

African Goals and Ideologies: “African Socialism” Revisited

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to highlight some salient features of the problematic in the search for socialism in Africa. This in essence involves a discussion of the goals and ideologies of a number of African countries that have attempted to go socialist and their attitudes to imperialism and class struggle; in reality it amounts to a re-examination of "African Socialism".

It is hard to define in concrete terms the meaning of "African Socialism", not only because of the gap between theory and practice, but also because of the different policies by different African Socialist Governments. While some African leaders have sympathies toward (genuine) socialism, others demonstrate in words and deeds that they are hostile to it. Needless to say that it does matter whether one was in England with the Fabians like the late Kenyan President Kenyatta or whether one's power sprung, in the words of Mao from the "barrel of the gun", with its inherent revolutionary flavour like the Mozambican FRELIMO militants. In the case of Malawi for instance, Dr. Banda's background particularly his education underlying the extremely Presbyterian Glasgow influence left him with values emphasizing the virtues of hard work and the importance of individual striving, sacrifice and personal attainment.

This partly accounts for his formulation of an essentially pragmatic capitalist development strategy. The choice of a development path may be less on proven economic grounds and more on the type of society that the leadership wish to mould. In the case of Malawi for example, five important variables are dominant :

- i) the legacy at independence;
- ii) the character and beliefs of the leadership;
- iii) the small size of the domestic market;
- iv) the country's resource endowment; and
- v) her geographical position.

Suffice it to pinpoint that mass guerrilla warfare does make for a high degree of political consciousness and involvement in political life on the part of the ordinary people, for whose support, serious instalments of social reform have to be accepted as part of the independence package, not to mention the weeding out of capitalists from the movement in the process. However, there was in most countries no bitter struggle, no legacy of animosity on both sides as, at least initially, in both Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau which could easily justify or prompt stringent measures to put the neo-colonies on the path to socialism.

"African Socialism" : Theory and Practice

Among the socialist-oriented states in Africa, much quantitative changes as a prelude to a "transition to socialism" has been made but the structure of the economies is still neo-colonial, and necessary "disengagement" from international finance capital has hardly begun. Few, if any, have reached a social democratic revolutionary stage, although, from some, even this is too radical!

This is not to say that there are no differences (in attitudes of mind, to say the least) to such key issues as :-

- i) the nature and causes of underdevelopment;
- ii) the implications for social relations of various economic systems; and
- iii) the way out of this state of backwardness, etc.,

So varied are the differences in concept and practice that one could say that in Africa there are as many brands of socialism as there are countries, parties or leaders.

Despite this diversity "African Socialists" generally hold certain common attitudes towards capitalism. They argue that society must be protected from the capitalist exploitation of man by man. They view capitalism and colonialism, or imperialism, rather, as Lenin¹ said they were - two sides of the same coin.

They see, as Nyerere has argued², a capitalist option as an invitation for foreign dominance of the economy since there is too little indigenous private capital accumulation and too few local entrepreneurs capable of mobilizing resources on the scale required for massive and urgent development. While this could be seen as a blessing in disguise for socialism, it also implies few experienced talent to fall on for the management of socialist enterprises. This problem was explicitly rampant in Guinea - Conakry with the sudden departure of the French in 1958.

Even in Tanzania where a lot of effort and resources have in recent years gone into manpower training and development the management of the nationalized concerns e.g. the now defunct State Trading Corporation left much to be desired - often surviving, not only due to lack of competition, but also exorbitant prices, frightening off socialist sympathizers. Indeed as Elliot Berg notes, "socialism with the larger state role that it assumes, is not less but much more complicated than a 'capitalist' or market system relying heavily on decentralized decision-making in the market".³

On the other hand, a socialist solution to African development problems is seen as being in harmony with the communal traditions of African society. There are differences though about what is to be harnessed and modernized - whether its the village, the kinship group, the cooperative societies or communal villages. It suffices to pinpoint that young leftists, more orthodox in approach observing the emergence of the kulak in the villages are quick to pinpoint that Russian populists at the turn of the 19th century said many of the same

things: by building on the tradition of village socialism, society can skip a stage of history - the destructive, individualistic capitalist stage.

