

In his previous book, *Africa, the Roots of Revolt*, Jack Woddis examined the economic and social consequences of colonialism in Africa. In *Africa, The Lion Awakes* he deals with the growth, organisation and policies of the vast movement of peoples which has already won political independence for the greater part of the continent and which continues to sweep southwards and eastwards towards the Cape.

Jack Woddis has a wide knowledge of African affairs and has had the opportunity of close contact with many of Africa's political and trade union leaders. In this volume he lays especial stress on the key part played by the trade unions in the independence movement, and on the task of advancing from political to economic independence.

some press opinions on

AFRICA, THE ROOTS OF REVOLT

by Jack Woddis

‘. . . through his close contact with many Africans he allows them to speak for themselves . . . the book marshals in a readable manner much unpleasant truth.’

The Humanist

‘a mine of information . . . it enables us to understand what has caused this gigantic upheaval.’

Foundry Workers’ Journal

‘. . . anyone who wants to understand what capitalism and colonialism have done to the African people will find a mountain of information here . . . Jack Woddis describes in detail how the land was taken, how the poll tax is used to compel Africans to become labourers for the Europeans, how they are exploited when they reach the town, and all the economic injustices from which they suffer.’

Fenner Brockway, M.P., in *Tribune*

‘It rests its argument on a careful sociological analysis of the position of the peasant and the worker in African society. Its author has a quite enviable command of the sources of information and by bringing them together has made a real contribution to colonial sociology.’

New Statesman

By the same author

AFRICA—THE ROOTS OF REVOLT

AFRICA

The Lion Awakes

by

JACK WODDIS

1961

LAWRENCE & WISHART

LONDON

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Dedicated to the memory of Patrice Lumumba, Felix Roland Moumie, Ruben Um Nyobe, Aissat Idir, Johannes Nkosi and countless other martyrs of Africa's struggle against imperialism. By their courage, steadfastness and self-sacrifice they have inspired a whole continent to rise to its full height and regain its long-lost freedom.

“The slumbering lion is now awake. This is due to the new spirit of nationalism which is gaining momentum in Africa.”

—KIWANUKA, President of the Uganda National Congress,
January 8, 1959

“Every African wants to be free, but the people can only show their strength when they are organised . . . The rising in the Congo is a sign of the awakening of the African lion.”

—The late FELIX ROLAND MOUMIE,
President of the Union of the Peoples of the Cameroons,

January 8, 1959

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PREFACE

So massively and rapidly did the African people carry out their intention of making 1960 Africa's year of decision that the phrase itself had almost become a cliché long before the year had run its course. Most of Africa—in population and territory—had gained its political independence by the end of this momentous year; and for those territories that still remain within the grey walls of colonialism's prison house the final joyous day of liberation lies not so far over the horizon, although—as reference to Algeria, Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, and South Africa show—this will involve the biggest and sharpest clashes Africa has yet witnessed.

For most people this stirring resurgence of Africa came like a sudden thunderbolt out of a peaceful sky. Yet, in fact, the signs of this growing movement have been there to observe throughout the past sixty years—from the first desperate yet heroic struggles to avoid imperialist conquest at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, through the early days of political organisation and agitation both before and after the first world war, on through the advancing thunderclouds of the 1920's and 1930's with their tax revolts and cocoa boycotts, and finally to the great strike struggles and political campaigns of the 1940's and 1950's which, like huge rocks hurled into the lake of colonial rule, have sent ever-widening ripples of national protest and revolt surging across the continent.

It is true, of course, that it has been the period since the second world war, and especially the last five years, that have witnessed the most tumultuous growth of the African national movement. But in noting this, it should not be forgotten that throughout the imperialist epoch in Africa—since, in fact, the decisions of the

Berlin Conference in 1885—the African people have been in revolt against colonialism.

That this movement has reached new heights, and only become powerful enough to gain signal victories in the past few years, is due to a number of internal and external causes which are discussed at greater length in the present author's previous book.¹

In that study an attempt was made to explain *why* the African people are now in such powerful revolt against colonialism. The present volume is largely devoted to an examination of *how* the African people have conducted their struggles. Yet this is, in no sense, a history of the African national movements, nor a detailed account of the growth of various national, political and trade union organisations. Such a task remains to be done—and undoubtedly it will be better performed with the co-operation and advice of those who have made this history, the African people themselves.

