

THE SUPERMARXISTS AND PAN-AFRICANISM⁺

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"I still feel it (Marxism) has been one of the most important phenomena in history and one of the greatest catalysts for change and transformation of society. The mistake of orthodox Marxists was to assume that the Manifesto, published in 1847, contained immutable scientific truth".¹

"I think I have said enough to make it understood that it is neither Marxism nor Communism that I renounce, but it is the use that certain people have made of Marxism and Communism of which I disapprove. What I want is Marxism and Communism to be placed in the services of the black peoples and not the black peoples in the service of Marxism and Communism".²

Once, not so long ago, academic solicitude nodded in the direction of the containment of an extremism which, underlain by a determination to have no truck with socialism, sought a capitalistic camouflage in African socialist uniqueness. Today's burden, for those unamused by hollow and unreal formulae, is to combat another kind of excess - the fervent emphasis on superordinate proletarianism by those seeking an escape from any kind of tangible commitment. We are reminded of Rousseau's cosmopolitans who try to "justify their love of their country by the love of the human race and make a boast of loving no one". It is a case where a non-committal existence seeks a specious respectability in internationalism.

The article of faith of Africa's cosmopolitans is to oppose Pan-Africanism - the creation of a massive and potent African nation - in the name of their love of the world's workers. The enterprise of creating and building an African continental nation, of course, calls for assiduous dedication and creativity. It becomes necessary for those who would rather not be a part of an ennobling but exacting conjecture to excuse themselves. Their way of doing this is to see Marxism and Pan-Africanism in dichotomous terms as mutually exclusive polar opposites.

⁺Adopted from "The Supermarxists and Pan-Africanism", mimeo, University of Dar es Salaam, 1977.

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It was not always like this. The proponent of the most radical school of pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah, declared pan-Africanism and scientific socialism to be "organically complementary". There was no possibility of attaining genuine socialist objectives in Africa without the foundation of a pan-African state that was not harnessed to socialism would be self-defeating, in that, among other things, it would only smooth the way for a more effective penetration by capitalistic imperialism. A socialist pan-African state, then - in the thinking of the Osagyefo - is the credible and viable anti-imperialist strategy, as also of African resurgence, in the continent.

The Marxist John Saul, among other thinkers, has endorsed this view of "the necessarily continental sweep of strategic calculation in contemporary Africa", saying unity is a "prerequisite for genuine continental advancement".³ The lack of an industrialization strategy - the root of economic impotence - must, he continues, be traced to the "difficulty of envisaging full-fledged economic transformation taking place within the African political and economic units in their present balkanized form".⁴ The major strength of Nkrumah's efforts in the cause of African unity "always lay in the vision of meaningful continental planning for development which accompanied them". Saul then goes on to back this argument of imperative integration with the authority of Green and Seidman:

"The gravest barrier to African economic development becomes apparent at this point. No African state is economically large enough to construct a modern economy alone. Africa as a whole has the resources for industrialization but it is split among more than forty African territories. Africa as a whole could provide markets able to support large-scale, efficient industrial complexes; no single African state nor existing sub-regional economic union can do so. African states cannot establish large-scale productive complexes stimulating demand throughout the economy as poles of rapid economic growth because their markets are far too small. Instead, the separate tiny economies willynilly plan on lines leading to the dead end of excessive dependence on raw materials exports and small scale inefficient "national factories" at high cost per unit of output. Inevitably, therefore, they fail to reduce substantially their basic dependence on foreign markets, complex manufactures and capital.

"The only way to achieve the economic reconstruction and development essential to fulfil the aspirations, needs and demands of the peoples of Africa is through a sustained

shift to continental planning so as to unite increasingly the resources, markets, and capital of Africa in a single substantial economic unit".⁵

John Saul, like Nkrumah, is insistent that the pan-Africanism in question must be a "progressive" one, and not one aimed at easing the further penetration of the African economies by the multinational corporations whose profit - oriented calculations could only "further the process of growth without development which is already a foot".⁶ The view here, in other words, is that in order to realize "its full progressive potential", pan-Africanism must be related to "a growing realization on the part of African radicals that their revolution is part and parcel of a world - wider anti-imperialist struggle".⁷ Even so, Saul, like another Western Marxist, Angela Davis, is careful to stress that such a latching of Pan-Africanism to global anti-imperialism must not entail the "submergence" of Pan-Africanism - the subordination of all the problems that relate to blacks "as a people".⁸

The African Supermarxists.

