poverty line neatly drawn, there is but one incontrovertible consequence: while most people in the Third World are permanently working, they continue to be permanently poor. Of the two billion people in Third World countries, 800 million, or some 40 per cent, are poor, and the majority of the perpetually poor happen to be women.<sup>4</sup> Women in the North have not escaped this plight: their numbers in the United States and Europe have recently risen.<sup>5</sup> Even in industrialized market economies, women constitute a higher percentage of those who depend on supplementary benefit schemes. They are always the majority receiving low pensions or no pensions. These points are only some symptoms of a larger malaise.

While the order of the magnitude of poverty—a subject immensely rich in studies—has been established in many countries, the current terminology in social sciences related to the concept of work (or 'utilization of labour') continues to confuse economic reality. What is the nature of activity fashioned by human hands that can be elevated to the status of work? Here, a poetic definition of creativity does not enter into statistical calculations. What does or does not constitute 'economic' activity has long been a subject of debate among economists and statisticians, and its boundaries have been shifted frequently over the last 30 years. Fundamentally, most of women's activities appear to fall outside the definition of 'gainful employment'. They are confined to a pigeon-hole, labelled 'non-market' or 'non-monetized' activities. It is this differential between 'work' and 'creativity' that funda-

mentally affects women and erodes their economic and social status. Many industrialized countries have moved on from the age of crafts to the century of consumerism, skipping various points in between. But in the Third World most of women's work is stuck at the agricultural or artisanal stage: the technological, and scientific revolutions have bypassed them, without significantly changing their traditional tools to aid their physical energies to earn a dignified living. Sophisticated techniques, mechanization and technical know-how are alien to their world of work.

There is another unperceived dimension to women's work, which further conceals their efforts and prevents them from surfacing. Until recently, socio-economic series and indicators, whether compiled at the national or international level, were not desegregated by sex. In consequence, the available data on key economic and social questions could not answer the fundamental questions: *where* are women working? in *what* numbers? in *which* activities? at *what* wage levels? However, during the last two years, especially since the UN Conference on the Decade for Women (Copenhagen, July 1980), some global data for an international information base on women has become available on questions such as employment and unemployment, wages, work hours in manufacturing, rate of school enrolment and percentage of dropouts, and voting percentages in local or national elections.<sup>6</sup> These new data will make it possible to follow much more closely, and on a comparative basis for a much larger number of countries, new developments concerning women's employment, working conditions, and, ultimately, their contribution to so-

ciety itself. These could help construct a pyramid of the inequalities suffered by women: showing from the base to the apex the economic and social distance that separates men and women.

### **Learning from women**

A few thousand years ago, a happy conjuncture of natural and human events created agriculture.<sup>7</sup> Woman was the catalyst. But there are very few works in history or anthropology which trace the steps or the processes of the settlement of communities, in which women slowly began to perform two main tasks: as the mainstays of agriculture, planting wheat and grain and transforming them into bread; and domesticating animals and using their milk and hides. Even today, women in most parts of the world continue to perform these tasks, in many places with the same tools. The other role of women imposed by society, that of producing children, particularly male, has left them at the mercy of both the climate (natural disasters) and the patriarch (man-made disasters). Even today, much of agriculture in the subsistence sector (which would be better named the 'survival sector') is managed, if not controlled by women. Conditions may vary and numbers may differ, but women constitute the major group of food producers in the world today. Women, food and nutrition are intertwined, but the politics of food at the world level raise quite a different set of issues!

Even the development of industry during the last two centuries presents a wide variety of choice in the study of 'development models'. One may select, for instance, the late nine-

teenth and early twentieth century British or Japanese model after the Meiji Era or the United States after the Civil War. Occupational segregation between men and women was an integral part of the economic and social organization in these countries. It was mostly men who were the scientists and technologists, the architects and dentists. The professions of engineer and physician are traditionally male-dominated and represent in all countries the highest rungs of the educational and skill ladder. Although the experience of socialist countries has begun to alter the scene, for example the percentage of women scientists, physicians and engineers is very high in the USSR and Czechoslovakia, the traditional separation of the occupational roles of men and women has largely been preserved throughout the twentieth century. And it is perpetuated in the more recent experiences of industrialization, e.g. in Mexico, in India, and in Nigeria.

Still, there are signs of change and new ground needs to be captured. The lines of occupational hierarchy between men and women have begun to shift, however slightly. At various points in the nineteenth century, teaching, selling in retail stores and office work were all thought to be totally unsuitable for women. 'Unsuitability' has often been used as a reason for not hiring women in similar occupations in several Third World countries recently. This shifting scenery and the 'variability of the boundaries' between men's and women's jobs is a changing concept which spans 200 years of industrialization in different countries over different periods. The reasons why women continue to be channelled into the same jobs at different stages of industrialization

need to be explained historically. For there are serious consequences of this phenomenon on women's work, the wages they receive and the 'place' they occupy in society. In order to gain some insights into the processes of development, let us examine four different economic and social indicators: agriculture, industry, health and education. What are women's main roles in food production, industrial work, health provision and education?

#### *The food producers*

The rural scene in most Third World countries (70–90 per cent of women work and live in the rural areas), shows that most of their energies are spent in finding enough food for survival. In most of South East Asia, much of Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Latin America, women constitute the largest number of food producers: approximately 50 per cent in Africa, 30–40 per cent in Asia and slightly less in Latin America. Working away from the urban lime-light and urban accessories, they transform the hard earth into staple food; always trying to hold the delicate balance between hunger and nutrition. They have been assigned specific 'feminine' roles, handed down through generations, and are almost everywhere the food-gatherers, food-makers and food-distributors, all in one and one in all. And yet the most significant point is that this half of humanity is itself the most undernourished, and in some places the hungriest part of the population.

Research studies and reports focusing on the rural poor during the last two decades indicate a general decline in income-earning opportunities, particularly in women's work.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, women working off the land in rural industries,

such as weaving carpets, baking bricks or transporting tiles and a host of other occupations, have also become increasingly dependent on the 'intermediaries' who supply raw materials, fix prices and distribute work. Whether women work on or off the land, in fields, farms or workshops—everywhere their workload has increased, their working hours have become longer and their sources of income have been slowly eroded. (This is increasingly the case in Africa, where cash crops are the mainstay of the economy.)

Why are women not 'entitled' to sufficient food for the family and themselves? Indeed, what is holding up agriculture? How is it that, irrespective of the economic or social organization or the political form of government, food—the primal need of mankind—is still insufficient? Analysts point to several causes: low levels of investment, lack of modern inputs, differences in land/man ratios, inadequate rural infrastructures and a host of other reasons. But hidden behind these primary causes are power structures, social institutions and systems of beliefs. The nature of women's relationships to these external factors, and within the family and the community, need to be closely examined. It will become evident that women contribute directly to almost all agricultural processes without being the direct beneficiaries of agricultural inputs, training techniques or capital resources. Irrespective of agrarian structures or modes of production, rural women's work is buried in the 'collectivity' of a household or a family. Women are frequently not recognized as individual producers in their own right. Almost everywhere they are not legally entitled to own land or to cultivate it on behalf of a

third party or a male member of the household. Most land tenure systems exclude women one way or another. Where women had communal rights, they had no use rights as individuals; where use rights existed, they elapsed after women married and went away to another village.

In *Another Development with Women* the first major step might be to recognize women as individuals and citizens who have the right to own and/or control their output; which, in turn, will set in motion a new way of looking at social relationships in agriculture. In some places, as was pointed out in an ILO study of a Hausa village in Northern Nigeria, even where they inherit land they tend to cultivate it on behalf of a male member.<sup>9</sup> While a certain amount of information is now being compiled on women cultivators in some parts of the Third World, we still do not know the full size of the problem. How many households depend upon women cultivators? If land to the cultivator is a policy principle, or the foundation of land reforms, why should it apply to men and not to women?

#### *The industrial workers*

The industrial scene, too, presents today a distorted picture of women's struggle to survive. Whether or not the patterns of industrialization during the last 200 years have adversely affected women is a question of some debate. But it should be noted that the same processes which have pushed women towards tedious and repetitive factory jobs for meagre wages in inhuman conditions, have also simultaneously released them from the oppressive feudal hierarchy which burdens their daily life in the villages.

As in the labour markets of industrialized countries, so in the 'modern wage sector' of the Third World countries, the hierarchical distinction, between 'male' and 'female' tasks continue to operate. However, occupational segregation appears to be caused not just by the labour market but also by the operation of tangible and intangible discrimination at all stages. The hierarchy is maintained above all by the social infrastructure. It also appears to be strengthened by laws prohibiting employment of women in certain occupations. The remarkable feature of the existing unequal division of labour is that, irrespective of the economic 'model' or the mode of production or the pattern and the stage of industrialization, women continue to perform 'the least qualified jobs which require supervision, while nearly all more qualified jobs are filled by men'.<sup>10</sup>

Several research findings and data clearly show that women everywhere remain concentrated in a fairly limited number of economic sectors and occupations: textiles, garments, leather goods, food-processing, cigarette making and office work.<sup>11</sup> The jobs they hold in these sectors are generally characterized by lower wages than those predominantly held by men. It is this occupational segregation which largely accounts for the fact that women on average have much lower earnings than men. It points to the need for breaking the existing barriers and moving towards a diversification of women's work by broadening their access to education and training and to a wider range of occupations.

#### *The health providers*

Because of the social blinkers through which

we tend to look, some of the serious problems affecting women's health have remained hidden behind the barriers of traditional habits of thought. In all societies, whether urban or rural, most women work harder and for longer hours than men. Yet the fatigue factor has not been considered as an important determinant in health studies.<sup>12</sup> There has been very little research on the physical effects of women's work in the production process and its influence on their mental health. Apart from the servicing jobs, mainly manual and menial, which create heavy demands upon women's energies, they are further drained throughout their life by the reproductive processes. Their exhaustion from these processes derives from social norms, values and traditions which abuse women's sexuality. Neglect of their health occurs at various stages: it begins early in childhood and continues throughout the reproductive stages. Women themselves add to this through negligence, by being always the last to recognize their ailments, consult a doctor or treat a disease. Not surprisingly, therefore, statistics tell us the sad tale that women living in poverty rarely seek medical help (even if it is available) and that large numbers of them in affluent societies are increasingly relying on the modern miracle of drugs to treat economic anxiety and social frustration.

In many areas of Asia, Latin America and Africa, a large proportion of a woman's life is devoted to child bearing and child rearing. To illustrate this, a typology of a rural woman might be presented. She may come from the Andean region or Nigeria or Nepal. 'She is 35 years old. When she was born, her mother was malnourished and overworked; she was very

small and low weight at birth; she grew slowly. During childhood she had little good food to eat—even less than her brothers. She was malnourished or undernourished most of the time. She could not go to school, as her brothers could, but had to remain at home to help her mother with the housework and childminding. When she became an adolescent, her pelvic bones were misshapen, and she was shorter in stature than might have been expected. As was the tradition, she was married early, and had her first baby when she was only 14, even before she had fully developed. It was a difficult birth, but she survived. Her second pregnancy was aborted spontaneously. It was a painful event; she was tired and weak afterwards ... She breastfed all of her children, but many times it was difficult and tiring. Once, in order not to lose her job at the brick factory, she bottlefed her infant ... Like her mother before her, she never went to a health centre when she was pregnant. It was too far away and too foreign ...<sup>13</sup> Later she succumbed and died prematurely, adding a lone figure to the statistics on mortality.

Health and women's development are intimately connected in the sense that 'the absence of disease is only the minimum level of health, while the optimum level is maximum self-realisation and social development in a socio-political and economic environment which corresponds to the aspirations of the total community'.<sup>14</sup> Another way of looking at the concept of health is to say that 'health is one's ability to cope autonomously with the environment'. Specific problems of a woman's health cannot be resolved unless the perception of her sexuality undergoes a fundamental change.

Women's health problems cannot be resolved as long as it is a third party, the church, the state or male members of the household who take the decisions about her capacity to bear children, her capacity to go out to work, her capacity to respond to the social environment. The health of the health providers is very poor indeed!

Since the status of women as health providers is frequently relegated to a minor place in policy and in practice, and since they themselves are not able to devote time, energy or resources to their own health care, the health of the family, the community and the nation will be under considerable threat by the year 2000.

#### *The educators*

Education in its broadest sense comprises learning, working and teaching in the university of life. Women everywhere play this role by passing on value systems to succeeding generations, acquiring a range of skills which never acquire a monetary value, and being only marginally admitted in the formal education structure of many societies. Statistics on formal education and training bear silent witness to this. The dimensions and dynamics of the problem are clearly illustrated by the fact that there are over one billion women in the Third World today who cannot read and write and that in some countries 90 per cent of the female population is illiterate. The tragedy is that the total number of women in all groups deprived of the magic of the written word has increased by 150 million since 1971.

To understand the humiliation a woman

might feel when using a 'thumb impression' on papers, one must observe a woman receiving her daily or weekly wage at any factory on pay day in a poor country. The inability to decipher words in 'a man's world' perpetuates her marginal status. The inability to join or continue schooling in the formal sense further aggravates this marginality. By the time girls reach secondary or higher levels, the fact of being a woman in a competitive world is enough to enhance her 'inferiority complex'—a complex which had begun at home where their education was given lower status and lower priority in household expenditure.

Educating girls may be one of the best investments for economic growth and welfare a country can make in future. But its 'social value' remains unrecognized and underestimated by many societies. Health studies tell us that the more educated the mother, the less likely that her children die premature deaths. Nutrition surveys underline the fact that families are better fed when mothers are educated. Fertility patterns show that educated women are more likely to know of, and use, contraceptives. Yet, in most parts of the Third World, many more boys get enrolled at school than girls. Of those girls who are between 6 and 11, only half will continue up the ladder to the secondary stage. The higher levels of education, in universities and institutes of learning, remain for a large majority a 'modern luxury'. And here we are only considering arts and humanities. The position in technical and scientific subjects is clearly worse.

Still, there are a few who do receive higher education and gain qualifications. Of these, many will join the labour force but will not find

jobs matching their skills. Many will have fewer, if any, chances of training or re-training. There will be many among them who will be the first to lose their jobs as fast moving technological developments create redundancies. 'Microchips' will further push women onto the assembly line or down towards lower skill levels. And there will still be a large number unrecorded in any statistics, who will simply end up bent over the kitchen sink or doing household chores, processes which will painfully wipe out any lingering memories of what they had learnt at school. Their intellectual and creative horizons will forever remain confined within four walls.

The educators of generations will get not even half a chance to use their traditional knowledge, or to upgrade their existing skills or to acquire new techniques. Thus half the 'human capital' of many nations will be either wasted or under-utilized.

### **What are women up against?**

In *The Ascent of Man*, J. Bronowski describes the grand lines of biological evolution over millions of years from which, by some circumstance, human beings evolved on this earth—in fact, in Africa.<sup>15</sup> Of course, the cultural evolution is of a much shorter duration: 12,000 years. And then came the 'watershed': the industrial revolution of the last 200 or 300 years, when machines overpowered men and women, distorting, twisting, reshuffling and rearranging social values, structures and lifestyles. In this long process, 'patriarchy' as an ideology appears on the stage. At what point did the 'descent of women' begin? To what ex-

tent has industrialization liberated them from feudal structures? In what way do machines release women's energies for creativity? Does 'industrialism' have a negative impact on their jobs and their incomes? How is it related to the 'development model' of a particular country?

These questions are not easily answered. Depending upon one's view of history or ideology, differing explanations can be brought to bear witness to the status of women. These claims can be considered on their merits. However, explanations would concur that, in any theory of power and its distribution, women bear the brunt of inequality in terms of income and rewards, assets and resources.<sup>16</sup>

The world is currently beset with crises. Signals are flashed from many directions. The economies of the North as well as the South, women as well as men—all are deeply affected. The survival of humanity is itself at stake. Development, planned or unplanned, is not only suffering from the lack of 'knowledge tools' but also, more importantly, from the absence of full participation by those who are most affected by it. Scientific research, objective knowledge and rational planning can contribute only partially to the solution of these crises, as long as all social groups, of whom, needless to add, women form the majority, do not participate fully in overcoming them.

Most of the poor are women. Most of the unemployed are also women. The majority of refugees are women. The majority of the undernourished are also women. The majority of women are not represented in important assemblies where decisions on development are taken. The majority of women are not bene-

fitting from the cumulative technical and scientific knowledge of mankind. Can we afford to trace any path of development without pooling the untapped resources of women? Another Development will need to take these factors into account and find ways by which the unexplored creative energies of women are released. We are entering the 'age of the Third World'! The economic power zones are shifting to different geographic regions. Without women coming of age, another stage of human development will remain unbalanced and in disharmony with new lifestyles.

#### Notes

1. The 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report, 'What Now: Another Development', *Development Dialogue* 1975, 1/2, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Uppsala.
2. For discussion on this point see Huizer, Gerritt, 'Politics and Anthropology: two essays', Occasional Paper 9, Third World Centre, Nijmegen, 1980, pp. 26-29.
3. For a detailed analysis see Ahoja-Patel, Krishna, *Women and work in Asia today: the three immobilities*, Working Paper, Office for Women Worker's Questions, Geneva, 1981, Doc. No. ILO/W.5/1981/Rev.1. (Circulation restricted.)
4. It has been variously estimated that in the Third World Countries 40 per cent, or 800 million people, live below the poverty line (late 70s estimates).
5. For data on poverty lines in selected countries and 'evidence from Britain' see *Women at Work*, 2/1978, pp. 3-7. According to the US Census Bureau (1980) 13 per cent of Americans live below the poverty threshold of a \$ 8414 annual income for a family of four. Nearly half of the poor families are headed by women. See *Newsweek*, Special Report, New York, 5 April, 1982, pp. 35-52.
6. Since 1980 (for the ILO *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*) and 1981 (for the ILO *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*), separate statistics for women have been

presented on a systematic basis on total and economically active population: employment, unemployment, hours of work and wages. See also International Labour Organisation, *Women's participation in the economic activity of the world*, Doc. No. ILO/W.3/1980. (Document restricted.) No comprehensive analysis of the scope, reliability and relevance of the available data has yet been undertaken. The documents prepared for the UN Commission on the Status of Women show statistics and indicators presently available in the following publications: ILO: *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* (1979); UN: *Demographic Yearbook* (1979) and *Compendium of social statistics* (1977); IBRD: *World Development Report* (1980); UNRISD: *Data Bank for 1970 and the statistical abstract* (1980); and UNESCO: *Women and Development: indicators of their changing role*, Socio-Economic Studies No. 3, 1981.

7. Bronowski, J., *The Ascent of Man*, British Broadcasting Corporation, London, 1973, p. 59.

8. For research studies completed and undertaken on rural women see Ahmad, Z.M. and Loutfi, M.F., *Programme: rural women*, ILO, Geneva, 1981. Also reported in *Women at Work*, Vols 1 and 2/1980, pp. 35-36 and pp. 29-30 respectively.

9. Longhurst, Richard, *Rural development planning and the sexual division of labour: A case study of a Hausa village in Northern Nigeria*, World Employment Programme research working paper, ILO, Geneva, 1980. (Circulation restricted.)

10. See International Labour Organisation, *Women in industry in developing countries* (Vienna, 6-13

November, 1978), a research note prepared by the author for the Office of Women Worker's Questions, Geneva, 1978, Doc. No. ILO/W.6/1978. (Distribution restricted).

11. Janjic, Marion, *The diversification of women's employment: a a Jallacy or a real step forward?*, Working Paper, Office for Women Worker's Questions, ILO, Geneva, 1980, Doc. No. ILO/W.2/1980.

12. See Ahooja-Patel, Krishna, 'Fatigue', *World Health*, special issue, June, 1980.

13. Hammar, Vicky, 'So many like her', *Women, health and development*, joint JUNIC/NGO development education kit, Geneva, 1981.

14. November, András, *Les médicaments et le tiers monde*, Lausanne, 1981, p. 16.

15. Bronowski, J., op. cit.

16. Feminist and Marxist theories have also attempted some answers. Is male dominance a creation of capitalism or capitalism one expression of male dominance? What does it mean for class analysis if one can assert that a social group is defined and exploited through means largely independent of the organization of production? If the structure and interests served by the socialist state and the capitalist state differ in class terms, are they equally predicated upon sex inequality? On this point see Mackinnon, Catherine A., 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: an agenda for theory', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, special issue on feminist theory, University of Chicago Press, Spring, 1982, Vol. 7, No. 3.

# Women as Food Producers and Suppliers in the Twentieth Century

## The Case of Zambia

By Shimwaayi Muntemba

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*Shimwaayi Muntemba is a well known African scholar. She has carried out research on the Zambian peasantry in general and, of late, has been looking at peasant women in particular. Her research and writings deal mainly with peasants in the 'agricultural' region of south-central Zambia. On leave of absence from the University of Zambia, where she is a Senior Lecturer in History, she is at present with the Rural Employment Policies Branch, World Employment Programme of the International Labour Organization. At the ILO her main concern is to look at issues which affect rural women in Africa and Asia, specifically in relation to a project which is studying successful initiatives for improving the employment conditions of rural women.*

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In this paper we argue that women's ability to produce and supply food has been deteriorating over time. This may have started in pre-colonial times, particularly with the advent of merchant capital. But twentieth-century economic and political developments have accelerated the process. While this situation applies to peasant production as a whole,<sup>1</sup> our discussion here is limited to food production and supply. This is because today the food crisis is one of the major problems facing many African countries.<sup>2</sup> Despite capitalist expansion and state policies favouring large-scale state-controlled production, peasants continue to play an important role in national food strategies. Moreover, we believe that questions dealing with food production will, of necessity, address female producers in their capacity as part of, and not in isolation from, the peasantry. The last ten years have witnessed an upsurge in peasant studies in Africa.<sup>3</sup> Most works conceive of the peasant as a male and use the male gender. They also largely deal with issues affecting male peasants: cash crops, marketing,

agricultural education, mechanization. Even such important questions as land dislocations, migration and social stratification, which affect women most poignantly, are analysed in relation to male peasants.

It is only in a few selected regions of eastern and southern Africa that some work is being done, mainly by female researchers, which addresses the female question.<sup>4</sup>

Focus on food production must of necessity deal with female producers because they have, in the main, carried the burden of food production. This is deducible from researches into African peasantries. The intensification of cash crop production, dominated by men, has led to male shifts away from food production. In addition, as a result of higher male migration to other rural or urban areas, women now form the larger percentage of peasant producers. (As examples, in Zambia in 1969 there were 80 males to 100 females in some rural districts, while 30–50 per cent of the households were headed by women in others; in Lesotho 40–60 per cent of able-bodied males are away work-

ing in South Africa at any one time.<sup>5</sup>) Food problems cannot, therefore, be analysed or remedies suggested without addressing this single major producing group.

This paper will attempt to understand and discuss the position of women as food producers and suppliers within the framework of the social relations of production, distribution and surplus appropriation. We believe that by so doing, we shall be getting to the fundamental cause of the problem. Control over, and access to, the physical means of production—land or fertile soils, communications, transport; and the productive forces—human labour, implements and inputs, coupled with more efficient methods, ensure labour's productivity. But that is not enough. To ensure non-appropriation and fair distribution there has to be control over one's own labour and the product of that labour. At every reconstructible period in history there has been a struggle over these factors at household, village, national and international levels. How women fared in this struggle influenced their ability to produce and supply food.

Evidence suggests that although this struggle may have existed in pre-colonial times, it was not until the penetration of capitalism and the money economy that the position of women was most markedly and devastatingly challenged. Then, the struggle heightened at every level. First, the relation to land was altered. In theory, chiefs remained the custodians of land. In actual fact, absolute control rested with colonial powers. In the process of alienating land to companies for mineral and agricultural production, or to settlers for capitalist farming, some African producers were dispossessed of

cultivable land altogether, while others moved to less fertile areas. In countries where white settlement did not occur, alliances and other processes associated with the colonial state resulted in land shortages and incipient landlessness for poorer peasants. The majority of peasants are not any better off under the independent states. Some land shortages and landlessness have occurred during this period. The commercialization of agriculture put constraints on the amount of land available for the production of food crops.

Labour posed a major problem. Capitalist enterprises demanded male workers. As a result, there was a high rate of migration by able-bodied males. As rural areas became more impoverished, even women, particularly the young, migrated. There arose, in the rural areas, a shortage of productive workers, particularly males, and this, in turn, altered the sexual division of labour. Women undertook jobs formerly performed by men; the old those of the young. Struggle over labour occurred in another way. The introduction of the money economy, as well as the demand for cash crops, resulted in competition for labour within households. More labour went into cash crop than food crop production. Emphasis on exportable crops also led to a shift from women to men as the main agricultural producers. In promoting agricultural production, states did not include women in their efforts to increase peasant productivity. Thus what little technology and financial assistance filtered through to the peasants went to selected men in selected regions. Begun in colonial times, this practice has persisted in many African countries despite political rhetoric or inten-

tions. Consequently, women's productivity, particularly of food crops, has stagnated and in some cases actually diminished.

In situations where food crops, such as maize, are the major marketable ones, more of the crop was marketed, less stored for consumption. It has been the case historically that the need for cash sometimes leads producers to sell their food. In times of stress, for example drought or war, peasants may choose to concentrate on food production to feed themselves. Whenever this happened, pressure was exerted on them to sell. To date national food shortages or political crises have resulted in greater hardships for peasants who are pressured to sell or whose food is requisitioned by the armed forces.

Reinforced by general capitalist biases against female producers, patriarchal modes of control over land (in patrilineal and virilocal societies), control over women's labour and the product of that labour, have lingered on. The man who controls the cash crop field as well as the woman's labour and who possesses modern knowledge and implements, exercises absolute control over agricultural income. This has made it difficult for women to independently purchase inputs for their fields and, occasionally, supplementary food. The man decides whether or not implements may be used in the woman's food crop field. If he decides in favour of using them, cultivation often takes place at the tail end of the rainy season resulting in poor yields. In this way men control food production and supply, sometimes to the detriment of food availability for the household.

Within the stated framework of our enquiry, three themes emerge as central to an examina-

tion of food production and supply. These are: land, labour and the sexual division of labour. Because of space constraints we shall speak generally about these themes in relation to Africa south of the Sahara. We shall then briefly illustrate the case in historical perspective by drawing on the Zambian experience.

Contrary to the generally held view that land is plentiful in Africa and therefore cannot act as a constraint, there is evidence that the land issue has been critical in food production. There are cases of poor quality land, of land shortages and of outright landlessness. Registration and privatization of land has particularly affected women peasants, and consequently food production, quite adversely.

In pre-colonial times land was generally under the control of the community with the chief having custodial rights and headmen administrative responsibilities. In patrilineal societies, men had usufructuary rights. Women had these rights in relation to plots allotted to their male relatives. In matrilineal communities all lineage adult members had usufructory rights. In virilocal societies women cultivated their husbands' plots or they got usufructory rights to fields of their own through the husbands' membership of the village community. In Nigeria, however, there is evidence that some wealthy individuals had started to control land privately. But this is an area which requires further research to see the extent and mechanisms of such controls. Cultivable land and the availability of water influenced the settlement patterns of agricultural people.

When capitalism reached its industrial and financial height in the metropolitan countries, colonialism was introduced over most of

Africa. Two approaches were adopted in terms of the appropriation of agricultural raw products from African countries: white settlement or production through local peasants. In West Africa and Uganda, peasants were delegated the production task, whereas in southern and eastern Africa (Tanzania to a lesser extent) countries experienced white settlement.

Despite the fact that production was in the hands of peasants in West Africa, the land problem recurred there too. The metropolitan countries introduced or encouraged three main cash crops: cocoa, coffee and nuts. They sought alliances for their desired production among local chiefs and elders. In almost all cases the latter ended up with large plots of land for themselves.

Later, the few African state functionaries joined their ranks. Mechanisms of such acquisition varied from country to country. In the Ivory Coast peasants were subjected to forced labour,<sup>6</sup> while notables were exempted. They were thus able to devote more time to their own production. In addition, the colonial state aided them with labour. As a result, they accumulated capital with which they bought larger land holdings. Others managed medium-sized plantations. However, from the late 1920s the metropolitan economy needed more cash crops. Consequently, forced labour was discontinued. The former conscripts went into small-scale plantation agriculture. By 1974 some peasants, particularly those who had cultivated small-sized plantations, could not expand because there was not enough new land.

A similar process occurred in the peanuts basin of the SeneGambia.<sup>7</sup> Chiefs and elders bought land to the detriment of small farmers.

In Niger<sup>8</sup> intensified cash crop production, which started in the 1930s but accelerated after the war, coincided with land shortage. Over the century the state had been aiding some peasants in increasing their production. Later, they were given access to credit facilities and were thus able to buy up land. Although landlessness as a whole is rare in the rest of Niger, there are now indices of it in the south. Nigeria<sup>9</sup> has reached the most advanced stage of land privatization in response to intensified cocoa growing. The many land disputes, which have become common since the sixties, bear witness to the struggle over land.

None of the works which we drew upon for this description discussed the effects of the land development on female producers. But we can deduce that women formed the majority of the disadvantaged peasants. They had no direct access to land in these mainly patrilineal societies, they had not been political office holders, and they did not own any cash crop fields.

Since the introduction of cash crop production in West Africa, land has gradually been taken away from food crops, partly to enlarge acreages for cash crop production and partly to utilize the available family labour to the maximum. This process has been observed in the Ivory Coast and Cameroun,<sup>10</sup> and in Niger where 'when land began to run out, people planted peanuts in their own millet fields'.<sup>11</sup> But the most telling example comes from Nigeria where, in 1974, it was estimated that most households were putting 70 per cent of their holdings under cocoa production. Holdings averaged three acres for migrants and ten for locals.

Peasants in southern and eastern Africa ex-

perienced land dislocation according to the scale of white settlement. In South Africa<sup>12</sup>, Boers started expanding their frontiers in the nineteenth century. The growth and development of mining resulted in large land sales. In addition, land was also taken up for mineral production, for towns, and by speculators. This, plus the need for labour, resulted in the 1913 Land Act allocating to Africans 13 per cent of the land. The 13 per cent included Lesotho and comprised the most unfertile land. The Bantustan development has crowned and enshrined the dispossession. From this land women, who stayed behind while their men went to the mines and towns, eked out a living for themselves and their children. They also supplemented their husbands' wages by providing them with food whenever they visited home. The deterioration of the already poor quality soils, together with population growth, gradually placed greater hardships on women. An example of women's difficulties in connection with production and labour problems in such lands comes from Lesotho. In recent research involving 524 wives of migrant men, 55 per cent of the respondents mentioned problems connected with their fields; 28 per cent referred to this as their greatest problem; 71–72 per cent worried about their ability to feed themselves and their children, while 6 per cent actually lacked food.<sup>13</sup>

From the 1890s land in Zimbabwe<sup>14</sup> started to pass into settler hands. Settlers then began to squeeze peasants out of production. As in South Africa, land in Zimbabwe was divided between whites and Africans. Native reserves (for Africans) were mainly located in rocky and less productive areas. Much of the area was in-

festes by tse-tse fly and baboon. Peasants could not keep cattle (essential for more productive plough cultivation) while baboons damaged their crops. The reserves were also set farther away from the urban markets. This had a double effect of curtailing peasant participation in the market and inflating prices in the reserves.

Under the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, 49.1 million out of about 90 million acres were under white control. African land included Native Purchase Areas (actually deducted from reserve land), where Africans could buy land. By 1970 the division was thus: 44.9 million acres for whites against 43.6 million for Africans, or 1,000 acres per head to Europeans and 29 per head to Africans. As in South Africa, women were supposed to reproduce labour in the reserves under dire production conditions. Formerly, women did not have direct access to land in these patrilineal societies. But now their access was curtailed even further because of the constraints placed on their men. Poor quality land led to lower crop yields. Land privatization, which started after 1951 in the reserves, has continued after independence. Settlement schemes have not taken women into consideration except as labour providers on their husbands' plots.

Large white settlement in the highlands of Kenya<sup>15</sup> resulted in dislocation for Kikuyu peasants. As in southern Africa, reserves were created for Africans. As in West Africa, but to a far smaller extent, collaborating Africans bought land. After 1953 the colonial government encouraged land privatization. This process gained momentum after independence when, with British aid, the new state initiated

settlement schemes to cater for landless peasants and to ease pressure in the reserves. The situation is that peasants in settlements take title to land. And, of course, they are all men. The question, then, is: what happens to female producers? In these patrilineal societies, women had usufructory rights to their husbands' or sons' lands. Can they be sure of this right under these developments, for if the son sells his lands he will for ever forfeit his right to it? The old system allowed for temporary land loans negotiated directly. Will the new system have room for this? Are development strategies calling for land privatization the best ones, seen in the perspective of the main food producers—the women?

The questionable effects of settlement schemes have also been noted in other countries. The attempts at socialized production through Ujamaa villages in Tanzania seem not to have addressed the question of control of both land and labour by women. Wives do not have access to land. As a result women must leave the villages when their husbands die. Those who may have had access to land through their matrilineal rights now face losing this altogether.<sup>16</sup> However, there are indications that the experiment at socialized production through communal villages in Mozambique might benefit women producers. There, women have the same rights to land as men.<sup>17</sup> But the experiment is still too new for effective analysis.

As in West Africa, so here too, those peasants involved in cash crop growing allotted more land to these than to food crops. From Tanzania come examples of men who put under cash crop production even the land that

belonged to their wives through their matrilineages.<sup>18</sup>

But land dislocation and privatization had another effect on food supply. Previously, women supplemented their food supplies, particularly fruit and vegetables, through gathering. In times of shortage, this became a strategy for survival. But this strategy failed as people moved to new areas whose ecosystems they did not know; or where gathering could not be undertaken. Privatization has limited their operational areas. Viewed from the 1980s and different socio-economic cultures, we might find this mode irrelevant to analyses of the food problem and to strategy formulation. But for people faced with malnutrition and famine these additional food sources are of great significance.

The question of land is, however, meaningless without consideration of labour: without the latter, land is nothing. Throughout the century, male labour has been extracted from local into capitalist production. Although less marked in West Africa some regions in the Savanna experienced migration. With no cash crops, men sold their labour in order to meet cash needs. From Niger comes the case of conscripted labour which continued until the later 1920s. But the process has been more marked in eastern and southern Africa. From the early days of capitalist penetration, male labour was deployed into the mines and settler farms—initially through forced labour, then through the tax mechanism and later through the people's desire for cash. In all cases, as the impoverishment of rural areas deepened, migration accelerated. It started to include young women. Rural-urban migration has become a thorn in the flesh of many independent countries.

The branches of production in the pre-colonial economies sometimes observed a sex division. There was also a sex division within agricultural production. The absence of men meant that women had to perform those tasks formerly undertaken by men. There were cases where they could not do this and overcropping and lower yields were the result. Servicing activities such as smithing were discontinued and this resulted in shortages of the tools of production of the right quality and shape. Women in the labour reservoirs of southern Africa: Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Mozambique and some parts of Zambia, suffered enormous hardship as their burdens of responsibility and the shortage of labour increased. Elderly women in particular have continued to experience hardship, lower yields and malnutrition.

From the 1930s, but especially after the 1939–45 war, governments all over Africa attempted to increase peasant productivity. In some cases more land was released; credit facilities were made available; inputs were distributed; training in more efficient methods of production was introduced; and markets were organized. But in all cases governments adopted the 'reinforcement of success' approach. In the SeneGambia the Porteres plan of 1950 advocated this. After independence the government, with the help of the French Société d'Aide Technique et de Coopération, implemented the policy of extending 'services to those producers with the capacity and will to mobilize enough land and labour'. In Zimbabwe the government introduced the Master Farmer programme, even in the face of land problems—thus causing many of the 'master farmers' to migrate to Zambia. In all the countries, poorer

peasants were not reached and in all cases women were excluded from the programmes. The independent governments have perpetuated the approach so that women, who are the poorest and yet the major food producers, do not have these means of increasing their yields. Poor cropping methods have been reported in many parts of Africa. Where we have evidence of this, it largely affects women in relation to production of food crops.<sup>19</sup>

Our analysis of the food problem cannot ignore natural disasters such as drought. Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that international and local state control over the products of labour has interfered with what strategies of survival women might have adopted. Both the colonial and neo-colonial states have emphasized the production of cash crops. Peasants responded in some of the ways noted above, to the detriment of food production. However, there is evidence that, in times of stress caused by climatic conditions, or in war situations or when there are national shortages for the non-producing groups, governments squeezed out even the little food peasants would have grown. This happened during the drought years of the early 1930s in West Africa. Then, peasants gave up cash crop production in favour of millet. State power was used to extract the millet. During the 1939–45 war peasants in eastern and southern Africa had to 'sell' food crops to the war effort. District Commissioners were given the task of ensuring this. When white settlers turned away from maize production during the UDI days in Zimbabwe, peasants made up the food crop deficit. Government propaganda, regimentation and sometimes brutal appropriation (for example by sol-

diers) have been used to extract food from the peasants.

We have already referred to the sexual division of labour in terms of job performance. But our concept goes beyond this to encompass control over labour and labour's product. Whether patrilineal or matrilineal, husbands have always controlled the labour of women. Because of this control, men have dictated that their wives spend less time in food production. The official preference for male producers resulted in men's control of the more efficient tools and methods of production. This affected women's food production in two ways. In the first place, men used the implements to cultivate cash crops, or they hired them out for cash. A recent village study of 90 households in Tanzania revealed that 90 per cent of the women surveyed used the hoe while, from the same households, ox-drawn ploughs were used for cash crop production.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, as we shall see in the following, men's control over produce heightened.

In pre-colonial times women had control over food produce and could distribute it as they saw fit, often as gifts to needy relatives. But in the rare cases of exchange for non-subsistence items they had to confer with their husbands (the exception to this comes from Nigeria, where men controlled yams). With increasing cash needs male control has sharpened. In this context it would be unfair to underplay factors which compel male household heads to sell food to meet immediate cash needs. The women's position is that they themselves should decide whether to sell food or not. If they have to, then they must have control over the income. They believe that, given the oppor-

tunity to choose between raising cash or food for their household, they would go for the latter. Indeed there are indications that female household heads tend to borrow money for immediate needs rather than sell food. On the other hand, there is evidence that women heads have sold food crops to their own disadvantage in order to invest in, for example, the health or education of a child.

In summary, then, land and labour issues have affected women's food production capabilities adversely, and their ability to supply food has been deteriorating. In those countries where their husbands go into wage labour, women have both fed themselves and their children and have supplemented their husbands' wages through food gifts and by maintaining them during their stay at home before the cycle starts again. Although they could not adequately do so, men were obligated to start partially maintaining their families 'back home' through cash remittances. But cash came at irregular intervals, or it was insufficient, mainly because of the meagre wages. Some women have sought to increase their food supply capacities by going into seasonal wage labour. Often the wages are too low and the prices of food too high for this strategy to work. The time spent in wage labour could be better spent in their own production, provided the factors of production are favourable to them. The intensification of cash crop production has drawn land and labour away from food crops resulting in local food shortages. This process was realized earlier in West Africa when, instead of encouraging peasants or allowing them to cultivate enough food crops, the colonial government started to import rice from China. Gradually,

this became an acceptable food crop. But attempts to grow it in sufficient quantities have benefitted only men. With the growing urban population rice became a viable marketable crop, to the disadvantage of sufficient food supplies for the producers themselves. Elsewhere, marketable food crops have been sold to the disadvantage of household requirements. Peasants have had to supplement their needs through imported foods.

### The Zambian case

#### *Historical perspectives: the pre-colonial situation*<sup>21</sup>

Pre-colonial Zambia was largely populated by matrilineal peoples. But there were pockets of patrilineal societies in the eastern and northern parts of the country. Matrilineal societies in the northern and north-central areas were also uxori-local so that access to land was through the woman's lineage. Others were virilocal. Broadly speaking, people followed three main agricultural practices. In the northern and north-central areas cultivators practised the *chintemenë* and *chiteme* systems involving lopping and felling of trees. Elsewhere, trees were cut when new fields were opened. They cut brambles for fertilization. Along the flood plains of the western region and in the north-west, cultivators also built mounds. Both men and women performed specific agricultural tasks within the agricultural cycle. Men lopped or felled trees, built mounds and turned fresh soils. Together with the women, they scared birds, harvested and built granaries. Women turned the soils, planted, weeded, scared birds, harvested and carried the produce to the villages

for storage. They also cultivated additional crops such as pumpkins, sweet potatoes, cassava and nuts. Clearly, women performed more tasks than the men. But while this was the case in the agricultural sector, men were more active in hunting, fishing, smelting and inter-regional trade.

In all situations, in uxori-local societies as well, theoretically it was the men who controlled the agricultural produce. Women distributed the produce for household consumption and sometimes to needy relatives. But beyond this, they consulted their husbands. In matrilineal, virilocal societies women who wanted the freedom to consume and distribute without interference got extra land whose produce they controlled absolutely. They got this land in two ways: from the husband's lineage through him or from their own lineage if they were close to their natal villages. We do not have evidence of this practice in patrilineal societies. Patriarchal modes of control also applied to single women. Before marriage, they were controlled by their fathers or uncles and could not cultivate fields independently, and, if divorced or widowed, control by fathers, brothers or sons persisted in patrilineal societies. While women in matrilineal societies had access to land independently, brothers or uncles could control the labour of their children.

Because of the low level of technology, fields were limited in size. The possible shortage of staple grains was compensated by a variety of other foods: nuts, pumpkins, sweet potatoes and cassava. When these did not see them through the year or when the climate was unfavourable, women gathered. Throughout the year, they gathered especially for relishes.

But even in pre-colonial times food production and supply did not always work smoothly and was often disturbed by the political institutions. Chiefs demanded tribute through labour services, thus deploying labour from individual households, and they wanted tribute in the form of gifts of produce. When producers did not give, the chiefs carried out raids. Powerful chiefs like those of the Lozi in the west and the Bemba in the north raided farther afield. Their raids were for people, cattle and grain; tribute to them included grain, iron tools, skins, and ivory. The dominating role of chiefs, then, deprived households of labour, tools and produce. We do not know the effects deployment of labour had on household production, although we can surmise what they could have been. But its results on food supplies have been documented.<sup>22</sup> Chiefly raids left some households without food. Women resorted to gathering as the sole mode of survival until the next crop was ready.

*Historical perspectives:  
the colonial situation 1900–1945*

A review of women as food producers during this period can be divided into two broad categories: women from areas with a lower rate of male out-migration and closer to the main lines of communication and urban centres; and women from areas which experienced high male labour migration. The first area included today's south-central parts of the country and portions of the east. Most white farmers who came to Northern Rhodesia (as Zambia was called before political independence in 1964) settled here and therefore struggle over land,

agricultural labour, the productive forces and the market was sharpest in this area.