In drawing a line between the *why* and the *how* of the African struggle for independence I have, of course, had to make a somewhat arbitrary division. In reality the two sets of phenomena are very closely interrelated. Experience in the struggle against imperialist domination has been one of the most potent causes of the further deepening and widening of the revolt itself. Cause and effect are further intertwined by the very conditions of the African people under foreign rule; the particular forms in which they have been exploited and oppressed, the special characteristics of the class structure of Africa, her system of land tenure, the relative weakness of the African bourgeoisie, the predominance of migrant labour in the ranks of the working class, the presence of white settlers in many territories—all these have conditioned the forms in which the African national movements have developed no less than the policies they have followed.

That the movements have made such rapid headway is due largely, though by no means entirely, to the great struggles waged by the growing African working class over the past two decades. The African proletariat, though still a minority of the total population and despite its being predominantly an unskilled, migrant labour force, nevertheless is able to carry a great weight in the national movement because of the extreme weakness of the African national bourgeoisie over most

¹ *Africa—the Roots of Revolt*, London, 1960.

of the African continent. Furthermore, the disintegration of traditional African agriculture under the impact of imperialist depredations has led, due to the particular conditions prevailing in Africa, not to the familiar millions-strong dispossessed armies of peasants that one finds in Asia, but rather to an increase in perpetual labour migration and the emergence of the peasant-worker or worker-peasant who constantly moves in a cycle between his land and wage employment, mainly in European enterprises.¹

The problems of the African working class, and in particular its strike struggles and its efforts to organise into trade unions (developments which are sadly lacking in most studies of African developments in the past two decades—apart from special studies such as those of Roper, Warmington and Saad Ed Din Fawzi), are understandably a major concern of this present study, for each attempt by the African workers to organise and to secure better conditions has inevitably turned in an anti-imperialist direction, assuming the pattern of a national protest, to which have rallied ever wider sections of people.

There is plenty of evidence to show that the ruling circles in Britain—and undoubtedly this is true of the other European colony-owning powers—had no conception of the speed with which the world-wide movement for national independence was to develop after the second world war. Especially was this so of Africa. In fact, Sir Andrew Cohen, former British Governor of Uganda, and one of the more far-sighted of British colonial administrators, has revealed that during the 1930's the British Government's policy was based on the "assumption that we had indefinite time ahead".² Independence for African peoples was regarded "as something for the pretty remote future which did not affect immediate policies and plans".

Yet one should not, therefore, run away with the idea that the colony-owning powers have been caught complete unawares. Surprised they may well have been, but, with their agility and resilience born of facing similar critical situations, both old and newer imperialist powers have rapidly sought to adjust themselves to this new situation and to cling to what they can while they ride

¹ See the present author's *Africa—the Roots of Revolt* for a more detailed treatment of this question.

² Cohen, Sir Andrew: *British Policy in Changing Africa*, London, 1959, p. 25.

out the storm. Imperialism's new tactics in post-war Africa therefore constitute a third major theme in this book.

Finally, we come to the problems facing the newly independent African states. With some twenty-five politically independent African states by the end of 1960, covering two-thirds to three-quarters of the territory and 180,000,000 of Africa's 260,000,000 people, political independence is well on the way to becoming the normal status of the African people. How they build their new states, develop democracy, follow through their political independence with economic reconstruction and improved living standards, and build new relations between themselves and with other countries is of special interest to all who are concerned with the forward march of mankind.

In dealing with these problems every effort has been made to draw on the analyses and solutions put forward by the African people themselves in whose hands rests the herculean task of wiping away the dirt and decay of colonialism and of building the glory of the new Africa.

JACK WODDIS

June 1, 1961

CHAPTER ONE

PRELUDE TO THE 1960's

THE destruction of colonial rule in Africa in the 1960's is one of the great landmarks of the twentieth century. To many people it seems inexplicable, almost an act of ingratitude ("after all, considering what we have done for them"). To others it is the natural consequence of a progression deliberately planned for by the colonial powers, who have carefully nurtured the stumbling African child, guided him through his first faltering steps and patiently led him onwards, stage by stage, until he was ready to stand on his own feet and take full responsibility. Both these myths, despite their differences, have one thing in common: they equally ignore or deny the long, continuous struggle of the African people from the very eve of the imperialist epoch, a struggle which has never halted for a day from the time when the Berlin Conference of 1885 arbitrarily divided Africa amongst the Western European powers. (Long before the onset of imperialist rule, too, the African people fought against European conquest and intrusion; but in tracing the origins of Africa's present victories over colonialism our concern must inevitably lie with the modern period of European conquest and rule, dating, broadly speaking, from the 1885 Berlin Conference.)