This is the view of a Western Marxist - one supportive of Pan-Africanism. But then John Saul is not an African SuperMarxist. It is the latter who has a self-appointed mission to exorcise Pan-Africanism from the continent and the world. It is strange, but Africans truly have a knack for carrying every adopted creed to a disease. It is their way of showing that they are more Marxist or more Christian than those with whom Marxism or Christianity is original. We have a good example of this in the Soweto of 1976. When a white pest control overseer strayed into the black township at a time Africans by the scores were being clubbed or shot to death by the excited apartheid police, he was suffused with love and tenderness. One woman obliged him a triumphant welcome: "Come to my house. This is the house of God", and then painstakingly sheltered him from the host of furious Africans seeking to wreak vengeance on him. The super-Christian protector meanwhile dubbed her charge's face in black boot polish, had him concealed in a blanket and driven to safety at nightfall.⁹

That is the way of the African over-zealous devotee of Christianity. It was not possible for our Soweto woman to see that God might desire the symbolic murder of that stray white man for all the un-Chris-

tian atrocities committed by Apartheid against black people. No, the black woman of Soweto was capable of only one form of Christian reaction - one which conduced to her worst interests.

So it is with Dar es Salaam's School of African Marxologists. With the morbid zeal of those with a compulsion to conform to orthodoxy, they posit a contradiction between Marxism and Pan-African nationalism (since Africans are without a nation in the real sense, this is what is at issue), proclaiming the sacred paramountcy of the former. Hence Jacques Depelchin's sneer: "What does Africa mean? The answer, if there is one, would probably be found in mataphysics" - an area far "beyond the scope" of his more immediate, more pressing interests.¹⁰ He goes on:

"Many of the institutions that were created after independence can be seen as simply an ideological response to colonial ideology... Balkanization having been identified with colonialism, the ideological opposite - Pan-Africanism - was seen as the pre-requisite step toward decolonization. The O.A.U., was the child of this ideology. The concept of African Unity is an empty one of continued oppression. Its only meaning has been one of continued oppression. If any unity has been forged or furthered, it has been the unity of the ruling classes of each of the neo-colonies?"¹¹

Is that all that can be said of Pan-Africanism? Is that all it is worth - a scant mention just for it to be dismissed?

It is to be noted that Depelchin's usage of ideology here is in the long - discarded Marxian orthodox signification of a "camouflage to mask the bare and brute facts of economic controls"; an "intellectual rationalization of prior economic interests"; "a cosmetic to disguise the ugly facts of privilege, exploitation and oppression".¹² Even in Marx and Engel's own day, this reading of ideology as necessarily having no independent validity - as possessing no creative impact, no formative force of its own became anachronistic. But even if one chooses to use it in this outmoded, dogmatic sense, it is strange that one should then gloss over the economic arguments given prominent play in Nkrumah's School which John Saul, for instance, so readily acclaims.

That the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) falls woefully short of a progressive pan-African institution goes without saying. But to use this organization as the essence - rather than the apology - of pan-Africanism is clearly to attack a straw man. It is just not true that, at every instance, "the concept of African unity is an empty one as far as

the working classes and peasants of the continent are concerned". It is revealing that Depelchin does not bother either to acknowledge or to address the exertions and the achievements of the Nkrumaist All-African Trade Union Federation (AATUF) in its anti-imperialist campaign which petered out only with Nkrumah's ouster in 1966.¹³ It is equally revealing that he does not see his way to suggesting a new pan-African organization of radical states like Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. The fact of the matter is that the subject does not interest him. It is not only reactionary pan-Africanism that holds scant interest for him. He has no use for progressive pan-Africanism either. Frankly, a SuperMarxist could not be bothered with "metaphysical" concepts like Africa.

An essay by another superMarxist, G.T. Mishambi,¹⁴ is of a piece with Depelchin's - indeed they constitute one paper with the authorship of two - in its readily visible opposition to Pan-Africanism. Mishambi takes Walter Rodney to task for advocating "integration of the markets across large areas of Africa". Rodney's advocacy is predicated on the fact that "it has become common knowledge" that one of the principal reasons why "genuine industrialization" in Africa is difficult today is that the "market for manufactured goods in any single African country is too small". Mishambi is totally underwhelmed by this argument. Indeed it offends the Marxism-Leninism in him to the point where he is moved to lament the ignorance which prevents Rodney from seeing "that industrialization can be done without a foreign market".¹⁵ If Rodney were tutored in Leninism he would have known that Lenin once did make the point that it is only where - as in capitalist production - there is "uneven development not only between different areas of the same country, but also in different branches of industry" that industrialization becomes tied up with a "foreign market". Even development could be achieved through "national planning under socialism" in that "each branch would find an internal market for its products".