The Administration of Northern Rhodesia did not have a clear land policy until after 1924. However, by 1910 much of the land along the railway line had been alienated either to mining and railway companies or to white settlers. More land was alienated after the 1914–1918 war to resettle British ex-soldiers. In today's Eastern Province the North Charterland Exploration Company controlled 10,000 square miles in addition to settler farms. The number of settlers in Northern Rhodesia was negligible compared to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). By 1911 there were 159 settlers in the country. In 1919 the number had risen to 250 for the railway region alone. These numbers notwithstanding, the settlers controlled large amounts of land on either leasehold or freehold tenure. Settler lands almost always coincided with the previously more densely populated areas because of the soil's higher productivity.

Initially, most settlers did not have much capital or technical knowledge. They relied on labour-intensive methods and African knowledge and produce. Thus they retained Africans, who had previously occupied these lands, as tenants. Because they were tenants, Africans could only cultivate land as allowed by their landlords. In the early period, they could cultivate as much as they would, although this was limited by technological and labour constraints.

Tenants were legally required to work for their landlords for two months in a year. In practice, however, they worked for longer periods. Moreover, settlers had difficulties in recruiting and retaining labour. They often

signed their tenants on as wage labourers after the tenants had fulfilled their tenancy obligations. The burden of agricultural work started to shift more heavily onto women. But, at peak periods, settlers also utilized the labour of women to work in the house and in the fields. Women thus had less time to devote to production to meet their own requirements. Another way settlers collected their rental dues was through produce, while some demanded that tenants sell at least one bag of maize to them.<sup>23</sup> Thus many tenants ran out of food before the end of the agricultural season. Women supplemented these shortfalls by gathering. Those tenants who found the situation unbearable, moved. Sometimes they went to alienated but unoccupied lands; at other times to unalienated lands within the same ecosystem.

Not regarded as a permanent labour resource, women were evicted at the death of a husband. The story of the old woman Lweembe, in Kabwe Rural District, illustrates the situation most poignantly. Lweembe's husband had been a tenant. Although she sometimes worked for the farmer at peak periods and helped around his house, she mainly worked in the small household plot. Her household produced enough to meet the rental and food requirements, and she sold one bag every so often to the landlord. These obligations were met because her husband used to hire an ox-drawn plough from the landlord. When her husband died, she was left with four dependent children. She wished to continue cultivating her plot and meet rental obligations because 'that land was all I had and I had grown up there'. This was not to be. She was evicted. She moved to the next farm to live with a brother. She could stay but could

not cultivate independently. She moved to another settler farm to live with an uncle. She could not stay because he was a tenant. In the next ten years, she moved from relative to relative until she heard of a chief 'who had a good heart'. She went and begged for a piece of land. This was granted, and she and her children settled there.<sup>24</sup>

As settlers' capital formations improved, coupled with increasing knowledge, they found the tenancy system unproductive. Some started to evict their tenants under the Agreement of Surrender of 1912.<sup>25</sup> Those Africans who attempted resistance met with state force. By 1930, most of the tenants had moved.

The Colonial Office took over direct administration of the country from the British South Africa Company in 1924. One of the first tasks the new government undertook was to enact a land policy. In 1928–29, land in Northern Rhodesia was divided into Native Reserves (for Africans) and Crown Lands (for towns, mineral development and for actual or anticipated white settlement). Africans were required to move into the reserves demarcated for them. Those who did not wish to move were overpowered. Many moved to less productive lands. Consequently, they had to stop growing some of their foods.<sup>26</sup> In some cases they crowded together in the few fertile places. Before removal some of them had started selling surpluses to settlers and the urban centres to meet their tax and other cash requirements. After the depression the mining industry's labour force grew, and with it the urban market. Along with its need for cash, was the state's desire for food for the urban workers. White settlers could not fulfil this

task and there was pressure on peasants to sell food. Land over-use developed, a situation which started to worry some government officials because of its implications for food supplies for mine workers. Nevertheless, the government did not do much to improve the situation until after the war.

There were also problems connected with water supplies for human beings and for stock. Previously, African peasants settled mainly along rivers, particularly perennial ones. Here, women cultivated vegetables and other supplementary foods throughout the year. In their new homes, they could not do so. Males who previously sought strategies to avoid wage labour, were now forced to sell their labour because of the foreclosing economic opportunities in the reserves. To other problems of production in the reserves began to be added those of labour shortages. Some males were recruited as fighters and porters for the war effort. Yet, throughout the war, peasants were also required to produce food. In addition to maize, they were to send millet. District Commissioners were commended according to the amount of grain they 'bought' from the peasants. The burden of meeting these requirements fell on women. 'Those were hard days', said one woman interviewee. They did not have enough even for their own households.

While land dispossession played an important role in altering the position of women as food producers in the agricultural regions, labour was mainly responsible in the rest of the country. From the outset, international capital was more interested in mineral extraction. But until the late 1920s, mineral production was negligible and required little labour. However,

as part of the larger southern African economic region, stretching from South Africa to the Congo (Zaire), African labour from Northern Rhodesia circulated among these countries. Men from the northern, north-western, western and parts of eastern areas migrated in great numbers. Yet in these areas their contribution to agriculture, i.e. to lop or fell trees for the *chitemene* system, to build mounds in the valleys and to help scare birds because sorghum and millet remained the main staples in some places, was more important. In these parts, the soils were generally of low productivity. The land rotation system<sup>27</sup>, whereby fields had to be continuously extended, was essential. By the 1930s, some villagers could not practise this owing to the absence of young men.<sup>28</sup> Women, who had started to perform most tasks, could not fell or lop trees. Less fertilization of soil occurred. Because women could not easily extend their gardens, overcropping, a curse of later years, started to take place. The men's contribution to scaring birds and harvesting was important because, although these tasks could be, and were undertaken by women, both were undertaken in the morning and evening. At the latter time, women's labour was also required for food preparation. During the dry months, relishes were not plentiful and women had to cover huge distances to fetch them. The heavier burden which started to fall on them sometimes resulted in their getting too tired by the end of the day to prepare the major and, in some cases, only meal of the day. As agricultural production became too onerous, women started to rely more heavily on gathering. Paradoxically, on account of the increasing burden, some found it difficult

to supplement their agricultural shortfalls through gathering. In an already precarious agricultural system, villagers experienced actual hunger during the three dry months, the 'hunger months'. Some women sent their children to relatives in urban centres even though the situation there was not better. Another development, which became accentuated later with urbanization, was that as their agricultural burden grew, in some instances they started to shift to less onerous but also less nutritious foods such as cassava.<sup>29</sup> This development sharpened according to the rate of out-migration and urbanization.

*Historical perspectives:*

*the colonial situation 1946–1964*

This period witnessed the intensification of commodity production. The shift to production of marketable crops became pronounced. At the same time, mines adopted a policy of labour stabilization, while the influx of young men to urban centres in search of wage employment accelerated. The demand for food increased accordingly. Furthermore, in its efforts to revamp its weak economy following the 1939–1945 war, the British Government wished to extract as much raw materials, including agricultural products, from its colonies as possible. Cotton, tobacco and groundnuts were the main crops required from Northern Rhodesia. Maize production was essential to feed the copper producers. But the Northern Rhodesia Government was operating within certain economic constraints. Besides, it was essential to retain some areas as labour reservoirs. Therefore, the government limited its financial, technical and marketing assistance to the south-central and

eastern parts of the country. These were the major maize, tobacco, cotton and groundnut growing areas. But even here it was confined to few producers, none of them women. Since the aim was to boost production of cash crops, only men formed the target group.

The first step the government took in realizing higher production by Africans was to release more land. Native Trust Lands were created in 1947. The government also initiated the Peasant and Improved Farmers Schemes, aimed at introducing peasants to modern technology. It established bonus schemes to reward those producers who followed modern methods of production, thus encouraging others to adopt them. The government gave financial assistance through loans, and it advanced implements. None of these benefits were extended to women. In spite of discrimination against poor peasants and women, the government required from them maize to feed urban workers. Depots were set up in areas not covered by agricultural assistants. In these areas, many men had left for wage labour. Women were the major target. They sold two, three or four bags of maize and were left small quantities to supplement their sorghum which they could not grow in large quantities because of labour problems. By 1964 many had stopped growing sorghum altogether and had turned to maize as the staple grain.

Between 1946 and 1964 the money economy had thoroughly penetrated most of south-central and eastern Zambia. Money was required to buy agricultural implements and inputs and essentials such as clothing and blankets, to purchase certain items of food and to pay school fees. This, plus government assistance and pro-

paganda, resulted in greater efforts by peasants to grow marketable crops.

There were several implications of these developments for food production in these areas. First, pressure on land mounted. In one of the chieftancies which I researched, pressure on land mounted because of the large number of ex-soldiers who settled there in the 1950s. These went into tobacco production and ranching. The government settled them in Native Trust Lands, thus defeating the purpose of the scheme, which was to relieve pressure on land in the reserves. Africans were pushed into less fertile 'rock and rubble' areas where cultivable land was most limited and scattered. Here, they joined those who had moved there before 1945. Land clearing was most arduous, so that by the time older women finished clearing a quarter of an acre, men would have taken up much of the cultivable land. The social fabric had been so broken that even headmen could not protect them. In the words of their chief, 'how can you expect elderly women to clear all those stones? How can you expect a man to clear enough land for his wives and children and mother and aunt?' This problem was compounded by the fact that younger men fled the reserves, leaving mothers to fend for themselves.

In another part of this region peasants were moved to make room for the Kariba dam. The amount of land they were allocated was based on the number of male household heads. Yet in this matrilineal society, women had always had usufructory rights to land through their lineages. Located away from the urban markets, along the routes used by men who recruited labour for the Southern Rhodesian mines,

the area had seen a high rate of male migration. Women had maintained themselves and their dependents by cultivating the rich alluvial soils along the Zambezi river. This was disturbed by the new developments. In the new less fertile and rocky lands, even male kin did not have sufficient land to allocate to female kin members, or, if they did, they did not have the time or energy to help with the clearing. As in similar situations, younger males joined the throng of wage labourers. Single women, those who might later be divorced or widowed, were placed in a very precarious position indeed.<sup>30</sup>

Elsewhere, peasants started to move to those parts of the reserves with more fertile land and/or closer to the main lines of communication and markets. Men had an advantage over women in this respect. Women could not migrate as easily, both for social reasons and because headmen tended to allocate land to males unless the woman was also a relative. When overcrowding developed, women were the first to get squeezed out so that their acreages got smaller and smaller. Though land in the reserves was not saleable legally, in fact a few peasants in the agricultural region started to sell some. A substantial number of them were elderly single women who 'sold' land to meet an immediate cash need. In fact because the concept of selling land did not exist in their communities, women thought that they were merely loaning the land, hence the paltry prices. When the lands they were cultivating became exhausted because of inefficient farming methods, they tried to regain those which they had 'sold'. Often they could not. Appeals to the local courts did not succeed.<sup>31</sup>

In matrilineal societies a husband could allot

a piece of land to his wife where she could grow crops over which she had absolute control, as already stated. A few women in south-central Zambia grew enough from these plots in pre-colonial times to sell and thus built up herds of cattle. Most importantly, in the twentieth century, women resorted to produce from these fields to feed members of their households. We said earlier that maize was the major cash crop. By this period it had completely ousted sorghum and millet as the staple grain. To fully utilize the available labour, households did not cultivate separate fields for domestic consumption. Instead, they reserved some bags of maize out of the total production. Men, although not food processors, made the decision and often underestimated the household requirements. There were instances when cash was needed most desperately at harvest time. Thus they ran out of maize before the next season's crop was ready. Women turned 'their' produce into household produce. It was not until after 1964 that most women lost these independent lands, but the process started during this period. Men wanted to bring as much land as possible under cash crop cultivation; they also wished to utilize women's labour to the maximum. They started to deny their wives these independent lands or to give them less acreages. Maximum utilization of their labour did not leave them sufficient time or energy to travel to their matrikin villages to exploit their land.

The struggle for household labour manifested itself in another way. As stated earlier, households have always supplemented their staple food with other foodstuffs such as pumpkins, cassava, sweet potatoes and yam, while

groundnuts and vegetables served as relishes. With the commercialization of agriculture, women did not have sufficient time to gather food. Domestically produced supplements, especially relishes, became crucial. However, in order to increase cash-crop production they now put less time into the production of these 'minor' crops (in official parlance—the term 'minor' itself reveals a lot about government attitudes to food production for household consumption.) Women's labour was most desired during the rainy season when most of these crops were also planted. To increase the yields, they had to use more efficient methods, modern technology and inputs. Men who controlled household implements or the cash to purchase seed and fertilizers preferred to use them for cash crop production; others hired out their implements in order to raise cash. They only allowed them to be used in the wives' fields when they did not need them, often at the tail end of the rainy season. Consequently, yields did not increase. In some cases, they actually diminished.

We mentioned that government programmes aimed at increasing peasant productivity were directed towards men only. In order to increase household production some men imparted knowledge to their wives so that female productivity did actually rise. However, control over knowledge and household implements, strengthening the patriarchal attitudes, gave men leverage to control agricultural income. They gave their wives a disproportionate share, even taking into account joint household expenses.<sup>32</sup> Some women informed me that direct or indirect pressure was brought on them to sell women's crops such as groundnuts and vegetables. This was particularly the case if

implements were used in the fields. This practice deprived household members of some important foodstuffs.

Single women faced even worse constraints on food production. We have already referred to some of the problems they encountered in relation to land. They were not given any training. Because they did not have husbands who wanted to increase their productivity through modern techniques, many continued to use the old methods. Moreover, use of more efficient implements was important both because of the need to increase production and to replace the labour of the now absent younger people. In the 1950s many women depended on male relatives to plough for them and apply fertilizers. By the 1960s, many of the latter could not afford the time away from their own fields to perform these tasks. The women's productivity, therefore, did not increase. Sometimes they were forced to sell three out of the five bags they had harvested. Thus, some found themselves short of food before the year was out. Younger ones resorted to beer brewing through which they bought grain. For older ones, this was too taxing.

Efforts to increase peasant production were restricted to the 'agricultural' region, as stated earlier. From 1960 the government attempted to sublimate nationalist aspirations by extending 'rural development' projects to 'non-agricultural' areas. Efforts were half-hearted and did not make any impact. Furthermore, the government wished to keep the 'non-producing' region as a labour reservoir. For these reasons, male outward migration grew, while visits by migrant workers to their homes became few and far between. Many more were

becoming urbanized. The mining companies' policies of labour stabilization encouraged urbanization. Some men took their 'village' wives to towns; many set up 'temporary' marriages with women from the neighbouring reserves. Thus, although land remained 'abundant', problems connected with labour accelerated. Women continued to use old implements such as the hoe; they continued to overcrop. Production of less nutritious food increased. With the penetration of the cash economy even to these areas, women started to sell crops such as cassava and groundnuts.<sup>33</sup> However, they did not produce these in large quantities because of labour shortages and by selling some, they were left without enough for domestic consumption. In the 1950s some producers from maize-producing areas in south-central Zambia profited by travelling to 'non-producing' areas where they sold maize at double the price offered by the Maize Control and Grain Marketing Boards. But, of course, many poor women could not afford the prices.

#### *The neo-colonial situation 1964–1981*

Initially, the independent government was committed to 'rural development' through the money economy. It also wished to increase agriculture's contribution to the GNP. From the early 1970s copper prices started to slide down on the world market. Copper contributed more than 90 per cent to the GNP. Agriculture was seen as a way of earning foreign exchange. For these reasons peasants were exhorted to increase their cash crop production, particularly of cotton, sunflower and tobacco. They were also urged to grow maize and other food crops to feed the nation (i.e. the urban workers), and

to increase their groundnut production for oil extraction. The formerly 'non-producing' labour reservoirs were also encouraged to produce maize, not as a domestic food but as a saleable crop. To aid them in increasing productivity, the state heightened its support and improved the agricultural prices of cash crops but not those of maize. More and more peasants were given training in efficient methods of production. Some were settled on unoccupied settler farms. In 1975, the President announced measures to alleviate problems connected with land. Henceforth all land in Zambia was under state guardianship, although chiefs could administer it in the reserves. In all cases land was to cease being a saleable commodity.<sup>34</sup>

Peasants reacted to these initiatives and their overall production of cash crops increased. The country became almost sufficient in cotton, for example (although in 1981, vegetable oil extracts, sunflower seeds and groundnuts were not being produced in sufficient quantities to meet national oil requirements). But this increase was at the expense of maize and other food crops. Thus the country found itself short of maize to feed the urban population. Some producers also experienced shortfalls themselves and looked to stores for their maize meal supplies. State officials chided rural producers for laziness, suggesting that the peasants were unable to feed themselves. But, as one rural District Governor was quick to remind the government in 1979, people in his area were not lazy. They were merely responding to party and government calls for increased cash crop production. The deteriorating food situation in rural areas, resulting in malnutrition in some

households, started to worry some state officials and from the 1970s rural people were urged to produce food for domestic consumption. The National Food and Nutrition Commission came to the forefront. These efforts notwithstanding, the problem of food for both urban and rural populations reached a critical stage in the later part of the 1970s. Problems connected with land and labour and the sexual division of labour continued to undermine production.

Pressure on land mounted as state lands (formerly Crown lands) remained closed to peasants who did not have the necessary securities. The few local bourgeoisie who had the securities started buying up this land. Government resettlement schemes affected few peasants. In the words of one chief, 'how can taking one *man* out of a village of 200–300 people relieve pressure on land?' The 1975 declaration does not seem to have released much land for the peasants. Mounting pressure on land hit women worse than it did men. Seventy per cent of the plaintiffs in some land cases in south-central Zambia were mainly elderly divorced or widowed women. Their holdings averaged three acres of poorer quality land. Many women in this region had turned to vegetable growing. Seventy-five per cent of them singled out land as the major constraint. As noted above, state concerns for food and nutrition took place against strong propaganda for the production of cash crops and food for urban populations. Emphasis on commodity production perpetuated and accelerated the struggle over land and labour within households. More land was given to cash crop production than previously. More labour was directed into these and other saleable food items.

While in theory women could receive government support, in practice they remained relatively insufficiently supported. Married women could not easily get loans because they were not household heads. Most single women did not have the necessary securities. Courses at farm institutes were still largely male-oriented; women's programmes continued to emphasize home economics. 'We were taught how to make scones. How could that help us with our farming? Flour was too expensive to get anyway. Later, you could not even get it', said one woman in an interview in 1976. Another in 1981: 'It is all very well to learn about good nutrition and hygiene. Where is the food to give nutrition?' From the later 1970s there were few courses for women in the production of food crops, such as groundnuts. Much of the crop ended up in the urban markets. While as many as 90 per cent of the women in the Southern Province could handle the ox-drawn plough, only 20 per cent could manage any other implement (minus the tractor where I recorded zero female knowledge). As the implements were owned by husbands, married women continued to face difficulties of access to them for production in 'their' fields. Male control over their wives' labour and household income marched alongside the intensification of saleable crops.

In what were formerly labour reservoirs men became the target of government support, despite the fact that there were more women living there. Improved production methods of food crops were not taught to female producers, although state agencies organized the collection of these items for urban markets. At the same time, the general state of deteriora-

tion led to increased migration of both men and women from the more productive age group. This exacerbated the problem of labour supply. Studies carried out in the Northern Province revealed accentuated overcropping. They reported malnutrition. There was a higher incidence of both in female-headed households.<sup>35</sup> In the North-Western Province stagnating or diminishing yields of crops such as cassava and groundnuts have been documented.<sup>36</sup> Struggle over household labour also developed because of the introduction of maize as a cash crop. Increasing male control of agricultural income forced women to sell more of the little cassava and groundnuts they grew than had been the case previously.<sup>37</sup> The tendency for women to sell food crops in order to raise cash continued to bedevil nutrition efforts. But the cash raised this way was in turn used to buy food at prices peasants often could not afford.

#### *Women's reaction and strategies*

Women analysed their position within the context of the role of the state and, to a lesser extent, that of their male relatives, particularly husbands—'the government has forgotten us'. 'As long as you people in towns eat, what does it matter that we cannot?' They blamed government precisely because of its role as the major agent for increased productivity. The state controlled overall distribution. In their view the state systematically operated against them. We have seen in this paper that their perception is not wrong. Both colonial and neo-colonial state policies contributed most decisively to the deteriorating position of women in production. Women reacted in many ways. Some lowered their production efforts so that the

state could not appropriate surpluses for the urban people. As some women conceded to me, this was the wrong strategy. In times of national needs food was extracted from them anyway. Furthermore, this strategy had the overall effect of lowering production so that even their own consumption was not always assured. Because men owned the implements, the man's relatives inherited them even though they may have been bought out of agricultural income. Older women, who would have already put their children through school, were particularly bitter. Said two polygamously married women, 'Our household production has been deteriorating over the last five years. How can it not when we, the women, have decided to work as little as possible?'

In the 'agricultural' region many women turned to vegetable growing. They saw in this a way to produce crops which they could control. They could also work in the vegetable gardens for short periods after working in the major fields. Household relishes were assured. We have already mentioned problems connected with land and labour, despite the husband's acknowledgement of the importance of vegetables for household food supply. Because of water supply problems, this activity should largely be undertaken during and soon after the rains. But women's labour was most needed during the wet season.

The inability to grow enough to feed themselves and through which they could also raise cash, led some women, particularly younger and single ones, to turn to other activities, such as beer brewing. While this activity was lucrative in the 'agricultural' region where there was a cash circulation and also surplus grain to buy, it

was not quite as rewarding in poorer areas. Some women stated that they could only make 30n (40 US cents) per brew. Often they gave the beer away for lack of customers to buy.

Finally, some women migrated to urban centres where they hoped for better social and economic opportunities. This, of course, added greater labour-related burdens to those who remained in the rural areas, while urban centres have not held much hope for those with little or no academic qualifications.

#### *Conclusion—and what then?*

In this paper we postulated that women are central to a discussion of the food situation. We argued that their capacity to produce and supply food has been deteriorating and posited three major areas of enquiry in analysing this situation. While these areas have been dealt with in relation to women producers, land and labour are central to an enquiry into peasant production generally. We traced the process of deteriorating fortunes within the framework of the three themes by drawing on the Zambian case. It is our contention that despite country or regional particularities, these themes can be applied in an analysis of the situation in other parts of Africa. Our brief and general description in the first part seems to substantiate our claims. Through the Zambian case, we have concluded that the situation of women producers and of food production worsened at a pace responding to the nature of capitalist appropriation of land and labour and the intensification of cash crop production. Thus the phenomenon became more marked after 1945 when everywhere colonial states intensified cash crop production. The situation has per-

sisted after formal independence. State attitudes and practices reinforced and sometimes deliberately promoted patriarchal systems of control placing further constraints on food crop production. We conceded the role that natural disasters play but showed that, even in such situations, food supply in peasant households is further undermined by state appropriation. It was indicated that mechanization has contributed to the marginalization of both female productivity and food crop production. We briefly surveyed women's options and noted the negative undertones in most of them.

The question, therefore, is: What then? Women's food production has deteriorated and with it food supply for their households and for nations still dependent on peasant production. We identified three problem areas—land, labour and, connected with the latter, the sexual division of labour. Women themselves identified two major responsible factors—the state and men, whether husbands, headmen, or male kin members. In the search for alternative development strategies—food and surplus food being key to poor peasants—Another Development must start by tackling these fundamental problems. Control by women of land, of the productive forces, of their labour and the product of that labour must be viewed as the most urgent priority. Thus land reforms and schemes resulting in privatization as the means of bolstering small-scale production must be challenged: they do not take women into consideration. It is imperative to consider women not because they are women but because, as we hope we have shown, they are central to food strategies. Instead, socialized forms of land systems in which *all* producers

have usufructory rights must be fostered. But this is not enough. Peasant women have to participate in the political machinery to assure equitable distribution of the productive forces and non-appropriation of food from them. Women must be conscientized to challenge the sexual division of labour which subjects their labour to men. They must translate 'the thought of this (male control of implements and labour and the inheritance laws) upsets me too much to want to go to the fields' into something more positive. But the forces at national and international levels are so strong that, alone, women cannot succeed and through this success move toward alleviating some of the food problems bedeviling many African countries.

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2. See FAO, *Food Outlook*, No. 7, July 1982, pp. 7–8.
3. The two volumes *The Roots of Rural Poverty*, op. cit., and Klein, Martin, A., (ed.), *Peasants in Africa*, Beverly Hills, 1980, have pulled many studies together. Tanzanian scholars have put out several studies on Tanzanian peasants and many theses and dissertations can be found on these subjects, particularly at the universities of Dar es Salaam and Zambia.

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# African Women, Industrialization and Another Development

## A Global Perspective

By Filomina Chioma Steady

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*Industrialization in Africa has more often resulted in exploitation than economic development and has created gross inequalities along the lines of race, class and gender. Historically, African women and men were differentially integrated into the world economic system, with males being more directly exploited by industry as cheap sources of labour. By using a global perspective it becomes apparent that a trend is already being created for direct female exploitation as African women become more fully integrated into the international division of labour. An alternative development for women will begin with decolonization and dissociation. It will then develop innovative ways to ensure equity and 'rotation' in all spheres of economic production and social life.*

*Dr. Filomina Chioina Steady is a social scientist from Sierra Leone and a founding member of AAWORD. She has taught at the Universities of Sierra Leone, Yale, Boston and Wesleyan and has served as consultant to several international agencies. She has published extensively and recently edited a book entitled: The Black Woman Cross-Culturally. She is currently writing a book on women and collective action in Africa. Dr. Steady who received her doctorate from Oxford University is married and has three children.*

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### **The need for Another Development**

International development efforts have failed to alleviate world poverty and have not succeeded in lessening the economic disparities between and within nations. Disillusionment and scepticism have become characteristic features of international discussions on development. The call for critical analyses of development efforts and for more appropriate conceptual guidelines towards a viable and equitable world economic order has become urgent.

By rejecting the world economic system at the outset, the Dag Hammarskjöld Report *What Now: Another Development* sets the

framework for meaningful discussions of alternatives in a direct and expedient manner.<sup>1</sup> The case which stresses that basic needs, self-reliance, ecological soundness, structural transformation and immediate action are necessary for an alternative development strategy, is well presented. However, the inevitable resistance of dominant and powerful international interest groups to the development of such an equitable, just and moral world economic order must be fully appreciated and analysed. Equally important to understand is the degree to which economic hardship can compel people to accept, and even desire exploitative conditions

in order to survive. Indeed, a development strategy which advocates further incorporation into the world economic system for Third World countries can only lead to increasing dependency; greater differentiation along lines of class, sex, race, ethnicity etc.; and greater world poverty. Dismantling the powerful organic links in the world economic system must be a necessary 'precondition' for an alternative development. Nowhere are these links more clearly demonstrated than in industrialization, and in the relationship between industrialization and inequalities of class and gender.

Industrialization is usually defined as a system based on mechanical principles and on the organization of economic production and social life. Its generally recognized aim is to reduce the real cost of goods and services produced while increasing the output per human hour. In short, it is based on exploitation of people for private profit. It is, then, no surprise that industrialization has reached a crisis in the West, as manifested in large-scale unemployment, social violence, environmental pollution, and the threat of nuclear war.

In Third World countries the crisis is of a more chronic nature, embedded in the structural characteristics of societies dependent on primary products in a competitive and unequal world market system. The outcome is chronic poverty, hyper-urbanization and the disruption of family life. In both industrialized and Third World countries this crisis is reinforced by new attempts to incorporate women in the process as cheap sources of labour and at the same time polarize male and female labour into public and private domains. Housework and reproductive labour, both indispensable to the public

domain, remain privatized and unrewarded, and thereby serve to bolster the accumulation of capital.<sup>2</sup>

While the equation of industrialization with economic development may be true of the West its application to Africa would be grossly misleading. The principle of industrialization in Africa has been based on the exploitation of the products of its enormously rich subsoil for export and expropriation in the West, and not on the economic development of the continent. In this process men have been even more directly exploited by industrialization than women. Historically the incorporation of Africa into the world economic system produced a supply of cheap male labour which is still abundant, and the types of industries more customarily established, such as mining and construction, have concentrated on male recruitment. In many agro-industries and peasant cultivation of cash crops, the production and collection of coffee, cocoa, peanuts, rubber and cotton have been carried out by male workers who can also more expediently be used as labourers to transport the goods.

Historically all attempts to incorporate the African male farmer into wage earning activities has been exploitative. These include land annexation and forced labour. Although not so obvious when behind the facade of political independence, these exploitative relations, in one form or another, continue up to the present day and are backed by government policies designed to provide inducements for foreign investment.

The negative effects of this external orientation to development is underscored by the emphasis on tourism of many African

countries. With the exception of Kenya, South Africa and the Maghreb region, revenue from tourism is low and investment high.

Apart from 'subsidizing European leisure' by providing a cheap source of labour, tourism creates an unconscious 'colour bar' through the segregation of tourist facilities and establishments. Other social effects include the rise in both male and female prostitution and its negative medical and social consequences, the promotion of an alien pattern of consumption and the worsening of inflation. Above all, most tourist industries are operated and controlled from European and American capitals where most of the profits are expropriated.

Historically, African women have been differentially integrated into the world economic system, serving primarily as a labour reserve and a mainstay for the subsistence and reproductive sectors.<sup>4</sup> If and when necessary, as in the case of migration of males to South African mines, female proletarianization can come into effect. In Swaziland, for example, women constitute 60 per cent of the labour force in the sugar plantations and 95 per cent in the citrus industries.<sup>5</sup>

By virtue of the strategic role African women play in traditional food systems, they have acquired certain skills compatible with labour intensive food processing industries. Consequently, they have been involved in the handling, processing and packing of fruits, sugar, coffee, oil, fish, etc., in some countries. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, for example, women constitute the predominant labour force in the shrimp packing industry.<sup>6</sup> The same is true of the textile industry wherever it seeks to capitalize on traditional female skills.

In many Third World countries regulations protecting minimum wage levels do not exist and collective bargaining activities are not strongly in force. Economic hardship and the desperate need to survive can lead to the acceptance of even lower wage levels by some groups. Consequently, although the employment of women at lower wages violates the principle of equal pay for equal work, agro-industries with monopolies can deliberately and with impunity hire women at lower wages than men, as in the case of the sugar industry in the Ivory Coast.<sup>7</sup>

In general, when women are hired in industries the nature of their employment is quite precarious, often being of a casual and seasonal nature and in greatest demand during peak periods. While the same may be true for men in some countries, such as Zambia for example,<sup>8</sup> women must also maintain a subsistence base by ensuring access to land for cultivation. Where land rights are customarily allocated to males the semi-proletarianization of women may result in the loss of access to land, particularly when widowed or divorced.

Significant, and even more ominous, is the tendency of agro-industries to take over the best land for cultivation of cash crops. Intensification of cash crop production can seriously threaten the ecological soundness of the surrounding society by undermining the quality of the soil. Livestock industries can produce similar effects when their objective is the intensification of production for export. In Botswana, for example, heavy grazing and pressure on the land for the export-oriented livestock industry has undermined the production of the staple crop, sorghum.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the policy of export-

oriented industrialization invariably threatens staple food crops, and the importation of staples such as rice has become commonplace in many countries of West Africa. This export-oriented 'ideology' of industrialization exposes African countries to the vulnerability of primary products in the world market where fluctuations of prices can seriously threaten the viability of many African countries.

In seeking to understand the implications of industrialization for African women a global perspective is necessary, since the incorporation of the African women in direct industrialization is, at present, minimal. The pattern of female employment in export-oriented manufacturing industries in other Third World countries in Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean has future implications for African women. These trends will no doubt come into effect in Africa with the increasing integration of African women into the international division of labour, since the differential integration of men and women is already apparent.

The worst form of exploitation of the African worker can be found in the most industrial country in the continent. In South Africa the labour of the African worker (particularly the male worker) is considered a pure form of labour—a commodity.

Migrant labour, confined in the reserves, is not only plentiful but it is also cheap. As practiced in South Africa, migrant labour is a variant of forced labour, and its resemblance to slavery is obvious.<sup>10</sup>

African women in these situations are wives, daughters and sisters of slaves. When employed they usually become fully-fledged slaves in their own right.

Racism has played an important role in the exploitation of the African continent, and no serious study of class and gender inequality in Africa must overlook that important fact. The link between racism and capitalism has been made convincingly, but perhaps the best and most succinct articulation for Africa was by Nkrumah:

Each historical situation develops its own dynamics. The close links between class and race developed in Africa alongside capitalist exploitation. Slavery, the master-servant relationship, and cheap labour were basic to it. The classic example is South Africa, where Africans experience a double exploitation—both on the grounds of colour and class.<sup>11</sup>

### **Industrialization as a single world system**

To understand industrialization in the Third World, particularly in Africa, one needs to view the whole world as a single system. Historically industrialization is closely linked to capitalism, having had its genesis in Britain in the mid-eighteenth century Industrial Revolution. Its early manifestation in the Third World is linked to colonial expansion and the search for raw materials for the home industries.

The preconditions for industrial development signal a course that ultimately links the world in a single economic system. An available labour force has often meant migration of labour or transfer of capital, or both, from one part of the world to another. Third World countries generally have provided raw materials, cheap labour and markets for finished products; whereas investment funds, technology and machinery have often originated from industrialized societies. The foreign companies

which dominate industrial production have only one objective: to make as much profit as possible for use in their own countries. When combined as transnational companies the exploitative effects can be even more profound.

In Africa and much of the Third World, extractive industries producing iron and other metallic ores, coal and lignite, petroleum, natural gas, gold, silver and diamonds, are linked to manufacturing industries primarily in Europe and the United States of America, preventing the development of such manufacturing industries locally. Thus, according to one estimate 'some 90 per cent of the iron ore mined in the under-developed countries goes to feed the blast furnaces of the developed countries'.<sup>12</sup>

Industrialization increased Europe's wealth considerably; so in comparative terms industrialized nations are richer in output per capita than non-industrialized ones. Industrialized nations can sustain a form of industrialization that encourages internal 'growth', shifts labour to trade, services and the professions, and ultimately replaces most labour with a capital-intensive form of industrialization. In this type of industrialization the human factor is relevant only in so far as it can help create profit. Even if this exploitative form of industrialization were desirable on a worldwide scale, most Third World countries do not possess the necessary conditions for industrialization, despite Rostow's 'optimistic' theory of stages of economic growth—which is supposed to propel each country from its traditional economic base to full industrialization and mass production.<sup>13</sup>

Those that have the potential for developing the necessary conditions for such unilinear economic 'evolution' are so inextricably

locked into the world economic system that their economic 'take-off' has been permanently grounded.

Powerful organic links between industrialized nations and Third World nations structure the international division of labour and create a labour hierarchy which generally places Third World countries on the lowest rung of the industrial ladder. In light of this, Third World countries share more similarities than differences, which makes intra-Third World differentiation and heterogeneity irrelevant, as Ismail-Sabri Abdalla has brilliantly argued.<sup>14</sup> What is of ultimate relevance is the relative collective poverty of Third World countries within this pattern of world economic development. To give one example, imports from industrialized nations to Third World countries amounted to \$ 123 billion in 1975, and exports from Third World countries to industrialized countries were less than \$ 26 billion.<sup>15</sup>

One significant indicator of this global imbalance is the manipulation of the population issue from the metropolises. Population growth was both a consequence and a stimulus for industrialization and economic growth in Europe and the United States. The link between population growth, industrialization and European prosperity is well known and is important to an understanding of the current unequal world economic system. Whereas population growth in Europe was an important condition for its development and prosperity, in the Third World it is viewed as threatening to Western affluence and elaborate consumption patterns. From the European and American perspectives, this disturbs the harmonious balance organically maintained and articulated by the un-

equal economic order. The overwhelming interest, obsession and aggressiveness of European and American 'foreign aid programmes' for fertility regulation in the Third World, despite high mortality and infertility, are attempts to maintain the first world hegemony. These are logical steps which point in the direction of maintaining the present world economic order and its unequal pattern of distribution and consumption of resources.<sup>16</sup>

### **Peripheral industrialization**

Depending upon the degree of incorporation of a country into the world economic system, there are differential effects of the economic and social consequences of industrialization. With regard to urbanization, for example, in highly industrialized societies it has been a viable and important consequence of industrialization. In many Third World countries, however, the rate of urbanization far exceeds the rate of industrialization, so that the effects of urbanization have been more negative than positive for the majority of the urban population. In the Third World countries a number of social problems, including malnutrition and the proliferation of slums, have been linked to the abnormal form of urbanization characteristic of these countries.<sup>17</sup> Women have been particularly vulnerable to the inimical consequences of this type of urbanization.

In addition to urbanization, peripheral industrialization can be characterized as having several other features which do not conform to industrialization in the metropolitan centres. In the former, industries are usually foreign-owned and oriented towards production for an

external market rather than an internal one. Inspired primarily by colonization, the dominant pattern has been the establishment of mines, plantations and export-oriented industries. Even though industrialization generally undermines agricultural labour and produces large-scale rural to urban migration, peripheral industrialization absorbs only a small part of this labour, resulting in high urban unemployment. This serves the purpose of creating a labour reserve and an informal labour market which frees industry and the state from providing subsistence and support for workers, and this serves to bolster capital accumulation.

The pattern of migration in peripheral industrialization is also different. It is more dynamic, linking rural and urban kin in a network which facilitates the flow of resources. Migration in peripheral economies, unlike the more stable pattern of migration in industrialized societies, involves a certain degree of return migration. Through this process the migrant is able to provide insulation against economic hardship by falling back on the rural economy for subsistence needs. The traditional kin structure survives and provides an economic base of support.<sup>18</sup> Since female labour is predominant in agricultural production, women provide the source of extra-market subsistence and security through kinship networks in the rural areas. The internal market is usually weak, and this type of industrialization never reaches a stage of maturity whereby workers are incorporated both as consumers and producers of the industrial product. Despite claims of 'development of the periphery' in the case of countries such as Singapore and Korea, peripheral industrialization is still precarious and exploitative and

dependent upon the centre. It uses traditional institutions and develops new ones to subsidize and support capital accumulation. This explains why several attempts at import substitution by Third World countries have failed, and have increased rather than decreased dependency.

Import substitution usually requires the importation of the technology and some of the personnel and raw materials. Priority may not be given to vital commodities so that in some countries, such as Sierra Leone, cigarette factories were the first to be established. Underutilization of some of the factories can be a problem, as in the case of the Ivory Coast, and lack of energy supply impedes any industrialization in countries like Cape Verde. Then there is the problem of corruption in some nationalized industries, such as the Union Cotonnière Centrafricaine in the Central African Republic. Significantly the overwhelming problem of the import substitution strategy is its fundamental dependence on the West. It implies economic independence but is, in fact, another example of further incorporation into the world economic system so long as the economy is dominated by the metropolitan power. Kenya and the Ivory Coast are good examples of greater incorporation under the guise of economic independence through import substitution.

### **The sexual division of labour in industry**

Numerous studies have shown how industry perpetuates the sexual division of labour.<sup>19</sup> Women have often held the least paid and most precarious jobs in industry, even in industrialized nations. The pattern has been as follows:

low wages, low levels of unionization, inadequate legislative protection and concentration in the labour-intensive industries. Yet, because of social and economic realities, women often need those jobs for survival. In some European countries, women's trade unions have been known to refrain from making demands for maternity and other benefits for fear of becoming less competitive in the labour market. In Third World countries, because of large-scale unemployment, women often compete with each other and with men for whatever exploitative jobs industry can provide.<sup>20</sup> In these instances, maternity benefits, child care facilities and other protective measures are often not provided.

Women's vulnerability is further worsened by a number of factors, the most inescapable being their reproductive capabilities. Not only are women often more vulnerable to industrial hazards, their employment can be truncated by pregnancy. Although increasing mechanization is threatening to all labour, there are indications that women are even more vulnerable than men. Whereas men can be given other jobs with the advent of mechanization, women's jobs are usually eliminated by the arrival of machines. In India, for example, the number of female employees fell by 72 per cent on account of mechanization, whereas the attrition of male workers was 10 per cent.<sup>21</sup>

Certain aspects of the sexual division of labour introduced with capitalist development also help to sustain women's low status in industry, such as the idea that women's income, like women's work, plays a supplementary role in the household economy. Women's work is also viewed as more traditional and oriented

towards domestic production and reproduction.

Home industries serve an important function in many Third World countries and can enhance a country's self-reliant capability to produce goods needed by members of the society. Both male and female labour is usually needed, although certain types of industry may be assigned to one sex rather than to another. Most of the production is for use value and suited to a people's lifestyle—a factor which need not imply a low level of civilization, as has been convincingly argued for the Aztecs.<sup>22</sup> However, industries which traditionally required both male and female labour are being altered by new relations of production. Industrialization can threaten home industries by reproducing similar goods in large quantities through mechanization, as is already happening in some textile industries in Africa. When large industries succeed in driving home industries out of business by producing similar products, it is usually women who are affected. Industry can also exploit the tradition of home industries by encouraging women to perform their work at home for low wages, as in Asia and Latin America, for example.

With industrialization the sexual division of labour results in men being more readily absorbed in modern industries and women remaining in traditional occupations, thereby creating a hierarchical and polarized work structure characteristic of the modern urban economy. The system is perpetuated by women's lack of training as skilled industrial workers and by sex discrimination in employment. Consequently, even though the principle of equal pay for equal work may be in force, women often lack

the skills needed for many of the jobs performed by men. This low level of training makes women highly vulnerable to exploitation and places them among the lowest ranks of the industrial hierarchy.

It is important to point out that women do not constitute a universal category, and that class differences also exist among women, some of whom control the means of production along with men. Others hold positions as corporate executives and managers of industries. The issue of racial differences among women is also important, particularly for southern Africa.

In those developing countries where racial or national divisions do not exist, the position of women workers tends to be exclusively that of unskilled labourers at the bottom of the industrial hierarchy. In multi-racial and multi-national societies, the hierarchy pattern is far more complex. Some women will be found in posts, and receive incomes, vastly superior to those enjoyed by men from groups which are regarded as inferior on account of race or nationality.<sup>23</sup>

In the African context, tribal rivalries can also feature in the polarization inspired by industrialization. These can have serious political and social consequences which may further disguise class divisions and dilute their importance for structural transformation. In South Africa, for example, tribal segregation is used as a deliberate strategy to 'divide and conquer' the African working class in keeping with the ideology of apartheid.