Africa's revolt is such a dominant feature of today's landscape that one can deny it no longer. Yet, less than a decade ago, a Negley Farson could find himself "depressed by the black man's apathy",¹ and regard him as lacking interest "even in his own life"; while a John Gunther could comfort himself with the illusory thought that "the great bulk of Congolese do not think at all in nationalist terms, i.e. of freedom from Belgian rule,

¹ Farson, Negley: Foreword to the cheap edition of *Last Chance in Africa*, November 15, 1952.

because they are not educated enough to know what nationalism is".¹

Such remarks seem quaint today in the light of the irresistible movement of millions of Africans. They are no less out of place if due account is taken of the struggles and experiences of the people of Africa during the past seventy-five years.

The European conquest of Africa began in the fifteenth century, with Portugal's early colonising of Angola in 1482, and of Mozambique in 1505. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries further European footholds were secured, the French establishing themselves in Cinegal (1637) and in Réunion (1643), and later in Mauritius (1715), and the Dutch settling at the Cape in 1652. The British Crown took over Sierra Leone in 1808 and Cape Colony in 1814; in 1830 the French bombarded Algiers into submission, and in 1841 established themselves in Equatorial Africa. Two years later Natal was declared a British colony, and a year after that the Gold Coast was declared a British Protectorate. In 1851 the first British invasion of Nigeria took place.

In the following sixty-five years nearly all the remaining areas of Africa fell under European domination. Britain took Basutoland in 1868, invaded Ashanti in 1873, and annexed the Transvaal in 1877; the French invaded Tunis in 1881 and occupied the Ivory Coast in 1882; and the Germans annexed South West Africa and established control over the Cameroons and Togoland in 1884.

The scramble for Africa was now on, and in order to bring some measure of "agreement" into the scramble and "fairly" share out the loot, the Berlin Conference was held in 1885. Spheres of influence and possession were marked out by the West European powers (the United States played a prominent part in the Conference and later endorsed the decisions at the 1890 Brussels Conference), and the division of Africa was settled. Settled, that is, on paper; for those who had so brazenly divided up Africa by making marks on a map were to find themselves faced with struggles for no less than thirty years—right up to the eve of the first world war in fact—before they were able fully to take over their African possessions.

Belgium, in the person of King Leopold, seized the Congo in 1885; in the same year German East Africa was established.

¹ Gunther, John: *Inside Africa*, 1955.

Sudan (1889), Zanzibar (1890), Nyasaland (1891), Northern and Southern Rhodesia (1891), Bechuanaland (1891), Uganda (1893), Dahomey (1894), Kenya (1895), Nigeria (1900), Italian Somaliland (1905), Libya (1911), Spanish Morocco (1912)—one by one the victims were attacked, until only Ethiopia (Abyssinia) was left, to be invaded by fascist Italy in 1935.

Thus the conquest of Africa by Europe stretched over four centuries and was only completed twenty-five years ago. It is not intended here to trace the history of this conquest in any detail, but two factors should be noted, for they help our understanding of Africa's present-day revolt. First, the major effort by the European powers to divide up Africa took place on the eve of the imperialist epoch, at a time when powerful European monopoly groupings, based on industrial and financial power, were reaching out to expand their domination, to seize raw materials, especially minerals (diamonds were discovered in South Africa in 1866 and gold in 1886, and in Southern Rhodesia, too, gold was found in the 1860's in Mashonaland), to acquire land for settlement and for strategic purposes, and to establish new vantage points for trading; in short, to find new fields for profit-making activities. Secondly, this phase in Africa, which we can date from about 1885, at the time of the Berlin Conference, called forth a mounting resistance from the African people which has culminated in the mighty movement now dominating the African scene.

It would, of course, be a gross over-simplification to pretend that African resistance to European conquest has led in a straight and undeviating line to the national revolts of the 1960's; or to claim that the modern African political parties and programmes, the trade union, co-operative, women and student organisations, are the direct linear descendants of the chiefs and peoples who first fought against foreign invasion in order to preserve their traditional way of life. Yet it would be equally misleading to argue that there was no connection between the different phases of the African struggle, to see a sharp line separating off the early resisters to foreign rule from the modern anti-colonial fighters who are taking a leap upward, away from the past, in the direction of creating something new, of establishing their new states, building up their own economy and giving a new lease of life to their own cultures.