Despite its rather loose definition, several general characteristics can be mentioned about "African socialists" :-

- a) Emphasize on planning;
- b) Sympathetic to nationalization of private industry, but differ vis-a-vis timing and the scope to be accorded to the private sector;
- c) Admittance of the need for foreign investment, including private, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm;
- d) Land ownership policies differ (ranging from encouragement to discouragement of individual tenure)
- e) Agriculture is, perhaps reluctantly, not ignored;
- f) State "participation" in the economy, ranging from passive to massive state intervention, is acknowledged. In the latter case it is seen as a driving force of development. In some cases this is taken as a continuity of colonial policy. As Elliot Berg has noted: "More often than not African peasants were told what to produce, who to sell to, where, when, at what price".⁴

Moreover, an indigenous capitalist class was either absent or very weak, and even then it did trade rather than industry and was "compradore" in character. It was generally composed of alien-oriented "ethnic" trading "castes": Indians in East Africa, Lebanese in West Africa, etc., and so were not easily reconcillable with the "black is beautiful" politics of the nationalist triumphal. Most Governments however, limited state intervention to large projects only.

"African Socialism": Why Hundred Flowers Blossom :

Despite the diversities in ideological orientation, one can nevertheless provide a simplified two-angled summation, the best of which has been made by the late Guinea-Conakry's President Sekou Toure⁵ and Tanzania's ruling party, in its 1971 Guidelines (MWONGOZO) on how to guard, consolidate and advance the Tanzanian and African Revolution. Sekou Toure had stated :

The OAU consisted of two Africas; the African of submission, of homage to, and complicity with imperialism and the African of dignity, of anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist combat⁶

In its interpretation of developments in Africa in this regard, TANU stated :

Today our African continent is a hot-bed of the liberation struggle. This struggle is between those who have for centuries been exploiting Africa's natural resources and using the people of the continent as their tools and as their slaves, and the people of Africa who have, after realizing their weakness and exploitation, decided to engage in the struggle to liberate themselves

TANU, aware of the problems involved, adds :

Its both a bitter and continuing struggle: at times it is a silent one, occassionally it explodes like gun-powder, at other times the successes and gains achieved by the people slip away.⁷

Why has this been so? Part of the answer lies in history: the colonial impact, but more so the nature of the nationalist struggle, the aim of which was to get independence, be it, as the TANU Guidelines referred to it, "flag independence", (which was indeed what was won for many an African country) or even to borrow from the assassinated Kenyan politician and Mau Mau detainee J.M. Kariuki, "independence minus independence".

Many of the nationalist parties, whether patron or mass parties, were contented with a national flag, a national anthem, a seat at the UNO and 21 gun salutes for its President. And in general, as the Senegalese writer, Alioune Diop⁸ noted, neither the growing parties, nor the opposition were class-based, most leaders were of the petty bourgeoisie origin.

Since revolutionary literature allowed in the "mother" country was banned in the colonies, not many leaders had read or taken seriously Frantz Fanon's⁹ warnings of the dangers of a "false decolonization" and "the pitfalls of nationalist consciousness" - the replacement of white faces by black faces leaving the pre-independence structures intact, thus turning the rising expectations of hope into rising frustrations and despair. But even those who like Nkrumah had been exposed to revolutionary literature could still under the circumstances argue: "Seek eye first the political Kingdom and all else would be added onto it."¹⁰

National independence took priority over socialism or class struggle. This implied that in most of Africa, alliance was made with chiefs, traditionalists, large businessmen, 'verandah boys', etc., provided they agreed to the often too simple denominator of black rule.

Unfortunately, even in recent years many black Americans for example, in their search for inspiration from Africa hailed the murderous and tyrannical regime of Idi Amin merely because of Amin's ostensibly anti-white and Africanist stance, exemplified in the expulsion of Asians, some of them Ugandan citizens, in 1972.

The assertion by progressive voices in Africa that Cuba's Castro and the CIA victim, the late Chilean Marxist leader Salvador Allende for example, were more brotherly to African people than some African leaders is not easily swallowed; at least it was not at the Sixth Pan-African Congress in Dar es Salaam in June 1974.¹¹ The more bourgeois-oriented elites, once they had gained political control, quickly lost their radicalism; Ivory Coast President Houphouet Boigny, initially a member of the French Communist Party is a case in point. Unfortunately, even today factional nationalist groups in, say, South

Africa, do not differ over the need and occasionally even the method of attaining political power; but most groups or parties have not explicitly stated how they would use that power "to translate", to quote the authors of the 1968 "October Revolution" in Somalia, "independence into bread and butter" for all. However, even if this pledge was made we must as in Siad Barre's Somalia distinguish empty "scientific socialism" rhetoric and actual practice. Not only has Somalia failed in this regard, but she is actually at war for and on behalf of imperialism.

