

REVIEW OF THE DEBATE ON IMPERIALISM, STATE, CLASS
AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION, University of Dar es Salaam,
1976-77

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The 1976 debate in Dar es Salaam over imperialism, state, class and the national question deserves a review and comment. This is so because this debate had raised many theoretical issues of proletarian ideology which has direct bearing on the revolutionary struggle of the working class and oppressed peoples of Africa and the world. In the process of the debate many issues have been clarified. Once we understand that without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement, we shall be able to appreciate and to understand the importance of this debate.

Of the numerous issues that have been raised, the most important are: imperialism and the national question, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure, the neo-colonial state and classes in the neo-colonies. It also dealt with the strategy and tactics of revolution in the neo-colonies, that is to say, problems of the new democratic revolution. Other issues included exploitation of the peasantry in the neo-colonies and methods of ideological struggle within revolutionary organisations.

The debate opened in London in the month of May and June 1976 when M. Mamdani and H. Bhagat, among others, decided to open a discussion and write critical comments on the manuscripts of Issa Shivji and D.W. Nabudere*. The comments were actually written and arrived in Dar the first week of July. The comments were not openly circulated, but at least one of them the critique on Nabudere's manuscript, was appended to Nabudere's reply to it.⁺⁺ Almost about the same time appeared Nabudere's own critique on Shivji's Class Struggles in Tanzania.

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*I.G. Shivji, Class Struggles in Tanzania, 1975.

D.W. Nabudere, The Political Economy of Imperialism, 1977.

⁺⁺Mamdani and Bhagat's critique of Shivji has not been openly circulated and therefore it has been left out of this review. For some of the positions they put forward in their critique, see the summary of Tandon's contribution to the debate.

I. NABUDERE'S CRITIQUE OF SHIVJI**

In his Imperialism, State, Class and Race, Nabudere presented his critique of I.G. Shivji's Class Struggles in Tanzania. He explained that this was the latest of Shivji's attempts to analyse Tanzania. He pointed out that the book however "fails to deal with the problem scientifically and therefore raises more questions than it purports to answer", and that it continues Shivji's past theoretical errors which other earlier critics had tended to compound, especially John Saul who in asking the question "Who is the immediate Enemy?", fell in line with Debray, Gundar Frank and other neo-Trotskyist theoreticians. Nabudere argued that all these errors of Shivji must be viewed within the context of how Marxism came to East Africa as part of the Neo-Marxist and Neo-Trotskyist Schools, through academics imported from Western Europe.

Nabudere summed up the Marxist-Leninist thesis on imperialism as the stage of capitalism in which finance capital and the financial oligarchy "acquires control over basic industries and the credit system, and, on the basis of this control, exports finance capital for the exploitation of cheap labour and other resources in the backward countries". Capital, and finance capital in particular, develops and survives because the bourgeoisie control not only the means of production but also the instruments of suppression of the opposing classes. But under capitalism, such class suppression, it must be borne in mind, continues on the basis of inter-capitalist competition and the reproduction of the working class. Nabudere pointed out that Shivji lacks the theoretical basis for examining the historical movement in Tanzania, namely the theory of imperialism. Thus Shivji, taking the Latin American neo-Marxist analysis, speaks of underdevelopment being an integral part of the world Capitalist System" and that the historically determined production system is the system of "underdevelopment". Nabudere demonstrated Shivji's inconsistencies and contradictory positions - even within the Neo-Marxist framework, quoting from Shivji himself on the so-called "Colonial (Economic) Structures" and on the nature of the relationship between the "nationalised" industries in Tanzania and "foreign" capital. Making reference to Shivji's eclectic quotation and the tagging into the Appendix the very material that should be analysed and synthesised, Nabudere shows that "(these) positions of Shivji should prove to us that he had no concept of imperialism as analysed by Lenin".

On Class and Race Nabudere stressed that once the financial oligarchy had taken a dominant position in imperialist countries, it negated the basis for a national bourgeoisie in the oppressed countries. He quoted Shivji's Preface to show how the latter starts from an abstraction and creates a

** See Utafiti, Vol. II no. 1.

dualism in his analysis of class and race. Nabudere strongly attacked Shivji's view that the "development of classes and class struggles can only be talked about tendentially", showing that this is the modern equivalent to Kant's idealism and Plato's "great gimmick of transubstantiation". This, concluded Nabudere, leads Shivji into a static, ethnographic "analysis" of classes in his Chapter 5. Quoting pages 42 & 45-6 of Shivji's book Nabudere showed how Shivji looks at classes in racial terms and added: "We must conclude that the thesis is not Marxist-Leninist scientific method of analysing classes on his own admissions and accordingly must be dismissed as petty-bourgeois". He continued to further elucidate this in his critique of Shivji's Part Three where Shivji treats "the Kulaks" "Yeoman farmers", the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, "cultural exclusivism" as aspects of class struggles in Tanzania.

Nabudere pointed out that because of major theoretical errors, Shivji's occasionally correct observations on Ujamaa Vijijini and workers' strike actions go astray within the general treatment. For he "has no concept of class and state", a fact which leads him to abandon Marxism-Leninism. He concludes that Shivji's book is "very bad", puts Marxism-Leninism in extremely bad light and, indeed, cannot be accepted as a Marxist-Leninist thesis on class struggles in Tanzania.

II. M. MAMDANI AND H. BHAGAT ON NABUDERE'S MANUSCRIPT ON IMPERIALISM

In their critique of Nabudere, Mamdani and Bhagat raised the question of imperialism, holding that any political analysis of modern imperialism must reveal the various contradictions of imperialism "in both their particular importance and interrelations". They went on to categorise these contradictions as.

- a) Contradictions among the superpowers.
- b) Contradictions within the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries.
- c) Contradictions among the superpowers and the second world.
- d) Contradictions among the imperialists.