Many strands have gone towards the construction of the African national movement as we know it today, many are the forms

through which this movement has expressed itself, and many the issues over which it has come into conflict with the colony-owning powers. Defence of land, resistance to the foreign trader, to taxation and forced labour, opposition to involvement in the first world war, the attempt to form an independent African church and independent African schools, the struggle for higher wages and trade union rights, opposition to pass laws and other forms of racial discrimination, the fight for the franchise, for "one man, one vote" and for full political rights for Africans, the campaign for the Africanisation of the civil service, against the industrial colour bar and the lack of education—these and other questions have been the issues around which the movement has struggled and grown. And out of these demands, and through the appropriate forms of action and organisation which have developed in support of them, has surged the present mighty torrent of African revolt insisting on full national and political power, on "Africa for the Africans", not for the foreign imperialists.

None of these important struggles during the past seventy-five years has been peaceful. Baton, bullet or prison have been the unhappy lot of those who fought for freedom or against the different manifestations of oppression; and, when even these weapons have proved inadequate, wholesale slaughter and massacre have been resorted to in order to hold the African people down. If there is any consistency in the African story from 1885 to 1960 it lies in the readiness of the European powers in Africa to use—except when circumstances have made it difficult or unwise—the most extreme measures of repression in order to maintain their domination. It is common these days for the imperialist powers to pretend that the winning of political independence by the African peoples is due to European assistance, European example and European encouragement. So carried away, in fact, are the spokesmen of these European interests, that a stranger to this planet could be forgiven for thinking that the African people were being dragged and cajoled, somewhat unwillingly, out of the darkness of colonialism and into the sun of independence by the disinterested efforts of the colony-owning powers themselves.

The African people, who for centuries have drunk the cup of bitterness so often and so deep, will never accept this false version of history. Even leaving aside the terrible days of slavery, which robbed the African continent of sixty million lives, sixty million

bodies, sixty million talents and thus stunted and distorted Africa's growth, the last seventy-five years themselves, the period in which Africa has lain under the yoke of "modern" industrial Europe, has been one of wholesale murder and massacre of which the current French crimes in Algeria and Cameroun and Angola's martyrdom are but the latest examples.

Suffice it to mention the reduction of the population of the "Belgian" Congo from 20,000,000 people in 1900 to 12,500,000 in 1960; the extermination of at least 80,000 Hereros—men, women and children—in South West Africa by German imperialist forces in 1906, and of 120,000 Africans during the Maji-Maji rebellion against German rule in Tanganyika in the same year; the slaughter of over 3,000 Africans in the Mashona and Matabele rebellion in 1896 in Rhodesia, by British forces, and the killing of 4,000 in Natal in 1906, during the Bambata rebellion; the slaughter of at least 40,000 Malagasies by French forces in the great Madagascar uprising in 1947 and of hundreds in the current fighting in Cameroun; the 11,000 killed during the Kenya emergency after 1952; and the 600,000 Algerian lives believed lost in the present war. And all this is apart from the "little" massacres in Portuguese Guinea, S. Thomé and Angola, in Sierra Leone, in Nyasaland, at Sharpeville and in Pondoland in South Africa, in Enugu, Nigeria, on the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt, in Bulawayo, Salisbury and Harare in Southern Rhodesia—the list is never-ending. Yet, in the face of all this violence and bloodshed, the "Establishment" would have it that the modern history of Africa is one of peaceful advance to independence, of imperialist help and guidance, of the actual preparation of the people for independence by their imperial masters. If today, in some cases, imperialist resort to open violence seems somewhat less noticeable, this is in no sense due to any change of heart; it is simply that the strength of the African people's movement, the growing resentment against imperialist policies even in the metropolitan countries themselves, the powerful support of the Afro-Asian countries and the unshakeable solidarity of the socialist camp constitute such a mighty force that the imperialists sometimes deem it wise to proceed with a little more caution, circumspection and finesse.

In assessing the African national movements and examining their main characteristics, it will no doubt be helpful if some effort

is made to establish their main phases. In attempting this, the present writer is by no means forgetful of Lenin's wise advice that whoever hopes to see a "pure revolution" will never live to witness it. There is, in fact, no Chinese Wall between each phase of the African anti-colonial struggle; characteristics of an early phase lap over into a later one, just as the first seeds of a later phase can already be detected in an earlier one. Moreover, there is an uneven rate of development as between one African territory and another, owing to the great variety of conditions all over the continent; sometimes a great movement gets under way in one territory, only to die down and be overtaken by the rapid advance in another; African political parties appear in some areas decades before they are formed in others; trade unions and strike struggles have long been phenomena in some African countries, while in others they are of comparatively recent growth; even political independence will not be achieved everywhere at the same time, though the lag in time between one part of Africa and another is rapidly being overcome as all-African solidarity mounts and the movement to end colonialism sweeps over the entire continent.