This is supposed to dispose of arguments for economic - leave alone political - integration in Africa. It is another instance where an issue is not discussed in the light of reason but is summarily dismissed by a facile reference to Marxist, or Leninist, revelation. As is so often the case with these Marxologists, every logic, every argument, is supposed to be decisively clinched by the mere citation

of a Marxian authority. We are not told what makes Marx's or Lenin's viewpoint ipso facto more valid than that of Nkrumah or Rodney. Is it on account of the differential colour of their skin? We must ask the Marxologists. Is colour what determines the chances of an opinion to the claim of validity?

It is difficult to see where the arguments for integration connects with a "foreign market". We are talking of an Africa that does not have a market in the first place and is seeking to create one. It is the search for indigenous, not foreign - oriented, viability. What is foreign about the prospective creation of an African Market? Lenin, Mishambi's deity, could himself hardly have been thinking of a "foreign market" in such absurd terms, having himself, in his day, enjoyed the advantages of the combined market of one massive nation composed of twelve Socialist Republics.

And yet that is how the Dar es Salaam Marxologist chose to interpret Lenin - all in the service of anti pan-Africanism. It is interesting, but the case of the SuperMarxists against pan-Africanism is hardly more profound than the pathetically frivolous one of the soldier Africa, one of the Coup-Makers against Nkrumah's government in 1966. It all hinged on the soldier's enduring memory of the glorious British breakfast during his career at Sandhurst. Against the flagrant nostalgia of this delicacy, pan-Africanism, of whatever hue, could have no chance:

"Organization of African Unity or no organization of African unity, I will claim my citizenship...of the Commonwealth in any part of the world. I have been trained in the United Kingdom as a soldier, and I am ever prepared to fight alongside my friends in the U.K. in the same way as Canadians and Australians do..."¹⁶

Not to be outdone, our friends the Marxologists are saying that they could not have any use for Africa when they could fight alongside the soldiery of the world's proletarians.

Internationalism.

Let us reiterate the main points here. There is no African nation to speak of, and our Marxist purists are all for vehemently opposing the founding of one. This might be a sure way of facilitating their candidacy for membership of a nation - less universe of stalwart proletarians. But it is also a confession of their unenthusiasm for prosecuting any anti-

imperialist crusade in Africa, all their voluble and vociferous protestations notwithstanding. For without a unified African rally, what other developmental strategy is available that can pull off Africa's break with the international capitalist system? As Nkrumah was out to emphasize, "since capitalism has come to the peak of monopoly", it is impossible for any African state singly "to avoid dealing with monopoly in some form or another". This was not an exercise in abstraction. The experiences of African states, the progressive ones included, all bear witness to this.

It must also be noted that in thus advocating a nation-less universalism, the purists go several steps better in their Marxism than the Soviet and the Chinese Marxists, for instance, who think in terms of proletarian internationalism presupposing the firm and solid existence of viable proletarian nations. The point bears emphasis. Marxian internationalism, in the minds of the Russians and the Chinese, is first and foremost realized in a national context. This is what Stalin's "Socialism in one country" was all about. In China, from the first, the Maoist component of Marxism-Leninism - Maoism was Chinese nationalism, pure and simple. The fight against international capitalism was never seen as an end in itself, but as a means to the renewal of Chinese integrity, the resurgence of the Middle Kingdom. China, and the U.S.S.R. before it, have performed as effective international actors from being geographical entities of highly visible potency. The peoples in these two important countries do not see themselves first as proletarian internationalists and only secondarily as Chinese and Russians. Rather, they regard themselves as Chinese and Russians first. They are not international actors without firm national bases and identities. On the contrary, it is their very distinctive identities and the power associated with them which lend force and plausibility to their international role. Overall, the conjecture of internationalism divorced from its national fountain head is too unreal by far.