They concluded that the Principal contradiction was that between imperialism and the oppressed nations, quoting the authority of "the proposal on the General line of the international Communist Movement". Their criticisms of Nabudere's manuscript were:

1. a) That it abstracted from all contradictions except that between labour and capital and this was possible because the manuscript absolutized the concepts of centralisation of capital arriving at a concept of world finance capital, thereby emphasising its unity in one sided manner and thus coming "perilously" close to taking the Kautskyite stand of ultra-imperialism.

- b) That the manuscript did not analyse social imperialism.
- c) That the manuscript suggested that the financial oligarchy was the "entire" bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries.
- d) That the manuscript did not analyse the contradictions between the first and second world, and thus could not explain Gaullism in France and the significance of the Lome convention.
- e) That its analysis of nationalisations in the third world was static.
- f) That it denied that the peasants in the third world are exploited though unequal exchange.
- g) That this allegedly one-sided emphasis on the contradiction between "labour and capital" was a Trotskyite deviation.

Classes

- 2. a) The manuscript had nothing to say on the principles of the peoples democratic revolution in the "semi-colonies".
- b) That the manuscript gave an incorrect analysis of classes in the neo-colonies holding that a section of the bourgeoisie which does not partake in production cannot be called petty-bourgeoisie and that the petty-bourgeoisie partakes in the labour process and is "part of the working masses".

The State

- 3. a) That the manuscript has little to say on the "semi-colonial state".
- b) That the manuscript takes the position that politics obediently follow economics and finally that;
- c) The financial oligarchy is not the ruling class in a semi-colony, because, "The Principal flaw in conceptualising the international bourgeoisie as the ruling class in a semi-colony is that it abstracts from intra-imperialist rivalry.

The first person to comment on the Bhagat-Mamdani "critiques" was Yash Tandon.

III. YASH TANDON'S COMMENT ON MAMDANI AND BHAGAT

In his comments, Yash Tandon dealt with questions of classes, the state in a neo- or semi-colony, the ruling class and unequal exchange. He pointed out that Mamdani and Bhagat's critique of Shivji was opportunist. They had criticised Shivji in that Shivji had failed to establish the emergence of bureaucratic capital and thus of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie because he could not establish that the social group that emerged in "control" of the state after the Arusha declaration "exercises control over the means of production" and not simply managerial or legal control. The evidence in the Appendix to Shivji's book showed that it is the multinationals that "exercised control" over the means of production after the Arusha Declaration.

Yet Mamdani and Bhagat after thus criticising Shivji went on to conclude: "In this scientific sense, then, we can identify the emergence of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie in Tanzania after the nationalisations accompanying the Arusha Declarations". But they had not shown that "bureaucratic capital" had emerged after Arusha. Neither had they shown that the bureacracts owned the means of production! Like Shivji they had no evidence of the emergence of bureacratic capital and thus of a "bureaucratic bourgeoisie". Thus Mamdani and Bhagat who had set out to criticise Shivji ended up being Shivjist themselves!

Tandon also criticised Mamdani and Bhagat for not providing evidence for the existence of a national bourgeoisie which the latter claimed existed in Tanzania. He vindicated the Nabudere's case of putting national bourgeoisie in inverted commas because any such bourgeoisie that exists in the neo-colony in the epoch of imperialism will never accomplish the national democratic bourgeois revolution due to the dominance of monopoly capitalism that has divided the whole world. Thus this "bourgeoisie" cannot be genuinely called national hence the inverted commas.

Tandon criticised Mamdani and Bhagat further for one-sidedly emphasizing that the petty-bourgeoisie are part of the working masses and belong to the camp of the people in the democratic revolution. He pointed out that the petty-bourgeoisie join the camp of the people when they know that their fate is to be determined by the proletariat; that they join the revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, only with correct proletarian practice. Otherwise the petty-bourgeoisie can and do take a reactionary and anti-revolutionary stand. Is it not the petty-bourgeoisie that fought the proletariat, during the Paris Commune? Is it not the petty-bourgeoisie that removed the workers' barricades from the streets of Paris thus paving way for the bourgeoisie to return from their "exile" in Marseilles? Tandon pointed out that Mamdani and Bhagat should realise the nature of the petty bourgeoisie from the contrasting cases of Chile and Vietnam where under different political practices, the petty-bourgeoisie took diametrically opposite positions in relation to revolution.

On the question of ruling classes in the neo- or semi-colony, Tandon criticised the "critiques" for creating a rupture between the political and the economic which is un-Marxist. On pg. 11 of their critique of Nabudere, Mamdani and Bhagat held that "in the case of a semi-colony there is a radical rupture between economic exploitation and political oppression. The state, the apparatus of oppression, is now managed by a class situated within the semi-colony, on the other hand imperialist exploitation continues". Here Tandon argued that Mamdani and Bhagat adopted a purely managerial concept of class for which they had earlier criticised Issa Shivji.

Mamdani and Bhagat held against Shivji that: "The analysis of imperialism must be integral to that of classes in the neo-colony". Yet in their "criticism" of Nabudere, on the other hand, while purporting to understand the meaning of

imperialism when it came to integrating the analysis of classes with that of imperialism, they again separated the two. While Mamdani and Bhagat accused Shivji of making "class analysis (which) is often abstracted from imperialism", they go on to do exactly the same thing in their own critique of Nabudere. If this is not opportunism and eclecticism, what is it? "You can't have it both ways", Tandon told them.