Nevertheless, despite all these reservations, it is possible to give a broad characterisation of the *main* features of each stage and, by so doing, obtain a clearer picture of the growth of the movement, of the changes it has undergone, of the stage it has now reached, and thus of the future that lies before it.

During the first phase, from 1885 to about 1914, the armed conquest of Africa by the European imperialist powers was met by the resistance of the African peoples to save themselves from foreign rule. Not everywhere was the struggle intense or protracted, for spears were little match for Maxim guns, but nowhere was European invasion accepted without opposition, and armed resistance was widespread. Amongst the many wars in this period one can mention the Zulu wars in South Africa, which continued right up to the twentieth century; in Southern Rhodesia, the Matabele War of 1893 and the Mashona-Matabele Rebellion of 1896; in German East Africa, the revolt led by Bushiri in 1889, the fierce Chagga and Hehe wars in the early 1890's, and the Maji-Maji Rebellion of 1906; the fighting in South West Africa against German rule, culminating in the large-scale Herero Rebellion of 1903-7; in Angola, the Bailundu war of 1902. There were wars waged by Yao and Ngoni chiefs in

Nyasaland, by Kabarega of Bunyore in Uganda, and by Kamba, Kikuyu and Nandi peoples in East Africa; in the Belgian Congo "pacification" of the Congolese resulted, as has been already noted, in a terrible loss of life. In West Africa, too, there was fighting—the Ashanti wars in the Gold Coast being outstanding. In Western Nigeria resistance is symbolised by the Akassa massacre of 1895. In the Eastern Region of Nigeria, too, resistance continued for a long time, and troop patrols were still needed as late as 1918. In the north, the forces of the Royal Niger Company were resisted by the Nupe and Ilorin, and later, during the transition to formal British rule, the Nupe and Kontagira revolted. The Yola, Kano, Sokoto and Hadeija emirates all offered resistance before being conquered by Lugard's forces in 1903. In the Middle Belt, too, "pacification" was not completed until the first world war—and even after then, revolts continued. A high point of resistance in this whole phase of Africa's struggle was the defeat of the Italian invaders by Ethiopian (Abyssinian) troops at Adowa in 1896.

In the Cameroons the Germans were met with prolonged resistance. From 1891 to 1895 as many as 20,000 men from the Bali, Bafut, Bandeng, Bangoa, Bambutu and Bafetehu tribes joined forces to resist the German occupation. In fact it was not until 1904 that the Germans put an end to mobilised uprisings throughout the Spanish-named territory of Rio dos Camarões and established a single administration over the entire area, naming it Kamerun. And yet once again, in 1906, the people rose in revolt.

The main point about all these manifestations of African resistance to the European powers in this period was that their aim was the simple, elementary one of resistance to conquest. There was little thought of the future, nor could there be; the enemy was at the gates and the struggle was one for mere survival. Moreover, the then existing stage of economic and social growth, the limited development of modern class forces, of workers and capitalists, precluded the emergence of a national movement in its more advanced stage.

Yet, even within this phase one could already note, in several territories, the elements of a new stage. This second stage can be characterised as one in which the African people, who had fallen under European domination, began to struggle against the consequences of conquest, in particular against land seizures, but

also against taxation and the various encroachments and brutalities associated with arbitrary foreign rule, including opposition to involvement in the first world war and its consequences. Broadly speaking, one can say that this period lasted from 1914 to 1944, although, as has been noted, in many territories the struggle against the consequences of imperialist rule was already taken up before 1914.

This is particularly true of the Union of South Africa where, owing largely to the earlier and more massive industrial development than in the rest of Africa, the stages of the national struggle generally pre-date those elsewhere. Two major issues of struggle in the Union of South Africa in the period before the first world war were land and the franchise, which were regarded as being closely related. In 1887, a mighty movement of protest developed in the Cape against the government's Bill to strike 30,000 Africans off the voters' rolls. There is no doubt that this move was intended to facilitate the robbery of African lands. It is certain that the African people regarded it in this light. Thus the *Imvo Zabantsundu*, the first African political newspaper in the Union, which had started publication in 1884, editorialised:

"The people have been moved less by actual disfranchisement than by the depreciating and ignoring of their rights to land. They are aware too that the object of (the government) is, by means of disfranchisement, to pave the way to doing what it likes with the rights and privileges of Natives, especially with rights to land.