In his treatise on "Problems of Building Socialism in an Ex-colonial Country" President Nyerere has stressed the problems posed by this conglomerate of "interest groups" of composite formations, extremely heterogeneous both socially and ideologically, united only in its opposition to foreign rule, but basically aspirant of the fruits of capitalism, which the colonizers enjoyed. He sees the nature of the anti-colonialist struggle as indeed intensifying the difficulties. This is because of :

- a) leaders who desired to occupy the privileged positions of the former exploiters;
- b) political organisations too exclusively geared to the straight forward demands of nationalism and therefore destined to "lose support" and atrophy;
- c) ideologies which easily degenerated into 'racialism' and mere black nationalism, providing no real defence against the underlying structures of capitalist exploitation;
- d) in the circumstances (especially with lack of ideological clarity) the masses were easily confused by the simplistic nostrums of nationalism to see such Africanisation as a significant accomplishment.

The emergence of such a situation is by no means accidental. Putting to question this make-up of the nationalist political parties, Fanon wrote :

The workers, primary school teachers, artisans and small shopkeepers who have begun to profit - at a discount, to be sure - from the colonial set-up have special interest at heart. What this sort of following demands is the betterment of their particular lot: increased salaries, for example. The dialogue between these political parties and colonialism is never broken off - a large number of natives are militant members of branches of political parties which stem from the mother country .¹²

The Colonialist 'Containment' Strategy

With the "winds of change" for independence blowing like the Monsoons, the different colonial Governments, save for the Salazar/Caetano Portuguese fascist regime opted for a "false decolonization". The French attempts in this regard are vivid vis-a-vis Algeria and Guinea-Conakry and indeed the rest of Francophone Africa - an attempt (which at independence failed in these two countries mentioned above but succeeded elsewhere) first to keep them in the French Community, failing, to hand as they did "the instruments of independence" to their stooges - men in some cases "more French than the French themselves", who then form, to quote the TANU Guidelines (MWONGOZO),

a Government of foremen or puppets. Such a Government will allow the imperialists to exploit national wealth in partnership with the local bourgeoisie.¹³

Although in Anglophone Africa the nationalists had not been so integrated in the Westminster system as the French-speaking "evolves" (some boast of having ruled France),¹⁴ they had nonetheless been greatly Westernized through the educational system which was upper class-oriented, through training at the UK elite military academy at Sandhurst or Oxford University. No wonder the late Ghanaian reactionary Premier Kofi Busia had the temerity to write: "Oxford is my second home, it has made me".¹⁵

"Indirect Rule" had also played its part. This other alternative, as Macaulay put it with respect to India is here relevant :

the creation of a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect .¹⁶

Thus as against earlier opposition to demands for freedom, Sir Andrew Cohen, a former Governor of Uganda and head of the African Division of the colonial office, advised that Britain needed a changing policy for Africa. She should recognize that "successful cooperation with nationalism" was the "greatest bulkwark against communism". "The transfer of power to colonial people needed not to be a defeat, but a strengthening of the Commonwealth and the free world".¹⁷ Recent revelations emerging from publication of the UK colonial office files on the Mau Mau war in Kenya underline this strategy.

Even a radical leadership and a mass Party such as Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party (CPP) was bound to neutralize its revolutionary flavour as it underwent the customary "dual rule" transitional stage of sharing power with the colonizer.¹⁸ Much popular support and enthusiasm was lost during this 'collaborationist phase'. To take but one example, Fitch and Oppenheimer have noted of the CPP attitude vis-a-vis the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) in the 1950's:

Nkrumah and the CPP did not choose to use their powers as members of the CMB to strike out in directions that would have led to a confrontation with British power. The CMB under CPP control continued to levy what were in effect huge export taxes, send cocoa profits to Great Britain and thus help Britain maintain them while renouncing, or at best postponing, attempts to start Ghana in the direction of economic independence and development¹⁹

Thus it is not surprising that at independence some even failed to make even the customary, albeit rhetorical distinction that "political

freedom is illusory unless, or until, it is accompanied by economic emancipation".²⁰ How could they?