It is a well known fact that as industrialization reaches maturity, stabilizes and becomes more capital-intensive, it releases labour and resources from direct production of goods and services, and transfers it to trade, services and

the professions. Consequently, the true 'proletariat' diminishes in numbers with the growth of industrialization. Within the world system, however, a new 'proletariat' emerges in the Third World as further evidence of their increasing incorporation into the global economy. Some of this labour migrates to the metropolises as is indicated by male migration from North African countries such as Algeria and Morocco to France, for example. However, for a number of reasons, including racism, restrictive immigration policies have been used to curtail the migration of Third World labour to the metropolises, and instead *capital* moves to where cheap labour can be found. Within the last two decades transnational companies have been increasingly locating their industries in Third World countries where labour is cheaper and plentiful. The goods produced are primarily for export rather than for domestic consumption.

Export-oriented manufacturing industries provide an excellent example of this new form of peripheral industrialization and its concomitant exploitative consequences. It is particularly prevalent in the textile, garment, food-processing and electronics industries where automation has occurred more slowly.<sup>24</sup> Since female labour traditionally has been valued lower than male labour, there has been a tendency for females to remain confined to labour-intensive industries, whereas males have moved more easily into capital-intensive industries.

The tradition of female labour in these labour-intensive industries goes back to industrial developments in the West,<sup>25</sup> and is sustained by stereotypes about female dexterity and preference for routine jobs.<sup>26</sup> It is now being

developed as a tradition in Latin America and Asia.<sup>27</sup> In all likelihood this pattern—which has already begun in some African countries, notably in the fruit, fishing, tobacco, sugar and textile industries—will become more widespread in time.<sup>28</sup> Female rural-urban migration is increasing in Africa<sup>29</sup> and conforms to the general pattern of peripheral migration.<sup>30</sup> It constitutes a labour reserve ready to be exploited by export-oriented manufacturing industries. A number of factors—low level of training, the abundance of cheap female labour, lack of protective legislation for female workers' and absence of strong unions pressing for workers' rights—produce and sustain a permanent labour pool, to be exploited sooner or later by transnational companies.

When not using Third World women as cheap sources of labour some of these industries exploit them as consumers of harmful products, including non-nutritious foods, potentially lethal infant formulas, cheap cosmetics, pesticides, etc. and as subjects in experimentation with dangerous drugs like Depo-Provera. They also promote new patterns of consumerism, and new life styles which are not only unsustainable by low income groups but also dangerous.

The types of industries set up by foreign companies—whether capital-intensive or labour-intensive are, in the final analysis, exploitative to Third World countries. Capital-intensive industrialization provides few employment opportunities, and labour-intensive industrialization disguises its exploitation by *providing* employment. Nationalization of these industries has failed to improve the situation, since heavy reliance on foreign technology and

personnel continues. Indeed, local industries can produce the same results as their foreign counterpart so long as the model being adopted is inherently exploitative.

### **Alternative development**

Alternative development begins with analysis—a process which has already begun under the intellectual leadership of Third World scholars and scholars from the industrialized nations. Without the correct analysis, solutions will be piecemeal palliatives growing out of the very structures which they seek to change. Concepts and strategies based on notions of ‘import substitution’, ‘integrating women into development’, and ‘the new international economic order’ have all fallen by the wayside, because they tend to increase dependency rather than decrease it.

Alternative development has to question assumptions upon which many of the earlier analyses and solutions have been based: assumptions based on the idea that women’s work is supplementary, that industrialization necessarily leads to economic growth, and that technology can solve all economic problems. Just as unrealistic is the equation of males with machinery. Such assumptions have resulted in the polarization of male and female labour, and in the formation of hierarchical structures in all spheres of economic life. An alternative model has to seriously question the emphasis by international agencies and governments on female labour force participation as an indicator of improvement in women’s status and economic position. The stress has to be on the *quality* rather than the quantity of female participa-

tion; for women can participate in the labour force as exploited wage labourers.

While basic needs, self-reliance and structural transformation would lead to endogenous and relevant development, an alternative strategy must also stress parity. This would mean identifying forces opposed to egalitarianism nationally and internationally, and creating new structures that would promote collectivization and more equitable distribution of resources. Since African societies have a basically cooperative ethos, it would be necessary to turn inward and seek to revive old egalitarian values where these existed, and use old African values in new and creative ways. There is a strong potential for harnessing the traditional African spirit of collectivity—which can be a revolutionary force in itself.

Looking inward, development plans should stress internal economic development rather than external trade. This would mean greater emphasis on agricultural development, which is necessary to any meaningful industrialization—a factor already recognized by several African countries. Extractive industries should not be operated prematurely, but instead should proceed alongside the development of manufacturing industries to process the raw materials and provide much-needed jobs for the country concerned. Industries should be established with the primary purpose of producing goods for basic needs, and governments should take a more forceful role in providing basic goods and services for *all* the people of a given country. In order to facilitate this people-oriented type of industrialization a good infrastructure must be developed, as well as an extremely efficient administrative machinery.

Within the world system, current North–South interactions should be modified in favour of South–South interactions. Strategies to increase technical cooperation among Third World countries should be strengthened, and institutional mechanisms for regional cooperation developed more extensively. The pattern of trade with industrialized countries sustains the present world economic order. Industrialization should be approached from the home base by initially developing agriculture and increasing trade links with other Third World countries.

Finally, the androcentric nature of technological development explains its current hierarchical and aggrandizing manifestations. The stress on machines and automation are part of the macho-value system. There is a need to recognize the close relationship between the excessive development of machines and the proliferation of weapons. If the goal of disarmament is ever to be reached, industrialization would have to be controlled. Above all, the type of industrialization characteristic of Third World countries would have to be halted; for peripheral industrialization tied to the metropolitan centres can only lead to greater exploitation of the most vulnerable sections of the population, particularly women.

My vision of an alternative development has to be projected within a planned system. Industrialization can no longer be left to the whims and fluctuations of the market and a true alternative will have to begin with dissociation and decolonization rather than further incorporation into the world economic system. Much of the planning will proportionately reflect the sexual, racial, ethnic and occupational com-

position of the population. There will also be a regular rotation of officers so that power does not become consolidated in the hands of a few individuals.

For self-reliant development to become a reality, the role of the United Nations and other international agencies in Third World development will have to be evaluated and drastically curtailed and all useless projects initiated by these agencies terminated.

Within the present world economic system corruption has become the norm and both men and women are involved. With dissociation the establishment of the principle of accountability to the people could be more strongly enforced through regular reporting, auditing of accounts, and the implementation of severe punishment for violations.

With regard to the question of land, shifting the control from men to women will not lead to a real alternative development but to a feminization of the unequal status quo. An alternative development will promote communal ownership of land with equal use rights for both men and women in all racial and ethnic groups. Equally important is the need to ensure protection of the environment. Intensive cultivation of cash crops for export and excessive use of pesticides will have to be abandoned in favour of safe production of staples and all essential food crops.

A technological alternative will de-emphasize capital-intensive industrialization and seek to establish small scale labour-intensive industries. Indigenous technologies which ensure a community's self-reliance should be developed and improved.

Training and education will be developed in

all areas of technological expertise for both men and women on an equal basis. Although women are the predominant labour force in agriculture in Africa, the educational programme will seek to provide options for women in other fields as well. Local and national councils will be responsible for establishing free and equal education for all and the gap between salaries will be greatly reduced for all jobs. Alternative development will also necessitate the exploration of alternative sources of energy based on solar and wind power, much of which is already used in indigenous food processing and textile (particularly tie-dye) production.

An alternative industrial development will have to proceed on several fronts at once, each well planned, well executed, and anticipating the next stage of development. This way the industrial process can be developed as a continuum, linking production, manufacture, distribution and consumption within a coherent plan.

Several legislative measures protecting local industries as well as valuing local 'products' will be necessary. At the same time, due to the low purchasing power of African countries, markets will have to be found within the region through regional trade agreements such as those initiated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and envisioned in the Lagos Plan of Action.

With regard to industrialization for self-reliance and basic needs, this process is already taking place in several African countries, so, in fact, we already have an alternative development along these lines. This takes place mainly within the informal labour market, often invis-

ible in national statistics. Ironically, this type of industrialization is quite visible and ubiquitous, particularly in the urban areas where it literally takes place 'in the streets'.

These 'road side industries' manufacture furniture, clothing, building materials, cooking utensils, trinkets, footwear, soap and other toiletries, traditional medicines and food products, which are purchased as basic needs items by the majority of the population. Women are vital to these industries as producers, distributors and consumers and constitute a major labour force in this informal sector. An alternative development will emphasize this sector in terms of investments, training, and access to credit and markets.

For an alternative development to be effective, it has to have an operating principle. This will be termed 'the principle of rotation'. This principle will aim to break down hierarchies within industry and in the organization of social and economic life. Specialization will not proceed along lines of sex, race or ethnicity. Sex stereotyping in jobs will be broken down by the regular rotation of men and women in traditional 'female' and 'male' jobs. The same principle will operate for jobs in the agricultural sector, the professions and within the household. All household work will be performed according to rotating weekly schedules allowing each adult member of the household to participate in activities involving cooking, laundry, house cleaning and child care. All of these measures will prevent the crystallization of roles along the lines of sex, and social groups will be more dynamically formed, thus preventing the development of rigid class divisions.

Reproduction will receive an equally impor-

tant place in production with industry providing maternity benefits, crèches and nursing breaks for mothers, as well as guaranteeing the reproductive rights of fathers through paternity leaves. Both parents will work for shorter hours during the first two years of the child's life with both spending an equal time in child rearing.

The principle of rotation will facilitate the formulation and adoption of an ideology of equality necessary for real structural transformation. This will call for the development of strong social movements pushing for the equality of all people in a vigilant and relentless manner, and the establishment of institutional mechanisms ensuring the control of the means of production by all the people. In this struggle both men and women will have to work together.

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# Another Development with Women: A View from Asia

By Vina Mazumdar

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*The monopolies of economic and political power as well as access to knowledge are the three major instruments by which the present structure of inequality between and within nations is maintained. The majority of women in the world, and more particularly in Asia, have little or no share in these instruments. Thus thrust into the background, women's positions are even more marginalized by their labour not being counted as productive and, more particularly, in rural areas, by their not having control of the land and its products. Vina Mazumdar, eminent Indian political scientist and woman activist, argues that traditional approaches to the 'women's question' in Asia have always been 'top-down' approaches that have looked at the question not as a political but rather as a social and cultural one. In addition, they have applied Western models and methods of data collection which are inappropriate. She speaks of land reform and the transfer of ownership of agricultural land to the tiller as being considered the most powerful instrument for structural change in agrarian societies. In Asia, women constitute the single largest group engaged in agriculture and the production of food and as such, any concept of development for women must adopt a 'bottom-up' approach, i.e. one that recognizes women's claims to own agricultural land in their own right when they are the tillers.*

*Dr. Vina Mazumdar is currently Director of the Centre for Women's Development Studies at New Delhi, India. Her contribution to the women's movement in India has the rare virtue of being both a practical and a theoretical one. She has held various posts including heading the Women's Studies Programme of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). She has written extensively on women and was one of the members of the Status of Women Committee whose report on the status of women in India remains one of the definitive works on Indian women today.*

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The Asian debate on the women's question has been characterized by three major ideologies, which sometimes complement but often contradict each other. The women's movements which developed in the colonized countries under the umbrella of national liberation

struggles were influenced by the often simultaneous presence of three competing beliefs: (a) of *liberal democracy* with its implicit acceptance of the Western pattern of social development as the answer to the problems of women's inequality, subordination or oppression; (b) of

*socialism* with its concept of a dichotomy between private (or family-based) and social production, and its offer of entry into social production on terms of equality with men as the only solution to women's problems; and (c) various shades of *cultural nationalism*, with their antipathy to anything Western, and their faith in the intrinsic justice and purity of religious traditions.

This last ideology gave birth to a spate of literature that projected the extraordinarily high status enjoyed by women in ancient civilizations, the prevalence of the mother cult, female deities and the ritual rights of women in most Asian religions, as well as the statements to be found in most scriptures regarding the sanctity of women's lives, their dignity and chastity. Current practices that institutionalized the subordination of women, e.g. child marriage, feet binding, *purdah*, the ill-treatment of widows, etc., and denied them access to education or property rights, were uniformly condemned by all three ideologies—but from different motives. While the liberal democrats and socialists sought remedies for the situation of women in the processes of modernization and the secularization of society, the cultural nationalists argued that improving the status of women through education and better acknowledgement of their rights within the family would strengthen the hold of Asian cultural traditions against the onslaught of Western values as women—by instinct and upbringing—were better custodians of cultural values and traditions.

Another interesting similarity between the three ideologies was in their agreement that the women's question was essentially a social and

cultural issue, to be resolved through education, legal reform and long-term developments, not an issue, which posed immediate economic or political challenges. Most national liberation fronts, therefore, agreed to project the women's question as a non-political, non-party issue, backed up by a consensus of otherwise warring ideologies.

The question of women's claim to political rights was, however, settled for somewhat different reasons. The challenge of transforming an urban middle-class movement for the sharing of power against the colonial or semicolonial regimes into mass liberation struggles invariably brought in the necessity of involving different constituencies in the struggle, and promising them a stake in the future structure of the nation. Secondly, the overwhelming response of women to the mass movements surprised, and even shamed, many of the national leaders into accepting their demand for equal political rights in the liberated countries. The implications of this right—for the social structure as a whole with its hierarchy, role and status differences, its extreme inequalities of class, caste, wealth, knowledge and power—were neither realized nor debated. There is little doubt that the influence of the suffragist and socialist movements in the West played a distinctive role in raising and settling this question in the Asian liberation movements.

Current research in a few countries has, however, opened a new controversy around the recognition of women's political rights in Asian societies. There is a theory that the Soviet Communist Party and Kamal Atatürk used the political and social emancipation of women as a device to smash the existing power structure in

the Soviet Asian territories and in Turkey. In the Soviet case this strategy is supposed to have resulted from the initial failure to mobilize the proletariat in these regions, as clan structures proved stronger than class differentiations. Women, therefore, were adopted as the 'surrogate proletariat'.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Turkey, Kamal's target for destruction was the Ottoman power structure which depended heavily on the priests for its legitimacy. The attack on Koranic law and its instruments which segregated and subordinated women (e.g. *pardah*, polygami and unilateral divorce) as a direct challenge to the rule of priests (and analogous to women's role as the surrogate proletariat) provides an interesting illustration of the political strategy of this nation-builder.<sup>2</sup>

No such analysis has been made of the Indian case, though there is some actual record of an unexplained objective articulated by the greatest ideologue of the Indian National Movement—Mahatma Gandhi. Emphasizing that equal political and legal rights for women were to be seen as *means*, not *ends* in themselves, he expressed, on different occasions, a theory of the *historic role* of women as vanguards of a non-violent struggle for a just and non-exploitative social order. Disagreeing with the cultural nationalists' glamourized image of women's position in ancient India, he identified women's oppression as historic and virtually universal, manifested through (a) their non-participation in the framing of social laws and rules of morality 'in the shaping of which they have had no voice'; (b) 'man's interested teaching' based on his 'lust for power', forcing women to accept their role as 'man's playthings'; (c) women's lack of autonomy in the use of their bodies and

in making life choices; and (d) their backward consciousness, which made them accept their inferior status in society.

But he noted that women had devised their own methods of dealing with these oppressions. They were the originators of various forms of non-violent non-cooperation. They had developed courage and endurance, a sense of moral strength, and a capacity to put the needs of others before their own. These qualities made them, in Gandhi's view, the 'natural leaders' of a non-violent struggle against all forms of social injustice.

Their historic role, therefore, was to lead the forces of social revolution against inequality, exploitation and injustice—not only for women, but for all oppressed groups in society; as victims of a historic oppression, women could identify with other oppressed groups more easily than men. The abolition of the legal and political disabilities of women was, therefore, necessary only to set the stage for the real struggle, when their influence on the 'political deliberations of the nation' would force the pace for the abolition of all forms of exploitation based on class, caste, property and power.<sup>3</sup>

Gandhi's critics have called him utopian and a conservative in his idealization of women's endurance and 'other-regarding' self-abnegation as virtues. They have also termed his brand of feminism as 'social feminism'—one that bases itself on an acceptance of the fundamental division of sex roles. A more cogent criticism could be of his failure to see the extent to which women identified with the interests of their families, class, caste or community. While it is true that many women who followed Gandhi played exemplary roles in the struggles

for the abolition of untouchability, the recognition of workers' and peasants' rights, and in peace movements of various kinds, it is also true that the concept of women's 'historic role', or Gandhi's views on women in general, have received very little intellectual examination by men or women during or after his life. Only one casual analyst<sup>4</sup> has observed that they could have sprung from a desire to 'feminize politics', or to give a blow to the established power processes.

A significant fact is that all three approaches evolved very nearly during the same period—i.e. just after World War I—when the movement for women's suffrage also reached its climax in the West. The Chinese experiment which, perhaps, attempted the liberation and participation of women on a far wider scale, developed slightly later, and displayed a similar mixture of ideologies and contradictions.

The course of history in most Asian countries during the last few decades displays certain marked similarities on the women's question—in spite of differences in political systems and differing priorities in patterns of development. The radical visions of new, egalitarian social orders that characterized liberation struggles kept giving way to the demands of economic development with technological and industrial modernization. Where the expansion of productive forces was combined with a policy for expanding the base of economic and political participation—as under socialist systems—women made some substantial gains. Whether these can withstand the present emphasis on technological modernization *at all costs*, remains to be seen. Reported evidence of the withdrawal of an attempt to recognize the econ-

omic value of housework, and the encouragement of women to take up part-time, sideline occupations that carry lower rewards and status are, however, disturbing signs.<sup>5</sup>

In the non-socialist countries, the extension of capitalism—national and international—has generally accelerated the process of the marginalization of the economic and social roles of women, increasingly projected as *consumers*—targets for social welfare services—but *not as partners with equal say in building a new society*. The fact that a few individual women have acceded to positions of enormous political power has not changed or prevented their marginality in the political process. Similarly, the gains of a minority—through education, wealth and class—have generally helped to mask a much more extensive decline for the majority.

The three major instruments for maintaining the present structure of inequality within and between nations are the monopolies of economic, political and knowledge power. All are historically tried devices of hierarchic societies, but they have become far more powerful today, because of the tremendous expansion of the base and resources needed for economic activity and knowledge acquisition. This logic also extends to political participation, but with one difference. The development of economic and knowledge bases also helps to reduce isolation between peoples, and throws the process of the generation, control and utilization of power open to greater scrutiny, criticism and attack. In the long run, political power under any system must depend on the consent of numbers of people and the efficiency of the system. *The monopoly of political power is therefore relatively more insecure and vulnerable.*

The majority of women in Asia do not share in any one of these monopolies. The modernization and formalization of economic and knowledge systems from the community down to the family appears to have had the effect of widening the gap between men's and women's access to, and control over knowledge, information resources, rewards and power (social, economic and cultural factors are combined in maintaining a network of constraints which make invisible the needs and contributions of women). This process has led to the building and perpetuation of the myth of women's dependence and to the reduction of the value of their traditional areas of knowledge, skills and occupation which helped shape their identity, self-image and sense of self-worth.

This process of marginalization and widening inequality is most pronounced in rural areas, where it should have been the least. Despite social science theories that culture determines the boundaries of women's lives more than any other factor, most of the multicultural agrarian societies of Asia, like those of Africa and Latin America, display one predominant pattern, the overwhelming involvement of women in agriculture, traditional industries (textiles, handicrafts) and informal markets. Yet, the myth of women's traditional non-participation in economic activity continues to dominate the thinking of policy-makers, social analysts and educationalists.<sup>6</sup> Poor households in all societies, whether rural or urban, depend heavily, if not solely, on the earnings and the labour of women, but the elite model—of women depending on male breadwinners—erected into a value by hierarchic societies, strengthened by the impact of colonialism and cultural national-

ism, has been further blessed by social analysis and data collection concepts derived from the highly industrialized societies of the West, where the reduction of women's roles from producers and managers to consumers and dependents was far more advanced.<sup>7</sup> The results, again similar in most countries, are lower rewards for harder labour, concentration in low paid, low skilled work, lack of access to technology or other resources, and displacement from traditionally protected occupations with the advance of economic modernizations.

The invisibility, undervaluation and non-valuation of women's contribution to the economy is closely linked with their lower social status. Upward economic mobility, instead of solving the problem of the oppression of poverty, begins the oppression of prosperity, and the entry of some form of social seclusion, withdrawal from public economic activity, and relative loss of individual freedom and status within the family. It has to be noted that matrilineal forms of descent and property rights which survived the onslaughts of patriarchal religions like Islam and Christianity, have succumbed to the processes of economic modernization and growing class differentiation.<sup>8</sup>

The new civil or political rights conceded to women in most countries have proved inadequate to break the reinforced strength of these social institutions, or structural inequalities that incorporate and thrive on sexual inequality.<sup>9</sup>

Well-intentioned policies for women's equality, which depended primarily on access to education, better legal rights and suffrage, have invariably foundered on the inbuilt denial of rights in hierarchical social structures that feed

on the exploitation of various sections of people. Rights to property, education and equality before the law mean nothing to the masses of people whose poverty deprives them of any access to these rights. Among the poor, women and children are the poorest, the most illiterate, the least healthy and the most exploited. The household economy of the poor, subjected to increasing tension in the context of economic modernization and growing marginalization, subsists by extorting a surplus, through depriving women and children of some basic needs—leisure, nutrition, education and health care.<sup>10</sup>

Any attempt at structural change in the direction of a more equitable distribution of resources and power has to incorporate measures to counter this generally crude, but sometimes subtle form of inequality and oppression. Whether one accepts Gandhi's concept of women's historic role or not, the question remains: can any structure based on inequality and exploitation be overturned without upsetting this basic inequality that is a feature of all classes, including the poorest?

The socialist experiment, while removing many aspects of women's inequality, failed to adequately solve the problem of the 'double burden' and non-valuation or undervaluation of housework. Whether the gains will stand the pressures of technological modernization and need for demographic control remains to be seen. At the ideological level, the women's question seems to have receded into the background with little information available on the next phase of women's development.

For the non-socialist countries, all the tried strategies for women's equality have been 'top-down' approaches. The right to property,

where real, has basically affected the upper classes, undoubtedly strengthening their monopolistic hold on economic power. It has also enabled families in these classes to evade the state's attempts to reduce inequality through fiscal policies and property ceilings. A few women in these classes may have obtained entry into the world of economic power, but most of them are controlled by male authority, and often provide a screen for manipulations by the latter. The institution of joint ownership by husband and wife prevalent in the Philippines and Indonesia requires careful investigation, particularly of its role in promoting women's equality.

Land reform, and the transfer of ownership of agricultural land to the tiller, is advocated as the most powerful instrument for structural change in agrarian societies, taking a 'bottom-up' approach. Rural women constitute the single largest group engaged in agriculture and the production of food. Yet very few of them control the basic asset—land. A truly bottom-up approach should recognize women's claims to own agricultural land in their own right when they are tillers.<sup>11</sup> In landless families, this will undoubtedly begin a readjustment of power balances within the family and the community, as these women are far more articulate and conscious of the real contribution they make to the family's survival, and the prosperity of the community.

Women in agriculture attach the highest priority to food crops, as it is their responsibility to feed their families. Greater influence by women on agricultural decisions can help to arrest the trend towards the reduction of areas under food crops.

Some Asian traditions claim that women discovered agriculture.<sup>12</sup> In those parts of the world where agriculture today is ruled by modern technology, women have virtually disappeared from the fields. Detachment from this primary production sector has perhaps been one of the important factors for the rapid transition of women to 'consumer' and 'non-skilled' status in these industrialized countries. But rural Asian women relate to agriculture as a source of their identity, roots and skills. Some specific skills, that Asian women have, can, with adequate input of modern scientific knowledge and technology, raise productivity relatively faster without displacing women.<sup>13</sup> Livestock rearing, pisci-culture, sericulture, apiculture, dairying, horticulture—all traditionally women's occupations—could only benefit them if they controlled the basic assets, and their own labour processes. Current attempts at 'social forestry', in spite of stated objectives to the contrary, mostly tend to promote the plantation of trees which mainly benefit large industries. The needs of rural households—for food, fodder, fuel and a livelihood—that could be met by the forest with planned management, are generally ignored. Forest policies, forest sciences and forest management are invariably in the hands of men, whose eyes are set on the revenue and the high income/profit offered by large industry. Planned attempts at afforestation—on forest fringes, along sides of highways and village roads, on waste land, including social forestry projects supported by international aid, seem to be becoming a monopoly for eucalyptus and similar plants, which offer nothing to women, while depriving them of sources of food, fodder, fuel, etc.

Irrigation—major and minor—gets high priority in most plans for rural development, but the supply of water for drinking and washing receives scant attention. As admitted recently by a top Indian planner: 'If men had to fetch drinking water, then 230,000 villages would not have remained without provision of drinking water after 30 years of planned development'.<sup>14</sup>

Suffrage has not really enabled women to 'affect the political deliberations of the nation' as Gandhi had visualized. The constraints of family, class, illiteracy and all the traditional barriers and attitudes that prevent women's ability to influence these vital development decisions, cannot be challenged individually. Overthrowing the 'subordination syndrome' requires collective organization, and the confidence that is generated by solidarity.

But what forms should such organizations take? Asian women have a long history of active participation in peasant and worker's movements for better rights and working conditions, in social movements against rigid hierarchic structures, against imperialism, colonialism and external aggressors. Yet the histories of these struggles seldom record the character and aftermath of women's role in these movements. Most modern political organizations—reactionary or progressive in ideology—include women, but their organizational structures tend to reproduce the subordination syndrome of traditional social units: household, family, kinship and communal groups. Women do participate actively in the *labour process*, or the mobilization drives in the case of political organizations, but seldom in the *decision-making processes*. The few women who do become visible in the latter do so not

as elected representatives of other women, but as individuals—qualified by reasons of age, personality, family, kinship with other leaders or personal merit.

Many countries have thrown up large national women's organizations and women's wings of political parties. Most of them are concentrated in urban areas, dominated by women from elite groups, with little understanding of development processes or their impact on poor rural and urban women.

New forms of grassroots level organization need to be studied, not only women's organizations, but peasant and worker's groups, local pressure and power groups of various kinds, with or without a stated political affiliation. The structural, procedural and attitudinal characteristics of these organizations need to be analysed, to identify those which contain features which assist women to participate more effectively in all processes.

Along with this is needed a new approach to the study of social organizations which have defied time—i.e. families and households. Women's work in maintaining these structures has received very little examination, strengthening the myths about its 'marginality, supplementarity and dispensibility'.<sup>15</sup>

Women and men need to reassess women's roles in history—with more objective data minus the biases that reflected implicit acceptance of subordination. Such reappraisal can help to create the characteristics of a war between the sexes. To most Asian women, the latter is unreal, impracticable and has little future. The society of the future has to be based on mutual respect and dignity. Equality is a state of mind—and rests more on self-perception, less on the

perception of others. Better knowledge about women—their past and present—can do far more to change these perceptions.

#### Notes

1. Marshall, Gregory, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Soviet Policy Towards Women in Central Asia 1919-29*, Princeton University Press.
2. Symposium on the Position of Women in Turkey, May 1978 (unpublished).
3. Gandhi, M.K., *To Women*, Navjeevan Press, Ahmedabad. See also *Towards Equality—Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1975, Chapter 7; and Mazumdar, Vina, 'Social Reform Movement from Ranade to Nehru' in *Indian Women from Purdah to Modernity*, Vikas, Delhi, 1976.
4. Dasgupta, Sugata, 'Emancipation of Women in India' (unpublished paper, prepared for the Committee on the Status of Women in India).
5. This was reported by a China specialist at an ILO workshop on Women in Asia held at Turin in November 1981.
6. *Towards Equality*, op. cit. Chapters 6 and 8; and *Report of the National Conference on Women's Studies 1981*, SNDT Women's University, Bombay. Also UNESCO Expert meeting on Women's Studies and Social Sciences in Asia, held at Delhi, October 1982; and *Rural Women and Development*, Report of an International Seminar, ICSSR, 1977.
7. Ibid. See also Mitra, Asok, introduction to *Status of Women: Shifts in Occupational Patterns 1961-71*, Abhinav Publications, Delhi 1979.
8. This had been commented on by Indian researchers and was noted by the Committee on the Status of Women in India. Similar trends were reported at the Unesco-sponsored meeting mentioned above, with a demand for comparative studies on these dying forms of social organization. A critical case study of the impact of changing land relations on women of a matrilineal community by K. Sarada-

moni, soon to be published by the ICSSR and Concept Publishers, Delhi.

9. Mazumdar, Vina, (ed), *Symbols of Power*, ICSSR, SNTD Women's University and Allied Publishers, 1979.

10. Mitra, Asok, 'National Population Policy and National Development' in *Population and Development Review*, March 1979; also by the same author, *India's Population: Aspects of Quality and Control*, Abhinav, Delhi 1978.

11. First demanded by Muslim peasant women from landless families in West Bengal in 1978; incorporated in the joint memorandum on *Indian Women in the Eighties: Development Imperatives*, submitted to the Government of India by eight national women's organizations in 1980; and in the Report of the National Committee reviewing the Role and Participation of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 1980. India's Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) acknowledges women's roles in agriculture and assures 'that in cases of transferred

assets such as agricultural or homestead land, government shall endeavour to provide joint titles to husband and wife'. See also Report of the ILO Tripartite Asian Regional Workshop on *Rural Women and Development*, ILO, Geneva, 1982.

12. Temple murals in parts of northeastern India inhabited by tribal communities (some of whom are still engaged in slash and burn agriculture, and some of whom still follow matrilineal descent systems, though control is shifting to male hands) portray women as the first domesticators of plants.

13. Swaminathan, M.S., (formerly Secretary, Agriculture; Director-General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research; and Member, Planning Commission; currently Director-General, International Rice Research Institute, Manila) in J.P. Naik Memorial Lecture on *Rural Women and Development*, Centre for Women's Development Studies, September 1982 (to be published).

14. Ibid.

15. Mitra, Asok, *Status of Women*, op. cit.

# Women and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

## Lessons from the Seventies and Hopes for the Future

By Lourdes Arizpe

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*'In the seventies, while for the mainstream Western feminist movements the priorities have been equal pay for equal work and sexual and psychological autonomy, the priorities for the largest number of women in the Third World have been the right to adequate employment and to primary services such as schools, drinking water, housing and medical services', writes Dr Lourdes Arizpe of the Department of Sociology at El Colegio de México in this wide-ranging analysis of the situation of the women in Latin America and the Caribbean. But now, in the eighties, she believes that new experiences are changing former priorities on both sides of the dividing line between North and South. In the South in particular, recent events have 'changed perceptions of women's strategies for equality and development. Chief among them is the well-known fact that neither national independence nor socialism automatically improve the position of women.'*

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The hope of liberation is contagious: when national liberation movements grew in the sixties in many Latin American, African and Asian countries, a new awareness arose among other oppressed groups. Ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples demanded the right to develop their cultural identity. And women became increasingly aware that their personal burdens and social disadvantages stemmed from a sociopolitical definition of their nature, their work and, in general, their role in society.

In the West, this awareness grew sharply out of their exclusion from the central arena of left-wing and civil rights movements, as well as the imposition of a feminine mystique which shackled them to the needs of a post-industrial society. In countries of the Third World this awareness has grown slowly, as the benefits of development were increasingly concentrated in the hands of men, and also of women from the upper classes. Women were invisible in the debate on development, through an unspoken

assumption that, just as it was thought that wealth would eventually trickle down to the poorer classes, so wealth created through development would automatically 'trickle over' to women.

Instead it was found, as research focused on this hidden topic, that among the ills of under-development and dependency, it is usually women who inhabit the bottom rungs of misery and poverty: they are the lowest paid agricultural workers, they are very often banned from owning and controlling land through customary or legal codes, and they have the highest rural outmigration rates in all ages in Latin America and, after the age of forty-five, in all Third World regions. Also, in most cities they have the highest urban unemployment rates, hence the large numbers of women street vendors, beggars and slum dwellers, and, finally, female-headed households consistently have lower incomes than their male counterparts. As national liberation movements advanced, it al-

so became clear that women were wanted only as active militants during the political struggle but, once the battles were over, they were sent home to the same conditions of double days, subordination and invisibility.

Hope is, indeed, a dangerous thing: once it has been lighted, it may flicker or even grow dim, but it will keep alive. And so we have entered the eighties, with our hopes still alive but in a very different world. If the sixties was the decade of liberation, and the seventies that of negotiation, the eighties run the risk of becoming the decade of confrontation. We are facing a world in which the senseless resistance to change threatens us all with self-extinction through a nuclear war. A world in which narrow national and patriarchal interests have become so obdurate that they would rather destroy than accept a loss of power and privilege. As some of the most powerful ruling elites of industrialized capitalist countries, and of socialist countries, as well as those in many Third World countries, try to maintain through military means a power which they cannot sustain through political means, it is all the more urgent to seek alternative visions of development for the future. I believe that the women's movement can contribute significantly towards this task of building a vision of a society which is more equal, more self-reliant (although interdependent), and more in harmony with the natural environment.

#### **Maldevelopment for women: lessons from Latin America**

At the end of the sixties, when most of us in Latin American universities were reading Fanon, Gandhi, Senghor, Césaire and, of course,

Cardoso, Stavenhagen, Gunder Frank, Freire and others, we thought, optimistically, that Third World countries could achieve national liberation, or greater internal democracy as well as a more equal partnership in the international monetary and trade system, simply by applying time and effort in the right direction. Several years later, some of us also began reading feminist publications and launched into what has been called in Latin America the 'double militancy' of women: fighting to bring about women's equality as well as structural change. Now, ten years later, the lesson is well learnt: the privileged elites will take up arms against any attempt at the redistribution of power and wealth. There are now right-wing military dictatorships in Latin American countries; popular participation in government is at its lowest ebb. In countries with repressive regimes, women have indeed been treated equally as men: thousands have been arrested, kidnapped, tortured, assassinated and exiled. Among them is a woman who fought for women's rights long before feminism grew fashionable, Alaide Foppa, founder of the Mexican feminist journal, *Fem*.

The seventies, then, witnessed the development of political underdevelopment in countries which had had strong, constitutional regimes, such as Chile and Uruguay. These years also witnessed the economic and social development of many such countries. In Chile, for example, the best organized and most comprehensive state medical service has been dismantled. In Argentina, the open door policy of the military government has all but destroyed what was once the most advanced national industry of Latin America. In terms of theories of

development, such events and the economic stagnation of many Latin American countries, have reinforced the view that industrial capitalism is neither an unilinear process, nor a model of development that can be replicated mechanically in Third World countries. Rather, it is subject to the intervention of vested interests working through international and national market forces, and state policies. Accordingly, the early implicit assumptions that industrialization or, generally, modernization, would automatically improve the condition of women have also been increasingly challenged by research and statistical data.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the theory which held that acculturation—that is, the cultural assimilation of ethnic groups of Indian and African descent into the national Hispanic or Portuguese cultures—implied an improvement in the condition of women, has been challenged through ethnographic and historical research.<sup>1</sup>

Women in closed corporate communities may have higher status, greater participation in authority and more support from their children, than those in open mestizo communities, where 'excessive drinking, and abusive sexual relations (including beating) not surprisingly form an integral part of this psychosocial complex of "machismo"'.<sup>2</sup> New research has focused on the forced integration of black women and also of Indian women, as concubines of the dominant white men, as a mechanism of *mestizaje*, that is, mixing of the population, against which women had no legal or *de facto* defense.<sup>3</sup> Such abuse of women, masked by racial and cultural prejudice, still continues in many backward rural areas in Latin America today. In

Mexico, for example, a mestizo schoolteacher who systematically raped the Indian girls who were his pupils has not been dismissed and continues to teach, and in another Indian region in the state of Chiapas, the 'droit du seigneur', that is, the right of the landowner to spend the first night with the virgin brides in his estate, disappeared only a few years ago.<sup>4</sup>

However, in discussions of the peasantry and of rural development in Latin America and the Caribbean, women had been largely ignored because agriculture was conceptualized as an exclusively male activity, an androcentric view which is reflected in census categories that make the component of women's labour in agriculture invisible or unimportant. As a result, the statistical percentages have always been unrealistically low in most countries. Detailed surveys and observations during the last decade have shown, much to the contrary, that peasant women work longer hours than men and are more liable to increase their time and load of work to offset pauperization.<sup>5</sup>

Different conceptualizations have been used to define women's work on the peasant farm. For example, it has been considered that women do the *processing* (shelling, chafing, storing, cooking, brewing, etc.) of agricultural products, while men carry out the *production* tasks<sup>6</sup> and also, that women produce *use values* while men produce the *exchange values* in the peasant household.<sup>7</sup> Both views, however, have been challenged as too schematic since, in many regions, women are also engaged in actual production, for example, in sowing, weeding and harvesting, and in producing goods for sale, i.e. brewing, knitting or weaving.

Another view has held that peasant women's

activities are related to the degree of capitalist penetration, and that, in fact, capitalism is responsible for women's subordination as their discrimination in the labour market is reflected in their position within the community and the family. Empirical data, though, have not borne this out, as is shown by a large-scale study in Colombia by Deere and Leon.<sup>8</sup> The sexual division of labour among small agricultural producers, they conclude, does not vary in a unilinear way according to the development of agrarian capitalism. Their research, as well as that of other women in different countries of the region, confirms that women's subordination precedes capitalism and is further used by this system of production for its own ends.<sup>9</sup>

The uneven and contradictory effects of development on rural women in Latin America and the Caribbean can be clearly seen in the different strategies adopted by women as the increased pauperization of the mass of small family producers with insufficient lands (*minifundistas*) makes their labour and income more and more crucial for the survival of the household. Among small family producers of a cash crop for the market, women are having to intensify their workload as unpaid family labour in order to compete with larger capitalist enterprises.<sup>10</sup> Where such intensification of labour in agricultural production is not viable, women have turned to the production of handicrafts or to cottage industries. These, however, are being increasingly undermined by competition from urban manufacturers<sup>11</sup> and, therefore, women have turned to petty trade. Thus, some of the Latin American countries with the poorest rural populations—Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Paraguay—have the highest

number of women involved in petty trade.<sup>12</sup> In Haiti, for example, women's employment in agriculture declined between 1950 and 1970, while their trade activities have increased notably as they become *Madam Saras* (long-distance traders) and *revendeuses* (local traders).<sup>13</sup>

A third alternative for women in impoverished rural households has been wage labour. Export-oriented agriculture—for example, flowers for the European market, or winter vegetables and fruits for the U.S. market—gives preference in employment to young rural women, for the often repeated reason that 'they are more dexterous with their hands' (after hearing this time and again, one wonders why, then, aren't women trained to be neurosurgeons, dentists, medical researchers or for other professions which require a gentle touch?). Women working in such enterprises are usually paid a lower salary than men, and only for actual work performed; they often have no contract, no medical, maternity or other social security benefits, and may be fired without compensation. Because they leave or are made to leave when they marry, it is difficult for them to organize or to form unions through which to negotiate better working conditions.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, many times such employment brings young women into the market who otherwise would not seek employment, and gives them preference even when there is very high unemployment among older women, many of them heads of households, and also among men.<sup>15</sup>

In spite of such conditions of work, the young women themselves are quite content, or even thrilled since the job allows them to leave the house, to make some money to give to their

parents or to buy a few things for themselves, and to walk around town and have a chance to talk to young men. In one case study in Mexico it became clear that such an attitude reflected the oppressive conditions of their traditional lives; to be virtual prisoners in their homes, afraid to venture out except in the company of their father or brothers, because young women there are frequently 'stolen' by men whom they are then forced to marry.<sup>16</sup>

Similar working conditions are offered to young rural women in redeployed electronics, garment and textile industries of transnational firms. Such industries also prefer young, unmarried women who leave voluntarily or are asked to leave when they marry. Thus, the firms save on maternity benefits, medical and child care, child stipends, promotion and seniority payments. Unionization is avoided through rapid turnover and because workers are inexperienced and uninformed. And wages are low because they are considered to be supplementary to the father's or other head of household's income. This has been the experience, for example, in the Free Trade Zone established along the Mexico-U.S. border in the sixties. A decade later, however, because transport and labour costs have increased, assembly plants are leaving the area. In fact, women tell of plants literally disappearing overnight, as sewing machines and prefabricated structures were dismantled and hauled away. The workers, then, had no one, no office, no firm, no management, to whom to address themselves to demand legal compensation.<sup>17</sup> As a result of the loss of jobs, women who can no longer return to their rural regions or their homes and can find no alternative em-

ployment, are having to resort to prostitution to make a living. Needless to say, such redeployed firms and assembly plants have moved yet again to new areas, say in Honduras or Haiti, where young girls are plentiful and the wages are low.

Importantly, when women's wage labour is analysed, the continuing activities of women in social reproduction must not be overlooked. In Latin America and the Caribbean, agro-industries or redeployed industries rarely provide child care facilities, although they may be legally bound to do so. This becomes a simple, non-obtrusive mechanism for excluding women workers with small children, when, in fact, most of them are female heads of households who need a wage more desperately than the young unmarried women. As a result, very often, such women are pushed back into agricultural wage labour, where employers do not even consider the need for child care activities. A frequent sight, then, in the fields, is that of tiny tots in rags, playing in the dust of the furrows. Also, because men are not made socially responsible for any area of reproductive tasks, whether domestic work or child care, for these rural married women the double day becomes a painful reality: wage labour does not give them more independence but added work, effort and worry. In fact, among small family producers women may even have a *triple* day: working in the family plot, carrying the full weight of all reproductive activities and working for a wage outside the home.