"It is this agrarian question that has much agitated the Native people and afforded life to the agitation."¹

The prophecies of African leaders that it was their land which was being threatened were soon proved to be correct. In 1913 the Union government (first established in 1909) enacted the Native Land Act which introduced sweeping restrictions against African ownership and purchase of land. The African National Congress, which had been set up in 1912, launched a campaign against this Act, sending a deputation to Britain to plead against it.

In addition to land, taxation, too, was an early feature of the African protest movement. Bambata's rebellion in Natal, in 1906,

¹ Quoted by Lionel Forman in *Chapters in the History of the March to Freedom*, New Age, Cape Town, 1959, p. 11.

was caused by the imposition of taxation, as was the 1898 Bai Bureh war (sometimes called the Hut Tax War) in Sierra Leone. In the Cameroons, under German rule, opposition to land seizures aggravated by the imposition of taxation, raised a storm of protest, culminating in a big movement in 1911; and in the same period Elliott Kamwana was deported from Nyasaland for carrying on agitation against the hut tax.

As early as 1895 there was a mass demonstration of 5,000 people in Lagos in protest against house and land taxation, a movement so threatening that the tax was never enforced. In 1907 and 1908 Nigeria witnessed a big agitation against a Land Acquisition Ordinance, which was to make possible the expropriation of property on Lagos Island to provide official residences; and in 1908 there was a considerable protest movement against the Lagos water rate, which, like the earlier electricity rate, was regarded as an imperialist imposition—the Africans were expected to pay the rate, but it was the Europeans who received the electricity and the piped water.

The robbery of African land and the imposition of hut and poll tax were intended to force Africans off the land and into European wage employment.¹ It is therefore not surprising that protests against working conditions and low wages were another feature of the early movements. As early as 1874 there was a strike in Freetown; in December 1882, 100 African miners stopped work at the Kimberley mine for two days in protest against a wage cut; and in 1894 the *Nyasa News* carried an article entitled "Strikes Among Natives", referring to a strike of Africans being trained as missionary teachers at Livingstonia.² This latter strike was also evidently connected with dissatisfaction over wages.

In Angola, which the Portuguese imperialists (as distinct from earlier conquerors) did not consider as fully occupied until 1922, the seizure of land, imposition of taxes and introduction of forced labour resulted in the Buta Rebellion of 1913-15, revolts in Porto Amboim in 1924 and in Ambriz in 1925.

It can thus be seen that in a number of territories of Africa, even in the period prior to the first world war, important struggles were being waged against the consequences of imperialist rule

¹ For more details on this, see the present author's *Africa—The Roots of Revolt*, London, 1960, especially chapters 1 and 2.

² See Shepperson, George, and Price, Thomas: *Independent African*, Edinburgh, 1958, p. 35.

at a time when in other regions conquest itself was still being resisted.

After 1914, by which time most of Africa had been conquered by the European powers, a whole variety of struggles against the consequences of foreign domination unfolded. Land, taxation, working conditions, trade competition—these were amongst the main issues around which the battles raged.

In Kenya, as early as August 1914, a rising took place in the Giriama country, north of Mombasa, as a consequence of an attempt to move Africans from their land.¹ By 1918, the protest movement in Kenya against land alienation had become widespread; and by 1921 it had erupted in the great nation-wide struggles associated with the name of Harry Thuku, in protest against not only the land seizures but also wage cuts, an increase in the poll tax and the imposition of forced labour.² Grievances about land and labour were also among the main causes of the Nyasaland Rising of 1915, when John Chilembwe led his band of men into a desperate and unequal battle against imperialism and war, a year before the Irish Easter Rising and two years before the Russian October Revolution. In Nigeria, the Egba Uprising (or Adubi War) of 1918 arose partly out of resentment over the imposition of British rule over the Egba Kingdom in Yorubaland after 1914 (it had retained a considerable measure of autonomy until then), and partly over the imposition of direct taxation in 1918. The revolt was supported by Egbas in Lagos who, in addition to resentment over the loss of Egba independence, were also angered by the introduction of the Lagos water rate.

The Aba riots of 1929 were another landmark in Nigeria's struggle for independence; they arose out of a proposal to tax women. The women, on their own, initiated a mass protest movement, and in the course of one of their mass demonstrations the police attacked them, killing fifty and wounding at least as many.

The first world war was also a cause of African protest, some of it directed openly against African involvement in the "white man's war". Liberia, for example, was the scene of rioting during

¹ Buell, Raymond Leslie: *The Native Problem in Africa*, New York, 1928, Vol. 1, pp. 373-4.