The late first Gabonese President Léon Mba was more honest when he stated unashamedly: "Gabon is independent, but between Gabon and France nothing has changed, everything continues as before " ²¹ . Gabon has one doctor to tens of thousands of peasants and yet Léon Mba built a clinic in France. And he would not fall-Gabon's uranium merits intervention by French paratroopers, as they did in 1964. As René Dumont noted :

In Dahomey, for example, 60% of internal budgetary income goes on to salaries of Government personnel (not unusual under colonial regimes either). Tiny Gabon has one MP to under 7,000 people; France only one to 100,000. But these MPs get far more than their French counterparts, and over twice as much as the British MP - all this in poverty - stricken banana or groundnut republics . ²²

Thus an MP who works for three months of the year, receives in six weeks what the peasant receives in 36½ years, a life-time. Dumont has estimated that the cost of some African Presidential and Ministerial establishments was probably higher in relation to National income than the cost to France of the Court of Louis XIV in 1788 (just before the French Revolution of 1789).

The late Tom Mboya's ²³ wedding was noted in the International press for its lavishness in the high style of upper-class European elegance, (to the deep disillusionment of campaigners of "War on want"). Or we could note the lavish, if not outright profligate reception at "Africa's wedding of the decade" in Abidjan of the late Liberian President Tolbert's son and adopted daughter of the Ivory Coast President respectively. The excessive corruption of President Tolbert, his family and political associates was exposed after the coup and his murder in 1979. ²⁴ Houphouet Boigny recently boasted of being "worth billions". ²⁵

But developments in society are not only based on the benevolency of the leadership. Non-Marxists, as the majority of them were, African leaders could not afford to ignore developments or contradictions internal to the system, which made changes inevitable. To quote President Nyerere :

The choice is not between change or no change. The choice is between change or being changed by circumstances beyond our control

26

The Ethiopia revolution for one, offers the best example in this regard. In Ethiopia even after the soldiers were in the streets, Parliament refused to approve even the very moderate demands for some mild land redistribution. Force finally did it amidst landlords resistance and bloodshed.

African leaders were faced with a situation where there was no easily visible "external enemy" to whom to point an accusing finger. The second "scramble for Africa" or Neo-colonialism - (the colonialists coming by the back door), true though they were, were not easy scape-goats to pick for non-fulfilment of Party Manifestos. The masses were told they would not take on the positions of the Whites, but "Black Europeans" were everywhere for all to see. Even in a poor country like Tanzania, the rapid emergence of differentiation reflected in the "wabenzi" (a stratum of mercedez benz car owners) was evident.

Calls, actions and indeed struggles for what was described as the search for "a second independence" (a second Revolution) were made. Indeed actual armed struggles occurred. In Zaire for instance we had the left-wing "Simba rebellion" by the murdered Pierre Mulele in the early 1960s.

A stage was reached where no African leader dared declare himself a capitalist. Everyone baptized himself a socialist or at least paid lip-service to social transformation. Some were quite genuine attempts at a "move to the left". To some it was a rejection of the excesses of materialism under capitalism on the one hand and a rejection of what they considered as oppression of communist dictatorship on the

other. Many would accept Alexander Dubcek's "Socialism with a Human face". To some, this would at least be, to avoid what they consider as the long-term horrors of a class war. But even those who paid lip service to socialism invented the facade of "African Socialism" to camouflage their capitalist tendencies. The seemingly very convincing argument was that the Marxist-Leninist model (as applied in the Soviet Union) was either "foreign" to Africa, or for some of the more enlightened, had to be moulded to fit African conditions, and in particular incorporate the traditional African values especially the extended African family system which is seen as reflective of the communalistic values destroyed by the colonizer's capitalist system.

Unlike the Maoist approach, this "moulding" to fit local conditions was tantamount to a watered-down protest against exploitation when done by foreigners or still sadder, to a deliberate ignoring of the basic tenets of socialism. Furthermore even the most radical, from Nkrumah to Nyerere at least in their initial pronouncements on the "socialism" they were constructing, rejected the existence of classes in Africa.