But there is also the issue of the myth of internationalism as an absolute value. In the real world, as the record shows, the intentness of "Marxist" states on their nationalism has conduced in no small measure to the derogation of Marxism. During the Chinese civil war, the only Marxist state then in existence, the USSR, for a good while backed

the Western stooge Chiang Kai - shek against the Chinese Communists in the hope, among other things, of gaining a good chunk of Chinese territory for itself and of further weakening the Chinese nation. With the successful establishment of the People's Republic of China - as of USSR before it - the question of its continuing commitment to the fight against global capitalistic imperialism became dependent on the calculus of expediency and "national interests". The armed readiness of Chinese and Russian troops across their common border is perhaps the most eloquent testimony of the triumph of nationalism over the dictates of socialist internationalism.

Then consider the disarray occasioned in the liberation movement by the feuding between the USSR and China, each determined, more often than not at the expense of the much - vaunted liberation objective itself, to eliminate each other's influence. So it is now that the world has become accustomed to seeing the improbable bedfellows - China and the USA display a common purpose in such international conflagrations as the Indo-Pakistani war over Bangladesh and The Angolan Civil War.

But if the liberation movement is thereby weakened, China, for its part, could not see its way to rendering apologies to those like the Africans who refuse to raise the level of their capacity to be able to fight their own wars and impose their own solutions, preferring, instead, to trust in the willingness of other peoples to do for them what they should be doing for themselves. The Chinese, as a people, learned the virtues - and the dignity - of self-reliance long ago. Not even the visitation in 1976 of an earthquake of catastrophic proportions would persuade the proud Asian people to temper their commitment to national self-sufficiency. In the event, they rejected all offers of assistance from external sources, both capitalist and socialist. Their message: as a people they are capable of meeting their needs in both normal and crisis periods, without having to throw their nation to the mercy of any principle as dubious as internationalism.

The Soviet Union has not done badly, either, in teaching the world a lesson or two on the subordination of internationalism to nationalism. Indeed, if nationalism vitiates Marxism, then no socialist nation is more subversive of Marxism than the USSR whose shifting perception of the contours of "detente" with the champion of world imperialism determines

whether it would support, at one time, Lumumba in the Congo or, at another, Neto in Angola. And consider how it treated the EuroCommunists on the eve of World War II. Significantly, it was at the time of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact that Andre Malraux, "the Last Renaissance Figure", like many others turned his back on Marxism. With the signing of that paper, he recalled, "I married France".¹⁷ It was certainly a moment of profound emotional and psychological mis-giving, as George Padmore also found out. With a career in the American Communist Party, in the columns of New York's Daily Worker, at Russia's "University of Eastern Toilers" and in the Comintern, he promptly quit the Comintern and renounced his links with Russia in disgust over the softening of the Soviet's anti-colonial line following its unprincipled overtures to Hitler's Germany. It is only then that his political thinking began to focus upon pan-Africanism "as the only hope of salvation for the black man from the depredations of both Western and Russian imperialism".¹⁸ And, more recently, witness the embarrassing disaster of Ghana's trade and credit agreements with the Soviet Union from 1963 when Nkrumah's Ghana, besieged by imperialism, made recourse to the "champion" of proletarian nations.¹⁹

So much for socialist fraternity "in this drear day", as W.E.B. du Bois put it, "when human brotherhood is mockery and a snare".²⁰ Global anti-imperialism is not the first order of business with any socialist state. If proletarianism was the primary value of Soviet policy, the Southern African complex would not still exist. Surely, the Soviets has more than sufficient capability - military, economic, political - to demolish the racist and capitalist bastions that have for so long insulted the dignity of man in Africa. Africa has not received, and will not receive, massive infusions of aid from the Soviet Union to help the continent break its disastrous dependence on the West, because Soviet national interests cannot underwrite it. An Africa that could really benefit from such a "Soviet Marshall Plan" is an Africa that must needs be united into one whole, planning its development on a continental scale. Such a potentially powerful entity would contain imperialist assaults in Africa, but it would also threaten the interests of the USSR in the sense of being capable of compelling a readjustment of the global balance of power. All told, a tangibly salutary internationalism is an elusive dream

celebrated only by those Africans who refuse to acknowledge their place and identity in the world and to do something worth while - an image re-cast job - for themselves.

Racism and a World Socialist Government.