He further pointed out that general theories should not be formulated for classes in neo-colonial states, but specific analyses that correspond to the reality of each neo-colonial state should be made. Further that it is false to hold that a ruling class must be an "internal" class. That it is possible for a ruling class to be "external", or at least a section of it. The dictatorship of the financial oligarchy over the neo-colonies proves this fact. The financial oligarchy rules in the neo-colony because it monopolises capital, turning the neo-colonies into the markets for export of finance capital and manufactured goods as well as turning them into sources of raw materials. The financial oligarchy is the exploiter of the proletariat and peasantry in the neo-colony. It makes it impossible for the "national bourgeoisie" to accumulate capital and to complete the bourgeois revolution, since finance capital has divided the market, the whole neo-colonial world, which it reserves for its own capital and commodities.

Lenin long ago pointed out:

"In a commodity - producing society, no independent development, or development of any sort whatsoever, is possible without capital. In Europe ~~the~~ dependent nations have both their own capital and easy access to it on a wide range of terms. The colonies (and to-day we can say the neo-colonies, if we take into account, as Lenin further pointed out, that self-determination of colonial countries belongs to the political sphere-Reviewer) have no capital of their own, or none to speak of, and under finance capital no colony (or neo-colony today) can obtain any except on terms of political submission". Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 339.

If the financial oligarchy economically exploits a neo-colony and politically subdues it, then how can we say it is not ruling in the neo-colony? Can it then be argued that the ruling class in the neo-colony must be found "within" the neo-colony, creating the impermissible rupture of the dialectical link between the economic and the political?

Finally, Tandon queried Mamdani's and Bhagat's proposition that the peasant is exploited at the level of exchange while the worker is exploited at the level of production. He challenged them to show why the law of equivalents will not apply to commodities produced by a peasant as well as a worker. He pointed out that the law of equivalents (exchange of commodities at their values or exchange of commodities of equal values at their values) does not always operate in practice i.e. that prices deviate from their values and continued:

"It is this deviation that brings about unequal exchange i.e. an exchange of unequal values at the level of the market where prices, not values, rule. And this can happen as easily with the products of workers as with the products of the petty-commodity producers, and it can happen in exchanges between the products of capitalist countries themselves as in the exchanges between the products of a capitalist country and those of a neo-colony".

He concluded that EXPLOITATION, the appropriation of surplus value, takes place at the level of PRODUCTION. Exploitation cannot be explained by unequal exchange.

IV. NABUDERE'S REPLY TO MAMDANI AND BHAGAT'S "COMMENTS" ON HIS MANUSCRIPT.

Around the Second half of July 1976, Nabudere replied to Bhagat and Mamdani's "criticism". He pointed out that Mamdani and Bhagat's criticism of Shivji had pointed out that Shivji had failed to comprehend his task, and yet they concluded:

"Nevertheless we consider the book a step forward representing a stage in the development of Marxist-Leninist thought in own countries.....".

Nabudere pointed out that Mamdani and Bhagat were able to reach such a conclusion because although they disagreed in form, they were in agreement in substance with Shivji. In addition, he argued that Mamdani and Bhagat's insistence that his (Nabudere's) Critique of Issa Shivji's Class Struggles be restricted to a small circle of arbitrarily selected "comrades" was a clear betrayal of his effort to conceal errors of theory and IDEOLOGY which had already been disseminated in BOOK FORM.

Thus Mamdani and Bhagat's half-hearted critique of Shivji, being opportunist, was unacceptable. Nabudere concluded that "for Mahmood to repudiate Issa, therefore, he must first repudiate himself".

Turning to their comments on his book, or rather Manuscript, Nabudere pointed out that they were "left" only in form but right in essence; that the use of Chinese comrades' references exhibited a certain amount of petty-bourgeois dogmatism and stereo-typed analysis which amounted to opportunism. Nabudere then went to expose the substance of the criticisms.

1. Imperialism And Contradictions

In this section Nabudere pointed out that the claim attributed to him of setting out to "analyse imperialism in its totality" was false because he had made no such claim. Moreover, that anybody who had read as a whole the Manuscript would not have failed to see its scope and purpose, namely - to defend Lenin's thesis: IMPERIALISM THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM, and to try in a theoretical manner to connect it with Marx's Capital. The accomplishment of this task was acknowledged by Bhagat and Mamdani on pg. 14 of their critique in these words:

"The Manuscript, particularly the relation it underlines between Marx's analysis of Capital and Lenin's theory of imperialism, we consider to be a scientific contribution to the development of Marxist-Leninist ideology of our time.

For this comment, Nabudere concluded thus:

"Thank you. We never undertook to do more nor have we claimed to have done any more than that".

It followed, Nabudere argued, that the criticisms of Mamdani and Bhagat were drawn from outside the Manuscript and that they tried to join issues on a thesis he had not advanced. On the point advanced by Bhagat and Mamdani that he (Nabudere) absolutizes the centralisation of capital and is oblivious of the intensifying contradiction within the camp of American Imperialism since the Second World War, Nabudere challenged them to show where he had denied this contradiction in the Manuscript. He asserted that any casual reading of Part IV of the Manuscript would reveal that the criticism had no foundation.

A. Kautsky and Imperialism

On criticism that Nabudere's "abstracts" centralisation of capital into a "World finance Capital", he said he held that there was no such abstraction, and that world finance capital is the TOTAL capital of the financial oligarchies in their unity aimed at exploiting the total working class of the world under hegemony. That this is the REALITY that Lenin analyses. Further that this does not rule out contradictions among the financial oligarchies as is shown in Part III of the Manuscript.

On the issue where Mamdani and Bhagat point out that Nabudere comes "perilously" close to Kautsky and where they quote Lenin, Nabudere pointed out that: "They quoted Lenin incorrectly, and from a source where he does not even discuss the issue of Kautsky:" that in Imperialism.... where Lenin discusses Kautsky, he was refuting obscurantists like Mamdani and Bhagat who separated the political from the economic and that he, Nabudere, had nowhere in the Manuscript failed to take into account the "political dimension", or said that "politics obediently follow economics". Nabudere also denied that he obscures the contradictions within the bourgeoisie. He pointed out that these "critics" had not bothered to look at Part III of the Manuscript, where the rise of the financial oligarchy is treated historically and there was no need here for Mamdani and Bhagat to quote Mao Tse-tung's on Contradiction. In his entire analysis, he said, he put emphasis on the financial oligarchy since this is the bourgeoisie involved directly in Imperialism.