Nyerere had in his 1962 paper "Ujamaa - The Basis of African Socialism" rejected the existence of classes in (traditional) Africa. He wrote :

... indeed I doubt if the equivalent for the word "class" exists in any indigenous African language, for language describes the ideo of those who spoke it, and the idea of 'class' or 'caste' was non-existent in African society²⁷

If the above quotation is attributed to a then "moderate" Nyerere, the radical Nyerere of the post - Arusha Declaration era, could still say of "Ujamaa" :

It is opposed to capitalism which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man, and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism which

seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of
inevitable conflict between man and man 28

"African Socialists" rejected further the Marxist dogma of class warfare and atheism. Some like Senghor, generalized this supposedly "classless" societies to presignify the achievement of continent-wide socialism, and to argue that "our problem is not how to put an end to the exploitation of man by his fellow man, but to prevent its ever happening" 29

However, it is significant that Nkrumah, in his post-coup revisit to the subject in his book Class Struggles in Africa 30 accepted the existence of classes in Africa, saw himself and his "socialist" bid in Ghana as a victim of a right-wing backlash comprising international finance capital and their local agents and saw class struggle and continental unity as the only logical alternative for genuine socialism in Africa.

"African Socialism" in Practice : Different Brands

As years went by, several brands of "African Socialism" purported to be peculiar to Africa evolved, with similarities and differences both between countries and time periods. We could briefly refer to several of the major brands. We shall start with "Arab Socialism".

According to Aly Sabry, Nasser's Egypt leading ideologue, the Egyptian Revolution laid down six principles to achieve "Arab Socialism". These were: eradication of imperialism and its agents, eradication of feudalism, eradication of monopoly and the control of capital over the Executive, setting up a strong national army, establishing social justice and setting up a sound democratic system. Despite progress towards some kind of a "transition to socialism" under Nasser, his death ushered in the de-Nasserization process, the detention and purge of lefts including Aly Sabry, the ditching of the Arab Socialist Union Party and the rapprochement and later capitulation of Sadat's Egypt to the Israeli - USA designs. This swept Egypt not only into the capitalist camp, but also set the hitherto progressive and non-aligned United Arab Republic into a willing ally and tool of imperialism.

Sekou Toure's Guinea said "No" to de Gaulle's French Community designs and was one of the leading anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist countries in the 1960s, and therefore the most haunted by neo-colonial forces in Africa. However, in latter years she made a U-turn and portrayed a very reactionary and counter-revolutionary foreign policy.

Internally the "communaucratique" African socialism of Sekou Toure's Parti Democratique de Guinee was intact only in form but hollow in content. Afterall foreign policy reflects the dynamics of the internal interplay of forces.

Much has been written³¹ about Senghor's "African Path to Socialism" which springs from his philosophy of Negritude.³² The latter embodies Euro-centric cultural overtones and a pathological hatred of Marxism. Despite Senghor's pretensions that classes never developed in Senegal's supposedly egalitarian society, other more objective analysts have different views. Markowitz for example has noted :

... the men who were at the top of traditional society seem, by and large, to have come out not too badly in their modern relations as well. Caste is still of the greatest significant in modern Senegal ³³

Recent studies in the Senegalese "Animation villages" portray the same class differentiation.³⁴

In Kenya Tom Mboya's "African Socialism" was a dead letter even before Mboya's own death in 1969. Kenya had a large settler population and the Mau Mau uprising was fought basically over the land question. Colonial Government policy was, as in the Zimbabwe case, bent on creating an African middle class which would accommodate more easily the essentially white propertied class or at least be a buffer between these classes and the common man.

Independence did not reverse this for Kenyatta's approach as reflected in his book "Suffering Without Bitterness" was to "let by-gones be gone".³⁵ As in the Zimbabwean case now, there was a lot of effort at "reconciliation" and reassuring the whites". The Government's

development philosophy came in 1965 in Sessional Paper No. 10 titled "African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya".³⁶ As Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first Vice-President documented in his autobiography, which is significantly titled, Not Yet Uhuru,³⁷ it sounded, according to one critic as "neither socialist or African". Informed opinion had it that it was drafted by an American Professor in Mboya's Economic Planning Ministry.

Following the footsteps of Nyerere, Toure, Senghor, Nkrumah etc., the Sessional Paper declared :-

The sharp class divisions that once existed in Europe have no place in African socialism and no parallel in African society. No class problem arose in the traditional African society and none exists today among Africans .³⁸

The Sessional paper claimed that through "traditional political democracy" and various controls on resource use, the class divisions that Marx deplored in Europe could be prevented.