The fourth alternative in seeking an income among women in poor rural households has a long tradition in Latin America: migration to urban centres to work as domestic servants. On

the basis of FAO and PREALC figures, it can be estimated that some 3.8 million rural women migrated to Latin American cities from rural areas between 1960 and 1970.<sup>18</sup>

While some researchers have regarded domestic service as a stepping stone for unskilled rural women towards formal employment in industry,<sup>19</sup> others have argued that few women in domestic service subsequently enter the manufacturing service, rather, they continue to work as non-residential servants or take up activities in the informal sector.<sup>20</sup> Available statistics support the latter view: in Latin America as a whole, 67.2 per cent of women workers are in the services sector, the majority of them in domestic service.<sup>21</sup> This has happened even in those countries with industrial growth, such as Argentina, where the percentage of women in industrial jobs declined from 31.9 per cent to 21 per cent from 1950 to 1970, while those in the services sector increased from 55.8 per cent to 74.8 per cent during that same period. It is important to note that this decline in industrial employment for women is not a recent phenomenon. Saffioti reports that between 1872 and 1900, 91.3 per cent of industrial workers in Brazil were women, due to the fact that most industries were textile factories and workshops.<sup>22</sup> This percentage decreased to 25.3 per cent in 1940 and by 1970 it had fallen to 12.2 per cent. Further back, historical research in Argentina also showed that in the last century, the international crisis of the wool industry led to widespread female unemployment in the provinces of the interior. An Argentinian writer noted in 1869 that 'working women, unable to continue their traditional work, had no other employment possibilities so suited to

their conditions'. In consequence, many of them turned to prostitution and, predictably, the government responded with harsher anti-vagrancy laws.<sup>23</sup> Thus, we somehow find history repeating itself in the interior provinces of Argentina in the 1860s, the Mexican Border Zone in the 1970s and so many other regions of Latin America and the Caribbean in between.

Thus, research in Latin America has shown that industrialization in the region has gone through several stages of women's employment: in the early stages of textile and generally labour-intensive industries, women are offered plenty of jobs. But as industry becomes capital intensive, it is men who are recruited and trained to handle the new technology and mechanization. With the expansion of urbanization and the state bureaucracy, jobs for middle-class and upper-class women expand, most of them in the services.<sup>24</sup>

The influence of dependency theory and Marxism on women's studies in Latin America and Caribbean has clearly led to research into structural and particularly, economic, constraints on the advancement of women. But in the last few years, it has been argued that economic analysis is not enough; that there are ethnic and racial prejudices, cultural traditions and ideological prescriptions to be dealt with. A major theme to be looked at is the effects of Catholic beliefs on women's lives. No matter how secular a social setting may seem—say, cosmopolitan Buenos Aires, urban Mexico or highly educated Costa Rica—the fundamental values about women's nature and behavior are still defined by Catholicism. But appraising these values has been a different matter: on

the one hand, women are expected to submit to a unique definition of femaleness in motherhood, represented by the passive and resigned image of the Virgin Mary. But at the same time, her strength as the only female figure in a pantheon of male gods gives women in Latin America a social centrality and an emotional power which women do not seem to have in Anglo-Saxon societies. As Jane Jacquette notes: 'the differentiation between the sexes may be a source of power'.<sup>25</sup> This ambivalence in the cultural tradition and in the power of women is, I believe, clearly reflected in the ambivalence with which Latin American women deal with feminism as defined by women in North Atlantic countries.

#### **A North-South dialogue on Another Development with women**

In the seventies, while for the mainstream Western feminist movements the priorities have been equal pay for equal work and sexual and psychological autonomy, the priorities for the largest number of women in the Third World have been the right to adequate employment and to primary services such as schools, drinking water, housing and medical services. Differences in priorities led to differences in strategies: for women in affluent industrial countries the main strategy has been to raise personal consciousness, and to create autonomous organizations of women to confront the male power structure. It is interesting to note that consciousness raising had its political equivalent in Latin America in *concientizacion*, the drive to spread political consciousness against exploitation and repression which led, in many

countries of the region in the seventies, to even more brutal repression as popular mobilization and left-wing movements grew widely. For women in the South, then, strategies must be different and the main one during the seventies was to participate alongside men in political movements seeking to attain national sovereignty or to challenge economic inequalities, both internally and internationally, as a precondition to the setting up of women's demands as a gender group.

Now, in the eighties, I believe that recent experiences are changing former priorities and strategies on both sides of the dividing line. On the one hand, in industrialized countries, economic recession and monetarist policies are undermining women's demands for more jobs, and for equal pay. Cut-backs in government spending are shutting down basic social services that eased women's unpaid reproductive labour, such as child care centres, care for the elderly and the infirm, contraception and abortion clinics, etc. Consequently, women in those countries can no longer take the economic and political structure as given: they now face the choice of retreating to the old, patriarchal system of capitalist domination in order to retain old privileges, or of joining in seeking a new social order, national and international, together with Third World women, at the price of lowering their standards of living but with the possibility of allowing a human society to survive in which equality for women can be fought for. That Western industrialized countries are willing to have their own working women pay the price for their concessions to Third World countries is becoming increasingly evident. A majority of jobs in the textile,

garment and electronics industries being re-deployed to the South were held by women and by blacks and other minorities in the North. Thus, it is becoming increasingly clear that strategies for women's equality, because they are enmeshed in the workings of the economic and political systems, cannot be achieved in this day and age only at a national level, but must be based on an understanding of the position of women within the *international* political and economic order.

In the South, recent events have also changed perceptions of women's strategies for equality and development. Chief among them is the well known fact that neither national independence nor socialism automatically improve the position of women. Deliberate policies are needed, and not always conceded, to give them equal participation without increasing their double day. Cuba is probably the most interesting example, where legislation decrees that women's greater economic and political participation must be supported by the active involvement of men in domestic and child-rearing activities.

Another experience in Latin America has been the misperception of feminism as a social movement. It has become a commonplace to cite, as an example to justify the Left's mistrust of feminism, the case of bourgeois women in Chile who helped bring about Allende's downfall by marching in the streets banging empty casseroles. In fact, this is an error in interpretation. Those women were certainly not feminists: they were not protesting against women's subordination, but were actually reaffirming their traditional female role as guardians of the hearth and kitchen. Rather, they

were protesting against their loss of privilege as a social class in that they could no longer feed their families as sumptuously as before. Moreover, it is bitterly ironic that none of the vast numbers of poor women in Latin America and the Third World who, in actual fact, cannot feed themselves or their families adequately, have never come out into the streets banging empty casseroles. The day that happens, no one will ever again question poor women's rights to have a say in political matters. It is not surprising, then, to find that conservative dictatorships consider feminism a subversive movement and have outlawed it, as Pinochet has done.

A more recent experience, in Nicaragua, shows that a new society based on principles of popular participation, equality for women and the redistribution of work and wealth, requires a creativity which can only develop in a context of self-reliance and autonomy. And it must be based on a new vision of society.

#### **Dilemmas and visions for Another Development with women**

All these findings, resulting from research by women for women are very eloquent. The diagnosis, then, of how dependent capitalist development brings an added burden of poverty and subordination to women in low-income households is clear. But we must now ask, what are the principles through which equality for women can be achieved simultaneously with genuine economic development?

In the difficult world of today, especially in Third World countries, the strategies for the advancement of women cannot be an either/or

choice, but must be assessed within their particular context. Two examples can illustrate this: ideally, women must demand the right to have the option of working in jobs with equal pay and appropriate legal conditions. But, while seeking a structural transformation which will allow this choice, immediate options must be assessed in relative terms. That is, for a poor woman it is preferable to have an income, even under exploitative conditions, than none at all. And it is preferable for young women to work outside the home rather than inside it. In this sense, employment options for women in maldeveloped economies must be judged according to the needs and viewpoint of the women themselves. Ultimately, though, a new system must be sought, neither capitalist nor bureaucratically centralized, where such exploitative piecemeal options are no longer needed.

Another example is the issue of female-headed households. On feminist principle, the right of a woman to decide to leave her husband and make a living on her own must be defended. Yet, in a situation of acute economic precariousness that makes survival difficult, the women themselves may prefer to strengthen the matrimonial bond so that the husband shares the responsibilities as father and provider. Again, flexibility is needed here to allow these options to be present, according to specific contexts and to women's decisions. Only then can the different needs and wishes of women be assessed according to class, ethnic and cultural definitions. Another development, then, needs a complex model giving different groups of women different opportunities.

A second principle, which grows out of the experiences in the South in the seventies, is

that self-reliance must not lead to autarchy. Whether in personal relationships or in relationships between countries, the sudden awareness of the inequality and exploitativeness of the relationship has led to the complete severance of these links, yet this is no solution. Several countries which had tried to de-link completely from the world market, have been forced to re-link to it as their economies stagnated. A key concept is: *exchange in itself is not negative*. In fact, industrialized countries were able to develop thanks to exchange, an exchange that is, totally tailored to their needs within a structure of imperialism. Therefore, what must be changed are the *terms* of exchange, in order to give dependent countries more equal terms in trade and finance in the world market. Such terms must be based on the principle of negotiated interdependence.

The same principle can be applied to relationships between women and men. Both must be self-reliant, independent individuals who share the love and enrichment of mutual interdependence. Such an exchange will only be possible if women are not forced into dependency through repression of their physical, intellectual or emotional growth. In fact, dependency is the opposite of love: it engenders personal politics which, in turn, destroy love.

Implicit in this principle is the fact that one partner, no matter how powerful he or she may be, must not impose their narrow personal, or national interests by force. When we look at the state of the world today, we see the tremendous dangers we are facing in this senseless resistance to change through the use of force: terrorism, military and paramilitary torture and murder, angry people, frightened people,

striking at each other with violence—and worse still, the irrational arms race, piling up destruction as ‘deterrents’. In this context, women must be active partners in achieving the survival of our natural environment and of more just societies. Perhaps, if we bring together all the lessons learned in different countries, if we bring together our wills and our hopes, perhaps the world will find a common sense.

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# Women's Disadvantage: Capitalist Development and Socialist Alternatives in Britain

By Kate Young and Sheila Smith

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*'There is a fatal bias in the way the economy of advanced capitalist societies are conceived' according to the arguments advanced by Kate Young and Sheila Smith in this article on 'Women's Disadvantage'. Only the production of goods and services for the market is considered economic activity while the production of children and the comforts of everyday life and the maintaining of social relations within the home is not accepted as such. Socialists and trade unionists have failed to take seriously the issues involved, and have not put forward alternative policies and visions. In the final part of this article, the authors attempt to formulate a number of such alternatives.*

*Kate Young holds a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology and is a Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex. Sheila Smith is a Ph.D. in Economics and at present Director of Studies in Development Economics at the University of Sussex.*

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Discussions of development and strategies for development rarely include detailed investigation of the effects of the process and results of development in the so-called advanced or developed countries on various social groups. Such discussions are the province of historians rather than development economists, planners and the like. In the past, indeed, the aim of development was to reproduce in countries of the Third World conditions similar to those in Britain, Europe and the U.S. today.

At this time when conventional ways of looking at development are being widely questioned, it is more important than ever to look at the deficiencies as well as the benefits of first world development and in particular at the organisation of social life within these countries, whether capitalist or socialist. To define alternatives it is important not merely to analyse the gains advanced countries have made—levels of health and education, levels of technology, domestic and otherwise, standard of living—but also social relations imbricated in

them. In this paper we will argue that women's disadvantage is built into the capitalist development strategy based on the market. This could be said to be one of the main products of the discussions and debates within the Women's Movement. However, the argument is not as simple as it appears for there is no evidence to suggest that by removing capitalism this disadvantage will automatically disappear. This is one of the lessons gained from the study of socialist societies, but also from increasing recognition of the intractability of certain social problems, those of racism, for example, the nature of ethnic difference and of cultural differentiation in general, and sexism. This in turn points to the need to develop far more detailed understandings of these problems than we have at present.

The British Women's Movement provides a diversity of fora for women to meet and discuss problems experienced in everyday life, the data and ideas thrown up by research, and the practicalities of campaigns on certain issues. It has,

however, never set itself the task of putting together a coherent statement of demands or a programme of changes which must be brought about to ensure the ending of women's subordination. In part this is due to a rejection of traditional political organisation and methods, as well as to a recognition of different tendencies within the movement.

However, it is probably true to say that feminists of today have concentrated on a number of issues which feminists of the past did not, and that this is not coincidental but reflects the historical situation in which we find ourselves. Feminists' struggles at the end of the last century and the beginning of this focused on reforming the legal position of women so as to guarantee them some rights in property and permission to vote; on gaining government provision of maternity and child care support; and on making contraception available to all women. Today's feminists have reverted, to some extent, to a much older set of preoccupations: the relationships between men and women, particularly within marriage, which were the subject of considerable debate during the French Revolution and its aftermath. They have also linked this with their preoccupation with women's right to and need for employment on equal terms with men; non-sexist education; and unbiased treatment by the state, among other things.

What has emerged then as an essential proposition about the nature of capitalist society is that marriage, and the obligations imposed on husband and wife by the terms of the marital contract (albeit an unwritten contract), is the crucial determinant of the structure of employment for both men and women, and the differ-

ential rewards to male and female workers. In this article we will, therefore, look at marriage and employment and, albeit briefly, education and state provision. We do not want only to touch on some of the theoretical discussions that have been taking place but also to look at the context of such discussions, that is, at how the processes occurring in British society over the past 20 years or so have affected women in order to give readers our sense of the inadequacies of development followed by our country.

We will then outline some of the discussions presently going on about what a more rational development strategy would have to encompass to include centrally the socialist feminist critique of present British society. In this brief presentation we will necessarily be somewhat sweeping and thus not go into detail on a number of important issues, such as differences in effect by class and race. To understand the context of the new feminism of the post-war period, let us start by giving a thumbnail sketch of the British economy since 1940.

Britain has been in a process of relative decline throughout the post-war period, with growth rates consistently below those of other Western economies. Certain sectors of the economy have experienced a disproportionate decline, particularly manufacturing (steel, shipbuilding, textiles, clothing, etc). This decline has affected the structure as well as the level of employment in the economy, the result being far fewer jobs in manufacturing than before, and more jobs in the public sector and in services generally.

It is important to stress that the decline has been a relative one: in comparison with Bri-

tain's own historical growth performance, the post-war period as a whole has been a time of unprecedented and stable increases in prosperity, at least until the mid-seventies. Part of this increased prosperity has been experienced in higher real wages, but an important element has been in an expanded sector of 'public consumption'—mainly services provided by the state, such as the national health service, national pension scheme, expansion of the free educational system, etc.—so that the standard of living of the bulk of the population has risen in comparison to that before the war.

The encouragement of immigration from the Caribbean, and the short-lived tolerance of it from South Asia and East Africa (brought to an end by the Immigration Act of 1971), has led both to a much greater diversity of racial backgrounds in British society and to various overt forms of racism. Although the recession of the mid-seventies was prefigured by events earlier in the decade, real living standards of working class people began to decline only gradually.

The recession has, in fact, led to sharper divisions: between those in work and those without, between the low-paid and highly-paid, and between skilled and unskilled workers. The decline in the quality and quantity of public services has been dramatic, and has further widened the gap between those who can afford private substitutes (health, education) and those who cannot. At the same time, the balance of political forces has shifted significantly: trade unions are weaker and more divided than a decade ago. And it is estimated that five million people in Britain today live below the poverty line.

### **Marriage relations**

The first notable point is that there has been a considerable change in marital patterns since the turn of the century. Nowadays almost all women marry; for example, by the mid-sixties 95 per cent of all women were or had been married by the age of 45 and 96 per cent of all men (since the mid-seventies, however, there has been a small decline in propensity to marry, particularly among younger people). In contrast, the percentages recorded in 1921 were 83 per cent and 88 per cent respectively. Not only do most women marry but they are now marrying younger than 20 years ago. Marriage is not, however, particularly stable: since the sixties the divorce rate has been rising rapidly and by the early eighties almost 1 in 3 marriages end in divorce. The bulk of all divorces occur in the first ten years of marriage (48 per cent of all divorces in 1976) or put another way, 1 in 10 marriages end in divorce before the sixth year; 1 in 4 before the fifteenth. Paradoxically, marriage is no less popular for all this: 75 per cent of divorced persons remarry (in 1979 remarriages accounted for a third of all marriages). What seems to be happening is that a great many people get into difficulties in their first marriage, but rather than seeing marriage the institution to be at fault, they appear to attribute their marital difficulties to poor choice of marriage partner. Second marriages appear to survive better than first ones although the rate of divorce in such marriages is rising—in 1980 16 per cent of all divorces were in marriages in which one or both partners had been married previously, in 1974 only 10 per cent.

Two alternative questions can be asked: why

so much marriage; why so much divorce? We want to tackle the second question first.

Some people have argued that with the Divorce Reform Act (1971), getting a divorce became much less complicated, thus more people could rid themselves of unsuitable marriage partners. Others, however, suggest that changes in people's expectations of the relationship between husband and wife has led to increasing friction. Nowadays, mutual love and sexual satisfaction, psychological understanding and close companionship are all demanded, placing an intolerable burden on a couple in a social setting in which married couples are relatively autonomous and are not enmeshed in a wider set of frequently activated kinship and family ties. First marriages of young people are particularly vulnerable. Without much more detailed knowledge of divorce among couples married for a second time, and indeed people's expectations of marriage (and the expectations of men compared with women probably vary considerably, as do those of middle class as compared with working class people), it is not possible to refute either of these suggestions. But a point that should be noted is that marriage was not particularly long lasting in the past either: the rate of adult mortality made widow(er)hood a common event. The effect of increasing longevity on marital stability is thus another complicating factor.

More relevant to our concerns, perhaps, are other aspects of marital relations. According to one account, roughly one third of all divorces involve couples with pre-school children, and it is suggested that 'many perfectly good marriages go downhill because of the totally different lifestyles of the couple once the wife is at

home full-time with small children and the husband out at work all day'.

The recent upsurge in feminism has led to a good deal of public discussion (whether negative or positive) about the degree to which women are saddled with the vast proportion of all those tasks of house cleaning and servicing, child bearing and caring that daily life brings with it, as well as male servicing. Some argue that women enjoy and are best suited to the life of housewifery; others that women are forced into this role and that it represents a dreadful waste of human resources. Many people have pointed out that a number of welfare state provisions are in fact predicated upon a stay-at-home wife, as, to some extent, is the tax system. Most married women, however, do go out to work once the children are at school and by 1977 over 58 per cent of married women were in the labour force. Studies have shown that where both husband and wife go out to work, the wife is still landed with the bulk of the housework and if anyone shares it with her, it is probably her daughter.

When women are in the labour force, the fact that housework and child care do not just disappear—nor get shared—itself shapes the commitment that women can make to their paid jobs. Estimates of hours worked per week in home and place of work by men and women show that, despite men's greater propensity to overtime (which is of course paid), women still put in far longer hours overall because of their (unpaid) domestic work. Even more striking is the fact that men under 30 with children put in 4 times as much overtime as childless husbands of the same age. It is perhaps not surprising that so many divorces involve couples with

pre-school children. This raises the question, is so much overtime really an economic necessity when children are so young and just as much in need of paternal as maternal care? Some people would argue that since most overtime is worked in those sectors where men's basic pay is lower than the average, overtime is a way of increasing low wages. Others would look to the question of male attitudes to parenting; and this raises that question never, it seems, considered by those who urge women to be full-time mothers so as to avoid maternal deprivation: are we not a nation which systematically puts its children at risk of paternal deprivation?

Furthermore, in those households where the wife does not go out to work and depends upon a subvention from her husband to pay for household and personal necessities (called housekeeping) there may be little relation between the size of his pay packet and the amount of housekeeping. This has led some observers to note that mothers and children may be in poverty while husbands are not. The constant attempts to make ends meet and the strain of acting as the broker between family and welfare state, may reduce some women to such a nervous state that they have to be 'propped up' by tranquilisers (and it is estimated that 1 woman in 6 is on some form of tranquiliser; equally that 1 woman in 6 will, for some period of her life, undergo psychiatric treatment).

It is not merely that women when at home have to do housework, which most people would agree to be repetitive, monotonous and unstimulating work, but that it tends to be invisible, unrecognized and is certainly unvalued by society, husbands and children alike. This

in part makes for the divergence in lifestyles mentioned earlier.

One possible alternative to young mothers having to spend so much of their time in child care duties that they are unable to take up work or even have the leisure for creative or educational pastimes (let alone just plain doing nothing), is state provision of crèches. There are two problems here: the first is a theoretical one, the second empirical. Adequate state provision of crèches, nurseries, etc., does not in any way question the assumption that young children should essentially be parented by the mother. Feminists, therefore, argue that rather than off-loading responsibility for children on to the state (which in fact would mean on to other women since they predominantly work in the caring services), both mother and father should share child care, not within the context of the monogamous family but of the community. Secondly, state provision of crèches and nurseries—never particularly generous—has in fact been savagely cut in the latest round of 'there is no alternative' economies. Trade unions, in turn, have never posed the question of union responsibility towards the new generation and its married women workers. Rather, trade unionists have argued for the family wage: i.e. a wage sufficiently large (in theory) for a man to keep his wife and children at home.

A further problem is the level of violence within the domestic unit: since the early seventies, the extent to which battering of women is widespread (in the sense of numbers, geography and class) has become ever more clear. By 1980, despite increasing economic constraints, the Women's Aid movement included some

100 groups and 200 refuges throughout the country. Although there is an attempt by the more conservative elements to convince us that battering is a class phenomenon (working class), and that it is due to psychological problems (mainly women's), studies of domestic violence show these to be untenable propositions and link it to the structure of women's dependence on men within society as a whole.

So we could suggest that divorce is rising not merely because of more liberal laws and the hyper-closeness expected between husband and wife, but because women are beginning to question the type of dependence that marriage and motherhood forces upon them. And here we would have to take into account the fact that the decline in infant and child mortality since the turn of the century has been associated with a decline in fertility, so that most women today give birth to only two children. Spacing between children is generally relatively short, so that care of very young children probably only accounts for some ten years of a mother's life. This relatively brief but intense period of mother and wifehood then gives way to a potentially much longer period of housewifehood. At this point marriage may appear as an unequal and intolerable burden (and one in five marriages end before the twelfth year, one in four before the fifteenth).

Equally, many people argue that given the unequal responsibility of men for house and child care, given the demands made on women to be lover, mother, cook, bottlewasher and psychotherapist, many women choose divorce because there is now an alternative to marriage—that is, employment. But what does getting a job actually mean for most women?

## **Employment**

By the beginning of the eighties, women made up about 40 per cent of the total labour force; put in another way, just under 60 per cent of all married women, just over 50 per cent of all mothers, and just under 70 per cent of all women without dependents (whether children or elderly or infirm relatives) worked outside the home. Given the actual numbers involved, about 10.4 million women, it might be thought that women would be found in all types of employment. However, 60 per cent of all employed women are clustered in only ten occupations: of all female manual workers, about 55 per cent are employed in catering, cleaning, hairdressing and personal services (76.3 per cent of the total occupational labour force); of all non-manual workers about 55 per cent are in clerical and related jobs (75.6 per cent of the total labour force) and a further 25 per cent in education, welfare and health (65.5 per cent of the total labour force).

Now, one can argue that there is no particular disadvantage in occupational segregation in a country that boasts an Equal Opportunity Commission and an Equal Pay Act. However, neither of these two interventions appear to have greatly benefitted women, indeed, one could argue their advent merely accelerated a long-term tendency to segregation and wage disadvantage. For example, between 1911 and 1971 women's share of skilled manual work dropped by nearly 50 per cent, from 24 per cent to 13.5 per cent. Over the same 60 year period, their share of unskilled manual jobs more than doubled—from 15.6 per cent to 37.2 per cent. The near-monopoly of skilled work by men has

continued during the seventies. Among the non-manual workers, women have increased their share of managerial and administrative jobs by a tiny margin—from 19.8 per cent to 21.6 per cent—but they have also more than tripled their share of clerical work—from 21.4 per cent to 73.2 per cent. 'Jobs which at the beginning of the century had a balance of male and female workers typical of the economy as a whole were transformed by the 1970s, into typically feminine jobs. Ninety per cent of all typists, shorthand writers and secretaries are women, but only 14 per cent of office managers.'

We know of no study which investigates the reasons underlying the reduction of the range of jobs open to women, but one contributory factor could be the extent to which women receive different education and training than men.

It is a commonplace to say that boys and girls enjoy the same education in Britain; surveys have shown that the majority of teachers state that they are opposed to sexual discrimination and that they personally do not discriminate but treat students equally and fairly. Nonetheless, girls continue to leave school having specialised in arts rather than sciences, typing and cooking rather than metal or woodworking or technical drawing; they tend to do relatively less well than male peers; and they fail to live up to early promise. At the university level, too, enrolment figures show much the same trend: only 35 per cent of undergraduates are women. They predominate in education, language, literature and area studies, but are noticeably absent from engineering and technological subjects (under 5 per cent of women undergraduates) and science (under a third). That

is to say they are absent from the most 'modern' areas of the economy. As for post-graduates, only 26 per cent are women.

The streaming of girls into different behaviour, aspirations and self-images begins from birth but at school the process is reinforced through sex-stereotyped books, different curricula, as well as teachers' treatment and advice, peer pressure and so on. A recent study, for example, showed that teachers spend much more time talking to boys and allow boys to talk more than girls, and this despite the fact that they all stated they gave equal time to both. When the same teachers agreed to an equal time experiment they found it difficult to spend more than 40 per cent of their time with the girls without being beset by feelings of guilt that they were treating the boys unfairly. Furthermore, spending more than approximately one third of the time with girl students was perceived by teachers and students alike as 'spending too much time with the girls'. Wider studies have shown that the majority of teachers of both sexes prefer to teach boys; they tend also to enhance boys' achievements, give them greater encouragement, and expect them to do better than girls.

Not only do girls get less privileged attention, they are encouraged to think of their future role as wives and mothers through classes on home economics (rarely attended by boys who are channelled into wood and metalwork). They leave school with few useful labour force skills and all too frequently a lack of commitment to a long working career. When in work, they rarely get a chance to take part in in-service training courses, and after they have temporarily withdrawn from the labour force to

bear and bring up a couple of children, there are few retraining courses for them to pick up new skills or to improve old ones to prepare them for re-entering the labour force.

Attempts to remedy this situation have been abruptly curtailed by the present economic crisis in which the government has severely cut back on adult and further education, which provides the main opportunities for women to make up for inadequate schooling or to prepare themselves to re-enter the labour market; grants to mature students have been reduced; crèche facilities in colleges decimated. Numbers of teachers have been cut, class sizes enlarged (despite falling rolls because of the falling birth rate), fewer books bought and the variety of courses offered restricted. If there ever had been plans to replace existing sexist (and racist) school texts with new ones, they have been abandoned. The young students who suffer most are not merely working class children in state schools but the children of West Indian or South Asian background, whose needs at the best of times have been poorly served.

The educational system is not merely a purveyor of beliefs, skills and aptitudes, but a sector of employment itself. It is one of the first places where children learn about the sexual division of labour, from the dinner ladies to the male caretaker, from the women primary school teachers but the male head, the male secondary teachers of maths, physics, chemistry, wood and metalwork classes, and the male school heads. Until this gender hierarchy begins to be changed, all the reforms introduced in texts and curricula will be of little worth.

### **Wages**

Leaving aside the question as to why women workers are being compressed into a small number of occupations, let us look at pay levels to see if these at least have improved. Since men appear to have monopolised skilled manual work, and the higher grades of non-manual work, one would expect women's earnings to be less than men's, and indeed women's average hourly earnings in 1979 were 73 per cent of men's (and this represents a 10 per cent increase over the 1970 figure). However, if a woman is to choose employment rather than marriage, or indeed if divorced or widowed women with children are to maintain themselves (given that it is apparently difficult, if not impossible for the law to enforce child maintenance orders on fathers) then average weekly earnings are more crucial than the hourly rate. Here data show that women's average gross weekly earnings were but 63.6 per cent of that of men's in 1979—up from 54.5 per cent in 1970.

The wages of full-time working women are not only lower than men's because women on the whole are crowded onto the lower rungs of the job ladder, whether unskilled or skilled, manual, non-manual or professional, but also because they are unable to take advantage of many of the fringe benefits that men can. Overtime is a good example: according to a survey in 1978, 41 per cent of male workers worked overtime compared with only 12 per cent of women. Sixteen per cent of men got shift premia (i.e. extra money for working night shift) but only 9 per cent of women; 29 per cent of men but only 13 per cent of women got productivity payments. These bare statistics

seem to indicate that women's pay is structured somewhat differently from men's: 'A range of extra payments has been organised by men to accompany the "proper" jobs that "real" workers do'. There is, nonetheless, considerable difficulty in making direct wage comparisons because women rarely work in the same jobs as men. Indeed, one of the main effects of the Equal Pay Act has been to exacerbate the sexual segregation of the workplace. However, a 1980 government survey of male and female workers doing the same work for the same employer, found that although both sexes were getting paid the same basic rates and were usually working the same basic hours, there was still a big difference in 'take home' pay. 'Men work more overtime, do more shiftwork, have been employed for longer to qualify for length of service awards and hold a disproportionate number of merit or responsibility positions.'

The reasons why men can afford to take on overtime and shift work, and accept ever more responsible positions is, of course, that they have a very different relation to domestic life and to paid employment than do women. Trade unions, government officials, economists and so on all tend to justify women's lower wages by supporting the proposition that men, as heads of families, need a 'family wage' so as to support a non-working wife and children, whereas women's labour force commitment is less, and they merely work for a secondary or additional wage. A brief glance at the characteristics of the labour force exposes the inaccuracy of this argument: in Britain today, only 18 per cent of working men are the sole supporters of a wife and children; 22 per cent

support dependent children *together* with their working wife; just under 60 per cent have no dependent children at all. As for women workers, 33 per cent are married with children and 5 per cent are single, widowed or divorced and support children. These bare statistics suggest that arguments in favour of differential wages for men because of their familial support responsibilities are dubious given that 82 per cent of the male labour force does not provide sole support for wife and/or children. Further, of all married couples of working age with dependent children, in only 39 per cent is the wife economically inactive. Furthermore, the concept of the family wage itself is somewhat of a misnomer in that wages are not calculated according to the number of children a man actually supports (larger families are thus penalised), nor are there additional wage increments for numbers of children over the supposedly typical two-child family. The family wage thus appears to be more of an ideological concept than an economic reality, reinforcing the role of women as dependent wives. It has been estimated that the number of families with a working father living at or below poverty line would quadruple if wives were not in paid work (a change from 17 per cent to 39 per cent of all families).

So far we have argued that the way in which the wage for the full-time workers is structured discriminates against the working woman, but there is another factor to be taken into account when discussing women's wages and the difference between women's and men's patterns of work. Government estimates suggest that 40 per cent of all women workers work part-time and 80 per cent of all part-time workers are

married women. Furthermore, the growth in women's jobs in the service industries between 1961 and 1971 (some 1.2 million jobs) was almost entirely in part-time work. Similarly, between 1961 and 1971 full-time women's employment in manufacturing fell by 16 per cent while part-time employment rose by 21 per cent. By 1976, of the total labour force, one worker in six was a part-time woman worker.

The amount of time women spend in employment also varies: 40 per cent of women work less than 30 hours a week compared with 5 per cent of men; 25 per cent of women work less than 16 hours. More significantly, perhaps, 90 per cent of women who work less than 30 hours a week are married and two-thirds have dependent children (i.e. children under 15).

Of course, part-time work is the obvious solution for married women who have to cope with two jobs every day of their lives: the paid and the unpaid. It allows them to combine the two responsibilities. But equally it allows the perpetuation of the ideology, and the practices associated with it, of the natural place of the women being in the home; and of the natural role of women as men's dependents. It reinforces the view of women as only partly committed to the workplace, and of their lesser need for a standard and viable wage. It also has the effect of encouraging discrimination against women workers: 'not only have employers, and unions, a tendency to guard the better jobs for full-time workers, often identical work is paid at a worse hourly rate if done part-time rather than full-time'. In the long run, part-time work provides little opportunity for training and promotion, and the fact that most women will marry and most will go on to

part-time working for some period of their early working life, gives employers a justification for not giving female employees the same opportunities for in-service training as young men. Lastly, part-time work restricts access to pension rights and fringe benefits; employers regard part-timers as casual workers who can be taken on or laid off with ease depending on the availability of work (in other words they play the role of a reserve army); and they are not covered by a number of statutory rights. For example, people working less than 16 hours a week are generally not entitled to redundancy payments from the state redundancy scheme; to claim against unfair dismissal; to payment during temporary lay-offs; to pay statements showing how their earnings have been calculated; to certain maternity benefits (such as the right to return to work, to maternity pay and to a certain amount of protection against dismissal for reasons connected with pregnancy).

### **State policies**

The question of state protection of and support for workers raises the question of state policies towards women. We noted in the introduction that the setting up of the welfare state largely benefitted the working class. However, it was premised on the assumption that women are wives and mothers and stay at home; and that housework, child and husband care is a private matter and not economically valuable. Thus, when industry was reconstructed after the war, no provision was made to include crèche facilities at the workplace so that fathers or mothers could take the children with them for at least

some period of the day. Facilities for the under 7s at community level were equally sparse. Indeed, there was a considerable campaign, bolstered by 'scientific' studies of the effects of maternal deprivation, to get women back into the family. State policies, however, are not homogeneous and do not reflect a coherent set of policy objectives: they tend to support marriage rather than the family and 'their impact depends on their interaction with a variety of other social practices, such as employment patterns and the division of labour within the home, practices which themselves affect the differential treatment of men and women.'

We cannot go into the wide range of taxation and social security provisions but merely point to a number of ways in which women's access to the same levels of benefit as men is weakened by the nature of their labour force participation.

The taxation system in general discriminates against married women financially because a marriage allowance is made to the man only (a rebate against tax made to husbands whether or not there are children), and also because it assumes the married couple is a financial unit under the control of the husband. Thus a married man is liable for declaring and paying tax on his wife's income unless, in accordance with recent reforms in tax law, a wife wishes to make a separate claim which she can only do with her husband's consent. The taxation system also discriminates against families with children and favours married working couples with none, both by the married man's allowance and by granting working married women the single person's allowance. Nowadays, mothers get a weekly child allowance for every child but

the benefit is inadequate, and does not compensate families with a non-working mother for the loss of her potential earnings. Thus 'the difference between having or not having children can be the difference between poverty and relative comfort'. The family of a fairly well paid male worker with a dependent wife and several children can be less well off than a married working couple each on low pay.

More critical is the system of social security and earnings-related, means-tested and non-contributory benefits. 'Social security is about women', the Labour Party pointed out in its *Discrimination against Women* published in 1972, nonetheless the social security system as laid down in 1942 managed to ignore women almost completely—'or at least to disenfranchise married women of rights in the social security system—giving them access to it only as their husbands' dependents and the amount in turn depending upon his contributions. Earnings-related benefits, introduced in the late sixties, give higher paid workers rights to short-term unemployment benefit as well as pensions at a higher than basic rate but this helped few women workers who, as we have seen, mainly work in the lower paid end of the market and for some portion of their lives may not be working at all. The Social Security (Pensions) Act introduced a 'home responsibilities' provision which ostensibly protects married women's pension rights. While working married women pay full national insurance contributions, any break in employment to bring up young children is covered by the home responsibilities provision. However, this protection affects only the basic pension and not the earnings-related supplement, and secondly, to

qualify for a full pension a woman has to have 20 years' contributions exclusive of home responsibilities.

Earnings-related pensions and benefits discriminate against all low-paid workers, regardless of sex, but the recent attempts to ameliorate this seem to have swung the balance against women. Low-paid male workers can choose the best twenty years of earnings upon which the state pension will be calculated; low-paid women spend a shorter period in the labour market, retire earlier than men and thus get little benefit from the provision. The basic assumption behind contributory benefit provisions is that the worker has an unbroken, full-time and well-paid history of labour force participation—but women, almost by definition, have a fragmented, part-time and low-paid working profile (and remember their wages are 60-70 per cent that of men's).

Non-contributory benefits such as the invalid care allowance, or even the child allowance, are equally problematic: to give but one example, the invalidity pension is for people who cannot work because of disability and have not previously earned a contributory invalidity pension; however, married women must demonstrate not only that they are incapable of paid employment but also that they are incapable of performing a substantial part of their 'domestic duties' before they are eligible.

Clearly, state support systems are complex matters but the general and simple point to be made is that they cannot bring about equality nor even equalize benefit between the sexes as long as benefits are tied to labour market performance, and the very different relationship to unpaid work of women and men persists.

### **General picture**

What then is the general picture of the employment situation today? Women can get work but for the vast majority of women this will be in a limited number of sectors, at the lower end of the job (and pay) hierarchy, probably part-time and with minimal career prospects.

So, to return to our original question—'why so much marriage?'—the solution to a set of problems which derive from the consistent and structural discrimination women suffer in the labour market may well take the form of marriage. But marriage itself, or rather the basic premises upon which most marriages are based in Britain, that the wife is the person charged with the maintenance of the home, the care of the children, the elderly and the infirm, that the husband's primary commitment is to the workplace, the trade union, 'the lads'—whether or not he is the main breadwinner—make it an uneasy, uncomfortable, even lonely 'refuge from a heartless world'. And when driven back to work—and many women confess to wanting to work for the company it allows them of other women as much as for the small degree of economic bargaining power it gives them—wives again face the same tightly woven net of structural disadvantage.

'Since the late 1960s many women have tried—individually and collectively—to break out of the conventional mould of family life. They have waged guerilla warfare over the housework. They have "nagged" and "scolded" to get men to change their habits. They have fought for their own space within the household. They have "reversed roles", leaving their husbands with the kids while they go out to

work.' So writes a commentator on the women's liberation movements since the sixties. What they have not been able to do is to change the structure of employment and the division of unpaid and paid work in society in general.

Another problem area related to work, but as yet little openly discussed, concerns female rather than male workers: sexual harassment at work. There is a wide range of harassment from wolf whistles, to exaggerated compliments and sexual innuendos, unwanted physical contact, and even physical assault, and refusal to give a woman a promotion or a raise without sexual payments. A lesser aggravation is the assumption that women workers (and this may be particularly true for clerical and hospital workers) should service the office and the boss just as they service the home and the husband: from making the office nice with flowers and plants, making cups of tea, and buying nice biscuits from already meagre wages; to going out to get the boss's shopping (birthday cake for the children, flowers for the wife). These issues are rarely taken seriously by male workers ('it's all a bit of a lark'), and virtually never by trade unions. But now, with the pressure of evidence of persistent and widespread harassment, there is some indication that at least union attitudes are slowly changing. Some unions have even agreed to discontinue publishing photos of semi-naked nymphets in the union newspaper (but will they remove the fleshy calendars from the workshop walls)?

Trade unions, too, are beginning to face up to their responsibilities to their women members. There is a TUC Charter for Women at Work (which among other things calls for com-

plete equality of job opportunity for women and men, and an end to all pay discrimination against women workers, but is silent on the topic of sharing domestic responsibilities) but not much active campaigning in support of the Charter. With the deepening recession there is now little likelihood that this will change.

Although women's membership in the unions is increasing rapidly (from 1.99 million in 1961 to 4.2 million in 1980) their participation remains limited and, whatever the gender composition of union membership, women are rarely high in the union hierarchy. For example, more than one third of the 956,000 members of the General and Municipal Workers' Union are women, yet in 1981 it had no women on its 40-member national executive committee; of its 243 officials, 13 were women. Some of the reasons for this have been mentioned earlier but we also have to note another aspect: of women aged between 25 and 34, a smaller proportion work than among any other age group between 15 and 55, a smaller proportion work full-time than any other age group, and a smaller proportion working full-time belong to a union than any other age group. 'The cumulative result of these biases means that 1 man in 2 aged 25-34 has a full-time job and belongs to a union compared with 1 woman in 20 in the same age range. As a result, the typical male union member in his late thirties or forties, has had work and union experience over twenty years; whereas for the typical female union member, work and union experience will be nothing like as continuous.' When union posts at higher levels become vacant it is generally the men who have the experience to take them. Since men are social

ized to see themselves as primarily wage-earners, and only minimally involved in the day-to-day life of their families, they are unlikely to use their bargaining strength to win improvements relating to the home rather than to the workplace.

### **An alternative strategy**

What we have suggested throughout the first section of this article is that there is a fatal bias in the way the economy of advanced capitalist societies are conceived. Only the production of goods and services for the market is considered economic activity—'work'—and therefore to be rewarded by a monetary return. The production of children, and of the comforts of everyday life; the maintaining of social relations with kin, neighbours and friends, the everyday conviviality within the home: none of these are considered to be part of the economic organization. The form of development that our country has adopted—if not pioneered—stresses the importance of economic 'productive' activity, values it both socially and in monetary terms; the rest is secondary, women's work. While it would be inaccurate to say that inequality between men and women is a product of capitalism, it would not be inaccurate to say that capitalism has reinforced and exacerbated it and benefits from it. The creation and marginalization of the housewife, the denigration of motherhood and caring, the emphasis on women as sexual object and play-girl, are not probably fortuitous productions of a system which lauds efficiency yet produces untold waste, extols individualism yet inhibits self-expression of the majority.

However, it is not only the processes within

capitalism that have reinforced and exacerbated gender inequality. Socialists and trade unionists, too, have failed to take seriously the issues involved, and have not put forward alternative policies and alternative visions for a society in which income, power, paid and unpaid work are more equally distributed between men and women. The Women's Liberation Movement is beginning to address itself to these questions, to criticize the long-established goals, strategies and methods of organization of the left and the trade union movement, and to formulate alternatives. The nature of the alternatives will be discussed briefly in the following broad areas: employment and forms of organization of work; state policies towards wages, social security and pensions; marriage and different living arrangements; child care and child benefits.

Concerning employment, a fundamental part of a feminist alternative is a reduction in the length of the working day, week and year for all workers, ultimately aimed at ending the distinctions between full-time and part-time work. This ultimate aim is a very distant one, since conceptions of 'proper work', i.e. full-time, long-term, uninterrupted participation in wage-work, are deeply embedded both in the economic system and the practices of the labour movement. However, much can be done in the immediate future to begin to remove the discriminatory conditions of part-time work in terms of hourly pay, working conditions and statutory protection. In addition, it is essential to begin to expand the availability of part-time work in all areas of the economy, at all levels of pay and skill. These changes will meet considerable resistance, both from employers and trade

unions: from the former because part-time women workers form a flexible and 'dispensable' group in times of economic downturn; and from the latter because of the implications which the changes will have for reducing the privileges of male work patterns. The shifts proposed in the structure of work do, however, offer men as well as women the potential for a more rewarding lifestyle in which more time is available for leisure, child care, education and social activities.

In order for the changes to be feasible, a major restructuring of pay differentials will be necessary, in two main directions. First, it will be necessary to reduce the financial privileges of male work patterns, and secondly, it will be vital to raise the relative pay of low-paid workers, so that they are not under financial pressure to work overtime. This restructuring of relative pay will require redistribution within the male work force, and between men and women workers. This will also meet resistance from many groups, since there are powerful vested interests in the current structure of relative pay. Important initial steps towards the longer-term objectives would be the following: the introduction of a statutory minimum wage; and a political campaign within the trade union movement to abandon the concept of a family wage for men, since the latter is totally incompatible with equal pay for men and women.