B. Contradiction between the Superpowers and the Second World and the relationship with the Third World.

To the accusation that he had failed to analyse contradictions between the superpowers and the "Second World" as intermediate zones which are

also "oppressed" Nabudere replied that this "oppression" was one-sidedly absolutized by his critics to the point where they saw no unity between these and the superpowers as exploiters of the third world. He pointed out that he had shown that contradiction exists between monopolies WHETHER INTER-MEDIATE OR OTHERWISE and this contradiction is over who should have the upper hand in exploiting labour both in the second and third world.

"This contradiction, generally non-antagonistic as it is within the same class - the bourgeoisie - for a greater share of the oppressed third world, at times breaks out in open war. You state that if we do not "grasp" this contradiction we cannot understand the formation of Euratom, Gaullism, etc. But we have shown that by grasping the "fundamental contradiction" among imperialist countries, we have also grasped the contradiction between the superpowers, among imperialist countries and among monopoly capitalist groups. All these stem from this fundamental contradiction".

On the point that Nabudere one-sidedly concludes that the Lome Convention is a victory for the monopolies of the U.S.A. and Japan the latter replied that the critics misunderstood the context because they didn't know the history of these conventions. If they had known, they would have found that the ACP countries fought tooth and nail to remove preferential treatment formerly given by them to E.E.C. countries, insisting that their markets should be open to other countries. Since trade between third world countries and with the socialist countries is almost non-existent, this meant the entry of U.S.A. and Japan in a big way - i.e. open door neo-colonialism, at least in the short run. It is in this sense that the multilateralisation of neo-colonialism in the Lome Convention was a victory for US and Japanese monopolies. Nabudere rapped the critics for not showing how the Convention was a "limited victory for the Third World" and for quoting Peking Review out of context on the issue which he concluded amounted to an opportunistic use of the source. The Peking Review position was that since the oppressed "national" or petty-bourgeoisie in the neo-colonies have a contradiction with imperialism, the proletariat has the greatest interest in deepening this contradictions in order to be able to generalise and popularise its case against imperialism on a broader front.

The question of nationalisation must also be viewed as part of this broader struggle. Mamdani and Bhagat had used the authority of Mao Tse-tung to argue:

"Nevertheless, these are anti-imperialist struggles and as such objectively form part of the world socialist revolution, as Mao Tse-tung pointed out in New Democracy".

This, Nabudere pointed out, was clearly a one-sided treatment of the question, because it implied that the petty-bourgeoisie was capable of waging this struggle against imperialism. This view of nationalisations and the struggle for the "New Economic Order" came "perilously" to the revisionist "non-

capitalist" road. Nabudere pointed out further that comrade Mao Tse-tung's authority was misused here because he was describing the character of the two democratic revolutions - old and new - in New Democracy. He was nowhere discussing nationalisations and the New Economic Order in New Democracy.

On the accusation that he attempted only an economic analysis of imperialism, Nabudere pointed out that the critics contradicted themselves when in a similar comment on Shivji's book they stated the other one-sided view thus:

"That property under concrete historical circumstances assume another legal form, in this case a public form, should not blind Marxist-Leninists to the fact that it still remains private (class) property".

And concluding Nabudere pointed out that the critics had not successfully shown that the Manuscript bears the faults they had purported to show, further that the Manuscript contained a political appreciation of these forms of struggle inspite of the fact that change in legal form does not change property relations. The Manuscript acknowledged these measures to be "important developments" (p. 448). The accusation that it makes only an "economic analysis" was thus rendered false and baseless. Nabudere further criticised the "critics" for undimensionally holding that of all the fundamental contradictions, the principal contradiction was that between imperialism and the oppressed nations and quoting the General Line (i.e. The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement), while the same General Line points out that:

"These contradictions (which it describes) and the struggles which they give rise to are interrelated and influence each other. Nobody can OBLITERATE any of these fundamental contradictions or subjectively substitute one for all the rest".

Finally, he pointed out that the criticism that the strategy against imperialism as expounded on pg. 506 of the Manuscript took a Troskyist line in one-sidedly emphasizing the contradiction between capital and labour and substituting it for the rest, was groundless. Further that this analysis on pg. 506 is in line with the General Line (pg. 13) on "The national democratic revolutionary movement...."

2. The New Democratic Revolution and the Neo-Colony.

Here Nabudere pointed out that most of the criticisms of Mamdani and Bhagat on the new democratic revolution, classes in the new colony and the politics of struggle were centred around on pivotal point - "national capital" and its contradiction with finance capital. However, the critics did not indicate the character of this contradiction under imperialist domination of the neo-colonies. Is it antagonistic or not? Nabudere held that the petty-bourgeoisie belong to the bourgeois class and thus their contradiction is basically non-

antagonistic. Finance capital has an antagonistic contradiction with a neo-colony because it exploits the working class and peasantry there.

A. Unequal Exchange

Nabudere pointed out here that the wrong understanding of the contradiction between imperialism and the people led Mamdani and Bhagat to the populist position of unequal exchange. His position, he said, was that of Marx, which was that with the rise of capital, a movement is established where all production is increasingly turned into commodity, production (i.e. for exchange in the market) and subjecting all labour-power, whether that of the worker or peasant to the exploitation of capital. In this context Marx pointed out:

"....Wherever it takes root capitalist production destroys all forms of commodity production which are based either on self-employment of the producers or merely on the sale of excess product as commodities. Capitalist production first makes the production of commodities general and then, by degrees transforms all Commodity production into capitalist commodity production". (Capital, Vol. II, pg. 36)

Thus the accusation that nothing is said of the exploitation of the peasantry in the Manuscript was baseless and populist. Exploitation is a scientific concept used in a capital-labour relation. That is why Marx talks of "the plunder, exploitation and entombment of aboriginal peoples" by merchant capital and of the 'EXPLOITATION' of labour by INDUSTRIAL capital. In The Peasant Question, Engels points out that:

"This small peasant, just like the small handicraftsman, is therefore a toiler who differs from the modern proletariat in that he still possesses his instruments of labour; hence a survival of a past mode of production....
(Whereas in the past his unit of production was self-sufficient), Capitalist production put an end to this by its money economy and large-scale industry". (SW, Vol. 3, p. 459/60).