The question that must now be asked is: Would a world Marxist government solve the problem of the black man? Would it hold within itself the vital therapy to cleanse the world of racism? Or, is there something about the black man's history - in its tragic dimensions of powerlessness, servitude and persistent subservience to others - that requires the solution of self-repair rather than the efforts of a world socialist regime, however genuinely motivated?

As it is, such genuine motivation understood by a colour-blind respect for humanity has not been in generous supply even among socialists. It is significant that Marx and Engels' initial formulations on the nationalist movement in the colonized world thoroughly reflected the basic Western racist assumptions concerning non European peoples. Like most Europeans, Marx thought of nonwhites as "barbarians" and "savages" whose only salvation lay in the beneficent tutelage of European political and economic, as also of European social and cultural, systems. Thus he found it easy to "dismiss as primitive everything from the communalism of West Africa to the ancient cultural institutions of China".²¹ As for Engels, he made no effort whatsoever to conceal his seething contempt for the values of nonwhites. In an article supporting the French occupation of Algeria, he gleefully observed that:

"The conquest of Algeria is an important and fortunate fact for the progress of civilization....(it) has already forced the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli, and even the Emperor of Morocco, to enter upon the road of civilization".²²

The relationship of all this to J. Depelchin's conception of ideology and what he has to say about it is of stimulating interest. He asserts that "the spread and expansion of capitalism has gone hand in hand with the production of mystifying ideologies".²³ In specific regard to colonial ideology ("exemplified by racism"),²⁴ he charges that "in the writings of the Diderots, Voltaires and Rousseaus" one could find "the germs of colonial ideology in the form of the European mission to carry the light of civilization to the savages",²⁵ conveniently leaving the substantial

contribution of his Marxist fathers to the same "ideological production" out of account. And yet the point is inescapable that if capitalism needed the prop of a colonial ideology to speed its way, the contribution of the founders of Marxism to this accomplishment must be accounted one of the most critical.

Whatever modifications took place over the years in Marx and Engels' view of the worth of non Europeans, they were not of sufficient weight to "lift classical Marxism into a comprehensive social model". The seeds of condescension, sown in the early years, were to take root and sprout. Consider their record of American Marxism. At its founding convention in 1901, the Socialist Party refused to pass any resolution dealing with racism or lynching. It was no wonder that in 1902 W.E.B. Du Bois resigned from the party in response to its blatant racism. "Theoretical socialism of the twentieth century", he wrote, "meets a critical dilemma in facing up to the problems of racism".²⁶ Over the years, racism was to remain a "glaring reality" with the American Communist Party, what with its segregated education classes and differential punishment for violations, all on the basis of race. Nor has Marxist hypocrisy in the U.S. over the question of racism lessened in recent years. On the one hand, writes E. Ofari, the white Marxists:

"acknowledge the fact that blacks are the most oppressed and exploited segment of American society and are therefore the vanguard of the American Revolution. On the other hand, these groups, with few exceptions, have no blacks in dominant positions of leadership.... Whites, in general, have never been accustomed to taking orders from blacks. It has always been the other way around".²⁸

The labour movement has hardly fared any better in demolishing the stern walls of racial prejudice. On account of "the pervasive racism in the trade union structure, black and white labour unity has never been an accomplished fact for any length of time in America". Writes Stokely Carmichael:

"We have seen that poor whites and.... blacks are incapable of coming together in this country, or when they come together we see it is the white man who benefits and, having gained what he wants, he turns against the black man. We have seen that time and time again. All coalitions of the two groups have always worked to the disadvantage of the black man".²⁹

But it is not only in the US that race has turned out to be "the biggest single thing which has blunted much of the impact of the class struggle". Racial realities are hardly less harsh in South Africa, for instance, where "the principal feature of the peculiar social formation.... is the sharp racial division which silhouettes the whites as beneficiaries extraordinary of the most intense oppression and exploitation of the vast majority of black people".³⁰ Those who feel undauntedly optimistic about a non racial strategy of liberation in the apartheid state must need remind themselves of the studied aloofness of white workers from the recent struggles of Soweto blacks. It might be argued in mitigation, that in South Africa institutional segregation makes trans-racial workers' solidarity virtually impossible. But such a line of defense would entail the suggestion that an apartheid - less South Africa would achieve a black - white proletarian rally - a highly improbable, if not absurd, conjecture.