In practice Kenyan development policies are by any standards capitalist. No nationalization measures were carried out, at least initially the only "public service" acquired was the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, and only in the 1970s was there some minor Government participation in industry including in one commercial bank. Even the Christian Council of Kenya in their study, Who Control Industry in Kenya³⁹ conservative as the church is generally held to be, were astonished by foreign (private) control of commerce and industry in Kenya and called for nationalization. Indeed the disintegration and collapse of the East African Community reflects in part the consolidation of the bourgeoisie in Kenya geared to filling the vacuum created by the collapse of the hitherto socialized EAst African Community Corporations.⁴⁰

Although Kenya has a lot of smallholder production there is extensive large scale farming at the expense of the peasants some of whom are landless. An ILO Report on Kenya pin-points that many of the

country's employment problems stem from the fact that there is no access to the land. Thus not only is Kenya not on any socialist road, "African" or otherwise, but there is no longer any claim to be so; indeed not daring to call a spade a spade i.e. capitalism; Kenyan leaders are avoiding all "isms".

Reference has already been made to Nkrumalism. The case of Nkrumah's Ghana is important for it was a bold attempt to build some sort of socialism which crumbled down. Nkrumah's version of socialism combined the communal values of society and a guided economy. His major socialist drive was in 1961/62 with the famous "Dawn Broadcast" against corruption and high living by Party and Government leaders, and two subsequent major policy documents - the CPP's "Programme for Work and Happiness" and the launching in 1963 of the Seven - year Development Plan, when five categories of ownership and control were set up.

The plan marked a belated recognition of the inadequacy of the Arthur Lewis export-oriented development strategy embodied in the First and Second Development Plans. These Plans rather than confronting international finance capital increasingly relied on it to finance and construct among others, the Volta Dam Project. Nkrumah's resolve that socialism had to go hand in hand with industrialization made him over-reliant on foreign aid despite his knowledge of its adverse effects.⁴¹ Over 50% of the finances for the Seven-Year Development Plan (1963-1969) were targetted to come from private capital. The latter was to provide the avenue for the capitalist countries squeeze of Ghana's economy, partly by withholding aid (including IMF credit facilities) at a time when cocoa prices were collapsing. The notion that foreign private capital would let itself be used to lay a foundation for socialism and that a state dependent on financing by private capital could retain the upper hand proved equally deceptive.

Nyerere's Tanzania is still soldiering on, despite serious economic constraints. In the case of Tanzania the pre-Arusha Declaration policies were a classic example of "African Socialism". Indeed the paper on which it was based was titled "Ujamaa: the Basis of African Socialism". With the 1967 Arusha Declaration - with its nationalization

of the "commanding heights" of the economy, the purification of the leadership through a Leadership code, emphasis on rural development including the collectivist "ujamaa villages", etc., and the 1971 Party Guidelines (MWONGOZO) - with its emphasis on worker participation/control, political education including the training of a peoples militia; there was an attempt to transcend the "African Socialism" brand in favour of a more radical approach. Despite these efforts, and the honesty and dedication of President Nyerere, Tanzania is far from a success story.⁴²

Summary and Concluding Remarks

We started with a two-angled view provided by Toure and TANU of the situation in Africa. With the exception of two or three countries, which have set on to create internally integrated and self-reliant economies and simultaneously attempting to create the foundations for the emergence of a "socialist man" in the sense of establishing the appropriate mechanism and institutions to guarantee these socialist relations of production, we could after the above analysis regrettably view the situation prevalent in the continent as follows :

- a. a petty bourgeoisie elite controls the African states, ensuring neo-colonial control by international finance capital, and their own privileged access to surpluses;
- b. the mass of the population are either demobilized and/or manipulated;
- c. political structures (whether military-cum-bureaucratic regimes or otherwise) are instruments to facilitate the above in the interests of the newly dominant classes; and
- d. the official ideologies serve primarily to rationalize and legitimize just such exploitative relations.

The analysis in the paper showed that generally two positions are held by African leaders vis-a-vis social stratification; that

- i) class formation and crystallization have not and may not occur;
- ii) or if emerging are of peripheral importance to social conflict.

Observation (i) arises partly from the uncritical over-eagerness to grasp traditional Africa, which might be overdone. As in any society, the heritage of traditional Africa is far from being uniformly positive: it contains for example illiberal traditions of the "feudal" past. Nor was submission to custom automatic. Indeed as Gohen⁴³ has stated there were many portrayed clear-cut lines of social stratification, sometimes enforced by ethnic and religious distinctions. Indeed Nyerere has, despite his tradition-based "Ujamaa" philosophy pinpointed the shortcomings of traditional Africa: people did not use proper tools and women were overworked. Nevertheless the search for the birth of a "new man" - what Che Guevara called "the 21st century man" - "the socialist man", must continue by restructuring not only the economic but also the social and cultural values of society. But Africa is not Mao's China. The values of many a leadership favoured the status quo; not only because of their Western colonial legacy/orientation but also because they stand to gain out of it.