Thus when the Manuscript talks of exploitation of labour it includes that of the peasantry. Thus the cheap talk that the Manuscript ignores exploitation of the peasantry because it does not take the "unequal exchange" position, is totally baseless.

B. Classes and the "Semi-Colony"

Here Nabudere pointed out that the question of classes is a concrete question. That although classes may be mentioned in their general relations in a major movement like imperialism, such treatment can only be meaningfully handled in a concrete way. Thus the question of existence of "national bourgeoisie", "comprador bourgeoisie" or whatever other bourgeoisie in a neo-colony is NOT a general question but a concrete question for a concrete situation, a question of concrete class analysis of a particular neo-colony and not a generalisation of class analysis in all neo-colonies. This is what Comrade Mao Tse-tung did for the Chinese society. Nabudere also criticised

his critics for confusing neo-colonies with semi-colonies and reducing these concepts to mere word-juggling.

A semi-colony, as the word suggests, is a country which has not been wholly or totally occupied by imperialism, its relationship with imperialism is based not on total occupation and colonisation but on unequal capitulationist-treaties. Turkey and China were such countries which were brought under colonial rule and were totally occupied by imperialism but have achieved self-determination, which, as Lenin emphasized, belongs to the political sphere. The new form of domination after self-determination is what is referred to as neo-colonialism. There was no need for "Marxist-Leninists" to confuse these concepts.

It was again pointed out that not all petty-bourgeoisie take part in production, i.e. in the labour process and thus the critics take one-sided view of this class which leads them to the conclusion that they are part of the "revolutionary masses". The Communist Manifesto was quoted to show that this class which is called "the lower middle class" in the Manifesto includes: Small manufacturers, shopkeepers, artisans and peasants. The Manifesto, although recognising their struggle against the bourgeoisie, does not see them one-sidedly as "part of the revolutionary masses". The Manifesto says of this class:

"They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative.
Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back
the wheel of history".

The petty-bourgeoisie, Nabudere pointed out, is a vacillating class. In periods of prosperity, they gang up with the bourgeoisie and fight the proletariat. In periods of crisis, they increasingly join proletarian ranks and support their struggles. Even in the times of crisis they join the struggles under proletarian leadership. Moreover, Nabudere added, comrade Chou-Enlai in his interview with Hinton pointed out:

"According to a Marxist point of view, the petty-bourgeoisie belong to the bourgeois class and not to the working class or proletariat".

In the last paragraph Nabudere analysed forms of the state dependence and criticised Mamdani and Bhagat for taking a dogmatic position when they talk as if all forms of state dependence are the same. He further exposed their confusion where they held that the international bourgeoisie cannot rule because there is no international state. This same question was raised by Hirji and we shall deal with it later.

In conclusion, Nabudere pointed out these criticisms were a jumble of confusion. "We therefore reject your criticism as wholly without foundation and adding nothing to its substance."

Finally he pointed out that he could not accept that the debate be closed and some comrades be excluded. He pointed out that proletarian interests demand open debate so that issues and errors could be brought to light and not be kept in the dark.

There were then murmurings behind the scene that an open debate among the left was not healthy because it would "split the left." This criticism was groundless, since Shivji's book had already come out in print, and Mamdani's and Nabudere's Manuscripts were freely circulating in the campus.

The demand that an open debate be scotched because it tends to "split the left" is usually the demand of those who have something to hide about the weakness of their positions. Lenin, when confronted with such petty bourgeois demands, was merciless. In a letter written to Appolinaria Yakubova in 1900, he wrote, inter alia:

"I am not in the least ashamed to fight - seeing that things have gone so far that the disagreements has concerned fundamental issues, that an atmosphere has been created of mutual non-comprehension, mutual distrust and complete discordance of views. To get rid of this oppressive atmosphere, even a furious thunderstorm, and not merely a literary polemic, can (and should) be welcomed".

Lenin continued:

"And there is no reason to be so much afraid of a struggle: a struggle may cause annoyance to some individuals, but it will clear the air, define attitudes in a precise and straightforward manner, define which differences are important and which unimportant, define where people stand - those who are taking a completely different path and those Party comrades who differ only on minor points".

And further:

Without a struggle there cannot be a sorting out, and without a sorting out there cannot be any successful advance, nor can there be any lasting unity. And those who are beginning the struggle at the present time are by no means destroying unity. There is no longer any unity; it has already been destroyed all along the line... and an open frank struggle is one of the essential conditions for restoring unity... Yes, restoring! The kind of "unity"... that makes us resent the publication of statements revealing what views are being propagated under the guise of... (Marxism) - such "unity" is sheer cant, it can only aggravate the disease and make it assume a chronic, malignant form. That on open, frank and honest struggle will cure this disease and create a really united, vigorous and strong Marxist* movement - I do not for a moment doubt". (*In the actual text "Marxist" appears as "social Democratic")

And Lenin concluded:

"Of course struggle in the press will cause more ill-feeling and give us good many hard knocks, but we are not so thin skinned as to fear knocks! (Emphasis added). To wish for struggle without knocks, differences without struggle, would

be the height of naivete, and if the struggle is waged openly it will be a hundred times better... and will lead, I repeat, hundred times faster to lasting unity".