Not only the structure of pay and of employment needs to be changed, but also the organization of work. The objective of 'workers control' and cooperative work organization has a long tradition within the British labour movement. Yet, without a serious feminist input into

the discussion, it is predictable that, even if the most radical visions of workers' control were to be achieved, 'control' would be exercised by men, perpetuating the relative privileges of men in the sphere of work. Although the achievement of the alternative structures of pay and work in private or state establishments is remote, their achievement in cooperative enterprises is potentially greater. The realisation of this potential will, however, not be attained without a political and ideological struggle.

Much of state policy towards taxation, social security, unemployment pay and supplementary benefit explicitly or implicitly assumes that each woman is financially dependent on a man. This has the effect of ensuring that large numbers of women find it difficult if not impossible to be economically independent. It is clear that the principle of treating all adults as autonomous economic units is the only one which will begin to provide the basis for economic equality between men and women. In the immediate future this will involve a large number of campaigns concerning taxation, unemployment pay, national insurance, etc. A vital accompanying change, without which economic equality will remain remote for women, is that the cost of supporting children is adequately borne by the state, i.e. by the whole population. This will involve, over time, a large increase in the real value of child benefit payments to a level which realistically covers the cost of child maintenance, as well as an expansion in supportive public services.

The major influences which create and reinforce women's economic dependence on men are all basically focused on the single presumption that women are married and their

husband supports them. It is not only in the area of economics that this presumption is determining, but in many others, for example, the style of domestic architecture, the nature of housing finance, even the nature of questions asked in the census. Increasing numbers of people, both men and women, have been making definite choices concerning living arrangements other than the nuclear family and large numbers of people, especially the old, have always lived in non-nuclear family units. Yet until the social norms which govern living arrangements change to match this heterogeneous pattern, those who do not live in the standard nuclear household will suffer from practical difficulties as well as social and ideological ones.

Finally, we need to consider the economic and social arrangements concerning the production, care and support of children. At present these are largely borne privately, within households, and the major burden of labour time involved falls upon individual women. The changes discussed above in relation to hours of work for all workers provide a necessary condition for men to play a greater role in the care of children, but they are certainly not sufficient conditions. Furthermore, community child care facilities currently available are staffed by low-paid women workers, thus this does not provide a means by which men's role in child care is increased. Any radical change in the distribution of care and responsibility for children between men and women requires a fundamental social and ideological transformation, but a transformation which is essential if the ideas and changes which we have discussed are to have any serious impact on gender inequality.

Although we have tried to identify certain changes which may be achievable in the medium-term future, it is clear that the ultimate objectives we have discussed are not compatible with a system of economic organization based on capitalist relations of production. However, it is also clear that actually existing socialist countries have not established conditions for gender equality. Hence it is vital that women's involvement in politics, in trades unions and in the construction of alternatives continues to expand, so that any social and economic transformations which occur are based on a clear commitment to the liberation of women.

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## *Document*

# **The Experience of the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD)**

## **A Workshop Report Prepared for the High-level Meeting on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries**

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*This report was prepared in the context of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) as a case study on how to build new knowledge through TCDC.*

*The document reviews the existing studies on African women and highlights some of their important consequences. The origin and early history of AAWORD is outlined and an account is given of its objectives, policies and programmes.*

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### **Introduction**

It has now become a truism to say that African women are central to the developmental process of their continent. One can argue that women are central simply because they make up half of the person power of the continent. This would, however, blur the real picture—where the existing sexual division of labour assigns to women a disproportionate role both in production and reproductive activities without a concomitant remuneration. Unequal remuneration and devaluation of women's work is reflective of the historical process of gender hierarchization embedded in the concept of the sexual division of labour. The subordination of women is a universal phenomenon with varying degrees of intensity. In Africa, as in the rest of the Third World, the subordination of women is both more intensified and gradually changing as a result of consolidations and changes in the international division of labour.

The significant part of agricultural production, which is the mainstay of Africa's economy, and the predominant portion of reproductive activities, such as taking care of and educating Africa's next generation, are both the main responsibilities of women. In many African countries, 60-70 per cent of subsistence production is carried out by women. In addition, women assist in cash crop production and

make up a large sector of those involved in petty trading of both agricultural and manufactured goods. Lack of kindergartens, child care centres, and sufficient places in schools implies that in addition to their role in production and household duties, women have the sole responsibility for child care and socialization. Household chores for African women are not limited to cooking and cleaning but include arduous and time-consuming tasks such as food processing, water and wood portage, as well as animal husbandry.

'Modernization' and 'development' have meant a few schools, a handful of industries and the evergrowing importance of cash crop production and other cash generating activities. Each of these new institutions have increased women's work and simultaneously decreased the time and resources that the majority of women would have spent caring for their children and their own well-being. Availability of schools, in the absence of other labour-saving devices and child care centres, reduces the help women receive from grown-up children. Cash crop production increases women's workload as they have to allocate their time both for cash and subsistence production. In addition, cash crop production decreases the amount and quality of land available for subsistence production, thereby forcing women to take up additional income-generating activities

in order to fulfil their responsibility of feeding the family.

Setting up industries in urban areas and/or mining enclaves has necessitated male out migration, giving women additional responsibilities in production and household management. In many African countries, the phenomena of households headed by women is on the increase. Yet, in spite of all these responsibilities, women are denied access to training, credit and other beneficial institutions. National development plans do not consider these problems women face as deserving a serious commitment in terms of allocating 'scarce' resources. Very often, national statistics fail to portray women's actual participation in the labour force and/or the implication of excluding women from effective participation in national reconstruction.

In other areas, one notes new trends and changes in the lives of African women. More and more girls are enrolled in schools, particularly elementary schools, and in spite of high drop-out rates in secondary schools, more girls complete university education. The number of women in wage employment is on the increase, although women are concentrated in certain sectors that require little or no skill and are almost always low paid. A handful of women have penetrated professional and political posts that were once all-male reserves. In spite of this progress, the majority of women are illiterate, unemployed and unrepresented in political decision-making processes. The deteriorating situation of the vast majority of women, as well as the limited progress gained by other women, although relatively more acute, is not limited to women. It is indicative of the widespread poverty and growing inequality in income distribution resulting from Africa's peripheral role in the international division of labour.

The process of decolonization, raising the

consciousness of many oppressed groups around the world—one of the most vocal of whom have been women—has created a new agenda in the debate on development. Globally, the subordination of women and the resultant impact on human and material resources has ushered in numerous research efforts, conferences and programmes for women. However, concomitant with Africa's role in the world economy as provider of raw materials and recipient of manufactured products, the international division of intellectual labour is such that Africa and Africans are the providers of 'raw data' and the recipients of finished products in the form of 'theories' and development programmes. Accordingly, until very recently, research efforts and conferences, as well as programmes, were all carried out by non-Africans.

Concerned African women who wanted to contribute to the articulation and possible solution of problems faced by women in Africa, were experiencing a sense of exclusion and frustration at the way these issues were discussed externally. At the local level, they suffered from isolation: issues concerning women are not considered important enough to discuss. A combination of these experiences, at a time when Third World people are searching for alternative solutions to the problems they face through different forms of North-South cooperation, had led to the formation of the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD). What follows is a brief critical review of the existing literature on African women, followed by the history of AAWORD in the light of its actual and potential contribution to the building of new knowledge and technical cooperation among developing countries. Hoping that our experiences would be of some use to similar groups and institutions, our report highlights:

1. Prospects and constraints involved in building new knowledge by women in development in Africa through Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC);
2. The intellectual and political criteria that validate research and policy formulation as being endogenous;
3. The purposes of new knowledge which result from intellectual contacts through TCDC;
4. Types of facilities that enable the generation of new knowledge.

#### **Critical review of existing studies on African women**

Historically, 'research' on Africa was conducted by merchants, missionaries, colonialists and anthropologists. Accordingly, the nature of the 'research' varied from information on available resources to native cultures and practices. Its form ranged from diaries and memoirs to well researched ethnographic monographs. In these documents, one finds brief reference to women, very often in the section dealing with marriage and family forms. One can also find a description of the division of labour with emphasis on women's role in household activities and child rearing practices.

However, as most of these writers were male and socialized within a society where patriarchal Victorian values predominated, they very often either underestimated, romanticized, or completely ignored the vital roles African women played in their societies. Distortions were not limited to accounts of African women but permeated almost all the records. European civilization, values and practices were to be the models, as well as the measurements, by which all societies were to be examined and moulded. It is important to remember that contrary to claims of intellectual curiosity, these different

documents were primarily intended to facilitate the smooth functioning of colonial rule. For example, when African women rebelled against colonial rule in Nigeria, Cameroon or Kenya, colonial governments had to commission anthropological studies in order to comprehend this 'unusual' phenomenon, followed by programmes designed to teach African women 'proper manners of civilized womanhood'.<sup>1</sup>

At present the content and focus of research on Africa has changed, while it remains predominantly a tool for domination. The independence of most African countries, the national liberation struggles in other parts and women's roles in these countries, as well as an ever-growing politicization and organization of women all over the world, have created an avalanche of literature on women. The writers range from Western feminist academics, local politicians and donor agencies to local grassroots organizations. Not surprisingly the topics and methodologies selected, as well as the utility of the results, vary in accordance with what is being studied and the person or institution carrying out these studies. In other words, while those in academia might choose a discipline-tied topic and a seemingly abstract or historical issue, such as matriarchy,<sup>2</sup> local researchers and/or local agencies are often involved in day-to-day issues such as how to reduce the workload of women, reduce family size, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The predominant type of most of the social science research carried out on women in Africa, particularly in the last decade, has been that of Western women academics. While they are all united in their interest in the research topic 'Women', they are not a homogenous group, as they represent different academic fields, ideologies, and political commitments. In brief, three interrelated issues seem

to have triggered numerous studies and on-going debates within and outside academia. These can be summarized as:

1. Primarily challenges to male-dominated social science, which visualizes female roles as necessary, natural and essentially not worthy of serious intellectual inquiry;
2. Recognition of the present universal subordination of women, which has led to a widespread query as to whether the position of women has been subordinate to that of men everywhere and at all times;
3. The growing women's movement: the resultant new knowledge about women in society coincided with and was partly triggered by the failure of the First Development Decade as manifested by the 'world food crisis', 'population explosion' and widespread poverty. Women were 'discovered' to be central to both 'crises' of production and reproduction. Hence, the need to include 'women and development' in the development agenda.

Each of these three areas has created and enriched human knowledge. Conversely, as is always the case, each in turn has added new distortions and/or intensified pre-existing prejudices concerning non-Western peoples and cultures.

Challenging male-biased assumptions necessitated reinterpretation of existing data as well as more extensive field work to generate new data. Similarly, the controversy surrounding the universal subordination of women popularized and reinforced the search for cross-cultural data. Studies under the umbrella of 'women and development' evaluated the impact of ongoing projects on women and recommended ways and means of 'integrating women in development'.

Undoubtedly, these research efforts have produced very useful and provocative data. For

example, longstanding male-biased assumptions claiming an inherent natural connection between biologically determined sex differences and sexual hierarchies have effectively been challenged and disproved. Moreover, these studies have demonstrated that what has been taken to be natural and given is historically variable and changeable. In other areas very useful data and reflections on the subject of the division of labour in production, social institutions surrounding biological reproduction, sex role socialization in childhood and the variants and similarities in women's lives have been documented.

The 'women-and-development' type of study has convincingly documented wide-ranging data which prove that structural and historical processes have eroded women's lives 'in men's favour'. These processes include the territorial displacement of women through marriage from one group to another, religion, colonization, capitalism and migration. Processes such as industrialization, modernization and development, with their components of knowledge, new skills, professions and resultant rewards, are only 'accessible to men'. It is therefore argued that transformation of traditional economic organization has caused an increased dichotomization of sex roles and concomitant sexual inequalities. In sum, the most important contributions to date have been the creation of an awareness of women's important, yet neglected role in society, the creation of a forum where this issue continues to be debated and a growing solidarity among women in different parts of the world.

Unfortunately, one cannot stop at the positive contributions or growing solidarities among women. While patriarchal views and structures oppress women all over the world, women are also members of classes and countries that dominate others and enjoy privi-

leges in terms of access to resources. Hence, contrary to the best intentions of 'sisterhood', not all women share identical interests.

We have asserted that alongside positive contributions one finds distortions in research on African women. These distortions are primarily political and methodological and reflect the divergent interests, needs and orientation of people in North-South countries. As indicated above, a cursory look at existing literature on African women would show that the majority is carried out by Western women. Very often these women are interested in the cross-cultural data that are 'trendy' in the West, and in appropriate case studies to support a model hypothesis. The others include women who work for donor agencies and non-governmental organizations whose interests vary from issues related to population control to that of teaching women domestic skills, thus alleviating their burden in household work. The latter engage in 'studies' that are of immediate use to the implementation of a particular project. In general, the outstanding problems with existing literature can be summed up as those of 'externality', faulty methodology and ethnocentrism.

None of these problems is limited to studies on women. The methodologies employed by social scientists, the ethnocentric assumption behind concepts and issues, and their external nature have come under heavy criticism by Third World researchers and concerned researchers in the West.<sup>4</sup> Nor is the hegemony in research and research facilities limited to Western women; it is a privilege enjoyed by most Western intellectuals. In fact, Western women are a relatively new addition to male-dominated research institutes and funding opportunities. Like all newcomers, they are very protective and defensive of their newly gained access.

Ethnocentric assumptions in social science are too numerous and deeply embedded, even in innocent sounding concepts like 'traditional', 'urban' and 'modern'. For our purpose the most important of them is that often unstated assumption that Africa is still basically primitive, politely known as 'traditional'. Traditional societies are presumed to be fundamentally static and similar. Finally, these assumptions are based on a unilinear view of history in which these traditional societies are moving towards a 'modern' continuum through their contact with the West. Hence, as African women are still at the primitive stage, feminists can go to remote villages in search of the origins of gender hierarchy, primitive family forms or an answer to debates related to biological determinism. Who can argue against the usefulness of reconstructing human history, particularly the neglected aspect of women?

The problem with this brand of research is that almost all of it fails to acknowledge the distortions brought about by colonial penetration and the continuous transformation and adaptive techniques of these societies, which are victims of uneven development. On the other hand, the debate concerning the universal subordination of women has resulted in a myth, propagated by many feminists, that the male-female dichotomy is the most fundamental and constant dichotomy and/or contradiction. Consequently, they argue that this common experience of femaleness unites all women more closely than with any man.

Based on these assumptions, the universal subordination of women is seen as a conspiracy by men all over the world to exclude women from the benefits of modernization and development. Lack of employment for women in the modern sector and their differential participation rates in educational institutions are explained away only in terms of 'male prefer-

ence'. While changes in family structures are seen as results or processes of westernization, the persistence of older forms is explained in terms of Africans being very traditional and it only strengthens the prevailing view of their communities as static. Likewise, lack of hospitals, child care centres and infrastructures that would have reduced the work burden for women, are seen as a neglect of women's needs by male-dominated state structures that could be ameliorated with proper planning. At the risk of sounding cynical and simplifying serious struggles waged by women all over the world, the existing prescription for these problems women face can be summarized as fighting male hegemony and 'integrating women in development'. To be sure, not all Western women subscribe to these simplistic views, but they do represent the predominant trend.

While the fight against 'male hegemony', that is, the view that holds men as the enemy, is presently almost exclusively limited to certain sectors of the Western feminist movement, it has alienated large sectors of Third World women to the point where, locally, feminism is construed as a Western plague to be strictly avoided. On the other hand, the vague slogan that calls for 'integration of women in development' has received widespread support internationally and nationally. In recent years, however, the exact implication of these slogans has begun to receive serious examination. In other words, African women have begun to ask what exactly is the nature of this 'development' from which they alone have been excluded and into which they now should be integrated. Have colonialism in the past and the asymmetrical world economy and political reality been so generous as to put all males in structurally dominant and skilled positions? Is local recognition of women's vital role in production and reproduction, followed by proper plan-

ning, sufficient precondition to solving the multifaceted problems women face? More importantly, have not women always been integrated into the international division of labour: as producers of food-stuffs in the subsistence sectors; reproducers of labour power; and assistants to export crop production?

The assumptions outlined above, however, result in faulty methodologies and continue to reproduce the same results and prescriptions. Again, methodological problems are not limited to studies on women but are reflective of the basic characteristics of conventional development research. A recent study summarizes these characteristics as:

1. The use of an ahistorical approach;
2. A static functionalist view of social structures;
3. A claim of ideological neutralism couched in terms of 'scientific objectivity';
4. The compartmentalization of social sciences into various 'disciplines' and within each discipline, further fragmentation into so-called specialization.

As a result, conventional development research is essentially fragmented in the sense that the micro units, which are its main pre-occupation, are isolated by disciplinary boundaries from their proper socio-economic context.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, all these characteristics permeate most studies on women. It is true that recent studies on women have made concerted efforts at interdisciplinary research in order to avoid compartmentalization of women's lives. However, 'each discipline in its own way, brings to the totality, its own ahistoricism, and its implicit values disguised under the veil of its parts'.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the assumption that women suffer identical oppression across the globe has led to the use of a superficial comparative

method that blurs vast inequalities and differences. That is, studying women *qua* women outside of the particular socio-economic context has led to false prescriptions and generalizations. Finally, most studies are descriptive and lack an analytical focus.

### **Consequences of existing studies**

The international women's movement has gained notable successes both in its political agitation for equal rights and the struggle to include studies on women in the teaching and research agenda of universities and donor agencies. While one can be apprehensive about the long-term implications of 'ghetto-izing' women's studies, it has now become a respectable field of inquiry in Western universities. Within Africa, however, local research on women, particularly by local researchers, is considered an unimportant, irrelevant and useless imitation of Western women's liberation. A cursory look at completed and ongoing research by local institutions in Africa would indicate that consequently only a handful have been focused on women. Yet recently published bibliographies show that externally a large amount of research on African women is carried out regularly.<sup>7</sup> As most of these studies are not meant for internal consumption, most of them are not available in Africa.

On the other hand, even those meant to influence local policies often fail to achieve the stated objectives. The reasons for this are many. External researchers from countries where constraints in implementation of research findings are very often the result of political decisions and not budgetary constraints, issue recommendations that are not feasible in the light of existing resources and priorities in Third World countries. Similarly, even when the implementation of recommendations is

theoretically feasible, given policy commitments, they often remain recommendations on paper. This is due to the lack of a continual follow-up by a local person, who can ensure the primary application of the suggestions; monitor the results; agitate for necessary adjustments; and, if successful, examine its replicability in other areas.

Based on the assumption of the universality of Western democracy, state structures and methods of policy formulations, external researchers have accused African women for not waging protest movements similar to their own. Similarly, equating policy formulation and implementation to the will and commitment of politicians, false illusions have resulted from recommendations concerning the inclusion of women in politics and existing state structures. In recent years all these false assumptions, recommendations and 'maternalistic' beliefs, that assume that African women are incapable of looking after their own interests, have come under heavy criticism by Africans and other Third World women.

Following the United Nations Programme for International Women's Year, which both created a relatively better atmosphere of acceptance for local researchers and resulted in a public clash between Western and Third World women on the issue of priorities, more and more research has been conducted by African women themselves. Prior to the Mexico conference, responses to faulty and maternalistic assumptions by Western feminists were made by isolated individuals. A case in point is an African writer who wrote:

Probably no single charge about the nature of traditional African society has animated Africans more than the idea commonly held by most foreigners that the African woman is dominated and used as a beast of burden, and is generally a pliable person.<sup>8</sup>

It is to be remembered that at the Mexico World Conference, Third World women registered their discontent at the analysis and strategies of Western women who insisted on prioritizing problems of inequality between the sexes as the fundamental issue facing all women and argued that the interests of men and women were opposed and mutually exclusive. On their part, Third World women argued that the primary problem for them was the widening inequality between their countries and the West, which has resulted in the widespread poverty of their peoples. Secondly, they pointed out that they were fully capable of waging their struggles in the ways and means that they considered to be fruitful and timely. This sentiment can be seen in a statement by a Nigerian woman journalist at the Conference who stated,

It is presumptuous for anyone to presume that women of the Third World are unable to articulate their own outrage at any issue that concerns them. As a member of the Third World, I repudiate this patronizing and particularly the underlining intellectual imperialism. Women in the Third World do not need any more champions. We are bored and tired of any more Great White Hopes.<sup>9</sup>

The contradictions between Western women and those in the Third World did not end in Mexico. Nor were the objections to these problems expressed at individual levels. The following year, at a Conference held at Wellesley College, Boston, Massachusetts, 2-6 June, 1976, African women and those of African descent presented a written criticism that was both procedural and substantial. The issues involved and the sentiments of the African participants can be discerned from the document, part of which reads:

We wish to register here our deep objections to the language used in dialogue with us by some of the

Conference convenors, which ranged from the patronizing to the insulting.

We, as scholars and colleagues, recognize the necessity for a clear and scientific appraisal of the roles and statuses of women in our societies ... We also appreciate the potential intellectual and practical value of scholarly endeavour such as this Conference represents. ... It is important, for example, that convenors of a conference do not think that the successful search for funds for, or the planning of a conference, grants them the moral right to dictate the terms by which their foreign colleagues should participate in that conference. Nor does the findings of funds for, or the planning of a conference confer the right to exploit the presence of these colleagues without granting them integral roles in the decision-making processes surrounding the conference.

We would like to remind the Convenors of this particular Conference that much of the wealth which allows for the funding of conferences such as this is derived from the exploitation of the regions from which we come. Therefore the question of gratitude for having been invited, or charity on the part of the hosts, does not arise.

As for substantial issues, the criticism ranged from the venue of the Conference (why was it not held in a non-Western country?) and biases in perspective on development, to lack of critiques of externally designed and controlled development projects that exist in Africa, Asia, etc. Furthermore, it was stated:

We recognize that the primary reality of our societies today is unquestionably that of neocolonialism which presents severe obstacles to us as African peoples, as women, and as researchers, and which is the major obstacle to development in its human and broadest sense.

We, as researchers, know that creativity and the development of scientific inquiry depend upon the constant appraisal of both theory and method if research is to be of any relevance for social development. It is important, therefore, that in any future conference dealing with research on the deprived

world, the creative efforts of scholars from these areas should be recognized and represented.<sup>10</sup>

The expression of dissatisfaction of African women with this state of affairs was not limited to spontaneous reactions at conferences organized by others or to responses in their journals. It has culminated in a process of internal organizing and the creation of horizontal links.

### **History of AAWORD**

Political independence in most African countries did not result in autonomous universities and research institutions. Until the 1970s, most African research institutes focused not only on received topics and disciplines from abroad, but continued to be funded in the form of research personnel and their research expenses. It is only in the mid-1970s that a stable core of local researchers, focusing on topics deemed internally relevant, have begun to work in these research institutes. The direct link of these universities and institutes to Europe and the United States meant that there was no communication among African scholars within the continent.

In recent years, more attempts at pan-African communications and regional research institutes, regionally published journals, and conferences have made it possible for African scholars to meet, exchange ideas and discuss problems of mutual concern. One example is the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa and its quarterly journal, *African Development*. However, studies on African women and the recruitment of women researchers are not the priorities of these research institutes. Here and there, one finds African women as staff members in these institutions. Not all of them work on issues concerning women, however, and when they

do, it is often related to either 'population studies' or nutrition. It is important to note that while these two topics are solicited and supported by a steady supply of external funding, neither topic, particularly the former, is considered a priority locally.

It was a combination of all these factors that accentuated the need for creating an organization. The Wellesley event and other frustrations experienced by African women scholars gave birth to the idea of having an Africa-wide organization of women, who are committed to a type of study and a new methodology that would lead to the amelioration and transformation of the lives of African women and that of the continent as a whole. Discussions between African women following Wellesley revealed that many African scholars have in recent years become increasingly aware of the need to articulate their own reality, particularly women scholars, who in the past have been left out of the traditional avenues of research. Further discussions between individual researchers and research groups and deliberations at national, regional and international conferences identified concerns and culminated in a concrete research proposal. This proposal was presented to the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC), in August 1976, for funds for a consultative meeting. The meeting was held in Lusaka, Zambia, in December 1976.

### **The Lusaka Consultative Meeting, 6-10 December, 1976**

At this meeting, a group of African women already involved with research and development projects gathered to outline the objectives of the association and to identify research priorities. Finally, a follow-up workshop was planned for Dakar, in the following year, 1977.

At the Lusaka Consultative Meeting, organized around the theme 'Towards the evaluation of socio-economic research priorities from an African perspective', the following objectives were agreed upon as a guide to future activities:

1. To mobilize and create channels of communication between researchers;
2. To strengthen research capabilities and promote participatory research in African countries;
3. To evaluate research methods and priorities;
4. To identify resources which would contribute to 1, 2 and 3;
5. To encourage an innovative approach to research from an African perspective in view of 1-4 above.

The proposed group, conceived as a network of women researchers in Africa, named AAWORD, went forward in Lusaka to define its policies and identify research priorities. The Association decided to make its membership available to indigenous Africans interested in research and committed to or capable of being committed to the objectives of the Association.

Regarding policy, the Association decided that:

1. AAWORD would be independent of any government or organization within or outside Africa;
2. The Association would cooperate with individuals and organizations who would support and identify themselves with its objectives in encouraging: (a) the formation of national groups in liaison with national research institutes in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Association, and (b) the encouragement of a strong liaison with the research groups in the rest of the Third World who are striving for similar objectives.

In its research policy, AAWORD is to promote the decolonization of research in Africa. The organization would also provide facilities for research along the lines of its stated objectives.

In its funding policy, the new organization would depend on individual membership, subscriptions, gifts and grants. Specific positions were taken regarding external funding with emphasis on the principle of not soliciting financial resources from governments and organizations whose policies were deemed to be in conflict with the objectives of AAWORD.

The Consultative Meeting focused on research priorities and redefinitions of available methodological tools which will facilitate the successful carrying out of our stated objectives.

It was stressed that research as a mere academic exercise should be discouraged. Rather, research should be directed towards solving pressing problems which affect the daily lives of our peoples. Research priorities identified at this meeting centred on developmental issues such as education, health, rural-urban development and the role of women in the scientific and technological development of a nation. Details of these research priorities have already been worked out and are being pursued by the Association at various levels. In the realization that the quality of research has usually been lowered by the inadequacy or the inapplicability of existing research methodology, the meeting outlined the following approaches:

1. The reconsideration of existing concepts with a view to making them reflective of African realities;
2. The use of approaches which would facilitate deep and complex analyses including: (a) a class perspective; (b) the diachronic approach; and (c) the holistic orientation;
3. The use of methodological tools defined and rendered creative by the adoption of indigenous criteria, models and practices.

While both the qualitative and quantitative use of data were deemed important, emphasis is to be placed on the qualitative. To this end, the details of research methods should include the use of traditional devices such as questionnaire interviews etc., handled innovatively in a manner sensitive and sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of our people.

Where necessary and useful, research projects should be interdisciplinary and interregional.

The Consultative Meeting made the following decisions in connection with follow-up action. As a first step:

1. To hold a workshop, 'African women and development: the decolonization of research' in Dakar, Senegal, in July, 1977;
2. To appoint a temporary administrative committee to work out the details of the Dakar Workshop;
3. To conduct feasibility studies on the establishment of a documentation and research centre in Africa on African women; and
4. During the Dakar Workshop, to provide for the establishment of the Association and a discussion of its future activities.

#### **The Dakar Workshop, 12-17 December, 1977**

The main objective of this Workshop was to bring together a number of African women who were engaged in research and development projects in Africa, in order to form a continent-wide supportive network, which was felt to be long overdue. On the basis of such a network, a re-examination of current research on African development problems and, more importantly, the full participation of women researchers in the designing and executing of research projects, as well as in the dissemination of findings, was to be undertaken.

A comprehensive appreciation of the im-

plication of the Dakar Workshop and the resultant organization necessitates an understanding of the history of colonialism and its legacies in the forms of various linguistic, geo-political divisions and the continuing vertical linkages. Having been excluded from public affairs locally, or having exchanged experiences only with Western women, whose problems were different in nature and magnitude, the coming together of African women researchers can be taken as a turning point in African history, which so far had rendered women voiceless and invisible. With these structural and historical problems as a background, three outstanding features can be noted about the Workshop and the network that resulted from it:

1. It was the first gathering of African women researchers and development agents at a conference organized in Africa by African women in search of a common strategy;
2. The participants were representatives of French-, English- and Portuguese-speaking Africa;
3. Likewise, participants were from North and Sub-Saharan Africa and members of liberation struggles.

As is always the case with initial gatherings of people who have been denied opportunities, the Workshop was marked by a very high degree of enthusiasm and intensity and an agenda with a multitude of issues to discuss. The Workshop, which was entitled 'African Women and Development: the Decolonization of Research', was funded by the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC) and sponsored by the Institute for Development and Economic Planning (IDEP) and the Council on the Development of Social and Economic Research in Africa (CODESRIA). There were 50 participants and 20 observers, including representatives from the Economic Commission for Africa

(ECA), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), SAREC and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

After an initial plenary, participants were divided into four working groups: 1. Rural development; 2. Urban development; 3. Women and the law; 4. Psycho-cultural studies.

In connection with the different topics, each group had a lengthy discussion on issues of methodology. Several papers were presented by participants who had been working on various aspects of women and development. In each working group, and the plenary sessions, there were intense and complex debates, ranging from the impact of religion on women and the role of multinationals to cultural issues such as differing views on polygamy. Another distinguishing feature of the Workshop, therefore, was the critical outlook on the various socio-economic and political problems that were both internally and externally generated and were being continuously reproduced.

As most participants were of the opinion that the quality of existing research had usually been affected by the inadequacy of its methodology, lengthy debates were held concerning methodological alternatives. These debates covered a variety of possible approaches. How do we render existing concepts reflective of African realities? What are the approaches that would facilitate deep and complex analysis? Can we use existing indigenous criteria and practices of information-gathering innovatively and in a manner that is sensitive and sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of our peoples? How do we utilize a historical perspective as both a conceptual and methodological tool to

clarify the process of social transformation? Participants were convinced that the way the above-mentioned challenges were met would both determine the quality of their work and define the prospects and limits of policy decisions that they would be able to recommend. Following these discussions, each working group identified research priorities which were later presented and amended at the plenary session. The other task at the Workshop was setting up a new association of African women researchers which was formally instituted and named 'the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD)'.

#### **Institutional framework of AAWORD**

The Association is made up of (a) the General Assembly, (b) the Bureau and (c) the Editing Committee.

The General Assembly is the central organ of the Association. Its membership is open to indigenous African women researchers who adhere to its objectives. Currently all its members are subdivided into four working groups. Each working group has a convener and a co-convener.

The Bureau is made up of the President, the Secretary-General, and the Treasurer, and is in charge of the administrative duties of the Association. The Editing Committee is made up of an editor and a co-editor, who are responsible for editing publications. The headquarters of the Association will be in the country where the President resides, currently Senegal.

#### **Objectives of the Association**

The general objective of the Association is to promote multidimensional development, i.e. development in the service of political awareness as well as the economic, social, cultural

and psychological fulfilment of the African people, and to make governments, public authorities and research centres sensitive to the need for decolonizing research.

The specific objectives are:

1. To create and develop, on the one hand, lines of communication between the women researchers themselves, and on the other hand, between the women researchers and others concerned with problems of development in Africa;
2. To promote research oriented towards action which calls for crucial and conscious participation of the populations in the formulation, realization and evaluation of development projects which concern them;
3. To evaluate and re-examine the methodology and research priorities, the application of which is in the service of the African populations;
4. To undertake and develop publishing activities.

The Association is a non-governmental organization.

The functions of the Association are:

1. To identify resources and accord its members facilities to permit them to put the above objectives into practice;
2. To encourage the formation of national research groups in conjunction with the National Research Centres to facilitate the attaining of these objectives;
3. To maintain contact with research groups in other developing countries, who are working towards similar objectives;
4. To create a magazine and bulletin to end the present isolation of African researchers, to establish a permanent communication network among them and publish the results of their research.

## Notes

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# **about understanding**

**—ideas and observations  
on cross-cultural  
communication**

**by andreas fuglesang**

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Over the last ten years there has been an ever growing importance attached to the communications *problématique*. Most efforts to transform the present international information structures have been made in a rather abstract manner and at a fairly high political level. *About Understanding* represents a major contribution to the problem of communication at the grass roots level.

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Andreas Fuglesang is an internationally recognized authority on information, cross-cultural communication and adult education in the Third World.



# Women in Cultural Work: The Fate of Kamĩrĩthũ People's Theatre in Kenya

By Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

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*In many discussions on development, the cultural aspect is left out or else admitted through the backdoor. And yet if people are the centre of development, if they are both the object and subject of development, then the quality of their cultural life should be the most important indicator of development. Many agencies will, for instance, easily fund any economic and social programme for which the results can be quantified, but recoil in horror or benign amusement or embarrassment at the notion of funding good quality feature films for the cinema and television or of funding actual cultural centres and theatre performing companies in Third World countries. Yet what could be a more effective way of making people actors in their own development than to raise their awareness and arouse their energies through cultural activities? Where cultural activities are admitted, it is often as a means of teaching the rural folk good hygiene, nutrition, better farming methods and so on. Yet their problem is often not lack of knowledge of how to do these things but lack of food and land and facilities on which to practise that knowledge. Theatre and cinema as an expression of the drama in the lives of the people—that is, as an expression of their struggles, their conflicts, their hopes and fears, their aspirations—can make a people view themselves positively, and even be the beginning of an awakening of the slumbering powers within them.*

*But unfortunately it is this very awakening of the slumbering powers within the people—indeed, even the possibility of such an awakening—which terrifies many of the ruling regimes in the Third World. They like a people constantly beholden to the authorities for any and every charitable handout. In most Third World countries, 'charity' and its corollary 'begging' has become the highest ethical goal, preached every weekend at political rallies and on every state occasion. They definitely do not wish to remove the social conditions that make charity possible. An awakened people, a people aware of where they are coming from, where they now are, and where they could go, is a threat to all the institutions and structures of 'charity'.*

*The people's theatre at Kamĩrĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre, Limuru, Kenya, which was started in 1976-77, has shown what poor peasants, factory workers and primary school teachers can do for themselves in theatre. In 1977 they performed Ngaahika Ndeenda (I will marry when I*



want), scripted by *Ngũgĩ wa Mirũ* and *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* and directed by *Kimani Gecau*, in an open-air theatre which they had built themselves. Thousands of ordinary people trekked from all over the country, on foot, in hired taxis and in buses, to see the show. The play was stopped by the Kenyan authorities after only ten performances. In February 1982, the same group tried to perform another play, *Maitũ Njugĩra* (*Mother sing for me*)—this time at the Kenya National Theatre, Nairobi—but they were refused permission by the authorities. Yet their open rehearsals at the University of Nairobi premises attracted thousands and once again the authorities stepped in and banned the rehearsals.

In the following article *Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*, who scripted *Maitũ Njugĩra*, describes women's participation in these dramatic efforts, and the fate of *Kamirũthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre*. All the photos show the rehearsals of *Maitũ Njugĩra* with a section of the kind of audience that attended the public rehearsals.

*Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o* has written four novels in English: *Weep not Child*; *The River Between*; *A Grain of Wheat*; *Petals of Blood*. He has also published two volumes of Essays: *Homecoming*; *Writers in Politics*, and a prison memoir: *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*. With *Micere Gũthae Mũgo* he has published the play, *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmaathi*. But it is his involvement in community theatre among villages and his work in a language and imagery understood by ordinary people that has earned him the wrath of the Kenyan authorities who, in 1978, put him in political detention for a year at *Kamĩĩ Maximum Security Prison*. After they released him from prison, the authorities refused to let him resume his job as Associate Professor of Literature at Nairobi University. His works in the *Gĩkũyũ* language include: *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, a play co-authored with *Ngũgĩ wa Mirũ*; *Maitũ Njugĩra*, a musical drama; *Caitaani Mũtharaba-inĩ*, a novel written in prison; and the *Njamba Nene* series (three books for children). *Ngaahika Ndeenda* has now been translated into English as *I will marry when I want* and *Caitaani Mũtharaba-inĩ* as *Devil on the Cross*. A Swedish translation of the novel was published in October, 1982. German and Japanese translations will soon follow. All translations are directly from the *Gĩkũyũ* original.

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In the Gĩkũyũ language play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, a factory worker finds a peasant mother weeping over, among other things, the fact that her daughter is now employed as a barmaid: one of the most insecure, lowly paid and humiliating jobs in Kenya, into which hundreds of girls are forced in the modern Kenya of US military bases, the IMF, and World Bank. Working in a bar is, to the peasant, the same as becoming a whore:

GICAAMBA: [*Moving away from the board*]  
Let's not call our children prostitutes.  
A hyena is very greedy  
But she does not eat her young.  
Our children are not to blame.  
Gathoni is not to blame.  
When a bird in flight gets very tired  
It lands on the nearest tree.  
We the parents have not put much effort  
In the education of our girls.  
Even before colonialism,  
We oppressed women  
Giving ourselves numerous justifications:

[*Sings*]  
*Women and property are not friends,  
Two women are two pots of poison,  
Women and the heavens are unpredictable,  
Women cannot keep secrets,  
A woman's word is believed only after the event.*

And through many other similar sayings,  
Forgetting that a home belongs to man and woman,  
That the country belongs to boys and girls.  
Do you think it was only the men  
Who fought for Kenya's independence?  
How many women died in the forests?  
Today when we face problems  
We take it out on our wives,  
Instead of holding a dialogue  
To find ways and means of removing darkness from the land.

[Sings]

*Come my friend  
Come my friend  
Let's reason together.  
Our hearts are heavy  
Over the future of our children.  
Let's find ways of driving darkness  
From the land.*

NJOOKI:

Gathoni now has no job.  
She has no other means of earning a living  
And she would like to dress up  
Like all her age-mates.

WANGECI:

Would she were a housemaid!

NJOOKI:

A housemaid?  
To be collecting all the shit in somebody else's house?  
And when the memsahib is out of sight,  
The husband wants the maid to act the wife!  
Thus the maid doing all the work for memsahib!

GICAAMBA AND NJOOKI: [*Sing as if continuing the song  
Gicaamba has just sung*].

*Yes we find out why  
It's the children of the poor  
Who look after rich people's homes,  
Who serve them beer in beer-halls,  
Who sell them their flesh.  
Come my friend  
Come my friend  
We reason together.  
Our hearts are heavy  
Over the future of our children.  
Let's find ways of driving away darkness  
From the land.*

WANGECI:

Oh, my child!

NJOOKI:

She will come back!



Workers dancing Mũthĩrīgũ defiantly

The passage shows the double oppression of women. As suppliers of labour in colonies and neo-colonies, they are exploited; and as women they suffer under the weight of male prejudices in both feudalism and imperialism.

But the passage shows two other things: the need to look for both causes and solutions in the social system of how wealth is produced, controlled and shared out. This calls for the unity of the workers and peasants—without sexist prejudices—against imperialism and all its class allies in the colonies and neo-colonies.

In the specific case of Kenya, the passage pays tribute to the important role women have always played in our history. They have been at the forefront in all its crucial and decisive phases.

The wars against the British colonial occupation of Kenya, for instance, threw to the fore the leadership of Me Katilili. She was in her seventies when she organized the Giriama youth in the 1913-14 armed struggle against the British colonial administration. She was arrested and detained but she never gave in to her torturers.

The twenties also saw a great awakening among workers of all Kenyan nationalities and they united in a major workers' movement: demanding an end to forced labour, the carrying of identity papers, taxation, slave wages and all other oppressive features of the colonial system such as the beating of workers and the prostitution of teenage girls by the settler plantation owners. The British retaliated by arresting and detaining Harry Thuku, the leader of the workers' movement. The biggest demonstration of workers then ever seen in Kenya

was led by Mary Mũthoni Nyanjirũ and demanded his release. She was among the first to be shot dead by the British forces, followed by 150 others in what has now come to be known as the 1922 massacre.

The fifties saw the Mau Mau armed struggle. Kenyan women played a heroic role in the fighting in the forests and mountains, and in prisons and detention camps, and in the homes. They were everywhere.

This is the kind of history and struggle that the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (I will marry when I want) celebrates.

The play was performed by members of Kamĩrĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre, Limuru, Kenya, in 1977. Over two thirds of the members were women, ranging from children to those in their seventies. They were mostly poor peasants, plantation workers and unemployed school leavers. There was one office secretary. Together with the men—factory workers, poor peasants, the unemployed, primary school teachers and university lecturers—they had built an open-air theatre with a seating capacity of over 2000. Although the script was drafted by Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ and I, the peasants and workers added to it, making the end product a far cry from the original draft. Everything was collective, open and public, and it was fascinating to see a unity gradually emerge which virtually rubbed out distinctions of age, education, sex and nationality. The evolution of this community centre is described in my book *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, and I cannot find better words with which to describe the transformation I experienced and witnessed with my own eyes:

The six months between June and November 1977 were the most exciting in my life and the true beginning of my education. I learnt my language anew. I rediscovered the creative nature and power of collective work.

Work, oh yes, work! Work, from each according to his ability for a collective vision, was the great democratic equalizer. Not money, not book education, but work. Not three-piece suits with carnations and gloves, not tongues of honey, but work. Not birth, not palaces, but work. Not globe-trotting, not the knowledge of foreign tongues and foreign lands, not dinners at foreign inns of court, but work. Not religions, not good intentions, but work. Work and yet more work, with collective democratic decisions on the basis of frank criticisms and self-criticism, was the organizing principle which gradually emerged to become the corner-stone of our activities.

Although the overall direction of the play was under Kimani Gecau, the whole project became a collective community effort with peasants and workers seizing more and more initiative in revising and adding to the script, in directing dance movements on the stage, and in the general organization.