Indeed the greatest danger with the socialist experiments in Africa is the possibility of the emergence of a "new class". The nationalisations which are the customary signal of a socialist trend, does place the political elite in a special relationship to the means of production - they do not own (but especially in the absence of effective Worker's Management) they control. This is a situation in which a gap could widen between the rulers and the people. The ensuing class struggle in this case will not be the classic Marxist one between socio-economic classes whose antagonism stem from the contradiction between private ownership and social production, but from the antagonism between a political elite controlling the society as a whole, including the major means of production, and the rest of the population. This is the "new class" situation. According to Cabral,⁴⁴ the elite ("the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie") in the new nations, has two alterna-

tives - to betray the Revolution or to "commit suicide" as a class. While individual members can "commit suicide", it is unlikely that a whole class can without being forced to do so. Here is where "the development of a revolutionary consciousness" is called for.

One pre-requisite for the long-term success of socialism is the constant improvement of the people's material well-being. This implies increased production, more equitable distribution of the national surplus and blocking of exploitation by international capitalism. Promises of a better tomorrow, when "to each according to his needs" becomes the distribution principle, while their present standards of living deteriorate, will not generate the kind of enthusiastic support needed to push forward more radical policies; hence the need for a proper balance between today's consumption and the sacrifices for a better tomorrow.

Africa has the highest ratio of frontiers to total areas of any continent. Unless common policies are laid down by geographically - related groups of Africa states, each of them is either through "demonstration effects" or otherwise at the mercy of policies followed by their neighbours. With capital-shortage and a limited market, the need for a larger market and joint industries in the framework of regional cooperation is paramount, but with ideological divergencies, this is almost impossible. The disintegration and collapse of the East African Community, arising particularly from conflicts between a Kenyan laissez faire policy oriented towards Western private investment and a Tanzanian policy fostering "Ujamaa" is a case in point. In cases of extreme ideological divergencies, the neighbouring country could be a base for plots against the socialist country. This raises the question (which initially faced revolutionary Russia) of whether "Socialism in one country" is possible in Africa.

Ideology can give direction, hope and inspire efforts for a better tomorrow. The "isms" must enter a developmental equation. "But ideology", notes Berg, "has its dangers too. It hardens thought. It restricts the search for alternatives and makes changes of direction difficult.

It might even be wrong in its picture of the World and in its policy prescriptions".⁴⁵ Unfortunately for Africa, this fear thrives.

African leaders including the progressive ones are either slow to appreciate Berg's warning or are ideologically immature; sometimes coming to terms with it when it is too late. Even for the intellectual and politician of Nkrumah's stature, clarity in his analysis matured after his fall when he could write :

There is only one true socialism and that is scientific socialism, the principles of which are binding and universal. The only way to achieve it is to devise policies aimed at general socialist goals, which take their form from the concrete, specific circumstances and conditions of a particular country at a definite historical period .

He added :

We must therefore be on our guard against measures which are declared to be 'socialist' but which do not in fact promote economic and social development .

Dismissing as muddled thinking the very suggestion of the existence of an "African Socialism" peculiar to continent, he argued :

The socialist countries of Africa may differ in the details of their policies. There are different paths to socialism, and adjustments have to be made to suit particular circumstances. But they should not be arbitrarily decided, or subject to vagaries of taste. They must be scientifically explained .⁴⁶

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin: Imperialism - The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Progress, Moscow, 1970.
2. J.K. Nyerere: Freedom and Socialism, Oxford University Press, 1968.