Mao Tse-tung on the Need to Combat Liberalism

Mao Tse-tung's Combat Liberalism is a further indictment of those who prefer to hide behind conspiratorial murmurings behind doors rather than an open debate, and who preach an unprincipled unity with "friends" rather than establishing unity on the basis of the formula unity-struggle-unity. We quote some relevant passages, but the whole essay of Mao's is worth reading.

We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organisations in the interest of our fight... But liberalism rejects ideological struggle, and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organisations....

To let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person had clearly gone wrong, and refrain from principled argument, because he is an old acquaintance... Or to touch on the matter lightly instead of going into it thoroughly, so as to keep on good terms. The result is that both the organisation and the individual are harmed....

This is one type of liberalism. To indulge in irresponsible criticism in private instead of actively putting forward one's suggestions to the organisation. To say nothing to people to their faces but to gossip behind their backs.... To show no regard at all for the principles of collective life but to follow one's own inclination. This is a second type. (SW, Vol. II, p. 31)

As such how could an open debate on the general issues raised be prevented? These behind the scene grumblings and gossips continued until Karim Hirji's "Criticism" came in around end August, 1976.

V. HIRJI'S REJOINDER AGAINST NABUDERE

Karim Hirji raised nothing new in his criticism and therefore we can treat it briefly here. He raised issues of class, state, ruling class and Kautskyism of which Nabudere was again accused. At the same time he was accused of economism. According to Karim, as to Mamdani and Bhagat, the financial oligarchy cannot rule because there is no international state, and since according to them a separate state implies a separate ruling class, Hirji compared Nabudere to Kievsky whom Lenin had criticised for economism. The question of transitional forms of state dependence was raised again as well as the question of contradictions within imperialism. Karim Hirji accused Nabudere for allegedly seeing the financial oligarchy as the only bourgeoisie, an accusation also levelled by Mamdani and Bhagat. Hirji asserted that under certain conditions politics determine the base, and suggested that this is the case in the neo-colonies.

The first people to reply to Hirji's comments were Sam Magara and A. Kayonga.

VI. S. MAGARA AND A. KAYONGA'S DEFENCE OF NABUDERE AGAINST HIRJI'S ATTACKS

They pointed out that although Hirji said "progressive circles" were surprised to learn that Shivji's book was Neo-Trotskyite, idealist, etc. he did not say a word in defence of Shivji's thesis. They also deplored that Karim had used slanderous language. While use of such concepts as "petty-bourgeois", "neo-Marxist", "neo-Trotskyist", or "eclectic" was permissible, as scientific, there was no need to use petty slandering as a substitute for argument.

Magara and Kayonga defended Nabudere's thesis showing the falseness of Hirji's accusation when he said that Nabudere saw the financial oligarchy as the sole bourgeoisie. One had only to read Nabudere's Manuscript to discover that this was not so. They pointed out further that it is not a "fundamental break" with Marxism to state that the petty-bourgeoisie is a portion of the bourgeois class. Moreover Nabudere had shown on the authority of Marx and Chou-Enlai that the petty-bourgeoisie belong to the bourgeois class.

If Hirji had depended on Mao's authority, namely that under certain conditions politics determine the base, to argue that the financial oligarchy, although the economically dominant was not a ruling class in the neo-colony, then it behoved on to Hirji to show whether the "certain conditions" of which Chairman Mao was talking included the neo-colonial state. He was challenged to show that a neo-colony is an exception to the general rule that the economic base determines the superstructure, the politics, and that the ruling class is as a rule the economically dominant class. Hirji was challenged to show how the politics of neo-colonial states determine the economic base. Magara and Kayonga also showed that Hirji's accusation of Nabudere as being Kauskyite was baseless. Nabudere's view had nothing in common with those of Kautsky. Kautsky defined imperialism not as a phase of capitalism but as a policy "preferred" by finance capital. Nabudere set out in his Manuscript to defend Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism clearly showing that imperialism is a phase of capitalism. Nabudere also showed that centralisation and concentration of capital led to monopoly, thus he did not regard imperialism as a policy "preferred" by finance capital. Nabudere had also refuted in his Manuscript Kautsky's argument that imperialism is a tendency of "industrial" countries to annex agrarian countries. Nabudere points out that imperialism is the rule of Finance capital which strives to dominate the whole world. Thus Hirji's accusations were shown to be baseless.

VII. NABUDERE'S 81-page REPLY TO K. HIRJI

On 10th September, Nabudere released his 81-page reply to Karim Hirji. We shall only summarise the main points. In his critique or rather reply,

Nabudere showed the idealist positions of Hirji for holding that a separate state implies a separate ruling class. He pointed out that this method of transubstantiating reality into ideas and presenting ideas as reality springs from the idealism of Plato which was perfected by Kant. And it manifests itself in the neo-Kantianism of Dilthey on which Durkheim and Weber based their bourgeois theories while claiming to be materialist.

Economism and The National Question

Under this heading, Nabudere reviewed Lenin's struggle against Kautsky, Kievsky and Rosa Luxembourg. We have already dealt with Kautsky. We shall here restrict ourselves to the review of Kievsky and Luxembourg.

Nabudere pointed out what Lenin meant when he accused people of the Kievsky type of economism and struggled against them in his famous What is to be done? Critical remarks on the National Question: and in Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism. He showed further that economism was an opportunist trend in the Russian Social Democratic Party whereby the Russian "Economists" argued that because of the level of capitalist development in Russia, political struggles of the proletariat were "impossible" and that therefore the working class should restrict itself to economic struggles for better working conditions, higher wages, etc.

Other deviationists, namely and foremost Rosa Luxembourg, sought to implement a similar line on the national question holding that political self-determination of oppressed nations under imperialism is unachievable, and that political struggles for political independence are "illusory" and impracticable. Since history has proved this theory bankrupt, we shall not go further into it.