For the fact is that racism is as much a question of attitudes as institutions. Cuba, since its Socialist Revolution, has successfully eliminated institutional causes of racism rooted in that land over three centuries. Yet the available evidence shows that "there are still surviving elements of prejudice against the Afro-Cuban" - "that socialism, by itself, is an insufficient remedy for eliminating attitudinal racism".³¹ This is by no means a startling revelation. Whatever the strenuous efforts of Fidel Castro, he cannot work miracles - he cannot transform the way the white section of his country feels and thinks about black people. That is an attitudinal - a psycho-social-issue beyond the manipulative ingenuity of governmental apparatus. It takes the existence of just about two decades for the average Caucasian in any part of the world to take full notice of the universal black man's underdog station in life; his political, social and economic marginality; his overall prostrate inconsequence around the globe. This our average Caucasian Youth is not interested in the woeful history that brought this about. He is only interested in the current spectacle of human wreckage which elicits from him a contempt that further compounds the difficulties of the world's marginal man. No amount of a socialist government's appeal for a change of attitude is going to make a whit of difference. His fixed opinion is that a people who could allow so much to be done to them can-

not but be inferior. Governmental exhortations of socialist fraternity are clearly beside the point. Only black racial resurgence - the building of power and the acquisition of all the necessary capabilities - can change that kind of attitude.

It is to be noted that our Caucasian youth is not holding such a view of blackness on account of economic reasons. E. Ofari has shown in a study of race relations in the U.S. that the workers most vehement in their opposition to blacks are not those in the unskilled and semi-skilled positions where there is strong competition for jobs from blacks, but the relatively skilled workers in job areas where blacks have "the least chance of entering".³² It is one more illustration that racism has attained a status independent of the economic rationality that initially gave it birth. Over the decades, continues Ofari, it "has developed a separate character and taken on new dimensions". It has assumed an autonomy of its own pervading the psyche of most whites to such an extent that they are not even aware of it.³³ It is pathetic that, bearing all the marks of unreasoning materialist orthodoxy, Mishambi comes in this late in the day to proclaim that at all times "what makes a person take a line he does is not due to his colour but his economic interests - either as an individual or a group".³⁴ He might well have been living on Mars.

The First Order of Business.

The sum of the matter is that where a strong currency of presumed inferiority of one race exists, it is idle to talk of internationalism embracing the purposes of the derided race with those of the others. As long as white people take the denigration of black people for granted, all expectations for a credible world-wide anti-imperialist rally cannot but be disappointed. Without the proletarian race getting on its feet first by its own exertions, proletarianism cannot even take off the ground. It flies in the face of all plausibility to assemble racial over-dogs and underdogs in one and the same movement and expect a coherence of purpose to result. It is first necessary that those who occupy a depressed status elevate themselves. Hence pan-Africanism's significance as a vital, inescapable first step in a global anti-imperialist offensive particularly so since such a progressive pan-Africanism contains within itself, of necessity, a struggle against those of the African group who are inclined and determined

to serve the interests of imperialism. Mao Tse-tung, unlike the dogmatists, recognized this first order in the anti-imperialist business when he proclaimed:

"The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and throve with the enslavement of Negroes and trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people."³⁵

There is so much said by the Marxologists about "mystification" and "idealism" (in whatever sense they use it) that there is need to question closely who is guilty of those "sins". Angela Davis' despairing: "And so today we say working people must understand, white working people particularly, that the struggle against racism is a struggle for their own interests...."³⁶ and Amilcar Cabral's lament: "Obviously, I don't think it is possible to forge closer relations between the peasantry in Guinea and the working class movement in Europe....(But) there are two alternatives: either we admit that there really is a struggle against imperialism which interests everybody, or we deny it...."³⁷ constitute a vital clue to the investigation. In a world where the nationalism of three superpowers strides like a colossus, where fiery emotional attachment to the nation induces workers to resist immigrant workers from "other nations" (and not simply for economic reasons) and disposes workers to fight for their "bourgeois" governments rather than join cause with international proletarianism against capital; in a world of racism in which contempt for the black race is a fundamental datum of the global social system.... is the much harped-upon expectation of a consolidated world workers' alliance predicated on realism or on faith? And is such an expectation easier to entertain than that which posits that the mass of the world's black peoples, the most battered victims of imperialism, might be united to fight against domination and indignity which they all, irrespective of their economic station, share? Which is more in consonance with global realities and which is closer to the "mystification" of the realities?