3. Elliot Berg. "Socialism and Economic Development in Tropical Africa", Quarterly Journal of Economics, November 1964.
4. Elliot Berg, Ibid.
5. This was made in the heydays of his radicalism. Sekou Toure's Guinea, was once torch-bearer of the African Revolution. In his latter years President Toure pursued very reactionary and counter-revolutionary foreign policies.
6. See, Ngila Mwase, "African Goal and Ideologies" in Africa, London, No. 66, February 1977.
7. TANU. MWONGOZO WA TANU (The Party Guidelines), Dar-es-Salaam, Government Printer, 1971.
8. Alioune Diop. Panafricanism Reconsidered (edited by American Society of African culture, University Press of America, 1962.
9. Frantz Fanon. The Wretched of the Earth. New York, 1968.
10. Kwame Nkrumah. I Speak of Freedom. Heinemann, London, 1961.
11. Report of the Sixth Pan-African Congress, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar-Es-Salaam, 1976.
12. Frantz Fanon. The Wretched of the Earth, Grove Press, New York, 1968, (first published in 1961.
13. TANU. Mwongozo wa TANU (The TANU Guidelines), Dar es Salaam, Government Printer, 1971.
14. Several Francophone African leaders notably Leopold Senghor (Senegal) and Felix Houphouet Boigny (Ivory Coast) were Ministers in France. Several other personalities in French-speaking West Africa were deputies i.e. Members of Parliament in France. Many retained French nationality.
14. K.A. Busia. Africa in Search of Democracy, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.
16. See V.P. Menon. The Transfer of Power in India, London, 1957.
17. See. Thomas Hodgkin. Nationalism in Colonial Africa. London, Frederick Muller, 1955.
18. The latest form of transitional administration in Africa was the Lord Soames Governorship in Zimbabwe prior to independence in April, 1980.
19. Bob Fitch, and Mary Oppenheimer. Ghana: End of an Illusion, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1966.

20. Kwame Nkrumah. Africa Must Unite, International Publishers, New Yor, 1972 (first published 1963).
21. Rene Dumont, op cit., Dahomey is now called Benin.
22. Rene Dumond. False Start in Africa, Andre Deutsch, London, 1966 (first published in French, 1962).
23. Tom Mboya was the father of Kenya's "African Socialism".
24. Colin Legum (ed.) Africa Contemporary Record, London, 1980.
25. Colin Legum (ed.) Africa Conteporary Record, London, 1983.
26. J.K. Nyerere. Freedom and Development, Dar es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1971.
27. J.K. Nyerere "Ujamaa - The Basis of African Socialism" in Freedom and Unity, Dar es Salaam, Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. 162 - 64.
28. J.K. Nyerere, Socialism and Rural Development, Dar es Salaam Government Printer, 1967.
29. Leopold Senghor. The African Path to Socialism, 1986.
30. Kwame Nkrumah. Class Struggles in Africa, International Publishers, New York, 1970.
31. See for example, Ngila Mwase, "African Socialism Revisited" Proceedings of the Southern African Universities Social Sciences Conference, Dar es Salaam, June, 1979. 42 pages.
32. Leopold Senghor. On African Socialism, Mercer Cook, Praeger, 1964. Senghor was President of Senegal since independence in 1960 to his retirement in 1979. He is along with politicians such as Willy Brandt, Mario Soares, Menachen Begin, Habib Bourguiba etc., a member of the "Socialist International".
33. I.L. Markowitz. Senghor and the Politics of Negritude. London, Heinamann, 1969. Senghor recognized the presence of castes, but rationalized this phenomena by claiming that they were of "Arab-Barber importation" rather than indigenous.
34. See for example Johathan Barker, "Political Factionalism in Senegal" Canadian Journal of African Affairs, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 287 - 303.
35. Jomo Kenyatta. Suffering Without Bitterness, East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 1968.
36. Kenya Government. African socialism and its application to Planning in Kenya, Sessional Paper No. 10, Nairobi, Government Printer, 1965.
37. Oginga Odinga. Not Yet Uhuru, Heinamann Education Book, 1967.

38. Kenya Government, op. cit.
39. Christian Council of Kenya. Who Controls Industry in Kenya, East African Publishing House, Nairobi, 1968.
40. See Ngila Mwase. "Regional Economic Cooperation and the Unequal Sharing of Benefits: Background to the Disintegration and Collapse of the East Africa Community", Africa Development CODESRIA, Dakar, No. 2/3, 1979.
41. See Kwame Nkrumah. Neo-Colonialism: The Last State of Imperialism, International Publishers, New York, 1966 (first published 1965).
42. For a critique of this "Ujamaa" socialism experiment see among others, Issa Shivji. The Silent Class Struggle, and Góran Hyden. Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry, London, 1980.
43. R. Cohen. "Class in Africa: Analytical problems and perspectives" Socialist Register, pp. 230 - 56.
44. Amílcar Cabral. Revolution in Guinea, R. Handyside, 1971.
45. Elliot Berg, op. cit.
46. Kwame Nkrumah. Class Struggles in Africa, International Publishers, New York, 1970.