² For further details on this movement and its outcome, see pp. 38-40 of this present book.

this period. In Dahomey, too, a number of revolts took place, and by 1922 Porto Novo was in a state of siege. Perhaps the most clear-cut opposition to the war was that expressed by John Chilembwe, who had previously voiced his opposition to the employment of Nyasa troops in the Ashanti and Somaliland campaigns. In his important document, "The Voice of African Natives in the Present War", written towards the end of 1914, shortly after a skirmish between "German" and "British" forces in East Africa in which five-sixths of the casualties on both sides were African, Chilembwe declared:

"We understand that we have been invited to shed our innocent blood in this world's war which is now in progress throughout the wide world . . . A number of our people have already shed their blood, while some are crippled for life . . . In time of peace everything for Europeans only. And instead of honour we suffer humiliation and names contemptible. But in time of war it has been found that we are needed to share hardships and shed our blood in equality. It is true that we have no voice in this Government. It is even true that there is a spot of our blood in the cross of the Nyasaland Government. . . . If this were a war . . . such as war for honour . . . we would have been boldly told: Let the rich men, bankers, titled men, storekeepers, farmers and landlords go to war and get shot. Instead the poor Africans who have nothing to own in this present world, who in death, leave only a long line of widows and orphans in utter want and dire distress, are invited to die for a cause which is not theirs." ¹

In assessing the varied influences which have helped to shape the African national movements, we cannot ignore the ideas of Marxism, nor the consequences of the October Revolution of 1917 and the growth of socialism as a world system. It is, I think, true that many studies of the African national movements, having looked for direct, concrete evidence of Marxist and Communist influence and having found few traces of Communist organisation (apart from North Africa and the Union of South Africa), have tended to play down the role of Marxism in Africa.

Yet there can be no proper appreciation of developments in

¹ Quoted by Shepperson and Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-5.

Africa if one ignores the impact of the socialist world. Not only did the emergence of the Soviet Union after the first world war, and of the further socialist countries after the second world war, assist African liberation by weakening imperialism and ending its career as a single world system, but the very ideas of socialism have left their mark on Africa.

Does not John Chilembwe, for example, in his denunciation of war, go beyond mere protest against African involvement? Does he not, by his stress on "rich men, bankers, titled men" raise fundamental class questions, and imply that the war was in the interest of a particular class, the capitalist class? No one would claim, for a single moment, that Chilembwe was a confirmed student and conscious follower of Marx; yet he cannot have been unaffected by his sojourn in the United States, by the growing American trade union movement and the early socialist pioneers whose radical teachings penetrated into the ranks of the Negroes, the most oppressed section of the people. Early Negro leaders, like the great Frederick Douglass, were not at all untouched by socialist ideas, and it would be strange indeed if the Negro preachers, with their penchant for politics, had not been nourished by this stream.

The 1917 revolution in Russia, too, and the general post-1918 revolutionary atmosphere, had its effects. Not for nothing did missionaries in the Gold Coast complain about the "communist" tendencies amongst returned soldiers after 1918. Nor is it pure coincidence that a confirmed follower of Marxism, Dr. DuBois, initiated the First Pan-African Congress in 1919, and that under its impact, and that of the Negro people in the United States, Marcus Garvey should have inaugurated the Convention which issued its *Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World*.

There is bound to be considerable conjecture regarding the influence of the October Revolution on the people of Africa, at least until more research has taken place. But even if the effects were not always direct and consciously absorbed, there is no doubt that the hammer-blow struck against world capitalism by the Russian working class in 1917 shook not alone the foundations of Europe. In Asia, too, the reverberations were felt; and the testimony is in the 1918 Rice Riots in Japan, the 1919 May 4 Movement in China, the great strike wave and unrest in India in 1919-20 which the imperialists tried to halt by the Amritsar

massacre. One is surely justified in placing the big strike wave in South Africa in 1918-20 with its accompanying Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union movement, the birth of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1921, the formation of the West African National Congress in 1920, the Kenya crisis of 1921, the uprising in Dahomey in 1922, and the First Pan-African Congress of 1919 in the same category as the post-1917 upheavals in Asia. For the Russian revolution freed more than the Russian working class; it destroyed the entire tsarist empire, liberated the former colonies from their "prison-house" and thus opened the epoch of the downfall of colonialism no less than of capitalism.