The point is incontestable that class is of lesser moment than race in a strategic calculation for change in the lot of the black man. To be sure, there are, up to a point, social and economic differences among black people. But this has to be viewed against the fact that the economic status of a black person, no matter how high, does not gain him equality

of social status with the white counterpart. In other words, the ranks of the world's propertied class is marked by social heterogeneity crippling to the black club member. Race, on the other hand, makes for a firmly homogeneous category in terms of the badge of humiliation the entire membership wears. Both objectively and subjectively (at least in the perception of those think and know the score), this is a fundamental, undeniable fact in the experience of black humanity. The most important contradiction in the world of the black man is that between his total submergence, materially and spiritually, in the haughty predominance of other races. The advantage of pan-Africanism, in this regard, is that it "rips through and permeates 'class' barriers precisely because it possesses the capacity to touch all black people, irrespective of their position in the social structure...."38

I am saying that on account of the indignity that afflicts the race, racial cleavage is more relevant than the class differences which exist within the black universe. But I will go even further to assert the advantages of a "bourgeois" black power achievement over an unrealizable global proletarian revolution. The point has already been made of the preference, deeply shared by this writer, for a socialist pan-African state. But if such a goal were to prove unrealizable, then surely it would make sense to entertain the next best conjecture of a non-socialist pan-African state, provided it contained the instruments for a great economic, scientific and technological achievements which could earn for the black man the heretofore lacking spiritual self-satisfaction of a worthy, competent and powerful people. The masses of such a capable Black Union might, like their white counterpart in capitalist societies, be relatively deprived materially. However, like them, they could now attain spiritual elevation of themselves by identifying with the achievements of a bourgeois state. It is this kind of identification with white bourgeois achievement which makes the Western white, however himself poor and uneducated, feel superior vis-a-vis the black man.

What I am saying, in other words, is that an Africa that turned into a Japan would be preferable to an Africa that remained in its present feeble condition waiting vainly and indefinitely for a world socialist revolution. Of course, the vision of the Communist Manifesto - of a new society without exploiters and exploited, a society without classes,

a society where no one would be permitted to own so much that he could use his possessions to exploit other human beings - is one that has to be the ultimate goal. But which society has attained it? If this is the acid test, does the world have a Marxist state yet?

The pertinent question - how such a bourgeois African Union based on powerful, independent, indigenous capitalists could come about, given Africa's state of siege - leads straightaway to the utility of Marxism, particularly in its Leninist prism of imperialism updated by the Pan-Africanist Nkrumah into "Neo-Colonialism", as the only viable liberation strategy. I am saying that the second best ideal of a capitalist Black Union, however intellectually entertainable, is not a viable option because of Africa's beleaguered condition. Even so, the case in hand then becomes one in which Marxism is being called into use, to recall the wisdom of Aime Cécile, to serve the redemption of African people and not one in which Marxism becomes an absolute value to which everything, black people themselves included, is subordinated.

Pan-Africanist Racism?

Does all this make the championship of Pan-Africanism racist? Does a call to black people to appreciate their common affliction and unite in one gigantic effort to cut the ground from under the racism that plagues them itself amount to racism? That is precisely what Mishambi thinks. In his opinion, it is the champions of anti-racism who are racists.³⁹ Mishambi admits that with the "superprofits" the capitalists make in the colonies, they are able to buy off "a stratum of the workers that Lenin called the labour aristocracy". Nevertheless, he says that this labour aristocracy, in spite of being "the social basis of bourgeois reformism within the working class", remains a part of the working class, never a part of the exploiters.⁴⁰

What we have, from this reckoning, is that one can still call on the "labour oppressed" in, say, Britain (all of the workers - the labour aristocracy included - since they share in the oppression of capitalism) to throw off their chains, but one cannot, on the other hand, call on "all Africans" to overthrow their oppression, since some of them receive crumbs from the imperialist table. Like the labour aristocracy, the African aristocracy receives bribes from the superprofits of the capita-

lists. But unlike the labour aristocracy, the African aristocracy, on receiving these bribes, ceases to be a member of the oppressed, since now it has "different economic interests". Given this factor of differential economic interests, it would be "racist" to call on "all Africans" to unite and overthrow imperialism. The workers of the West, the aristocratic element and all, can be treated as a homogeneous group, for purposes of the class struggle. But not Africans since, after independence, the principal contradiction becomes "that between imperialism and all those who benefit from it in the neo-colony on the one hand, and the workers and peasants on the other".⁴¹ We are certainly attaining new levels of intellectual servility.