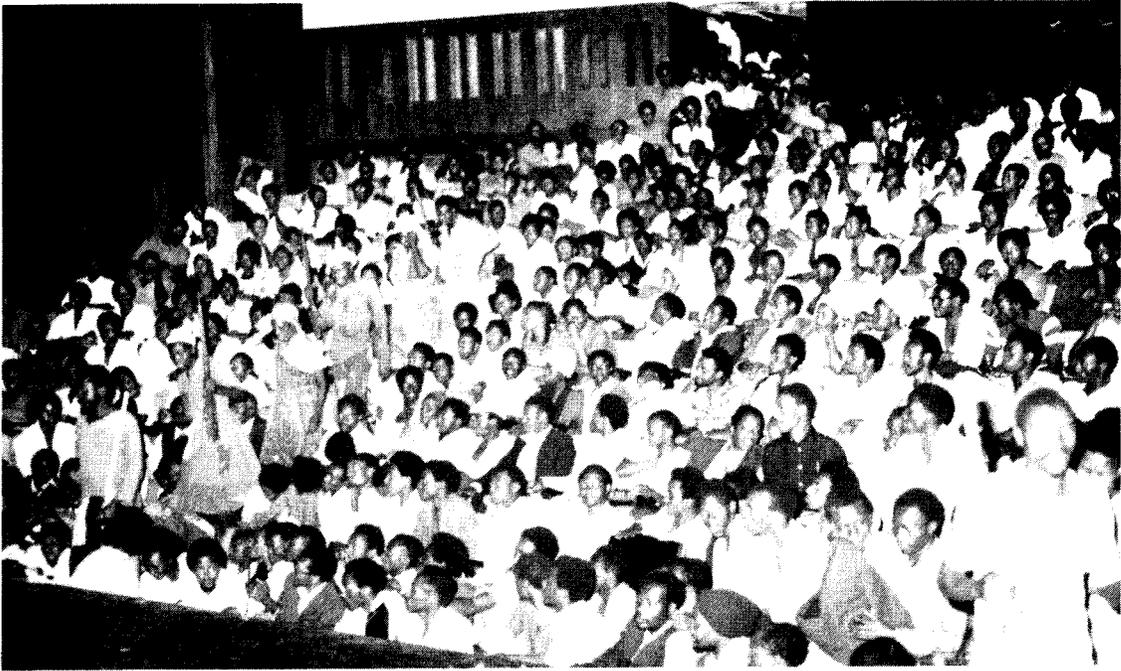


Njoki wa Njũkĩra in action: she is 72 years old

I saw with my own eyes an incredible discipline emerge in keeping time and in cutting down negative social practices. Drinking alcohol, for instance. It was the women's group, led by Gaceeri wa Waigaanjo, who imposed on themselves a ban on drinking alcohol, even a glass, when coming to work at the centre. This spread to all the other groups including the audience. By the time we came to perform, it was generally understood and accepted that drunkenness was not allowed at the centre. For a village which was known for drunken brawls, it was a remarkable achievement of our collective self-discipline that we never had a single incident of fighting or a single drunken disruption for all the six months of public rehearsals and performances.

I saw with my own eyes peasants, some of whom had never once been inside a theatre in their lives, design and construct an open-air theatre complete with a raised stage, roofed dressing-rooms and stores, and an auditorium with a seating capacity of more than two thousand persons. Under a production team led by Gatoonye wa Mũgoiyo, an office messenger, they experimented with matchsticks on the ground before building a small working model on which they based the final complex.

The rehearsals, arranged to fit in with the working rhythms of the village, which meant mostly Saturday and Sunday afternoons, were all in the open, attracting an ever-increasing crowd of spectators and an equally great volume of running appreciative or critical commentaries. The whole process of play-acting and production had been demystified and the actors and the show were the gainers for it. The dress rehearsal on Sunday, 25 September 1977, attracted one of the biggest crowds I have ever seen for a similar occasion, and



A section of the audience: all the entrances and isles are completely packed

the same level of high attendance was maintained for the next four Saturdays and six Sundays.

Furthermore, the whole effort unleashed a torrent of talents hitherto unsuspected even by the owners. Thus before the play was over, we had already received three scripts of plays in the Gikūyū language, two written by a worker, and one by a primary school teacher. One unemployed youth, who had tried to commit suicide four times because he thought his life was useless, now suddenly discovered that he had a tremendous voice which, when raised in a song, kept its listeners on dramatic tenter-hooks. None of the actors had ever been on a stage before, yet they kept the audiences glued to their seats, even when it was raining. One of the most insulting compliments came from a critic who wrote that the orchestra was professional and had been hired from Nairobi. Another insulting compliment came from those who heatedly argued that simple villagers could never attain that excellence; that the actors were all university students dressed in the tattered clothes of peasants. Another equally insulting compliment came from a university lecturer in literature who argued that the apparent effortless ease of the acting was spontaneous: after all, the villagers were acting themselves. The fact was that all the actors and musicians, men, women and children, came from the village, and they put in more than four months of conscious disciplined work. Some of our university lecturers and those other critics, in their petty-bourgeois blindness, could never conceive peasants as being capable of sustained disciplined intellectual efforts.

For myself, I learnt a lot. I had been delegated to the role of a messenger and a porter, running errands here and there. But I also had time to observe things. I saw how the people had appropriated the text, improving on the language and episodes and metaphors, so that the play which was finally put on to a fee-paying audience on Sunday, 2 October 1977, was a far cry from the tentative awkward efforts originally put together by Ngūgī and myself. I felt one with the people. I shared in their rediscovery of their collective strength and abilities, and in their joyous feeling that they could accomplish anything—even transform the whole village and their lives without a single

Harambee of charity—and I could feel the way the actors were communicating their joyous sense of a new power to their audience who too went home with gladdened hearts.

Before long the centre received delegations from other peasant communities who wanted similar cultural ventures in their areas. A peasant/worker theatre movement was about to start.

But unfortunately the Kenya Government struck with a vengeance. The public performances of the play were stopped on November 16, 1977 and I was later arrested and detained for a year.

For the next three years or so, there were no theatre activities in the centre. Adult literacy classes continued, and once again women were the main participants.

Then, in November 1981, the group reassembled, ready to tackle yet another play. This time it was a musical, *Maitũ Njugĩra* (Mother sing for me), set in the twenties and thirties when Kenyan workers were struggling against repressive labour conditions. The Kamĩrĩthũ group was ready to put on the show at the Kenya National Theatre on 19th February, 1982, but the Kenyan authorities refused the group permission to publicly perform the play. In Kenya, a drama group has to be registered: even then such a group has to get a licence for each play they want to perform. The group retaliated by continuing with rehearsals at Nairobi University but making them public. The rehearsals went on for seven days during which at least 10,000 people were able to see the show. The government finally stopped the rehearsals.

The fate of the Kamĩrĩthũ Theatre is described in a statement I was asked to make on 10th March, 1982. To understand the frustrations faced by a progressive rural and community-based theatre movement in neo-colonial Kenya, I reproduce the statement.

But there is another reason for reproducing it. Lately, and in response to widespread national and international criticism of the Kenya Government's wilful destruction of Kamĩrĩthũ Theatre, the President of the Republic has been making public speeches saying that Kamĩrĩthũ was teaching politics under the cover of culture. The statement below is a detailed documented account of the group's tireless efforts to get a response, in vain, from the government—and it shows the total contempt the regime has for people's efforts. The statement was released to both the Kenyan and international press at a conference in Nairobi.



Workers being punished by the new African Director of Anglo-American Fruit Storage Farm.

....., I have been asked by the management committee of Kamĩrĩthũ Theatre Group and those responsible for the production of our new play, *Maitũ Njugĩra*, to express the following observations regarding our efforts to obtain a government stage licence for the Kenya National Theatre.

First I must express our extreme disappointment and even much anger at the grossly irresponsible manner in which the authorities concerned chose to deal with our application for the licence, normally a quick routine administrative procedure, unnecessary in most countries, but introduced in most British colonies as a method of vetting and censoring native cultural expression.

Dutifully we applied for this licence, in writing, on 2nd November, 1981 to the Nairobi Provincial Commissioner. We then followed this up with a reminder on 12th November, 1981. On 18th November, 1981 we got a letter from the Nairobi Provincial Commissioner's Office asking us to do something that no other theatre group has ever been asked to do, that is, to go back to the District Commissioner, Kiambu, to ask for a recommendation—this on the pretext that the physical address of our Group was in Kiambu. Still, we went ahead and on 23rd November, 1981 we wrote to the District Commissioner, Kiambu, asking for a recommendation. We have never received a reply from the D.C., Kiambu, but throughout December 1981 and January 1982 the Chairman of our Group, Mr. Ngũgĩ wa Mĩrĩĩ, kept running between Kiambu and Nairobi trying to get a reply and the result of our application. On 3rd February, 1982 we wrote a second reminder to the Nairobi Provincial Commissioner. On 16th February 1982, three days before the scheduled opening of our performances at the Kenya National Theatre, we wrote a third reminder, which we even copied to the Chief Secretary.

To all these letters and reminders, the Government, through the Nairobi Provincial Commissioner, never responded in writing. Instead the management of the Kenya National Theatre were given secret instructions not to allow our group into the theatre either for the technical rehearsals starting on 15th February or for the opening night of 19th February. The police must have



Workers in a dance of unity

also been given instructions to harass us for, on 19th February, they kept patrolling the grounds of the Kenya National Theatre where our Group sat singing, waiting for a last minute reply to our application for the stage licence.

After 19th February, our Group resumed rehearsals at the Theatre Two of the University of Nairobi where we had been rehearsing. But once again on 25th February, the University authorities were instructed by telephone not to allow us the use of their premises. I would like to make it clear that up to now the Government has not formally written to us about the fate of our application.

By so doing, the Government denied us one of the most elementary human and democratic rights: the right of every human community to cultural expression. The administration's handling of the matter showed total insensitivity to the sheer amount of labour, effort and money put up by a village group over a three month period. By refusing us a licence, the administration denied Kenyans the right to an entertainment of their choice. The fact that the rehearsals attracted over 10,000 people was an indication that they wanted the show. The play, which heavily drew from the songs and dances of different Kenyan nationalities, showed practical possibilities for the integration of Kenyan cultures. And, as brilliantly directed by Waigwa Wachira and Kimani Gecau, the play suggested a whole new basis for Kenyan theatre. It now looks as if Kenyans, especially peasants, are not supposed to dance, sing and act out their history of struggle against colonial oppression.

The play *Maitũ Njugĩra*, draft-written by myself and subsequently enriched by the cast, is what may be called a dramatized documentary on the forced labour and Kipande laws in the colonial Kenya of the twenties and thirties. It shows the attempts in one community to repulse these and other injustices and to survive as a unit despite tremendous official intrigue and brutality. It shows indirectly the genesis of some of our peoples' subsequent political movements and the seeds of their defeats and partial triumphs.

This play is unlike our earlier effort at communal drama, *Ngaahika Ndeen-*



A tense moment: a captive audience

*da*, whose staging was stopped without explanation by the government in 1977 after a highly acclaimed brief run and whose basic theme revolved around present day Kenyan society. Understandably, the wealthy who control the government did not like the stark realities of their own social origins enacted on the stage by simple villagers. As a result, we were harassed, some of us even detained—as you know. We did not apologize. We still believe in and stand by the content of that play. The spirit of the Centre (that is, Kamirĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre) was not killed or even impaired.

*Maitũ Njugĩra* by contrast addresses itself to the rulers of a previous, albeit related, era and it seemed to us curious that the ghosts of the settler colonial regime of the thirties should, in 1982, come to haunt the same tiny circle of wealth that *Ngaahika Ndeenda* so terrified. It now seems, despite constitutional safeguards, that any public examination of Kenya's society, its history or future cannot be done without raising the nervousness of the authorities.

We consider this attitude undemocratic and extremely dangerous. It is our right to represent our art and culture from our own viewpoint so long as in the process no extant law is broken. We have sought to act strictly according to law and with complete legitimacy in all aspects of our work. We have followed the unnecessarily difficult and frustrating due process of registering ourselves, applying for permits and all the other now commonplace prerequisites of self-expression in Kenya. We have been very patient.

In return we have received official lies and ping-pong tactics: going from office to office, authority to authority, ministry to ministry, with never so much as a word of hard decision, only indirect instructions such as, for example, the administration's last minute letter to the National Theatre refusing us entry on 15th February, 1982. No department has had the courage to address itself decisively or conclusively to our countless communications over a period of three months. Instead we have encountered only monumental indecision and a farrago of verbal excuses to frustrate us.

The manner in which the refusal of permission to stage the play was carried

out, reveals a very serious element in Kenya today. The fact that the government conducted their instructions verbally or by telephone without ever writing to us directly, so that no written record exists, reinforces a dangerous trend. Thus acts are carried out without any officials being held accountable. Under such an atmosphere, anything can be done to any Kenyan or group of Kenyans by officials without written documentation or accountability.

This is not just simple irresponsibility and heavyhanded use of authority. The government seems mortally terrified of peasants organizing themselves on their terms and their own initiative.

We wish to denounce in the strongest possible terms the government's increasing intolerance and repression of the Kenyan people's cultural initiatives. Secondly, we now question fundamentally the seriousness of the government's commitment to Kenyan culture. If, as we are told, the economy has slowed down for external factors of recession, inflation and petroleum prices, we ask is Kenyan culture to slow down or stagnate for the same reasons? If we had chosen to do often mindless and always irrelevant pieces as do the foreign groups, we probably might not have met with such official hostility. Foreign theatre can freely thrive on Kenyan soil. But there is no room for Kenyan theatre on Kenyan soil. During the Emergency, the British colonial regime introduced severe censorship of Kenyan theatre, particularly in detention camps like Athi River, and employed African rehabilitation officers to do their dirty work. Similar tactics are being used in Kenya today! We now call for an end to censorship of Kenyan people's cultural expression.

Finally, as you are now aware, we had secured independently a fully sponsored invitation from Zimbabwe to perform during the month of April as part of their rural cultural project. The invitation of the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education and Culture dated 2nd December, 1981, and which we accepted on 21st December, 1981, was a tremendous boost to our morale and an important recognition of the contribution of the Kamirĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre to rural community-based theatre and was very much in the spirit of intra-African cultural exchange. In our letter of acceptance, we asked our prospective hosts to formalize this invitation, if only for simple protocol, through the relevant authorities in the Kenya Government. We believe this they did in writing. We, too, have written to the government through the Ministry of Culture about the visit but we have had no reply.

We now fear that the same forces which worked against our getting a stage licence to perform *Maitũ Njugira* at the Kenya National Theatre will now work to prevent the visit of our Group to Zimbabwe during April .....

I made this statement on Wednesday, 10th March, 1982 on behalf of Kamirĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre Theatre Group. On Thursday, 11th March, the government, through the Provincial Commissioner for Central Province, a Mr. Musila, came to Kamirĩthũ and—dressed in the full regalia of his office (exactly the same uniform worn by British colonial provincial commissioners)—re-



Wanjiru Ngigi acting the character of a woman who has been tortured into miscarriage. A little crazed, she is now searching for an imaginary child

voked the license for Kamĩrĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre. He said that women were being misled into cultural activities that had nothing to do with development. He therefore banned all theatre activities in the area.

On Friday, 12th March, the District Officer for Limuru led three truckloads of heavily armed police and demolished Kamĩrĩthũ's people's open-air theatre.

The government never gave the group permission to go to Zimbabwe. Our letters to the Minister of Culture informing him about the invitation were never answered, not even acknowledged. We were unable to go to Zimbabwe.

In view of President Moi's recent public statements, attacking the theatre at Kamĩrĩthũ, one can now definitely say that the whole cultural repression was *not* an accident nor an isolated mistake by some over-zealous phillistines in the provincial administration, but the deliberate, thought-out action of a nervous regime. The government ban on the public performance of other plays (*Muntu* by Joe de Graft, *Kilio* by students of Nairobi school, etc.) and the arrest and detention of university teachers, students, lawyers and left-wing politicians, and the general climate of terror, would confirm that the destruction of Kamĩrĩthũ was part and parcel of a programmed attempt to enforce conformity of thought on the entire population by rooting out critical elements and suspending the democratic process in politics, education and culture. But conformity to which thought?

It may be pointed out that during the same period that the Kenya Government was suppressing *Maitũ Njugĩra*, a musical depicting the worker and peasant resistance to colonial repression in a positive light, it had bought a TV film of Elspeth Huxley's autobiography *Flame Trees of Thika* and screened it in seven episodes over two months on Kenya Television. The film was made by a British television company and both it and the book, set in the twenties and thirties, show Kenyans as part and parcel of the animal and natural landscape. They are certainly not depicted as possessing any capacity for resistance.

What now? Is this the end of Kamĩrĩthũ? The Government's repressive measures were certainly a setback to the development of a people-based theatre in the countryside. For it means that, for the majority of women in the rural areas, the church on Sundays will remain their only venue for cultural expression—by way of religious hymns, prayers, sermons and bible readings. For the others, alcohol will be their only means of entertainment. But despite this, I am convinced that the Kamĩrĩthũ idea can never be killed. How do you kill the right and the determination of a people to have a cultural life?

Kamĩrĩthũ has shown what peasants and workers are capable of doing in modern theatre if left alone to organize on their own terms. In their participation in the peasant and worker-based theatre, the Kamĩrĩthũ women have joined a long line of others who have always stood for a free united Kenya, a Kenya in which if a bean falls to the ground, it is shared among the children. This is the vision that guided the Mau Mau anti-colonial movement and it is what today guides the

Kenyan people in their anti-imperialist struggle against all forms of internal and external exploitation and oppression.

Gĩcaamba, the factory worker in the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (I will marry when I want), sums up the situation when talking to the other peasant and worker characters (both men and women) in the play:

GĨCAAMBA:

The question is this:  
Who are our friends? And where are they?  
Who are our enemies? And where are they?  
Let us unite against our enemies.  
I don't need to elaborate!  
He who has ears, let him hear,  
He who has eyes, let him see.  
I know only this:  
We cannot end poverty by erecting a hundred churches in the village;  
We cannot end poverty by erecting a hundred beer-halls in the village;  
Ending up with two alcoholics.  
The alcoholic of hard liquor.  
The alcoholic of the rosary.  
Let's rather unite in patriotic love:  
Gikũyũ once said:

[Sings]

Two hands can carry a beehive,  
One man's ability is not enough,  
One finger cannot kill a louse,  
Many hands make work light.  
Why did Gikũyũ say those things?  
Development will come from our unity.  
Unity is our strength and wealth.  
A day will surely come when  
If a bean falls to the ground  
It'll be split equally among us,  
For—

[They sing]

SOLOIST:

*The trumpet—*

ALL:

*Of the workers has been blown  
To wake all the slaves  
To wake all the peasants  
To wake all the poor  
To wake the masses.*



A work sequence in dance and song

SOLOIST:

*The trumpet—*

ALL:

*Of the poor has been blown.*

SOLOIST:

*The trumpet!*

ALL:

*The trumpet of the masses has been blown.*

*Let's preach to all our friends.*

*The trumpet of the masses has been blown.*

*We change to new songs*

*For the revolution is near.*

SOLOIST:

*The trumpet!*

ALL:

*The trumpet of the masses has been blown.*

SOLOIST:

*The trumpet!*

ALL:

*The trumpet of the masses has been blown.*

*We are tired of being robbed*

*We are tired of exploitation*

*We are tired of land grabbing*

*We are tired of slavery*

*We are tired of charity and abuses.*

SOLOIST:

*The trumpet!*

ALL:  
*The trumpet of the poor has been blown.  
 Let's unite and organize  
 Organization is our club  
 Organization is our sword  
 Organization is our gun  
 Organization is our shield  
 Organization is the way  
 Organization is our strength  
 Organization is our light  
 Organization is our wealth.*

SOLOIST:  
*The trumpet!*

ALL:  
*The trumpet of the masses has been blown.*

SOLOIST:  
*The trumpet—*

ALL:  
*Of the workers has been blown  
 There are two sides in the struggle,  
 The side of the exploiters and that of the exploited.  
 On which side will you be when*

SOLOIST:  
*The trumpet—*

ALL:  
*Of the workers is finally blown?*

Like Gĩcaamba, the people of Kenya—men, women and children—are looking out to see who their friends are. Anybody who would raise their voice against the current cultural and political repression in the land and against the denial to Kenyans of their democratic and human rights to organize, in whatever capacity, on their own terms, are friends of Kenyan people and of democracy.

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression', says Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All cultural and women's organizations throughout the world should raise their voices against what is happening in Kenya. Certainly, they should make their abhorrence of rule by terror known to the Kenyan authorities in every venue at every opportunity. No amount of material well-being (such as giving three sewing machines to a village of 10,000 people as the authorities have recently done at Kamĩrĩĩthũ!) can compensate for the loss of a people's right to determine their lives, or at least have a say in such determination.

Development should mean the release of the creative powers in men, women and children. The destruction of a cultural centre is an attempt to stifle creativity and says a lot about the spiritual and mental state of these regimes, which nervously reach out for the pistol at the mention of the phrase 'people's culture'. It is interesting that the authorities changed the name of Kamĩrĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre to Kamĩrĩthũ Polytechnic and Adult Literacy Centre, while banning all theatre activities in the area. At the entrance of the open-air theatre (now destroyed) there stood a board with the inscriptions *Mucit wa muingi* in Gikũyũ, and *Mji wa umma* in Kiswahili. Both phrases meant the same thing: A People's Cultural Centre.

The board was the first object to be removed and destroyed in the police raid of Friday, 12th March, 1982. The regime can destroy people's centres and even abolish theatre: but can they destroy or abolish the people? That's why I say: KAMĨRĨTHŪ WILL COME BACK!

Ah, yes, may it come! But I'm still convinced that the biggest aid and gift to Kenyan people from their friends is a call and an insistence on Kenyan authorities to return to the democratic process by releasing the university lecturers and all the other political prisoners<sup>1</sup>; by lifting the ban on theatre among peasants and workers; and by allowing Kenyans their rights to organize for culture on their own terms.

#### **Note**

1. The lecturers are: Alamin Mazrui, Kamoji Wachira, Edward Oyugi, Willy Mutunga, Mukaru Ng'ang'a and Maina-wa-Kinyatti—but there are many others currently languishing in prisons and detention camps.

# The Removal and Restitution of the Third World's Historical and Cultural Objects

## The Case of Ethiopia

By Richard Pankhurst

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*As part of the colonial exercise of power, innumerable articles of historic and cultural importance to the Third World were brought to the museums and libraries of Europe. Thus, the crown of the Ethiopian Emperor Têwodros as well as 350 of Ethiopia's finest manuscripts were taken to the Victoria and Albert Museum and to the British Museum in the late 1860s. In this article, Richard Pankhurst, who is a leading authority on Ethiopian history, shows how the story of the seizure of antiquities from Ethiopia by the British and also by the Italians and the persistent efforts of the Ethiopian leaders to obtain their restitution has established important precedents which are highly relevant to the current discussions in UNESCO and elsewhere on the return of Third World antiquities.*

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Throughout the Third World there is growing interest in the objects of historical and cultural importance which were removed during the colonial era. Increasingly vigorous appeals are being made for their return to their country of origin. The Director-General of UNESCO, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, has observed that 'the men and women of these countries have the right to recover these cultural assets which are part of their being', while the Director of Museums and Monuments of Ghana, R.B. Nunbo, is quoted as declaring:

Those of us in developing countries are grateful that in the days when we could not properly conserve things, they were taken away and well looked after. But now we are equipped to preserve such cultural property and it is time to have these things back.

The story of the seizure of antiquities from Ethiopia, by the British in 1867-8 and by the Italians in 1935-6, may be taken as a case study. It serves to illustrate how Third World countries could be stripped of their cultural heritage. Ethiopian experience indicates, moreover, the gravity with which the loss of objects

of historic importance was regarded, and how the leaders of the country strove persistently to obtain restitution, often in the face of immense difficulty. The Ethiopians thereby established precedents which are relevant to current discussions on the return of Third World antiquities, and, even where they failed, revealed an understanding that man lives not by bread alone, and that the retention or restitution of a nation's historic objects contributes towards the progress and well-being of a civilisation while their absence leads to cultural sterility.

### **The Magdala expedition**

A long drawn out dispute between Emperor Têwodros (or Theodore) of Ethiopia and the British Government, and the detention by the monarch of a handful of Europeans, including two of Queen Victoria's envoys, led Great Britain to despatch an expedition against him in 1867-8. Têwodros, who had planned to found a new capital, had collected many treasures, among them about a thousand fine manuscripts, at his mountain fortress of Magdala. This seemingly impregnable citadel was as-

saulted by the British force in April 1868. The Emperor, unable to withstand the invaders' vastly superior firepower, committed suicide on April 13th rather than become a captive. At this point the British troops broke into the fort and, as Clements Markham, the British historian of the campaign, states, 'dispersed ... in search of plunder. The treasury was soon rifled'. This is confirmed by other eye witnesses. The American H. M. Stanley states that the whole surface of the rocky citadel, the slopes of the hill, and the entire road to the (British) camp two miles off were soon covered with looted articles, while Gerhard Rohlfs, a German, remarks that, when the expedition left, Magdala and its surroundings were strewn with torn Amharic books, loose leaves and fragments.

Among those present during the looting was Richard (later Sir Richard) Holmes, Assistant in the British Museum's Department of Manuscripts, who had been appointed as 'archaeologist' to the expedition. He recalls in a report to the Museum that the Union Jack had 'not been waved ... much more than ten minutes' before he succeeded in entering the fort, for he knew he 'must be in at once or many things might disappear'. Sure enough, within half an hour he met a soldier carrying the crown of the *Abun*, or head of the Ethiopian church, and a 'solid gold chalice' weighing 'at least 6 lbs' (just under 3 kg). Holmes purchased them both for £4. He was also offered some large manuscripts, but found them too heavy to carry away.

The principle of looting after a battle, which was of course normal practice in those days, was fully accepted by the leaders of the expedi-

tion. They did, however, attempt to regularize it. A specially-appointed 'prize-master' accordingly collected as much of the loot as he could from the soldiers who had appropriated it. The objects thus obtained were sold a week or so later at an auction, held on the Dalanta plain, to raise 'prize money' for the troops. 'Bidders', Stanley recalls, were 'not scarce ... every officer and civilian desired some souvenir', and there were many 'richly illuminated bibles and manuscripts' to purchase. Holmes was, he says, 'in his full glory' at the sale, for, 'armed with ample funds, he outbid all in most things but Colonel Frazer ran him hard because he was buying for a wealthy regimental mess ... and when anything belonging personally to Theodore was offered for sale, there were private gentlemen who outbid both'. Pieces of hair from the late monarch's head were among the items sold. The auction lasted two days, and raised £5000, enough to give each man 'a trifle over four dollars'.

By such means British libraries and museums became the receivers of innumerable articles of historic or cultural importance. The crowns of the Emperor and the *Abun*, a golden chalice and numerous processional crosses were taken to the South Kensington (later the Victoria and Albert) Museum, while the British Museum obtained Téwodros' tent as well as 350 Ethiopian manuscripts, many of them splendidly illuminated, and among the finest in the land. Six especially beautiful volumes were taken to the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, where the Emperor's cap and seal were also deposited. Between 150 and 200 other rare manuscripts from Magdala were subsequently acquired by other British collections, notably

the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Cambridge University Library, and the John Rylands Library, Manchester. Besides innumerable manuscripts of religious importance the hoard from Magdala includes the tax documents of Emperor Téwodros (recently published by the present author), which are the only such records known to exist prior to the twentieth century, and much data on land grants and sales which are thus far scarcely known to the world of scholarship.

#### **Emperor Yohannes' initiative**

Téwodros' successor, Emperor Yohannes, a firm friend of the church, was doubtless grieved by the loss of the ecclesiastical and other treasures from Magdala. Although unable to demand full restitution, he wrote, on August 10th, 1872, just six months after his coronation, to Queen Victoria and the British Foreign Secretary, Earl Granville, requesting the return of a manuscript and an icon. Both were considered of particular importance in Ethiopia. The manuscript was a *Kebra Nagast*, or 'Glory of Kings', which told the story of the Ethiopian emperors' descent from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The copy requested was apparently of additional interest, in that it seems to have been one containing 'historical notices and other documents' relating to the sacred Ethiopian city of Aksum, as Dr. Dieu of the British Museum later recorded.

The icon was no less notable. Called the *Kwer'ata Re'esu*, it was a representation of Christ wearing the Crown of Thorns and, since at least the seventeenth century, had been taken by Ethiopian emperors and their armies

with them whenever they went on major or particularly hazardous campaigns. Captured by the Sudanese in the eighteenth century, it had later been repurchased, on which occasion, as the Scottish traveller and historian James Bruce recalls, Gondar, the then Ethiopian capital, was 'drunk with joy'.

On receiving the letters from Emperor Yohannes, the British Government informed the British Museum that it would be a 'gracious and friendly act' if it complied with the Ethiopian request. The Museum authorities discovered that they possessed two copies of the *Kebra Nagast* taken from Magdala, and accordingly agreed to return one, in Dr. Dieu's view the less interesting copy. The manuscript is note-worthy in that it was the only acquisition of the Museum thus to be restored to its former owners.

The requested icon, on the other hand, could not be traced. Queen Victoria wrote back to Yohannes, on December 14th, to declare: 'Of the picture we can discover no trace whatever, and we do not think it can have been brought to England'. In this assumption she was, however, mistaken, for the painting, as we now know, had somehow or other been acquired by none other than Holmes, who had kept it for himself. He had by then left the Museum's service to become Librarian of Windsor Castle. His ownership of the painting was not, however, publicly acknowledged until 1890, a year after Yohannes' death, and it was not until 1905 that a photograph of the icon was allowed to appear, in the *Burlington Magazine*, a journal with which Holmes was closely associated. The reproduction bore the title, 'Head of Christ formerly in the possession of King Theodore of

Abyssinia, now in the possession of Sir Richard Holmes, K.C.V.O'. By then the late Ethiopian ruler's letters requesting the return of the icon had long since been filed away and had been forgotten in Britain.

### **Tafari Makonnen's initiative**

The question of the loot from Magdala was, however, still remembered in Ethiopia. It was raised at the time of the state visit to Britain in 1924 of the then Ethiopian Regent, Tafari Makonnen (later Emperor Haile Selassie). On that occasion King George V returned to him Téwodros' crown, which had been kept at the Victoria and Albert Museum for over half a century. The future Emperor was later to write in his autobiography that, although the loss of the crown had not affected Ethiopian sovereignty, its presence in a foreign country 'did not please him'.

### **The Italian fascist invasion**

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935–6 was accompanied by looting which rivalled that at Magdala.

Immediately after the occupation, Mussolini, anxious to eradicate memories of Ethiopian independence and dignity, decided on the removal of all the country's national monuments. One of the most important was a statue of Emperor Menilek, the founder of modern Ethiopia. The Duce telegraphed to his Viceroy, Graziani, instructing that it should be taken down, but the latter prevaricated, fearing, as he later wrote in his memoirs, that were

the order executed 'all the Shoans would rebel'. The dictator, however, insisted. The statue was accordingly dismantled one night on the initiative of Lessona, the Minister of the Colonies, and Cobolli-Gigli, the Minister of Public Works, who together witnessed the event. Contemporary accounts state that, when in the morning the Ethiopian public learnt what had happened, there was loud lament, and cries of 'Menilek is no more. They have stolen our Menilek in the night'.

Another statue which was removed from Addis Ababa shortly afterwards, and subsequently taken to Italy, was that of the Lion of Judah, long the symbol of Ethiopian independence. Its re-erection in Rome, in 1938, so angered one young Eritrean, Zerai Deress, that he carried out a demonstration of protest, which earned him fleeting publicity in the world press, as well as imprisonment, which ended only with the fall of the Italian fascist regime six years later.

The fascists, acting once more on Mussolini's instructions, also removed one of the famous obelisks of Aksum, thought to date from before the Christian era. This historic and finely fashioned stele was taken to Rome in 1937, and later put up in front of the Ministry of Italian Africa (later the headquarters of FAO). Emperor Haile Selassie, then an exile, described the removal of this obelisk, in a letter to world churches, as one of the eleven principal 'outrages' committed against his country.

The loot from Ethiopia likewise included a number of gold and other crowns, three of which came into the news when Mussolini, attempting to flee to Switzerland with these and other valuables, was captured by Italian partisans at Dongo in April 1944.

### **The Italian peace treaty, its partial implementation, and the return of Téwodros' cap and seal**

After Italy's defeat in World War Two, the Ethiopian Government insisted, in the face of initial Allied lack of interest, that the question of the loot taken from their country before the opening of hostilities in Europe should be discussed at the Paris Peace Conference of 1946. The Italians were as a result obliged to agree, in Article 37 of the Peace Treaty, that 'within eighteen months ... Italy shall restore all works of art, religious objects, archives and objects of historical value belonging to Ethiopia or its nationals and removed from Ethiopia to Italy since October 3, 1935', i.e. the date of the Italian invasion.

The implementation of this agreement was, however, neither prompt nor complete.

Memories of Magdala were meanwhile revived, in 1965, when Queen Elizabeth at the end of a state visit to Ethiopia presented Emperor Haile Selassie with two articles from Windsor Castle, Téwodros' cap and seal, as 'a token of our gratitude and esteem for your throne and person'.

The Italian Government at about this time began to slowly return a number of articles, including some Ethiopian state archives which had been taken to Rome, several paintings of Ethiopian rulers which had formerly adorned the walls of the Ethiopian Parliament, and the Lion of Judah statue, which reached Addis Ababa in 1969, no less than twelve years after the signature of the treaty. The crowns which had been found in Mussolini's possession at the time of his capture had on the other hand disappeared, while the Aksum obelisk, though

visible to all, was on various pretexts left to stand where it had been since fascist times. Italy's failure to honour the treaty created much resentment in Ethiopia. In the spring of 1970, an irate Ethiopian Parliament passed a resolution urging that 'pressure should be applied, for the return of the obelisk and other historical objects, by refusing permits to persons coming to the country, by the suspension of trade, and as a last resort by breaking of diplomatic relations'. The Emperor, then about to carry out a state visit to Italy, was urged not to do so until the obelisk was returned.

On the eve of the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, the dialogue over the fate of the lost antiquities was thus far from stilled ...

### **Conserving the national heritage**

Ethiopian yearning for the restitution of objects of historic or cultural significance must be viewed in the broad context of the country's modernizing efforts. The period since the liberation in 1941 witnessed the establishment of the National Library of Ethiopia, the Institute of Archaeology, and, in the University, of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, all of which were (and are) concerned with the preservation and study of various aspects of the national heritage. The National Library and the Institute of Ethiopian Studies both operate libraries which cater for both local and foreign scholars. Efforts have also been made towards the registration and microfilming of manuscripts in churches and monasteries throughout the land. An Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library (EMML) project, established under the aus-

pices of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, and operating in collaboration with the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library of St John's Abbey and University at Collegeville, Minnesota, was launched in the autumn of 1973, by the summer of 1976 it had filmed over 5,000 manuscripts, albeit few as fine as those Téwodros had collected at Magdala, and had begun the publication of catalogues, three of which have appeared to date. All manuscripts filmed by EMML, in contrast to those looted in former days, can be consulted both in Ethiopia and abroad, i.e. at either Addis Ababa or Collegeville.

#### **UNESCO initiatives and solutions**

The protracted question of the objects of historic or cultural importance taken from Ethiopia has been brought to the fore by UNESCO's discussion on the fate of articles removed during the colonial period from the Third World, and there has also been some correspondence on the matter in the British press.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that the British Museum, and presumably other libraries in possession of manuscripts taken from Magdala, should make honorable restitution, either by returning them (or possibly only the duplicate copies of any texts in their possession), or, more modestly, by furnishing Ethiopia with microfilm copies, perhaps also by financing the editing and publication of the more important works.

Such proposals cannot be spelt out or argued in this article. They are, however, to be welcomed, for restitution, besides being commendable on moral grounds—a repudiation, as it were, of the principle that might is right—

would contribute towards strengthening, and revitalising Ethiopian culture, and thus assist well-balanced overall development.

#### **Postscript**

Press correspondence in Britain on works of art looted from the Third World<sup>2</sup> prompted the Ethiopian playwright, Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin, to write the following poem, in November 1981. It is devoted to the *Kwer'ata Re'esu* (the history of which is outlined in the above article), an icon traditionally carried by the Ethiopian army when going to war. The poet recalls that this work of art, which he considers a source of great pride for all 'black peoples', was at Magdala, the citadel of the unifying Emperor Téwodros, at the time of the latter's capture by the British in 1868. The painting was then secretly acquired by the British Museum's agent, Sir Richard Holmes. Emperor Yohannes asked in vain for its return, thus appearing to the British 'a veritable bore'. Fate later dealt him a 'final blow' when, deprived of the war icon, he was killed and beheaded by the Dervishes in 1889. Twentieth-century Ethiopia, now struggling to develop, faces new difficulties in the shape of international conflict which, the poet feels, threatens in effect total destruction.

Again, that icon of Emperor Yohannes  
By which side Téwodros fell  
For honour and national oneness  
At fort Magdala's colonial harness,  
That icon of British army's loot  
Treasure of Ethiopia's historic root  
Is also of all black peoples to boot.

Yohannes asked, after the storms  
If Britannia or Richard Holmes  
Would own up the loot of the works of art  
Which in actual fact  
They must have intended  
To take from the very start.

It was, after all, a scramble for loot  
And indeed a kind of war.  
And that's that: Therefore  
They found his letter in bad taste  
And him a veritable bore.

A case of insolence added to injury  
But there being no international jury  
Even fate, the rebel above all law,  
Conspired with them to deal him a final blow:  
So justice he lost, plus, and instead  
He lost his crown, his neck and head!

Now even if Great New Britannia  
Was ever to play fair ball  
To raise a universal icon-call  
And throw up Yohannes' head and all,  
The question still rests  
Neither in Holmes' nor in the British Museum wall.  
But whether dwarfed Ethiopia from her icon-regain  
Shall ever again grow up real and tall?  
Because, you know, the Third World War  
Is now on Ethiopia's door  
To blow up icons, heavens and all!

#### Notes

1. See *The Guardian*, July 18th, 20th, and 29th and August 1st, 1981, and *The Times*, October 19th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 28th and 31st, and November 4th and 5th, 1981.
2. *Ibid.*

# A Nation in Agony: The Namibian People's Struggle for Solidarity, Freedom and Justice

By Reginald Herbold Green and Jean de la Paix

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Reg Green has been a member of support groups for Southern African Liberation Movements since 1955, and a student of the political economy of Africa since 1960. Currently a Professorial Fellow of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, he has been on the faculties of the Universities of Dar es Salaam, East Africa (Makerere) and Ghana. He has written widely on economic development, with particular reference to global and African aspects. He has served as economic civil servant and consultant since 1965. Currently, he is a member of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference Liaison Committee, of the Advisory Group on Economic Matters of the World Council of Churches, of the Education Committee of the (UK) Catholic Institute for International Relations and of the Development Advisory Group of the British Council of Churches/Christian Aid, and a consultant from time to time to the Government of Tanzania, the UN Institute for Namibia and SWAPO.

Jean de la Paix is the pen-name of a researcher and analyst on Southern African affairs with extensive research in the region, which he has followed up by several visits over the past years.

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We do not believe in a system that sells people.

– Striking 'Contract' Workers (1971)

Namibia's history of the past century is unforgiving ... It is a virtually unrelieved record of theft and violence, blood and iron—African blood shed by European iron.

– *From Südwestafrika to Namibia* (1981)

We are outcasts in our own country

We ask

A dwelling place of our own.

– Chief Hosea Kutako (1970)

It must be borne in mind that the Namibian people are shedding blood to liberate each and every inch of the Namibian soil, thus each and every inch of the Namibian land must and will belong to the Namibian people.

– Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO (1979)

## Time present and time past in travail

*April 1982: symbols, contradictions and signposts*

Easter comes in the fall in Namibia, but March/April is nonetheless a key period in the natural

cycle; a time of rain and the promise of grazing and crops, or of hot dry days and the threat of famine. In March 1982 the rains came—breaking a drought that had held most of the land in its grip since 1978. But on the social front the



drought continued. Vagrancy laws and employer 'solidarity' have replaced pass laws and monopoly recruitment to herd single African men, torn from their families, into prison-like concrete barracks; the black population of Windhoek, the capital, continued (except for a few favoured collaborators of the occupation regime) to be confined to the ghetto suburb of Katatura (whose name in the regional language means 'the place we do not want to be').\*

United Nations Secretary-General Pérez de Cúellar, in his first major address, placed high priority on achieving the early and genuine independence of Namibia. The confirmation of Marti Ahtisaari as his Special Representative and the separate appointment of Dr. Mishra as new Commissioner for Namibia (underlining the United Nation's legal, if not actual status as interim sovereign authority over Namibia) demonstrated the reality of his concern. But no such concern with speed or result could be seen in the Western Contact Group's negotiations with South Africa, SWAPO (South West African People's Organization of Namibia) and the Front Line States (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The apparent determination of the Group (USA, UK, Federal Germany, Canada, France) and more particularly of the USA, to mollify the illegal occupier, South Africa, first, and see

\* Katatura is so named because the African population of Windhoek was forcibly moved there (and the 'Colored' to the separate satellite ghetto of Khomasdal) from the multi-racial Windhoek 'Old Location' over the period 1959-68. That bitterly-resisted, forced movement (analogous to the parallel destruction of the similar Johannesburg community of Sophiatown, which led to Archbishop Trevor Huddleston's *Naught for your comfort*, London, 1956) opened with the December 10th 1959 massacre of peacefully protesting residents—Namibia's Sharpeville.

about freeing the victims after, and its tortuously complex procedural discussions, amply earned the appellation 'Operation Pussyfoot' given by Sister Catherine Hughes, a member of the British Council of Churches' November 1981 delegation to Namibia.

#### *Patterns of violence and of hope*

South Africa, unable to prevent SWAPO from organising in Namibia or its military force, PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia), from finding civilian support, continued to strike into Angola and to create the military cover behind which it is desperately trying to erect a puppet state from the broken remnants of UNITA (the Union for the Total Independence of Angola, a sometime anti-Portuguese Liberation movement which in 1974-75 waged a civil war against the Angolan Government with South African backing) and the black mercenary forces of Portuguese East Africa and Rhodesia.

The hopelessness of this policy was shown by SWAPO's mounting its most intensive campaign to date in the Grootfontein-Otavi-Tsumeb triangle, 300 kilometres south of the Angolan border and by the sabotage of the Windhoek power station.

The dead hand of the colonial economy and the febrile 'initiatives' of the desperate DTA (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, named after the gymnasium where the 'international settlement constitution' was planned—or plotted) puppet regime lay heavy on the land. Fleeing ranchers; hesitant mining companies; over US \$200 million (an eighth of GDP) spent on bribing farmers to stay on their ranches (and join the 'home guard') and blacks to work for the

bantustans and the DTA organs; a devastated fishing industry; and a sense of doom illustrated by the supposed Chief Minister Dirk Mudge repeatedly lashing out that South Africa was talking behind his back and would sell him down the river (or, perhaps more aptly, into the sands)—these were among the vignettes of the end of an era. Meanwhile SWAPO, the United Nations Institute for Namibia, and invited experts, met in Lusaka to examine alternatives and work out strategies and policies for political economic transition, rehabilitation and development, in full confidence that working out charts for the future was their responsibility to the Namibian people.