The point here is that the "economism" of which Hirji accused Nabudere is not the economism that Lenin meant. On the contrary, petty-bourgeois theorists, who see Marxist analysis as "economism" or at other times as "economic determinism" had long levelled this accusation against Marx. Among the first of such petty-bourgeois theorists to accuse Marx of Economism was Proudhon who was followed by Durkheim and Weber. This "economism", or what the bourgeois and petty-bourgeoisie see as "economism", had nothing in common with the Leninist understanding of economism. Thus Hirji was gravely mistaken and distorting Lenin when he quoted him to support his case of "economism" which as we have shown is a petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism.

Hirji, however, being eclectic, landed himself in a contradiction. Having accused Nabudere of "economism" he then goes ahead to call him Kautskyite alleging that he sees imperialism as a "policy". This would mean that, as Lenin pointed out, he separates the politics of imperialism from its economics

in which case he would be accused of "politicism". Now isn't it absurd to accuse one, as Hirji does, of "economism" and "politicism" at the same time!

Nabudere showed further that Hirji's conception of economism is that of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois who deny the materialist conception of history which holds that the production of real life is the basis of all ideas. Hirji does this to create room for his idealist theorising that it would be "economistic" to deny a "new ruling class" which must come into being with a "separate state" in the neo-colony. Since Mao Tse-tung "asserts" that under certain conditions politics determine the base Hirji then concludes that it is "implied" (sic) that a new ruling class, upon the rise of a separate state, would emerge. Hirji however does not indicate what "certain conditions" Chairman Mao meant. Chairman Mao has never said that politics in a neo-colony determine the economic base. Moreover since self-determination belongs to the political sphere, then Hirji's capitalist ruling class rises "non-economically". Now certainly this is not "economism" but probably "politicism". Such are the a priori idealist assertions of Hirji which deny the dominant place of the economic base vis-a-vis the superstructure. Moreover, as we pointed out, the petty-bourgeoisie belong to the bourgeois class according to Marxism. It is therefore unacceptable for Hirji to disjoin them from the economically dominant stratum, namely the financial oligarchy. It is a very well known fact that under imperialism the petty-bourgeoisie may manage the bourgeois state, while effective political power is exercised by the financial oligarchy precisely because of its economic power.

We repeat that the neo-colonies have no capital of their own, or none to speak of, and under finance capital no neo-colony can obtain any except on terms of political submission. This is the source of the whole outcry on "The New International Economic Order", "Transfer of Resources", "Transfer of Technology", etc. Hirji does not understand this important issue of our time because according to him the financial oligarchy cannot rule as no international state exists. If that is so why this outcry and "begging", we ask our dear Hirji.

In his conclusion Nabudere criticised Mahmood Mamdani according to whom imperialism is "external" to Uganda and the "enemy" "principally" is the nascent commercial bourgeoisie. (See Maji Maji, No. 11, August 1976). Now one wonders whose commerce this nascent commercial bourgeoisie carries on. Whose commodities do they circulate? And can this class survive without the producers of the commodities? And whose capital is involved in the production of these commodities, if it is not of finance capital?

Again who principally exploits labour in Uganda? Is it the nascent commercial bourgeoisie or finance capital? If finance capital has reduced Uganda to its market allowing only a commercial bourgeoisie, and if again it is finance capital that exploits the labour of Uganda proletariat,

how then can Mamdani hold that imperialism is external and that so long as imperialism does not invade, the enemy remains principally internal? We would like to tell Mamdani that imperialism invaded long ago and has never left. Mamdani should tell us when it did. If it did then what do we mean when we say Uganda is a neo-colony? What does Mamdani think the neo-colonial state is - a people's state?

Mamdani holds that if we say the enemy is imperialism, we are disarming the working class ideologically and sheltering what he call the "ruling class" (the nascent commercial bourgeoisie) in the camp of the people. We hold that in the struggle against imperialism during the new democratic revolution and under correct proletarian practice, this "commercial bourgeoisie", being oppressed by imperialism, has the chance to join the popular united front. Or at least a major part of it can be won to the proletarian side. This is what we mean by United front or broad alliances against imperialism, as Chairman Mao has pointed out. Does broad alliance in a Unitedfront mean "sheltering" the ruling class in the camp of the people and disarming the revolutionary forces ideologically?

VIII. NABUDERE'S CRITIQUE OF MAMDANI'S POLITICS AND CLASS FORMATION IN UGANDA.

At the end of January 1977, when Mamdani's book came out, Nabudere brought out a critical review of it as he had promised in his Critique of Shivji's Class Struggles in Tanzania.

He began by pointing out that the terms like petty-bourgeoisie, neo-Trotskyite, etc. were not terms of abuse as Mamdani and other had taken them to be. Nabudere quoted Lenin in support of this view:

"... our opponents display remarkable shortsightedness in regarding the terms reactionary and petty-bourgeois as polemical abuse, when they have perfectly historico-philosophical meaning" (Coll. Works Vol. 2 p. 515).

Elsewhere, Lenin points out that the term "reactionary", for example, is employed in its historico-philosophical sense:

"Describing only the ERROR of the theoreticians who take models for their theories from obsolete forms of society. It does not apply at all to the personal qualities of the theoreticians, or to their programmes". (CW, Vol. 2, p. 217)

Citing examples, Lenin continued;

"Everybody knows that neither Sismondi nor Proudhon were reactionaries in the normal sense of the term".