The Purpose.

I have not undertaken this exercise just to savour the satisfaction of scoring points off these latter - day defenders of Marxist orthodoxy whose interpretive absurdities remind one of the predicament induced Marx himself, just before he died, to painfully declare: "I am not a Marxist." The intention is rather to do battle with a dangerous dogmatism whose end result can only be the fostering of a new mental bondage among African people. Such is the obsession with the materialist world view that even the effort, like Rodney's, to stimulate psychological self-confidence among blacks by showing that Africa had its own history of civilization before the European intrusion put a knife to everything, invites hysterical reactions.⁴²

The Marxologists are wont to deride the Tanzanian political system for its lack of official resolve - its voluntarism - toward issues of socialism. They may not know it, but they are perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of Nyerere's ethic of suasion rather than of coercion. For where would they be if, instead of his ineffectual pleadings, he had moved to forcibly expunge the theology of Marxism that has lately spawned such a remarkable priesthood? But such is the intractable irony of the human condition. The sad part lies in the unreasoning sloganeering so characteristic of student essays. They, the students, are the main casualty in an educational production which might turn out graduates who have barely begun to think for themselves.

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20. W.E.B. Du Bois, Souls of Black Folk, Longmans, Green & Co., 1965, p. 170.
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22. F. Engels in the Northern Star, Jan. 22, 1848 and cited in E. Ofari, Ibid., p. 20.
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24. As he puts it: "A.... mystification occurred during colonial rule. Because productive forces were developing during this phase, apologists have described it as having been beneficial, forgetting that the development of the productive forces was.... necessary to capital....". See *Ibid*, p. 11.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
26. Cited in E. Ofari, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 30, footnote.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
29. See his Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism. And compare this with what Du Bois had to say in 1931: "We are the victims of their (white workers) physical oppression, social ostracism, economic exclusion, and personal hatred; and when in sheer self defence we seek sheer subsistence, we are howled down as scabs". See Crisis, August 1931. For a comprehensive and contemporary record of labour in the US, see Rey Marshall, The Negro and Organized Labour. Marshall depicts the impossible hostility that organized labour has visited on blacks.
30. Ben Turok, "South Africa: The Search for a Strategy", Socialist Register, 1973, p. 342.
31. E. Ofari, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
32. *Ibid*, p. 25.
33. *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.
34. G.T. Mishambi, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
35. Cited in a Speech by Chiao Kuan - hua, Chairman of Chinese delegation at 31st session of the U.N. General Assembly. See Hsinhua News Bulletin, No. 2689, Dar es Salaam, October 6, 1976, p. 8.
36. The African Communist, No. 61, 2nd Quarter, 1975, p. 35.
37. A. Cabral, Revolution in Guinea: An African People's Struggle, Love and Malchomson, London, 1969, p. 61.
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39. Mishambi is particularly worried by Walter Rodney's point that every African has a responsibility to understand the system of imperialism and work for its overthrow. "It certainly mystifies reality", he rejoins, "when Rodney comes calling upon 'all Africans' to fight imperialism". Rodney "is so much caught up in racism that he explains African history as a racial category". He extends his racism everywhere. He lumps all the Europeans together and sees them as exploiting the Africans thus too lumped together". He "talks of 'white bourgeois scholarship'. He even talks of European or white American Marxists. Everywhere we turn it is racism". See *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7, 22.
40. *Ibid*, pp. 6-7. Emphasis given.
41. *Ibid*.

For examples of dogmatist insistence on the sole legitimacy of materialist analysis, see Depelchin, op. cit., pp. 4, 5, 16, 17, 19; Mishambi, op. cit., pp. 14, 20, Depelchin and Mishambi would do well to ponder the views of another Marxist, Angela Davis, on the imperative of African self discovery: "First of all, we should be absolutely clear that it is extremely important for black people to attain a self confidence and identity, something which the white ruling class has attempted to take away from us for so many hundreds of years. The history of black people in the U.S. is a history of genocide in many respects, cultural genocide, psychological genocide, and it is extremely important for us to reassert our identity, to talk about the fact that the standards of the white dominant culture are not absolute". See The African Communist, Vol. 61, 2nd Quarter, 1975, pp. 33-34.