#### *Bullying and bravery*

The shadow over that future was made brutally plain in March, when Prime Minister Piet Wappen ('Pete the Gun') Botha met in Windhoek with the leaders of the Namibian Council of Churches (NCC). When the bishops, moderators and pastors pressed him for South African withdrawal he did indeed say that if the pressure continued South Africa would leave. But he went on to say that South Africa would take everything it had 'made' and would destroy the buildings, bridges, and mines it could not take. The Christian leaders' answer was clear and blunt: nothing could be worse than your presence, go now. Botha stormed out of the meeting. Small wonder that the NCC Executive Secretary, Albertus Maasdorp, says on behalf of the churches, 'SWAPO are our children', or that Sister Hughes comments, 'It was very hard to see how Christians could be anything but pro-SWAPO'.

The symbols of change, the violent contradiction between the forces of liberation and of oppression, the signposts to the future of Namibia, are starkly and speedily visible to those who care to look. But a fuller understanding requires a deeper acquaintance with Namibia's tragic history, its unforgiving natural ecology, its colonial political economy of theft, the particular forms in which South African apartheid has cast these historical and structural characteristics and the nature of the liberation struggle of the Namibian people and the leadership they have chosen—whom they will follow to prison, to death and to victory.

#### *Contributions to knowledge, calls to action*

Four volumes appeared in the second half of 1981 which go a long way to giving the facts and the interpretations which allow a fuller comprehension of Namibia, Namibians and SWAPO. The first—*To Be Born A Nation*\*—is an official SWAPO publication which puts the history of oppression and resistance, exploitation and the struggle for liberation clearly, coherently and lucidly, with substantial amounts of detailed data and quotations from Namibian workers, churches and SWAPO's own key statements.

The second—*From Südwestafrika to Namibia*\*\*—is an up-to-date political economic survey set against the historical background and looking to a future in which progress toward solidarity, liberation and justice could be achieved.

\* *To Be Born A Nation*, Zed Press, London, 1981.

\*\* Green, R.H., *From Südwestafrika to Namibia*, Research Report No. 58, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1981.

The third—*Namibia in the 1980's*\*—is the first in a monograph series prepared in close consultation with Christian and secular Namibian bodies. It surveys the background to, the course of, and the future requirements of the Liberation Struggle in broad terms. More specific studies in the near future will cover the subordination and struggle for liberation of Namibian women; and the ecology, political economy and agronomy of Namibian agriculture from 1800 to date, and into the future.

The fourth—*Namibia: The Last Colony*\*\*—is an integrated set of political economic, social and political studies of Namibia supported by the most complete set of statistical estimates yet available for the country.

None of these volumes is neutral; their authors clearly see any such stance in respect to Namibia as immoral. But each is analytical, factual and reasoned. They provide a rich array of qualitative, quantitative and historical data, and from it argue their cases; the reader is able to judge them for himself.

#### *SWAPO 1960-1980*

The colonisation of Namibia was both very late and very brutal. Most remembered is the deliberate campaign of genocide waged by the German colonial power between 1904 and 1908, which killed more than half the people in the war area: over 75 per cent of the Herero and over 50 per cent of the Nama and Damara perished in battle, in the waterless desert or in

\* *Namibia in the 1980's*, Catholic Institute for International Relations/British Council of Churches, London 1981.

\*\* Green, R.H., Kiljunen, M-L, and Kiljunen, K., *Namibia—The Last Colony*, Longman, Harlow, Essex, 1981.

concentration camps. But there is also a tradition of popular resistance, repeatedly contained, beaten back and suppressed (for the total population of Namibia is even today less than 1.5 million—and scattered) but continuous. After World War Two, resistance was manifested initially by petitioning the United Nations, and increasingly by strikes and go-slows on the part of the contract workers in Namibia's mines, fish plants and settler ranches. It was in opposition to contract work that the Ovamboland People's Organisation was founded in 1957 (transformed into SWAPO in 1960), with contract workers and students forming its base. (A second movement, SWANU, South West African National Union, was also influential in the early sixties, but its support fell as it failed to develop a mass worker and peasant base or a truly national membership.)

The early sixties saw SWAPO establishing branches round the country, calling for national unity and self-reliance and pressing the United Nations to assert its legal authority over the territory. Namibians listened and joined, but the world community would not respond. In the words of Toivo ja Toivo's speech in the dock: 'My organisation could not work properly—it could not even hold meetings. I had to answer to the question: "Where has your non-violence got us?" Whilst the (1966) World Court judgement was pending, I at least had that to fall back on. When we failed, after years of waiting, I had no answer to give to my people.'<sup>1</sup> The month after the judgement, the first armed clash took place between SWAPO guerrillas and South African troops.

Armed struggle formed an important part of SWAPO's operation in the seventies, particu-

larly after the collapse of the Portuguese empire in neighbouring Angola. South African forces have increased in response, to about 100,000 men today, and their tactics of terror are detailed in these books. More recently the Christian Council of Namibia has told the Prime Minister of South Africa, 'We know of the killing of innocent people, of the wanton destruction of property and of beatings, detention, solitary confinement and torture of the local population'. The north of the country is a war zone living under nightly curfew.

Equally critically, the seventies were a decade when widespread organised national opposition reasserted itself. In 1971/72 an extraordinary general strike of contract workers, against the very existence of the contract labour system, was maintained for two months, linking the urban areas and mines of the south with rural labour reserves from which the workers were recruited. In 1973, 98 per cent of the electorate in Ovamboland responded to a SWAPO call to boycott elections for the bantustan council. In 1976 and 1977, students boycotted classes and examinations. When SWAPO public meetings were permitted, huge crowds turned out. The depth of support for SWAPO has been conceded several times by the South African authorities themselves, who estimated it would win over half the votes in a free election.

SWAPO's organisational base among students, workers, peasants and women, and its relation of solidarity with Namibia's churches, is national and well entrenched, despite two decades of South African efforts to stifle its growth. General Geldenhuys admitted this when he warned that to call PLAN 'terrorists'

was to misunderstand them fatally: they were guerillas with a broad civilian support base, and with clear objectives to which military action was a means to an end; they were not isolated militants for whom violence was an end in itself.

Similarly, SWAPO has built up a substantial civil government capacity. There are three senses in which it has done this.

First, it provides basic services and a democratic community structure for over 50,000 refugees in Angola and Zambia and—less completely—for Namibians in semi-liberated areas where South African civil rule has vanished and troops venture rarely.

Second, it has developed a large-scale education programme from crèche to postgraduate, to build up the cadres for an independent Namibia. At upper secondary and tertiary level this external programme substantially exceeds the scale of training provided by the South African occupation regime.

Third, SWAPO is building up data and analysis leading to a dialogue on transitional and independence planning over a wide range of social and economic strategies, policies, institutions and projects. In March 1981, the *Windhoek Observer* sharply contrasted what it saw as the vitality, creativity and vision of SWAPO's educational work and forward planning with the stale, intellectually bankrupt, self-serving palliatives and bribes of the DTA administration.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic activity of SWAPO outside Namibia has been directed to securing international support for its struggle for liberation, attempting to persuade the United Nations to implement its decision to revoke

South Africa's mandate, and securing resources to carry on its civilian services for refugees and in semi-liberated zones, as well as training personpower and carrying out research toward post-independence development.

#### *The United Nations*

In 1966 the General Assembly of the United Nations formally revoked South Africa's mandate to govern Namibia,\* a decision eventually confirmed by a nearly unanimous International Court of Justice in 1971. 'State members of the United Nations are under obligation to recognise the illegality of South Africa's presence in Namibia,' the Court declared. Formal responsibility was passed to a United Nations Council for Namibia, which has issued a number of Decrees, the first banning exports of Namibian natural resources without the Council's authorization.

However, this Decree remains a dead letter and South Africa in control, while the key Western countries refuse to implement sanctions or other measures to compel a withdrawal. Instead, five Western members formed a Contact Group (widely termed the 'Gang of Five') to negotiate a transition to independence, and in 1978 their outline proposals for an election under United Nations supervision followed by independence were approved by the United Na-

tions Security Council in Resolution 435. The implementation of Resolution 435 became a central part of SWAPO policy. Since then negotiations have continued over the mechanics of implementation. *Namibia in the 1980's* details their course up to the end of 1981. Stripped of the breathless meeting watching by the international press, it is a sorry tale. There have been cycles consisting almost entirely of South African objections coinciding with heavy military attacks into Angola, followed by SWAPO concessions met with further South African objections. But Resolution 435 does still remain intact, as a potentially viable and internationally acceptable way forward. In the meantime, the United Nations has established with SWAPO a major Nationhood Programme to train Namibians, and to build up a data and analytical base for independence.

#### *South Africa*

South Africa's post-1945 course toward the incorporation of Namibia as a fifth Province was reversed in the mid-seventies by rising international hostility, mobilised by SWAPO and extending even to the Republic's Western friends, and by Portugal's collapse in seeking to prevent the liberation of Angola and Mozambique. A parallel short-term response was intensified military control. For the longer term, by 1977 South Africa was proposing, at the Turnhalle Conference, a neo-colonial solution—indeed a 'Frankenstein monster' as *Namibia in the 1980's* puts it: eleven ethnic governments (with 'tribal' not territorial definition of coverage) under a multi-ethnic central government and solid *de facto* white control. The books reviewed in this article are all agreed that this is

\* The mandate was granted to the British Crown to be exercised on its behalf by the then Union of South Africa. This was part of the reallocations of German colonies after World War One. Arguably it was made void by South Africa leaving the Commonwealth in 1961. Both SWAPO and the Commonwealth clearly view Namibia as a Commonwealth territory illegally taken out by South Africa, and one which will become a full member on independence.

not in practice a viable solution: the level of popular opposition and the minute size of any black middle class that might benefit from collaboration, mean that South African troops would have to remain. The 1982 split in South Africa's protégée, the DTA, confirms their view, as does the remarkably unimpressive performance put up by the puppet members of the South African delegation at the 1981 Geneva Pre-Implementation Talks and subsequent international junkets.

South Africa is unlikely to give up. It has had a triple strategy: first, building a neo-colonial state apparatus of departments, police and armed forces; second, engaging in negotiations with the United Nations so that 'an image has been sustained of something really taking place or talks reaching a real breakthrough'<sup>22</sup>—which, if nothing else, buys time; and, finally, seeking to withdraw at a time and on terms entailing the smallest possible cost with the greatest possible remaining benefits, even if this does mean accepting a genuinely national government. There are reasons why South Africa might in the end acquiesce in a genuine election: Namibia is not strategically essential; the cost of the war now exceeds receipts from Namibia; and white soldiers being killed unsettles the *volk* back home. But domestic political concerns pull in the other direction: namely, the psychological impact withdrawal would have—on both the black and white communities—in South Africa itself; P.W. Botha's weakness in respect to the two major Afrikaner parties to his right following the recent split in the Nationalist Party; and the uses of an external hot war to underline the need for *volk* solidarity and a 'total [national security

state] strategy', as well as for training troops and police in combatting guerillas and political mobilization—not to speak of the advantages of a military training ground. In practice there is no need yet for South Africa to stop playing for time, for its power of military repression is enormous and, as *To Be Born A Nation* warns, the liberation struggle advances 'slowly, grimly, with great sacrifice'. Only outside pressure can accelerate the process.

#### *The Western Contact Group*

The interest of the Contact Group (or Gang of Five) of the USA, the UK, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Canada, in a country so thinly populated as Namibia is at first sight surprising. There are some—such as Senator Jesse Helms and the US Congress Sub-Committee on Security and Terrorism—who argue that Western interests are best served by standing by South Africa as a bastion against the spread of communism in Africa, as 'represented' in Namibia by SWAPO. However, the alternative view associated with US Under-Secretary of State for Africa, Chester Crocker, and the one which prevails at present, is that the voice of trading partners in Africa cannot be ignored, that communism is better fought by establishing 'constructive involvement' with both South Africa and friendly African states—and that this is not possible unless the West is seen to be making efforts to remove the last colonial sore on the continent.

The method chosen, however (or perhaps, therefore), is immensely time-consuming. A Contact Group mission tours African capitals to consult: a formal proposal is then drawn up by the Contact Group and presented to both

sides; reactions are awaited; and a revised proposal is presented. Between each stage, weeks elapse. It can degenerate into 'diplomacy by wheeze'. In mid-December 1981, a ludicrously cumbersome and confusing dual proportional/constituency system of voting was set out as a revised proposal, which would clearly meet objections from parties committed to one man, one vote. Once South Africa accepted it, the Contact Group pressed SWAPO to concur; alteration was first deemed impossible without allowing South Africa to reopen many other issues, and then made half-way only. As a result, April 1982 was reached with no progress.

Amazingly, Chester Crocker asserted that SWAPO and the Front Line States (FLS), who stand ready to accept either a national proportional list system or—subject to an impartial census—a constituency one, were obstructing a settlement. Both SWAPO and the FLS sadly pointed out that Resolution 435 itself was a compromise means to end an illegal occupation; that since then SWAPO and the FLS have accepted a large number of amendments to 'reassure' South Africa, while South Africa has yielded on none of the terms of 435 or even of subsequent proposals less than optimal for SWAPO and the FLS; and that it would be more convincing if the Contact Group were to pressure South Africa than its victims.

Moreover, such pressure would now have some cracks in the South African ruling elite on which to work. The business community wants the war in Namibia ended—it believes it can do business even with a nationalist government, and sees high military costs and insecurity as worsening its prospects in Namibia, at home

and in other independent African states. The military high command is shifting to the view that the Namibian war cannot be won, and poses risks of unmanageable escalation and/or diversion of forces needed at home. The Afrikaaner intellectual, professional, theological and business elite is splitting—witness the Progressive Federal Party's capture of Randfontein (an upper-income, high-education Afrikaaner influential residential suburb) in 1982, and the Boer students at Potchefstroom University who shouted Prime Minister Botha down in 1981 with left challenges.

There is a real debate on what to do about Namibia, even within the Afrikaaner *volk*, and how it is resolved will largely determine when and if South Africa agrees to internationally supervised transition to constitution writing, and with what conditions. Only pressure, not concessions on 'entrenched clauses' (which the Afrikaaner leaders do not believe in, having carefully ripped them out of their own constitution), still less complicity in time-wasting 'technical' objections and requests for 'clarification', can have a positive impact on that dialogue's outcome. Even the most reasonable and patient of FLS leaders are losing both patience and faith in the Gang of Five's good sense, goodwill or both. A recent speech by a leader of the most moderate of the FLS warned against making no choice between white oppressor and black victim, occupation and liberation, terrorism and self-defence, good and evil. It clearly paraphrased and rejected Crocker's 1981 Honolulu speech on even-handedness and impartiality, echoing Dante's condemnation of those who in a time of moral crisis refuse to take the decision between good and evil.

To Namibians, 'killing time' in negotiations means killing people, as the various church statements in *Namibia in the 1980's* illustrate. It also erodes the chances for a positive transition when the time does come. At a psychological level, military occupation and war breed bitterness, callousness and division. At a practical level, the further the South Africans proceed with the construction of an artificial neo-colonial state, the more difficult it will be to construct a state serving the people after independence: the new 'South West Africa Defence Force' and the Police will have to be integrated or disbanded, and the small but significant number of Namibians who have been enriched (by corruption or otherwise) and who work in the new ethnic authorities, stimulate both contempt toward administration and unrealistic expectations of wealth. Meanwhile the economy moves deeper into crisis as drought, present insecurity, future uncertainty, ecologically unsound production patterns, global recession and South African depression perpetuate the collapse of the fishing industry, deepen the fissures in the crumbling ranching sector, erode the mineral core of production and add to the backlog of required infrastructure and services not provided.

*November 1982: a long, dry year*

1982 proved to be a long dry year for Namibia. Stripped of day-to-day, breathless peaks and troughs the record is only too clear. The literal drought was only partially broken while the diplomatic, military and economic droughts remained unbroken by any gentle rains of peace or justice.

The Contact Group changed its working

style—for the worse. Now South Africa (through its most senior diplomat Brand Fourie, currently Ambassador to the USA) contacts the USA (usually represented by Under-Secretary Crocker) and reaches an agreement which the USA then passes on to the other four Contact Group members more or less as a *fait accompli*. The one potential gain from this change is that it is apparently beginning to grate on the 'little four'.

Throughout the summer the USA, South Africa, the DTA and—to a lesser extent—the Contact Group exuded optimism. They asserted that all substantive points except the election procedure and the exact makeup of the military component of UNTAG (United Nations Technical Assistance Group) were settled. SWAPO and the FLS expressed grave doubts that this was a correct statement of position.

In fact, South Africa and the USA had agreed on a new condition (in no way provided for by Resolution 435)—that Cuban troops must be evacuated from Angola. Private negotiations on this reached an impasse by September. Apparently Angola (and Cuba) indicated that phased withdrawal would begin once UNTAG was in place and (as provided in 435) the bulk of South African troops had been evacuated from Namibia—a position the USA seems to have considered accepting. South Africa, however, insisted on immediate Cuban evacuation to be followed by the withdrawal of its invading forces from Angola. French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson sharply criticized the RSA-USA position and denied that it represented the views of the rest of the Contact Group in an October speech in Dar es Salaam. By then a

new RSA proposal totally outside 435's terms of reference had been floated—that as part of a settlement all FLS expel ANC (African National Congress of South Africa) training camps, refugees and diplomatic missions.

The war dragged on with continued brutality, destruction and loss of life. South Africa and its UNITA puppets/mercenaries occupied some portions of southern Angola permanently and raided more deeply repeatedly. SWAPO continued a steady series of guerilla raids, encouraging abandonment of more ranches and impeding transport to and power transmission from the northern and north-central regions. South African forces continued to kill villagers, burn villages, round up and torture suspects. In this case no new news is very bad news.

South Africa repeatedly hinted at reshuffling the Turnhalle pack, dumping Dirk Mudge and substituting Herr Pretorius of the National Party. While this party indeed has majority white support, it is so far to the right of Mudge (or even the South African Nationalist Party whose territorial branch it once was) that the point of the exercise remains unclear. Such a reshuffle would hardly win more respectable African collaborators or provide a more credible fig leaf to cover the increasing nakedness of military occupation whether to Namibians or internationally. Perhaps the explanation lies in RSA's creation of a separate parliamentary seat for Walvis Bay (Namibia's main port built during the mandatory period but recently wrenched away by South Africa after over 60 years of common administration) and the need to avoid the seat falling to Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party. If that is the explanation, the exercise was a success: the Nats won the seat.

During 1982 South Africa has pursued a policy of avoiding both breakdown of the Contact Group's negotiating effort and also completion of negotiations allowing the emplacement of UNTAG and the beginning of the election process. When, in June, the electoral procedural issue threatened to cause a breakdown of the talks and both SWAPO and the FLS called for direct negotiations with RSA, South Africa did withdraw certain of its previous demands. However, when the talks seemed on the verge of successful completion in August, it suddenly placed much greater emphasis on the Cuban troop 'issue' and has now launched 'ANC presence' as an additional condition.

These tactics may not be simple time-wasting to avoid an election RSA is increasingly sure SWAPO would win by a landslide. They seem to relate to Prime Minister Botha's domestic political survival problem and his related effort to create an Executive Presidency, presiding over a quadripartite Presidential Council with nominal Coloured and Asian participation, largely divorced from parliamentary control. To do so in the face of a strong right opposition requires avoiding taking any action which could cause significant new defections of voters or MPs. An internationally acceptable Namibian settlement would be precisely such an action. If that is Piet Botha's reasoning, substantial progress in the talks before the first half of 1984—when the constitutional amendments creating the Executive Presidency and Council are scheduled to have been passed—is highly unlikely. For Namibians, Namibia is central, for the Nationalist Party establishment it is very much secondary to retaining power against the white right opposition at home.

The Namibian economy is rapidly running down. By the end of 1982 constant price Gross Domestic Product had fallen at least 25 per cent below its 1978–79 peak. The causes are varied: the general depression of the world economy (including diamond, uranium oxide and base metal markets), the drought, the destruction of the fishing industry by overcatching, fashion shifts unfavourable to karacul. But the war has had an impact in two senses: it has disrupted northern and north-central ranching and contributed to the substantial settler exodus shown in the 1981 census; and it has forced subsidization of settlers, buying of collaborators and local defence-related spending of about R 250-300 million a year or almost 20 per cent of GDP.

As a result of the consequential revenue shortfalls and spending rises the Recurrent Budget has slipped into massive deficit since 1980—the first true recurrent deficits in almost twenty years. South Africa has taken advantage of this to try to float a SWA/Namibia external debt. On present trends it may reach R 750 million in 1983 and, if accepted by an independent Namibia, cost over R 200 million a year (about 20 per cent of exports) to service.

As the SWA/Namibia administration is illegal under international law—and has been since 1966—according to the UN General Assembly and Security Council and the International Court of Justice, there is no evident reason why SWAPO should agree to shoulder such a crushing burden incurred primarily to thwart or delay liberation. Banks outside South Africa also seem to have doubts—almost all of the loans to date seem to have been taken up by RSA banks. However, South Africa may well raise the ‘ex-

ternal debt’ issue as a further means to delay completion of negotiations.

There was no increase in effective pressure on South Africa to settle promptly beyond that exerted by PLAN and the deteriorating Namibian economy. France, indeed, moved to ever firmer verbal endorsements of the SWAPO/FLS positions but, in parallel, increased its trade in strategic goods with South Africa, especially in the nuclear sector. In Germany the emergence of Franz Josef Strauss, an explicit DTA backer, as a leading politician is ominous. The USA has continued its strategy of ‘constructive engagement’ with South Africa impervious both to South Africa’s busily snapping up the proffered carrots of cooperation without offering anything in return and to the widespread criticism forcefully voiced by the Nigerian Chairman of the UN Committee Against Apartheid: ‘engagement with apartheid and racism can never be constructive’. In the IMF the USA, the UK and Federal Germany led the successful mobilization of a majority to approve facilities to South Africa of over US \$1,000 million in October despite the fact that at least US \$300 million of the ‘need’ seems to come from the costs of war in Namibia.

True, church groups—including the Catholic Conference of Bishops of South Africa and the national church councils of the Gang of Five’s member states—issued sharply worded, carefully reasoned statements against the South African ‘dirty war’ in Angola and Namibia and in support of early implementation of Resolution 435. But the ears to which they addressed themselves remained either deaf or, at best, unconvinced.

For the people of Namibia, 1982 has brought

no respite from agony—only its continuation and intensification. It has also brought no diminution in their determination to pursue the struggle for liberation or their belief that, in the end, victory is certain.

### **The Political Economy of Theft**

*By appointment to the playboys and power merchants of the world*

Diamond jewelry, high fashion karacul coats, lobster tails, uranium oxide for nuclear power plants: these are the main products of South African-occupied Namibia. Or rather, for this is a colony *par excellence*, the raw materials come from Namibia; the jewelry, coats and power station fuel rods are made up outside. If there was ever a poor country with an economy 'by appointment to the playboys of the world', this is it. With the addition of uranium (and atomic power is basically another item for the rich), these products account for three-quarters of exports and two-thirds of national production of goods excluding services. The contrast with the needs and consumption of Namibians themselves could hardly be more stark. Even in the case of the two major products directly relevant to Namibian mass needs—meat and fish—the same bitter irony pervades. So export centred is production that Namibia imports tinned meat (and even Irish meat—to run its export-oriented tinning plant), milk, and both tinned and fresh fish. It is just one indicator of Namibia's position as an extreme colonial economy, indeed as a virtual caricature of the pure model for such an economy.

### *How it was created*

The early German campaigns were carried out primarily in pursuit of land for settlers—so effectively that today some 70 per cent of the usable land is in the hands of white ranches and farms. The Germans were frank about what they were doing:

The decision to colonise in Southern Africa means nothing else than that the native tribes must withdraw from the lands on which they have pastured *their* cattle and so let the *white man* pasture *his* cattle on these self-same lands. If the moral rights of this standpoint are questioned, the answer is that for people of the cultural standard of the South African natives, the loss of their *free natural barbarism* and the development of a class of workers in the service of and dependent on whites is above all a law of survival of the highest order.<sup>3</sup>

The settlers' survival that is—at least two thirds of the Nama and Herero were killed in war, concentration camps or by being driven into waterless desert.

With the available labour force in the centre and south of the country decimated by war, labourers were sought from the more established and densely populated Ovambo areas to the north. Previous studies by Richard Moorsom and Gervase Clarence Smith<sup>4</sup> have shown how the structure of Ovambo society and production was undermined by the availability of mass-produced goods and weapons from the capitalist countries, and by those countries' demand for ivory, slaves and, ultimately, wage labour. With land stolen, the population rising, and independent and 'subsistence' production in decline, the north came to depend on male workers working on term contracts in the south. Women were forced to stay

behind, and the resulting long hours of farm and domestic work, the strain and the lack of opportunities that they suffer are perhaps too briefly examined in these works.<sup>5</sup> Government spending has been minimal: for example, between 1928 and 1938 only R 1.1 million was spent on all services for the then about 260,000 African population. The 'reserves' are now, in the words of *Namibia: The Last Colony*, a 'residual sector'—with 60 per cent of all households fully or partly engaged in subsistence agriculture which generates only 2 per cent of Namibia's GDP. The low wages, formed by the need for jobs, and the transfer of household subsistence cost to the 'reserves' were essential to the white ranches (whose profitability was marginal even with state subsidy), and to the initial development of the mines.

The European discovery of diamonds in 1908 (and rediscovery of marketable copper in 1906)\* summoned the first real inflow of large-scale capital. The 1915 conquest of Namibia also provided South Africa with a new area in which to settle destitute Afrikaaner farmers being thrown off the land in South Africa by the crisis in small farm agriculture. Nevertheless, it was not until after World War Two that export production boomed, with the re-equipment and expansion of mines, the establishment of fishing and canning industries, and the expansion of karacul farming.

The control of labour was formalized and intensified by the application of the full panoply of apartheid law to Namibia. Duncan

Innes' chapter in *Namibia: The Last Colony*<sup>6</sup> links the whole process with the development of capitalism in South Africa itself. The colony was fully developed as a source of surplus and foreign exchange, and as a market for South African manufactures (competitors are kept out with high tariffs, while local manufacture is weak and geared to servicing export industries).

It is important for the understanding of current political developments to recognize that, in the words of *To Be Born a Nation*,<sup>7</sup> 'the class of exploiters presents extreme contrasts'. On the one hand, the commercial ranching sector includes a substantial proportion of inefficient farms. All depend on continued state support and continued low wages, without which they would operate at a loss. One fraction of their owners forms the backbone of the extreme right wing HNP (True Nationalist Party). Many have been leaving the country, selling out farms to the new 'ethnic authorities' and the small group of black councillors and officials who have been provided with money by South Africa—so much so that land prices in some areas are reported to have almost doubled during 1981, despite a devastating drought. Another largely German fraction appears to view life under an African government differently and are seeking to find means to accommodate the prospect.

On the other hand, the overwhelming source of surplus has been the highly capitalised mining industry—with a net operating surplus up from R 97 million in 1975 to R 455 million in 1979, whilst the wage bill only doubled to R 106 million.<sup>8</sup> This sector of mining (though not necessarily the small mines) no longer depends

\* A pre-colonial industry mining and smelting copper to produce tools, involving specialisation and long distance trade, was destroyed when the German 'Red Line' cut off the Ovambo smiths and traders from the Otavi area mines.

on the low wage labour system: where once armies of men with shovels sifted diamondiferous gravels, huge machines now excavate. The wage bill is a small proportion of total mine costs, and during the seventies mine wages have indeed risen sharply. While only Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM) now pays the so-called 'efficiency wage' (reasonable but fairly austere household consumption), the other two main groups (Rossing and Tsumeb) could readily afford to do so, as is demonstrated in *To Be Born A Nation*.<sup>9</sup>

Correspondingly, the huge transnational mining corporations do not depend on continued South African rule. They are to be seen supporting independence, preferably under the private enterprise DTA, or even, in the case of CDM, attempting to remain neutral and allowing SWAPO to organise among the workforce—as SWAPO's *To Be Born A Nation* notes.<sup>10</sup>

By 1982 mining was in considerable disarray. Political uncertainty suppresses new investment. 'In particular, it is thought that Anglo-American does not wish to invest in a new mining development prior to independence', noted boldly the (London) *Mining Annual Review*.<sup>11</sup> This is a readily understandable concern: major mines take five years to bring on stream and at least five more to recover capital costs. And SWAPO has made it clear that it views illegal post-1967 mines quite differently from previously established operations. All this is compounded by a severe slump in demand due to international recession, with several mines on a care-and-maintenance basis or closed, and diamond production cut back by virtually 50 per cent between 1978 and 1982

(probably a blessing for Namibia in conserving reserves but at present a severe blow to state revenue).

#### *The dimensions of theft*

These four books provide many measures of the impact on Namibians of the colonial suction-pump to which they are subjected. Perhaps the most telling is the comparison with Tanzania in *Namibia: The Last Colony*<sup>12</sup>: although Namibia's total per capita production is at least six times that of Tanzania, Africans in Namibia probably have a lower level of personal consumption and certainly a lower level of public services than do Tanzanians.

Examination of the breakdown of GDP is devastating. The most recent figures in *From Südwestafrika to Namibia* show 50 per cent going to company profits and another 10 per cent to taxes on these profits.<sup>13</sup> After whites have taken their salaries and other income, only 12 per cent is left to black Namibians. Lest it be thought that this is an inevitable consequence of having a predominant, diamond-led mineral sector, the roughly comparable figures for Botswana are 42 per cent going to operating surplus (profits and taxes thereon), and 38 per cent in wages and salaries to Botswana citizens. The apparent ratio between European and black per capita incomes in Namibia is 23:1, compared with perhaps 8:1 in Botswana or Zambia and 15:1 even in South Africa itself.

The outward orientation of the economy is equally extreme. Two-thirds of GDP (90 per cent of physical goods) are exported, largely unprocessed. Correspondingly, most Namibian consumption, including half the grain requirement, is met by imports. Ninety per cent of

directly productive investment is foreign-owned. And, at the bottom line, over a third of GDP leaves the country annually, as the profits of the colonizers (33 per cent in 1979, compared with 27 per cent in Botswana and under 5 per cent in Zambia).<sup>14</sup>

The extraction of Namibia's physical resources has been plain theft in international law since the revocation of the South African mandate. The government of the United States (though not Britain) has recognized as much in informing its companies that it would not defend them against actions by the government of an independent Namibia. The indications are that mineral reserves are adequate for long-term production, but inevitably the richest and most profitably extracted deposits tend to have been worked already: the companies have 'plucked the eyes of the land' (in the memorable phrase used to describe the settlement of the first Boer farmers around present-day Lesotho), while not carrying out the proving and development of new reserves necessary to sustain steady future production levels.

The most serious plunder was wreaked on fish stocks. At the industry's height, US \$120 million was earned annually and eight processing plants were in operation at Walvis Bay, plus two in Luderitz. Scientific reports on over-fishing were ignored; by 1980 the catch was only 14 per cent of its 1968 peak and only two factories remained in operation. Several companies literally packed their machinery and left for Chile where new opportunities beckoned.

A serious problem for future development is the extraordinarily low educational provision, and the lack of experienced skilled Namibians. Skilled jobs have been reserved for whites.

Despite a burst of training activity by the large mines (not the state) since the late seventies, this remains the dominant *de facto* position: in 1977, 93 per cent of managerial and professional posts (except primary school teachers and nurses) were held by whites. Up to 1977, only 5,000 Africans in the whole country had completed secondary school (compared, as *Namibia in the 1980's* and *From Südwestafrika to Namibia* point out, with over 3,000 refugees enrolled by SWAPO in secondary education abroad in 1981)<sup>15</sup>. There is no university, while students sent abroad (largely to 'Bantu Universities') by the occupation regime and Transnational Corporations are far fewer than SWAPO-sponsored tertiary level students.

#### *The human effects of theft*

The lives of many black Namibians are organised by the contract labour system: 110,000 workers left their families to migrate to work; another 50-75,000 domestic workers and perhaps 25,000 seasonal farm and fishery employees are also paid far below minimum family subsistence levels. The effects on their lives are detailed in quotations and in the results of questionnaires. A sombre, poignant 1971/72 missionary booklet addressed to white employers entitled '*Contract Work through Ovambo Eyes*' is reprinted in *Namibia: The Last Colony*.<sup>16</sup> In *To Be Born A Nation* the presentation (including citations of worker manifestos) is far angrier in tone but the message is the same.<sup>17</sup> Poverty at home forces men to migrate and women to desperately hard work; man and wife rarely see each other, and human relationships are difficult and strained. For the migrant, working and living conditions are hard

and brutal on farms and, until recently, in most urban and mining jobs as well. A British journalist's 1973 description of the contract workers' compound outside Windhoek is quoted in *To Be Born a Nation*:<sup>18</sup>

5,000 Ovambos are being housed in circumstances that would disgrace a 19th century prison. A visitor can only be appalled by the compounds' unrelieved bleakness—the barbed wire fences; the food being prepared with spades and pitch forks; above all, the overpowering stench of urine which hangs over the compound.

On the isolated farms, housing is worse (indeed often non-existent, despite Namibia's blazing summers and cold winter nights) and arbitrary violence from the farmer a common experience.

Agriculture in the black 'reserves' is unrewarding and precarious.\* Crop yields are extremely low even in good years, as is carrying capacity for animals. Drought can be devastating: by the end of 1981 it had reduced cattle numbers by 75 per cent in the Kaokoveld and 80 per cent in Damaraland, compared with 25 per cent in the affected white areas, most of that 25 per cent having been sold for slaughter at good prices rather than merely dying unprofitably.

The experience of colonialism has been divisive and debilitating; but it is clear from the statements of individuals, churches and parties that it has also stimulated a clear realisation of

\* For example, the Herero people have had the 'reserve' pushed north and east into the Kalahari desert fringe until now it is basically the Omeheke desert. That is exactly where von Trotha deliberately drove thousands of Herero to die of lack of water.

exploitation, and a determination to change. Even the one serious political economic analysis in favour of a neo-colonial solution<sup>19</sup> admits the history of exploitation and the need to reduce oppression, inequality and segregation if the productive heart of the colonial economy is to be preserved. Works from the German Development Institute,<sup>20</sup> while much more cautious in proposals than the volumes under review, fully confirm their analysis of Namibia's economic past and present as one of gross exploitation, massive inequality, denial of basic human needs and unnecessary, damaging subordination to South African and foreign company interests.

### **The course of the liberation struggle**

#### *Breaking contract*

Contract in Namibia does not mean a business transaction. It is the legally authenticated slave labour/peasant subjugation system described above and in coldly biting political economic analysis (see *Namibia: The Last Colony and From Südwestafrika to Namibia*); in poignant humanitarian appeal (see *Namibia: The Last Colony*) and in controlled anger (see *To Be Born A Nation*.<sup>21</sup>) Breaking contract, therefore, does not mean going back on one's word: it means human, social, economic and national liberation.

Contract built the political economy of theft, the socio-political system of repression and the politics of authoritarian exclusion which are occupied Namibia. It will also destroy them.

This is not simply a matter of resentment at exploitation or anger at maltreatment. The nature of contract has shaped the consciousness

and key themes of the Namibian Liberation Movement.

By forcing blacks to work as members of production teams it has given to most Namibians, including most peasant families, experience in social organisation of labour far beyond that of household production.

By forcing members of peasant households to go on contract to survive—and, even more, by sending the 1971 strikers back to the rural areas—it has created an organic peasant/work-er unity.

By bringing Namibians from all parts of the country into contact with one another, it has created the national vision and communication system 'reserves' and 'bantustans' were meant to prevent.

By isolating workers in prison-like compounds, it has (for over a decade) created 'no go' areas in which the Liberation Movement has space and time to organize and educate. As a perceptive CDM executive put it, no better way of assisting SWAPO in recruitment could easily be imagined.

By forcing women to act as heads of households and to go into wage work, it has created both an experience of deprivation and of self-organisation which has been key to the very prominent role women play in SWAPO and to the highly conscious work of these women to overcome their subordination.

By its very pervasiveness, contract has forced a broadening and deepening of the political, economic and social consciousness of Namibians and a realisation that minor reforms or attacks on specific aspects of the system would lead nowhere—national liberation had to be total. That perception has been at the root of

the dismal failure of South African efforts to buy a following for the DTA or to forge a 'third force' of 'moderate' regional, ethnic and personality parties.

#### *Toward 'One Namibia, One Nation'*

Namibia had been described in the South African press as:

a country in waiting—waiting for SWAPO ... One of the most consistent trends I found in speaking to a wide range of Namibians representing all shades of the motley political and economic spectrum was an acceptance—sometimes eagerly expectant, sometimes resigned and fearful—that a SWAPO government is on the way.<sup>22</sup>

What is SWAPO? What is it likely to do? To these questions there can be few definitive answers. SWAPO is a broad front, national liberation movement which has not yet achieved power nor had to grapple with the day-to-day problems of running a newly independent state. Yet some points are fairly clear.

#### *To Be Born A Nation*

SWAPO is national, not tribal (a theme which comes through particularly strongly because it is more often implicit than explicit). The title of its volume under review comes from a Mozambican liberation slogan, 'to die a tribe and be born a nation', which was used to galvanize national unity. SWAPO's name for its country is Nama, 'the shield', a reference to the Namib desert which for so long defended the land against invaders. The date (August 26) on which it launched military action is the anniversary of the death of Samuel Maherero, leader

of the Herero war against the Germans. Contrary to assertions that 'SWAPO is Ovambo', its leaders and members came from all communities (even, in a handful of cases, the European) and major Nama and Herero political groups dissolved to join SWAPO in 1976 and the main Damara group seems, as of late 1982, to be following in their footsteps.\*

#### *The first day of a longer journey*

SWAPO is quite clear in its own mind that independence is a vital first step, not a day of arrival, and that black faces in political and decorative managerial posts mean less than nothing (Smith did this and Mudge was trying to) and equally that black faces in all key posts with no other changes in the economy would merely replicate internal repression and continue external exploitation:

But the first day of political independence cannot be the first day free from imperialist domination. That is a daydream. Namibians are under no illusions that the occupation regime will prove gracious in defeat ... Beyond the immediate aftermath of independence, the people's government will face a formidable task of national reconstruction and social reconstruction ... without (adequate) skilled manpower and technical resources ... management, marketing, technical expertise and know-how on big local operations ... international sources of finance and credit.<sup>23</sup>

#### The dialogue and data collection and analysis

\* The one legitimate black party other than SWAPO—SWANU—is basically Herero in fact, if not in name. It is a ghost of its former self, little more than a talking shop of isolated students and intellectuals well aware it has no broad base or programme but still unwilling to accept that they have, as members of SWANU, 'missed the bus' and to dissolve into SWAPO.

aimed at defining parameters, priorities, sequences and alternatives has begun—most evidently, but by no means only, in the United Nations Institute for Namibia seminars,<sup>24</sup> which are associated with the volumes in their Namibia Studies Series.

SWAPO has clearly chosen to concentrate on: (a) building personnel and data bases for use at independence and (b) developing basic services for refugees and residents of semi-liberated areas (which does provide useful experience as well as tests on what may be possible later in rural Namibia as a whole). It would, after all, be rather foolish to write a plan now; before adequate up-to-date information is to hand, before independence, and before full consultation with Namibians at home—particularly as so early a plan would tell opponents what strategy and moves they had to plan to thwart.

#### *Toward health with the people*

In some respects the most completely elaborated policy and praxis is for health. The policy statement outlined in *SWAPO Political Programme, 1976*<sup>25</sup> states:

... Shall strive for preventative as well as curative medicine for all citizens:

- a. comprehensive, free medical services ...
- b. hospitals and clinics in every district ...
- c. nurseries and clinics in every community for working people and their families;
- d. health education centres for preventative medicine and family planning;
- e. institutions for the training of medical and paramedical personnel;
- f. rehabilitation centres for disabled and infirm persons;
- g. an International Red Cross Society.

This is a case where one can test words and actions—and the two square almost exactly. In Zambia and Angola, SWAPO has acted on each of these points. Its medical service (doctors, paramedicals, nurses, aides, nursery personnel, and administrative assistants) functions. It regularly places new entrants and experienced personnel on a variety of paramedical and medical courses. Namibian doctors head the service. SWAPO (under the name of the UN Council for Namibia) is an active WHO member. An active research programme—including the collection of data to estimate health parameters in Namibia\*—is being given priority as a basis for improving present services and as a means of laying the groundwork for their transfer on a national basis to Namibia.

#### *The political economy of SWAPO*

SWAPO is a socialist party and seeks a transition to socialism in Namibia:

Economic reconstruction in a free, democratic and united Namibia will have as its motive force the establishment of a classless society. Thus social justice and progress for all is the governing idea behind every SWAPO policy decision.

- abolition of all forms of exploitation
- major means of production and exchange of the country are [in the] ownership of the people
- an integrated national economy
- land to the tiller
- agriculturally self-sufficient
- a spirit of self-reliance<sup>26</sup>

Clearly what these statements mean depends most on praxis after independence, not on

\* Probably unknown even to RSA and certainly unpublished—see cited work of the German Development Institute on lack of official data published or unpublished.

words now. But the details stressed are interesting:<sup>27</sup>

1. free trade unions;
2. basic services;
3. respect for honestly acquired private property;
4. joint ventures with the private sector (including, for a while at least, some present ranchers), co-operatives;
5. gradual change, on a negotiated basis if possible (even in respect to economic relations).

These suggest a set of priorities and sequences not very dissimilar from Tanzania since 1967 (Tanzania is currently negotiating a joint venture with a transnational fertilizer company for the largest manufacturing plant in independent Sub-Saharan Africa at the same time as it continues public corporation dominance in import/export, wholesaling, finance and—less uniformly—manufacturing and plantation agriculture). This does, of course, assume foreign firms in Namibia will cooperate with such a strategy.

Certainly the examples of change in the mining sector cited in *To Be Born A Nation*<sup>28</sup> stress a tax share in profit similar to Botswana's levels (now 35 per cent in Namibia, 66-70 per cent in Botswana, in respect of diamonds). Their secondary theme is joint ventures. Similarly, in his television interview at the 1981 Geneva Conference, SWAPO President Sam Nujoma was quite specific that while revised arrangements were essential, Namibia would accept/need foreign company presence in several sectors for many years.