Nabudere pointed out further that such other terms as neo-Marxist and Neo-Trotskyist refer to trends within the international working class movement. Indeed Mamdani's friends recommended his book for publication because they saw it in very favourable light as the culmination of the finest fruit of the

neo-Marxist underdevelopment school of thought, which glorifies in its "originality" of "revising" Marxism to make it more "up-to-date". As one of Mamdani's friends wrote of the book:

"It is in my view very nearly a perfect piece of work, as well as a work of scholarship. It is WITHOUT QUESTION an uncommonly fine specimen of the NEO-MARXIST "UNDERDEVELOPMENT" school - indeed, probably its best fruit to date in African studies...."

(spring' 76 brochure issued by Monthly Review Press)

This description has been conveniently removed from the Heinemann edition for circulation in East Africa although the Monthly Review edition for circulation in USA still retains it.

Mamdani's eclecticism and contradiction are difficult to disentangle and summarise. We refer the reader to Nabudere's and Tandon's critiques. Here we shall confine ourselves to the major weaknesses of Mamdani's thesis.

First Mahmood Mamdani abstracts class formation and class struggle in a neo-colony such as Uganda from imperialism. This is presumably because to him imperialism is external.

According to Mamdani, "The Uganda Economy was an undeveloped economy integrated into the world capitalist market..." He does not show how this was so concretely. Thus he sees the crisis of imperialism in Uganda as that of balance of payments crisis because of unequal exchange where instead of "an inflow" of capital (whatever for?), each year there is an outflow of capital. If Uganda was integrated into the capitalist system, how then does the crisis become a balance of payments crisis and not that of imperialist exploitation and oppression?

According to Mamdani, a communal mode co-exists with the capitalist mode of production in Uganda (p. 140) whereby labour is drastically paid below its value. One wonders how labour-power could be paid below its value if it was not part of the capitalist mode for then the law of value would not apply.

Mamdani often finds himself caught up in contradictions. "Underdevelopment" is blamed on merchant capital, although its primacy is seen also as the "primacy" of metropolitan capital to which it is "tied in a dependent relation". Thus a dualism is created. Mamdani tells us that the Indian "Commercial bourgeoisie" dominated production at the level of the "territorial economy" although the metropolitan bourgeoisie "dominated the entire colonial system" (p. 108). We are told that "Indian capital" as represented by Narandas Rajaram and Co. Limited "at one stroke" struck a blow to the domination of the (cotton) industry by British capital. Then we are told that the capital did not actually belong to Rajaram but to the National Bank of India whose capital, as Mamdani came to realise, was not Indian but British finance capital. The Bank, in spite of its name, belonged to the British monopoly capitalists.

Lacking the understanding of imperialism Mamdani's "class struggles" turn out to be no "class struggles" but contradictions among the petty-bourgeoisie. A class struggle is created between the "African petty-bourgeoisie" and the "Indian commercial bourgeoisie", and their contradiction is postponed in 1969 to 1971 when it is "resolved" by the coup d'etat. The passing of the Cooperative Societies Ordinance "to boost the organisational strength of African Kulaks and traders" result in "class struggle" although there was a "contradiction" between the traders and Kulaks. The principal contradiction is seen as that between the African petty-bourgeoisie and "Asian" capital. This "contradiction" surfaced with Amin's ascendancy to power after "the state had consolidated its state apparatus" and was resolved 8 months later when Amin called the Asians to a conference in January 1972 after which they were expelled. Thus the "principal" contradiction was resolved! In this way Mamdani reduces the scientific theories of "class struggles" and "contradiction" to an absurdity. (For a better treatment and exposition of this absurdity see Tandon's review "Whose Capital and Whose State?")

Imperialism and the proletariat hardly features in Mamdani's class struggles and contradictions. Because Mamdani does not understand imperialism, he also does not understand what the National Question means and consequently he doesn't know what the New Democratic Revolution is about. This is why he holds that those who say the enemy is Imperialism will shelter the "ruling class" (which happens to be a "nascent commercial bourgeoisie") in the camp of the "people".

Chairman Mao long ago advised us that:

"...in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can readily be resolved. This is the method that Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied Imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet Economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of the problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions" (S.W., Vol. 1 pg. 332, Emphasis added).

Such are our Mamdanis who, lost in a fog, create "principal" contradictions out of nowhere only to "resolve" some in 8 months and to postpone others. These "contradictions" exist only in their brains. This is idealism par excellence and to us it is totally unacceptable. We hold that the principal contradiction is that between the people of Uganda and finance capital (Imperialism) and the local comprador agents who oppress and exploit them. The contradiction within the petty-bourgeoisie and between the petty-bourgeoisie and the proletariat are secondary. Accordingly the proletariat in the New

Democratic revolution rallies the petty-bourgeoisie behind it forming a broad united front against imperialism, smashing the neo-colonial state and all supporters of imperialism who refuse to join the united front, and establishes the democratic dictatorship of the revolutionary classes and later of the proletariat.

Chairman Mao teaches us that the contradictions among the people as the case may be, can, if "properly handled be transformed into a non-antagonistic one" during the fight against imperialism. Such is the strategy of the proletariat and such is our stand! We leave "pure theorising" to the scholars and "men of action" who are lost in a fog.

CONCLUSION:

The debate has clarified many issues and contributed to our ideological development. We are convinced that the only way to advance is through struggle against incorrect and anti-Marxist views. This is why we have carried out a relentless struggle against the views of Mamdani's and Co. It is a pity that these gentlemen have mistaken these criticisms for personal attack. That mistaken position of theirs is unacceptable and we shall continue to criticise them. While not replying to the criticisms so far made of them they have further made no effort to criticise themselves. This suggests to us that they still stick to their erroneous line. If that is so there is no platform for unity since we cannot compromise on major issues of Marxism-Leninism. This is because the two lines are diametrically opposed on these issues. We therefore, request all, and we cannot emphasize enough the necessity of all those seriously concerned about these issues, to clarify themselves of them. We hope that they will not get "lost in a fog" or if they do, that they should have the courage and initiative to break through it. This can only be done through study and further study. "Without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement". (Lenin: What is to be done)