Breaking contract does require decent wages, working conditions and labour relations

now. It also requires a plausible Namibian share—via taxes and joint ventures as well as land redistribution—in surpluses. Similarly, it is seen as necessary to nationalize public utilities (now RSA owned) and create a firm, national economic policy central frame. But much of this is the present policy in states as cautious as Botswana or Zambia and all of it is practised in states such as Algeria and Tanzania.

#### *Human rights and participation*

SWAPO does not assume that there cannot be Namibians of European ancestry. It does not even assume that—to the extent that their higher incomes stem from greater education or greater experience, or from small business capital—these incomes would be reduced to a national average. It does reject a system in which a white secondary school librarian receives US \$20,000 plus fringe benefits and a skilled black mineworker perhaps US \$3,000.

The SWAPO constitutional discussion paper<sup>29</sup> is very firm on the need for a Bill of Rights, anti-discrimination machinery (and ratification of the relevant UN Convention) and ratification of the two UN Covenants on Human Rights. That is a very different stance indeed from RSA practice, at home or (directly and through DTA) in Namibia.

SWAPO's own operational style is as informative as its written proposals. It is collegiate and participatory—some friendly observers think almost to the extent (at times) of hindering prompt decision taking. A less dirigiste party/civil government is not to be found in Africa—indeed, there are very few anywhere. To SWAPO, the meaning of 'democratic cen-

tralism' is that full and free discussion must precede decisions, and that—if situations change—decisions can be reopened in Party circles, but that once taken they must be carried out and, in public debate, supported by Party members.\*

Evidently there are limitations on consultation and democracy during a war. But who caused a war? The 13 North American Colonies and the French *sans culottes* had, objectively, far fewer reasons to revolt than the people of Namibia. SWAPO has remained clear that 'it is always politics which leads the gun' and 'we do not beautify war as a purpose or regard it as a form of sport. We see war for what it is—an extension of politics by other means'.<sup>30</sup>

#### *SWAPO: finance, programme, contacts*

SWAPO is consistently accused of being Moscow-oriented or puppeteered. Its statements provide little evidence for such a view; still less does the depth of church support in one of the world's most Christian countries. Nor does its list of 15 diplomatic missions: eight in Africa (plus the provisional headquarters in Angola), two in Scandinavia, and one each in the United Nations, the UK, Yugoslavia, Cuba and the German Democratic Republic. While SWAPO has deliberately avoided making firm statements about organisations, an independent Namibia would join, in addition to the Organisation of African Unity, the Southern African Development Coordina-

\* This is a perfectly reasonable reading of what Lenin wrote. If Krushchev, Tito and Enrico Berlinguer are to be believed, it is not necessarily very close to actual practice in most European industrialized socialist economies.

tion Conference and the UN plus its specialised agencies; its pattern of relations strongly implies early accession to the Commonwealth and (subject, one might suppose, to a satisfactory beef quota) to the ACP countries (the African, Caribbean and Pacific states which are signatories to the second Lomé Convention defining their special economic relationship with the EEC).

South Africa's denunciation of SWAPO's foreign finances and programme is self-condemning. It asserts SWAPO receives US \$100 million a year in support of PLAN—90 per cent supposedly supplied by Warsaw Pact states, Cuba, China and Yugoslavia. It implies that the civilian programme receives comparable assistance—70 per cent from Western and non-aligned states. The surprising point is not the source of military assistance—where else can SWAPO turn, and how large does it look against semi-official South African estimates of US \$1,000 million Namibian war expenditure (plus US \$200 million to bribe ranchers and 'bantustan' employees)? Rather, it is that, on South Africa's own admission, SWAPO's civil government expenditure is of an equal order of magnitude and is financed from a very broad range of sources, notably Scandinavian ones.

*Which side are you on?*

Namibia's condition is not one which should leave observers neutral. For Namibians there is no option of neutrality. As the main southern leaders (led by Hendrik Witbooi, grandson of the Nama national resistance hero) declared when they joined SWAPO in 1976:

Now there are only two platforms left: the national

movement, SWAPO, or Turnhalle. We asked ourselves: who repressed, persecuted, humiliated, liquidated and betrayed us; was it SWAPO or the Boers and their allies?<sup>31</sup>

Since 1976 the buying of bantustan staff and homeguards and the compulsory conscription of blacks to fight against the liberation movement have made the choice even starker. To paraphrase the words of a US mineworkers' organising song:

Which side are you on, boys? Which side  
are you on?  
They say in Namibia, boys, there are  
no neutrals there;  
You either are a SWAPO man or a pawn of  
the RSA.

For outsiders, there may be more choices—and less willingness to take a stand, even though our freedom and lives (unlike those of Namibians) can hardly be endangered by our stands. One argument has been to give South Africa time. As Prime Minister Vorster said, 'Give us six months and we will amaze the world'. But that was in 1974. For 35 years South Africa has been in open, legal violation of its obligations to the United Nations in respect of Namibia; for nearly 16 (since the revocation of the Mandate) its presence has constituted armed aggression and a threat to peace within the meaning of the Charter. (The thousands of dead and maimed and imprisoned Namibians and Angolans know how real that 'threat' is.)

Another argument is the claim that South Africa is the beleaguered defender of Western Christian democracy, our ally in war. The present leaders of the Republic are no such thing—as Toivo ja Toivo said in the dock:

During the Second World War, when it became evident that both my country and yours were threatened by the dark clouds of Nazism, I risked my life to defend both of them ... But some of your countrymen ... resorted to sabotage against their own fatherland. I volunteered to face German bullets, and as a guard of military installations both in South West Africa and the Republic, was prepared to be victim of their sabotage. Today they are our masters and are considered the heroes, and I am called the coward.<sup>32</sup>

South Africa's record on democracy needs no rehearsing, and contrasts sharply with that of SWAPO. As to Christianity, South Africa has twice blown up the main Lutheran printing press at Onipa as well as the Anglican theological seminary St Mary's, and deported a score of clergy, including three bishops. SWAPO's refugee camps have pastors, chaplains and lay readers, and build churches with their own hands. Small wonder a Lutheran leader stated:

The Freedom Fighters are our children. Even people who are suffering still give them food because they know the freedom fighters are the people who come from us, who are fighting for our freedom—and we've got to help them.<sup>33</sup>

Or that the World Lutheran Federation at its World Assembly in Dar es Salaam stated that support for apartheid placed one in *status confessionis* (mortal sin)—a decision opposed only by the white South African and Namibian Lutheran Churches.

The one major South African church which either endorses apartheid or considers the war in Namibia a 'just war' (in the Christian theological sense) is the white 'mother' GKN (the South African Dutch Reformed Church which has been the moral and theological backbone

of the Afrikaaner nation—or tribe—and can fairly be described as 'the Broederbond at prayer'). It left the World Council of Churches long ago to avoid expulsion and in the fall of 1982 was suspended by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (those of the Calvinist tradition) which declared apartheid to be a heresy. Both in South Africa itself and in Namibia the other major churches are inexorably being forced into direct defiance of the state because of their growing conviction that neither apartheid nor the war in Namibia can be compatible with the Gospel of Christ.

South Africa is vulnerable. It needs to import petroleum; it needs business partners to provide high technology (not least for weapons production); it now has to borrow over US \$4,000 million a year from banks and the IMF. Banks, corporations, governments, the IMF: these are the external arteries and pressure points of apartheid. South Africa does respond to pressure. When its attempt to obscure the involvement of serving security and military personnel in the 1981 Seychelles mercenary coup attempt was met by the warning that the USA, the UK, France and Federal Germany would invoke the air piracy convention, and block services to and from RSA, the Republic retreated, despite the highly damaging revelations of security service briefings of mercenary leader Mike Hoare, armed forces delivery of arms and the presence of serving military personnel (as well as reservists) among the mercenaries which came out during the air hijacking trial. The vehemence and sustained energy of its attacks on bodies like the World Council of Churches (partially revealed in Muldergate fallout) also indicate its real fear

that they may mobilize Western pressures it cannot simply reject.\*

For those concerned to act, the list of SWAPO missions and of support groups printed at the end of *To Be Born A Nation* gives them a starting point, while their own churches, trade unions, women's groups and political parties provide another.

There will never be a clearer moral case for taking a stand than Namibia. True, it is 'a small and far away country', but the sequel to Neville Chamberlain's use of those words to justify his sanctioning of the rape and murder of Czechoslovakia, should cause advocates of benign neglect or appeasement of or 'constructive involvement' with South Africa to think again about what they really mean to say. The more appropriate words are those of the late Angolan President, Agostino Neto:

*So comes the moment  
To advance resolutely  
To build the world, which belongs  
To all human beings.*

\* The 1983 forced resignation of Mudge, the chatter of a new internal election and the 1982-83 American/South African talks with Angola do not represent progress or even change. They are merely further charades killing time while war goes on killing human beings and Botha juggles for time to safeguard his political position in South Africa. The agony and the choices remain unchanged.

#### Notes

1. Reprinted in *To Be Born A Nation*, Zed Press, London, 1981.
2. See Green, R.H., Kiljunen, M-L., and Kiljunen, K., *Namibia: The Last Colony*, Longman, Harlow, Essex, 1981.
3. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., p. 17.
4. See 'Underdevelopment and Class Formation in Ovamboland 1845-1915', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 16, No 3, 1975.
5. Pages 98-100 of *To Be Born A Nation* are the clearest, although the chapter by Voipio, R., in *Namibia: The Last Colony* examines contract labour's oppression of women and pages 202 and 210 contain liberation-oriented suggestions.
6. See *Namibia: The Last Colony*, op. cit.
7. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit.
8. See *Namibia in the 1980's*, Catholic Institute for International Relations, British Council of Churches, London, 1981.
9. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit.
10. Ibid.
11. See *Mining Annual Review*, London, 1981.
12. See *Namibia: The Last Colony*, op. cit.
13. See Green, R.H., *From Südwestafrika to Namibia*, Research Report No. 58, Scandanavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1981.
14. Ibid.
15. See *Namibia in the 1980's*, op. cit., and *From Südwestafrika to Namibia*, op. cit.
16. See *Namibia: The Last Colony*, op. cit.
17. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit.
18. Ibid., p. 89.
19. Thomas, W.H., *Economic Development in Namibia: Towards Acceptable Development Strategies for Independent Namibia*, Kaiser Grunewald, Munich, 1978. (Acceptability to Namibian workers and peasants does not, it seems, rank high in Thomas' priorities or else he totally fails to grasp their perception of past and present reality.)
20. Notably Barthold, W.S., *Namibia's Economic Potential and Existing Economic Ties with the Republic of South Africa*, 1977, and *Multi-Sectoral Study on Namibia*, German Development Institute, 1978.

21. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., especially pp. 59-85.
22. Quoted in *From Südwestafrika to Namibia*, op. cit., p. 26.
23. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., pp. 295-6.
24. The most recent seminar, in April 1982, was on economic alternatives; the first, in 1977, on person-power development. Others held include ones on national language, constitutional choices, agriculture and education, and subjects scheduled for 1982-83 include commerce and mining.
25. Reprinted in *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., p. 96.
26. 'SWAPO Political Programme, 1976', reprinted in *Namibia: The Last Colony*, op. cit., p. 196.
27. For a fuller exposition, see *Namibia: The Last Colony*, op. cit., pp. 197-204.
28. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., pp. 50-51.
29. Reproduced in *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., pp. 102-3.
30. See *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., pp. 168 and 262.
31. Quoted in *To Be Born A Nation*, op. cit., pp. 234-6.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

# News and Notes

## Seminar on Education in Zimbabwe: Past, Present and Future

Salisbury, August 27th—September 7th, 1981

### Introduction

The Government of Zimbabwe is committed to building a socialist society, and regards the transformation of the education system as vital to this objective. This transformation has only just begun and faces considerable difficulties. In order to stimulate discussion of educational change and innovation, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) held a 'Seminar on Education in Zimbabwe—Past, Present and Future' from August 27th to September 7th, 1981. The seminar took place at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare and was organized in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation with the assistance of the Foundation for Education with Production. The 200 Zimbabwean participants were all actively concerned with education: as officials of the Ministry of Education and Culture or other ministries; as provincial or district education officers; as lecturers at teacher training colleges; as teachers; or as members of a variety of other state or private bodies connected with education. In addition, there were about 30 invited foreign delegates, who came to share their experience in educational development with the Zimbabweans. Countries represented included Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Zambia, Cuba, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Ethiopia, Sweden and Australia. Representatives from the African National Congress of South Africa and of the South West African People's Organisation of Namibia were also present. UNESCO was represented by the Director-General, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, as well as by several experts from the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP).

In his opening address, the Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, reminded the participants that colonialism used education to inculcate attitudes of deference and subservience to foreign



Dr Dzingai Mutumbuka, Zimbabwean Minister for Education and Culture

rule on the part of the colonized. He set out the task for education in Zimbabwe today: to fundamentally orient itself towards the revolutionary transformation now taking place in all spheres of society. He explained:

Our schools, our entire educational system, must inculcate a socialist consciousness among our young people, that is to say, an attitude and sense of commitment to the development of our people as a collectivity rather than the development of the self as an individual. Our schools must not merely teach such commitment, they must themselves practise it as well. Pupils must learn to work together productively for the good of their school and the community.

In a fraternal address, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow drew attention to the importance and magnitude of the educational task facing Zim-

babwe. He emphasized the importance of good planning and administration, and underlined the need for a large-scale programme of literacy training and adult education, to make up for the deficiencies of the previous regime, which denied education to most of the population. The Director-General pledged the full support of UNESCO in the development of education in Zimbabwe.

The Minister of Education and Culture, Dzingai Mutumbuka, described the very rapid expansion of education since independence, and pointed out the strains and problems caused by the doubling of both primary and secondary school enrolment in just over one year. He mentioned the reasons which led to the organization of the Seminar:

The aim of this seminar is to examine as clearly and as profoundly as possible the institutional framework of education that we have inherited from the past, the content and structure of that education, and most important of all, the objectives we hope to achieve by our present strategy of extending such opportunities to the masses formerly deprived of the most basic educational facilities.

Minister Mutumbuka stressed that education must change to suit the priorities of a growing nation. It must depart from elitist colonialist models, and cease to assess people in terms of overseas paper criteria.

The education of the future must be a mass based education, which will serve the development needs of the masses. It must be based on an analysis of the present intellectual, cultural and technological levels of the people vis-à-vis their needs rather than on high sounding solutions from overseas.

This would involve a complete overhaul of the curriculum, and the linking of learning with production. Since Zimbabwe is an agricultural

country, every school should have an agricultural project. The curriculum must also emphasize national culture and national unity, and must give an equal place to all three of Zimbabwe's languages. Teacher training must have high priority. Above all, the aim is for a unitary educational system, offering equal opportunity to all Zimbabweans irrespective of race, and irrespective of whether they live in urban or rural areas.

The Seminar adopted the following method of work: papers dealing with every aspect of education (except higher education, which was to be dealt with by a special seminar) were presented in plenary session. On most topics there were at least two papers: usually one by a fraternal delegate from another country, and one by a Zimbabwean. After the plenary session, the delegates split up into nine working groups: six with an emphasis on formal education, and three concentrating on non-formal education. The groups discussed each topic, and presented reports on their discussions to a coordinating group. At the end of the Seminar, each group presented recommendations, which were used to help in formulating the Seminar's Final Recommendations.

### **The poverty of colonialist education**

The major emphasis of the Seminar was the search for viable strategies for introducing socialist principles in the various sectors of education. In order to do this adequately, it was necessary to start by analysing the historical roots of the present system, and by looking at the existing structure and problems of education in Zimbabwe. Although many of the speakers addressed themselves to this task, the main contribution was made by the very detailed paper of Samuel Mumbengegwi, Deputy Chief Planning Officer at the MEC, entitled:

'Zimbabwe: a Diagnosis of an Educational System in Rapid Change'.

The education system inherited from the racist-capitalist society of Rhodesia provided a very high level of free state education for the white minority. Nominal fees were charged in these schools. Quantitative provision for blacks was wholly inadequate, so that most had to seek places in private, relatively high fee-paying schools. Usually such schools were run by missionaries or by employers, and the educational standard was often very low. Many teachers themselves had had no education beyond primary school. In the white commercial farming areas educational facilities were virtually non-existent.

Nearly all white children went on to secondary school, and then into higher or vocational education, but there were very few secondary school places for blacks. Competition for them was intense, and success usually meant huge financial sacrifices for the student's family. Of every 100 black children who entered primary school in 1970, only 29 completed primary education, six entered secondary school and just four got as far as Form 4. The tiny minority of blacks who got as far as university found that informal rules kept them out of scientific and engineering courses. They were channelled into arts subjects, geared to training them as future secondary school teachers.

But the worst aspect of the system was not its quantitative inadequacy, but the mental colonization built into it. Rhodesian education was an out-of-date carbon copy of the British system. African children had to study Dickens and Shakespeare, learn about the rivers and mountains of Europe, and about the British Royal family. Children were taught that Shona and Ndebele were inferior to the English language, and that European forms of behaviour were preferable to African customs. The price

of success was complete alienation from African cultural roots. Schools emphasized the superiority of mental over manual work and instilled elitist attitudes. The highest aim was selection for study abroad, where the process of cultural alienation was completed. Revulsion against this type of education led many young Zimbabweans to join the liberation struggle.

A further problem left by the racist education system was a great shortage of trained teachers. While pupil/teacher ratios in white primary schools were around 20:1 at the time of independence, they were over 40:1 in black primary schools. Since independence, ratios have worsened, for the number of pupils has grown faster than that of teachers. Teacher training facilities are quite inadequate, with the result that over a quarter of all primary school teachers are untrained. The Rhodesian Government in 1974/5 spent an average of Z\$35 on every black primary school child, but Z\$461 on every white primary school child—13 times as much. In secondary education, three times as much was spent per white child compared with each black child. In fact, no education at all was available for many black children, with the result that today an estimated 70 per cent of the adult population of Zimbabwe is illiterate or semi-literate. That is the legacy of a century of colonialism.

#### **Aims and principles of the new education**

The Seminar paid particular attention to the question of the type of education required for the new Zimbabwe—indeed this issue recurred constantly throughout the deliberations. In this respect, a special contribution was made by the delegates from the socialist countries, who showed how they had applied the marxist aim of the creation of a 'new man' or 'totally

developed individual' to the special historical and cultural conditions of their own countries. There was general agreement that Zimbabwe should adopt socialist education principles, and modify these to meet the special needs of Zimbabwean society. Now that the Zimbabwean people had successfully liberated themselves from colonialism through armed struggle, stress was put on the need for a type of education which would help to combat neo-colonialism.

Delegates emphasized that education is never neutral, but always serves class interests. Rhodesian education had served the interests of a small capitalist minority. In Zimbabwe, education of a high standard must be available to all citizens, and it must serve the interests of the majority of the population: the workers and peasants. The overall aim of education was defined by the Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in the following terms:

Education should transmit a culture that inculcates in the people a consciousness that man through his labour power is the creator of his social environment and that in the same way that man acts on nature and changes it, he can also act on his social environment and change it, and in the process change himself.

Many working groups felt that a popular culture can be regarded as a product and a reflection of a people's history, built on man's relationship with man and with nature and production. As such the question of culture is central to the development of a Zimbabwean system of education. Therefore it should be included in the school curriculum at all levels. In the group discussions it was strongly felt that there is a need to establish a national council of culture in Zimbabwe to coordinate cultural activities and to preserve the country's cultural heritage. There was agreement that Zimbabwe's

three main languages should be given equal prominence throughout the education system.

Education should be seen not as an end in itself, but as an instrument for developing the economy and society, and for ensuring full participation by all Zimbabweans. This implies that education should not just concentrate on youth, but also provide the opportunity for literacy, basic education and vocational training for the large number of people denied schooling by the previous system. The guiding principle at all levels of education should be relevance to production and to the community. This means linking education with production, and ensuring community participation and control in the administration of education.

#### **The refugee schools as a model**

Delegates paid considerable attention to the schools developed by ZANU in Mozambique and by ZAPU in Zambia during the Liberation Struggle. These schools embodied principles of self-reliance, linking education with production, political education and national culture. Delegates agreed that the experience of these schools should be studied, for it provides valuable insights into ways of changing education to meet the aims of a new independent Zimbabwe.

Despite the extremely difficult material conditions at the refugee schools, important advances were made in curriculum development, in the production of new-style textbooks, and in teacher training. Since independence, four refugee schools have been re-established within Zimbabwe, to re-absorb returning young refugees. It is hoped that these schools will continue to serve as models for changing education in Zimbabwe.

### **The new curriculum**

There was unanimity on the need for a new curriculum at all levels of education. The curriculum still used after nearly two years of independence is the old colonialist curriculum, with its emphasis on European culture, language, literature and values. Continued use of examinations which are set and marked in Britain makes it all the harder to escape from this inappropriate curriculum.

All the groups which discussed papers on curriculum reform were unanimous in pointing out that the Departments of the Ministry of Education and Culture responsible for curriculum reform are moving too slowly. It was agreed that they are lagging behind the aspirations of the workers and peasants of the country as far as curriculum reform is concerned. For example, some discussion groups condemned the continued use of the 1977 Teacher Training Syllabus (the 'Pink Book') nearly two years after independence. It was felt that some senior officials in departments responsible for implementing change were actually opposed to innovation. It is important that administrative structures should be modified to encourage innovation, and that adequate finance should be made available for new approaches.

Working groups agreed that the curriculum should emphasize technical subjects. The dependency relationship between former colonies and the industrialized countries stems in part from the failure to give proper attention to technical and scientific subjects at school. The importance of polytechnics and technical colleges was also stressed. Neo-colonialism is perpetuated through the technological dependence of the developing countries on the capitalist world. The ZimSci Project for science teaching kits is a step in the right direction.

It was confirmed that education with production must be embodied in the curriculum at all levels. Education with production means a system in which production programmes form the central hub around which other aspects of the curriculum, such as sciences, languages and social studies, revolve. The objective is to link everything that goes on in the classroom with the world of work and social life, so as to overcome the abstractness of capitalist education. Zimbabwe needs a type of education which links theory with practice and which helps to overcome the division between manual and mental work, so that all citizens are capable of both doing productive work, and of planning and controlling the production process.

Linking education with production means, in the long run, breaking down the barrier between school and society. Every school should have gardens and farmland as well as workshops. Local workers and peasants should be brought into the schools as instructors, while students should go outside their schools to receive training in local farms, workshops and factories. Rural schools can take on an important role in introducing agricultural and technical innovations, on the pattern pioneered by the rural secondary schools of Cuba.

The new curriculum will have important repercussions for educational administration, for teacher training and for the production of new textbooks. In all these fields, the colonial system will clearly be inappropriate. If adhered to, the old patterns would present an obstacle to the introduction of the new curriculum. Innovations in all these areas are essential. They must be based on the principle of developing a socialist education appropriate to Zimbabwean conditions and culture. Foreign models will have to be abandoned, and replaced with new forms, which take the culture and social condi-

tions of Zimbabwe's workers and peasants as their starting point. The emphasis will be on Africa and the Third World, rather than on the culture and educational methods of the former colonizing powers.

### **Teacher education**

Lack of trained teachers is a major constraint to educational development in Zimbabwe. This problem has several aspects: the very large quantitative deficiency, the inappropriateness of much of the traditional training, the need for upgrading of the many teachers with inadequate or no training, and the problem of finance for an expansion of teacher training. In 1980 there were 1,235,994 pupils in primary schools and 28,423 teachers. This gave an average pupil/teacher ratio of 44:1. In 1981 it rose to 1,680,000 pupils in primary school with 36,774 teachers. School enrolment is expected to increase to over 2 million in the next few years. Even to maintain the present unsatisfactory pupil/teacher ratio, more than 17,000 new teachers would be required. Of the existing teachers, 15,500 are unqualified. Shortages in secondary education are of a similar order. Here the MEC has sought a stop-gap through the recruitment of secondary teachers in Australia, Canada and Britain. Clearly, this cannot be a long-term solution. At present, there are eight traditional teacher training colleges: four government colleges and four private ones. Together, their annual output of trained teachers is 500–600. At that rate, the number of teachers needed for educational expansion will never be available. Moreover, the curricula of the teacher training colleges are in many ways inappropriate to the needs and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe.

The MEC has already taken an innovative step to solve both the problems of quantity and

quality of teacher training by instituting the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course Programme (ZINTEC). This is designed to quickly increase the number of teachers, using a combination of residential courses, correspondence courses and supervised teaching practice. The ZINTEC curriculum embodies socialist education principles such as education with production, and emphasizes national culture.

Delegates saw ZINTEC as a model for further expansion of teacher training, but realised that although ZINTEC methods are cheaper than conventional training, there would still be serious financial constraints on expansion of the programme. Methods such as distance education for teachers, on the Tanzanian model, were also discussed, and it was agreed that there is an urgent need for further initiatives in this field.

The working groups recognized the need to change teaching programmes at the conventional teacher training colleges to meet the requirements of the people and government. There is a need for lecturers to reorientate their work and attitudes in line with the new socio-economic order. Teacher education source material should be diversified to include progressive material which had hitherto been banned. There is also a need for in-service teacher training courses to reorientate existing teachers on socialist teaching aims, principles and methods. These in-service courses will afford teachers the opportunity for a critical discussion and analysis of the colonialist educational system, which will be contrasted with the new educational goals and methods. Such courses should be held with the participation of members of the local communities, to ensure that teaching does come to reflect the needs and aspirations of the people. Delegates emphasized that teachers and other graduates of

the formal education system have a lot to learn from workers and peasants.

Further suggestions from working groups in this area were: government participation in the preparation and publication of school textbooks and other teaching materials; use of ZINTEC-style programmes to upgrade teachers' qualifications; and the utilization of ZINTEC regional centres as teachers' centres.

#### **Adult education and literacy**

There was general agreement that programmes for literacy and adult education should be given the highest priority. The transformation of the school system would guarantee the future development of Zimbabwe, but its effects would inevitably be felt only in the long term. Literacy and adult education was essential to secure the immediate participation of the workers and peasants in the social, economic and political development of the nation. These classes—excluded from participation in education by the racist capitalist system of the previous regime—needed special educational facilities if they were to take their appropriate place in Zimbabwean society.

The most pressing need is for literacy programmes. It is estimated that 1.9 million Zimbabweans are illiterate. If those classified as semi-literate are added, the proportion of adults requiring literacy instruction is about 70 per cent. However, delegates rejected any programme aiming at mere formal literacy. It was agreed that literacy must be part of a general programme of basic adult education, concerned with developing the cultural capabilities required for mass participation in production, planning and control of the economy, for the development of popular culture, and for individuals to take an active role in political life. Considerable help in developing these aims,

and the methods required to achieve them, was given by delegates from countries which had carried out mass literacy and adult education programmes, in particular Cuba, Ethiopia and Nicaragua.

The general feeling of delegates was that adult education should be under the control of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This control should embrace the curriculum, organization and implementation. This would not preclude private initiatives in adult education, which should be encouraged, but would ensure that a fully coordinated and appropriate system could be developed. Adult education should be understood in a comprehensive sense, to include literacy programmes, basic adult education, workers' education, peasants' education, cooperative education and distance education. Moreover, adult education should be linked with the establishment of new forms of production such as cooperatives in agriculture, handicrafts, industry and transport, youth brigades and self-help groups. Education, training and job creation should go hand in hand. The MEC should have a special department for adult education, with a chief education officer. There should also be adult education offices at the various administrative levels.

It was suggested that to develop the aims and methods of adult education, and to begin the necessary process of mass mobilization in this field, a national seminar on adult education should be carried out. Participants at this seminar should include popular organizations, professional associations, trade unions, representatives of appropriate ministries, parents and teachers.

Delegates regarded literacy as a basic human right. Illiteracy is a social evil, which retards the broad masses and prevents participation in social and economic development. Illiteracy should therefore be eliminated as quickly as

possible. The first step should be a National Literacy Campaign, led and coordinated by the MEC, but based on mobilizing the resources and initiatives of the whole population. The Campaign should be organized by a specially established National Literacy Coordinating Committee, to be composed of representatives of appropriate government agencies, mass organizations and other democratic bodies. A basic principle is that those citizens lucky enough to have received basic education have a duty to pass on their knowledge to the rest of the people.

Literacy teaching should take place in the languages of the people, and should reflect the cultural, social, economic and political needs of the people. Teaching must be based on the everyday occupations and activities of the population, and must be relevant to production. From the outset, literacy should be seen merely as the first step in a general programme of basic popular education.

Newly literate citizens should receive further education in a system of popular education collectives, based either on the workplace or on local communities. There should be close links between the system of adult education and the formal education system. Both together should constitute a system of recurrent education, permitting people to change from one sector to another, on the principle of alternation of work and study.

It is essential that adult education be based on democratic methods allowing workers and peasants to become the subjects of their own learning process. Conscientization and dialogue should be the main methods, rather than use of textbooks and courses with predetermined content. Distance education, which precludes dialogue between teacher and learner, should only be used in special circumstances, such as in areas of very low population density.

Responsibility for financing the campaign against illiteracy and the system of adult education should lie with the government. Resources should be mobilized from economic and social organizations and from the people. External finance should be sought and accepted, provided that no conditions are attached to such aid.

### **Planning and evaluation**

There was considerable emphasis on the need for a strong planning and evaluation capacity in the MEC. The planning unit of the MEC bore main responsibility for policy and physical planning, and adequate attention should therefore be paid to structure and staffing of this department. It was also felt that there was a need for continuous evaluation by the MEC of all programmes. Attention should be given to improvement of evaluation methods, and strengthening of the appropriate department.

An essential step towards national autonomy in education and the development of a new curriculum would be the establishment of Zimbabwe's own examining board. Possibilities of international cooperation, particularly with other Southern African Development Coordination Council countries, should be explored. Delegates condemned the present system, in which whites and blacks sat for different exams, set by different bodies. This system is clearly out of step with the new socio-economic order.

### **Final recommendations**

The Seminar on Education in Zimbabwe—Past, Present and Future adopted the following final recommendations.

### *Preamble*

The Seminar accepted the aims and objectives of socialist education as enunciated by the Honourable Minister of Education and Culture, Dzingai Mutumbuka, in his speech.

The following recommendations were accepted by the full plenary session of the Seminar:

#### *1. Curriculum change*

- (a) The curriculum must be Zimbabwe orientated and mass orientated: it must include Zimbabwe's experience, cater for Zimbabwe's needs and include Zimbabwe's culture;
- (b) The three national languages must be included in the curriculum of all schools;
- (c) From the focal point of Zimbabwe, the curriculum should move out toward Africa, the Third World and then the rest of the world;
- (d) Education with production is highly recommended by all groups;
- (e) Examinations need to be Zimbabwe orientated and Zimbabwe based, and evaluation must include other aspects of school experience such as service to the community.

#### *2. Teacher training*

The Seminar recommends that teacher training and in-service training should support curricular change in particular, because of the new political, technical, scientific and productive orientation.

#### *3. Structural change*

The Seminar recommends that:

- (a) there be democratization of all structures to include consultation with the community and schools;
- (b) bureaucratic structures and procedures at all levels need to be revamped to suit the new political change;

- (c) there must be administrative and financial support for innovations;
- (d) there must be community evaluation of education;
- (e) there must be a unitary system of education.

#### *4. Adult education*

The Seminar recommends without reservation that:

- (a) a mass adult literacy campaign be launched immediately to be completed within the shortest possible time;
- (b) all adult education for workers and peasants be linked to production, skill improvement, managerial improvement and cultural activities;
- (c) the literacy campaign should be followed up by systematic post literacy and continuing education programmes aimed at consolidation of literacy and reinforcement of functional skills and social awareness.

#### *5. Special priorities*

Certain priority areas have been identified as requiring special attention including:

- (a) the education of those whose education was interrupted by the war;
- (b) the education of women;
- (c) the education of the disabled.

#### *6. Follow-up*

The Seminar recommends effective dissemination, follow-up and feedback of the ideas discussed in this Seminar at regional, district, school and community levels.

### **Conclusion**

In his closing speech, the President of Zimbabwe, the Hon. Rev. Canaan Banana, underlined the need not for mere cosmetic changes

but for radical changes in the content and methodology of education. He said that education must contribute significantly to the welfare and development of the nation, and should aim at creating an all-round resourceful Zimbabwean citizen. The President stated that in the initial stages of educational reform, it would be necessary to 'de-educate in order to re-educate many in the teaching profession, if we are to effect fundamental change free from the colonial image'. There was a need for courses to re-orientate teachers in the realities of the new

socio-economic order. Finally, while stressing the success of the Seminar, the President emphasized that the real test of its work would be the ability to translate into action the objectives agreed upon at the Seminar.

It is the intention of the MEC to ensure implementation of the findings of the Seminar, through an intensive follow-up process in all sectors and at all levels of education. The Seminar was of great significance for the transformation of education in Zimbabwe, but it was only the first step.

## **The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies**

The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies (SIAS) is located in Sweden's old university town, Uppsala. Its task is to provide information on Africa for the public in the five Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The Institute is mainly financed by the Swedish government, although contributions are provided by the other Nordic governments for scholarships and research staff.

SIAS has functioned now for 20 years. Its establishment in 1962 was linked to the awakening Nordic interest in the Third World in general and Africa in particular. The rapid decolonization of Africa made the public aware of the emerging importance of the continent. Interest in Africa increased in many fields: the Nordic countries became engaged in large-scale development cooperation with African countries, trade and investment increased and courses on Africa became common at universities and high schools. The creation of SIAS was one measure taken in response to the increased interest in the continent.

From the start, the activities of SIAS were concentrated on documentation and publication. The first visible results of the work by SIAS staff, under Dr. Carl-Gösta Widstrand, was the establishment of a library and the publication of eight booklets in Swedish, the first of which dealt with the trade union movements in Africa.

Since then the Institute has published a total of 250 books, research reports, seminar proceedings and occasional papers, some in cooperation with other Nordic, British, Canadian and African institutions.

The 'internationalization' of the Institute's programme came with the organization of annual conferences, with broad international participation, on a variety of African topics. The proceedings of these events were published in English. The first of them was a seminar on 'The Soviet Block, China and Africa' held in 1963. This was followed by conferences on: 'Development and Adult Education in Africa', 1964; 'Refugee Problems in Africa', 1966; 'The Writer in Modern Africa', 1967; 'African

Boundary Problems', 1968; 'Cooperatives and Rural Development in East Africa', 1969; 'Reporting Africa', 1970; 'African Cooperatives and Efficiency', 1971; 'Land-locked Countries of Africa', 1972; 'Multinational Firms in Africa', 1974; 'Problems of Socialist Orientation in Africa', 1976; 'African Refugees and the Law', 1977; and 'Canada, Scandinavia and Southern Africa', 1978.

In September 1982, SIAS held, in cooperation with the Centre for Development Research (Copenhagen) and the Institute of Development Studies (Sussex), a conference on the effects of the international recession on the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries.

In addition to the international conferences, the Institute also arranges seminars for young researchers and more advanced students in the Nordic countries. On a couple of occasions some 100 scholars have gathered to listen to invited lecturers and to discuss common problems in their research. On other occasions more specialized seminars have been organized on specific subjects such as 'Pastoralism' and 'Small-scale Industry' with some 20–30 participants.

An important part of the duties of the Institute is the organization of public lectures on current African issues. This is done partly in the Institute's own premises in Uppsala, where invited speakers hold seminars twice a month on average; and partly through lecture-tours which are arranged once or twice a year. Sometimes the lecture activities, in which the staff of the Institute also take an active part, are directed towards select target-groups. Primary and secondary school teachers and study-organisers in adult education associations make frequent use of the Institute's services in this area.

However, publication, library and documentation services still constitute the core of the Institute's work. SIAS launched, in 1967, a

series of 'Research Reports' which has become widely read internationally and already includes more than 60 titles. In 1978 a new series, 'Studies of Law in Social Change and Development' was launched in cooperation with the International Centre for Law in Development, New York. Up to 1981 five volumes have appeared. Another series started in 1979, in cooperation with the Centre for Development Research in Copenhagen. Jette Bukh's *The Village Woman in Ghana* and John Carlsen's *Economic and Social Transformation in Rural Kenya* are two examples of the six titles which have appeared in that series.

The Institute has, furthermore, published a number of books on rural development and refugee problems. Two examples of these themes are *Managing Rural Development: Ideas and Experience from East Africa* by Robert Chambers and *International Legal Instruments of Refugees in Africa*. In his book, Chambers critically examines the priorities of rural development and gives a meticulous account of the strategies for rural development in East Africa: planning, implementation and evaluation. The second book is a collection of the most important international legal instruments regulating refugees in Africa, all texts being given both in English and French.

Another publication which illustrates the scope of SIAS publishing activities is the two-volume Swahili-Swedish and Swedish-Swahili dictionary by Abdulaziz Lodhi and Tommy Otterbrandt, which is a good indication of the Swedish interest in East Africa in general and Tanzania in particular. In 1968 a collection of President Julius K. Nyerere's most important speeches was translated into Swedish and published under the title *Socialism i Tanzania*. This book is one of the Institute's bestsellers in Swedish.

Since 1966, SIAS has followed the situation of

refugees in Africa. A number of publications have been devoted to this theme. The institute participated in the preparations for the Pan-African conference on the situation of refugees in Africa which was held in Arusha, Tanzania in 1979. The Institute continues to follow the refugee situation and a number of publications on this topic will be forthcoming.

The Institute is not a teaching institution, nor does it award academic degrees or scholarships. Its travel funds, around US \$30,000 per annum, are used solely for supporting travel and field research in Africa by scholars in the Nordic countries. One recent and very successful innovation has been modest grants which enable students in the Nordic countries to spend one month in Uppsala and work on their papers or theses at the Institute's library. This form of promotion of research on Africa has also contributed to the expansion of SIAS contacts throughout the Nordic countries. To date, a total of 250 students have used this opportunity.

The Institute's library is the only one in the Nordic countries which specializes in modern Africa. The main subjects covered are modern history, politics, economics, education and development cooperation. There is close cooperation with the University Library, Uppsala, which has a large and important collection of books on Africa's history, archaeology, ethnography, linguistics and fine arts. The library of SIAS has about 25,000 titles. One of its strengths is the collection of periodicals. Some 800 current journals, newspapers, magazines, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) publications, as well as African government publications, are available. About one-third of the annual acquisitions are publications on an exchange scheme, of which there are some 250 with universities and research institutions in Africa and elsewhere.

A review of books published, seminars held and travel grants distributed by SIAS shows a geographical bias. Most activities are directed towards the eastern half of the continent: from Sudan and Ethiopia, through East Africa down to Mozambique and South Africa. This geographical bias reflects the Nordic interest in African affairs, which for historical reasons has been focused on Eastern and Southern Africa where English is used as the official language. Francophone West Africa has traditionally attracted only marginal interest in the Nordic countries. This applies equally to missionary activities, development cooperation, trade, investment and research. However, the Institute tries to rectify the situation by, for example, encouraging Nordic scholars to study West Africa, and through the library's acquisition policy, which gives high priority to documentation on Western and Northern Africa.

SIAS is not primarily a research institution. It strives to stimulate research on Africa undertaken by scholars attached to universities in the Nordic countries. Its library, travel-grant system and publishing activities are all geared to this end. However, during recent years the research capacity at the Institute has increased, as a number of research posts have been created. Each of the Nordic countries outside Sweden finances a research post. These can be held by Nordic scholars for a period of three years. Cooperation with African universities is considered essential and the Institute has recently initiated a modest programme of inviting African researchers to the Institute as guest researchers.

SIAS falls administratively under the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs but it has a board of governors responsible for the direction of its activities. The board is composed of 13 members, the Vice-Chancellor of Uppsala University being the chairman *ex officio*. The

Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway appoint one member each. SIDA also has a representative on the board, while the remaining members represent organizations such as the Swedish cooperative movement, the business community, the missionary churches and the academic community.

In conclusion a few words should be said about the Institute's political stand. The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies is not impartial. It actively supports the African cause

for liberation of Africa from all vestiges of colonialism and racial discrimination, as well as for freedom from all kinds of political and economic repression. However, the Institute has never lost the perception of its proper role, which is to serve the Scandinavian public in a scholarly and objective manner, and not particular political movements or organisations.

The address of the Institute is: *The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, P.O. Box 2126, 75002, Uppsala, Sweden.*





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## **The International Monetary System and the New International Order**

**1980:2**

Message from the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Hon. Michael Manley, to the South-North Conference on the International Monetary System and the New International Order

No to IMF Meddling: President Nyerere's New Year Message 1980 to the Diplomats accredited to Tanzania

The Arusha Initiative: A Call for a United Nations Conference on International Money and Finance

Solidarity with Jamaica: Resolution Adopted by the South-North Conference

The Inadequacy and Loss of Legitimacy of the International Monetary Fund *by Ismail-Sabri Abdalla*

Swallowing the IMF Medicine in the 'Seventies *by Norman Girvan*

Restructuring the International Monetary System *by Justinian F Rweyemamu*

Comments on 'Restructuring the International Monetary System' *by Luigi Spaventa*

Background Notes on the International Monetary Fund

The IMF and the Third World: The Case of Jamaica, 1974–80 *by Norman Girvan, Richard Bernal and Wesley Hughes*

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## **Another Development: Perspectives for the 'Eighties**

**1980:1**

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The Terra Nova Statement on the International Monetary System and the Third World

Gale Warnings: Fragments of Charts and Guides for Navigators *by Reginald Herbold Green*

Towards a New International Development Strategy: The Scheveningen Report

Looking Out: A Photographic Essay *by Bo-Erik Gyberg*

Socio-political Constraints on Primary Health Care: A Case Study from Java *by Glen Williams and Satoto*

Statement and Recommendations on Infant and Young Child Feeding

Beyond Infant Feeding: The Case for Another Relationship between NGOs and the UN System *by*

*Thierry Lemaquesquier*

The Institute for Local Self-reliance: Questioning the American Style of Development *by Tessa Huxley*

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## **Three Case Studies in Another Development**

**1979:2**

Bhoomi Sena: A Struggle for People's Power *by G.V.S. de Silva, Nirranjan Mehta, Md. Anisur Rahman and Ponna Wignaraja*

Can Sweden Be Shrunk? *by Nordal Åkerman*

Towards a New Information Order: Rural Participation in the Peruvian Press *by Hélan Jaworski C.*

Nuclear Energy—Implications for Society: Declaration of the Groupe de Bellerive

Purari: Overpowering Papua New Guinea? Book Review *by Robin Burns*

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