Direct communist organisation, it must be admitted, is not yet widespread in Africa. Yet it exists and is growing in the Union of South Africa and in the territories of North Africa. In the former French territories, too, owing to the close links in the immediate post-war period between the African workers and the French General Confederation of Labour, the ideas of class and of socialism, the general theories of Marxism and of Communist Party organisation, have undoubtedly been an important element not only in the African trade union movement but also in the broader national movement as a whole.

How far can one say that Marxism is an influence in Africa today? No one can read the speeches of African national and trade union leaders, the resolutions and declarations of African conferences, the programmes and policies of African political parties, without seeing that the lessons of the socialist world, the experiences of the Soviet Union and China in the fields of economic planning, the importance of early industrialisation as a key to progress and economic independence, the policy of agrarian reform and co-operative farming, the nationalisation of foreign monopolies, the mass participation of people in carving out their own future, are having a profound influence upon African political thinking. The Soviet Union and China were both backward countries. Today the Soviet Union is the most scientifically and technically advanced country in the world, a powerful industrial country rapidly overhauling the United States, while China is well on the road to overcoming her former backwardness and becoming a modern industrialised power. Africa, as a vast underdeveloped continent, cannot but be interested in this breathtaking advance and it would be strange

indeed if she were not to make use of socialist methods in re-fashioning her economy and her social life.

It is significant that many national leaders in Africa have declared their support for "socialist" aims. As Hodgkin has remarked, "any African 'mass' party, if it wishes to gain popular support, must speak the language of modern radicalism".¹

Thus Marxism, too, has contributed to the growth of the African national movement and has become part of its political philosophy.

No examination of the African national movements would be complete without some reference to what Hodgkin² (in a most interesting analysis) has called "the prophets and priests". As in all cases where discontent is denied its normal channels of expression, protest in Africa has often found voice through religion. Sometimes this has been expressed through the Watch Tower movement, or through the activities of individual African "prophets", such as the Mwana Lesa movement in the 1920's in the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt, the movement in Tanganyika in the same period, the "Israelite" African movement of Enoch Mgijima in the Ciskei, South Africa, in which 163 Africans were killed in 1921, and, in particular, the Kimbanguist movement in the Belgian Congo after the first world war. Such movements, which arose in consequence of the people's misery and oppression, were naturally attracted to the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses and their Watch Tower missionaries, or to the messianic warnings of individual "prophets". The whole conception of the coming day of doom, of the sweeping away of the old order and the birth of a new life of joy was in tune with all the African people's deepest aspirations and pent-up hopes. In the midst of their darkest misery, they looked forward to the downfall of their oppressors and to their own coming liberation. That these movements were not merely religious is shown by their very clear connection with economic, social and political discontent. The leader of the Watch Tower movement in Nyasaland in the early part of the twentieth century was Elliott Kamwana—but he was deported from Nyasaland not alone for his Watch Tower activity, but equally because of his anti-hut tax agitation and his propaganda against European rule. Similar economic and social

¹ Hodgkin, Thomas: *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, London, 1956, p. 162.

² *ibid.*, pp. 93-115.

issues lie—even if more indirectly—behind the other manifestations of the Watch Tower movement and the support for individual “prophets”.

A more important form of religious activity which contributed to the growth of the African national movements in many territories was the struggle for independent African churches. The tradition for such churches goes back to the beginnings of Negro congregations among the plantation slaves in America, who were influenced by Baptist teaching. These Negro preachers were often imprisoned, say Shepperson and Price,¹ “for the levelling content of their teaching”, and they add that the slave disturbances of 1831 in Jamaica were spoken of as “a Baptist war”.

There is little doubt that the tradition of the American Negro preachers and their conception of a *political church*, a church which saw its role as that of participant in and mobiliser of the Negroes in their struggle against oppression and their oppressors, had considerable influence in Africa. Not only did American Negro Baptist preachers go to Africa, but Africans such as John Chilembwe, who was later to lead the Nyasaland rising of 1915, were educated among such preachers in America. The American Negro preachers have been described as the Negro people's “most active politicians . . . The two parts of minister and orator are played so skilfully at one and the same time that it is impossible to distinguish them . . . His church is thus converted into a political organisation that is consolidated by the religious fervour that pervades it . . .”² It was this tradition which led to Ethiopianism,³ or African religious nationalism, which was, at one time, such a powerful force in southern and central Africa. A high point of this Ethiopian movement was the formation in 1884 of the Tembu Church, the first African-controlled church in South Africa, founded by Nehemia Tile as a breakaway from white domination and discrimination in the church. Shepperson and Price are undoubtedly right when they say that “colour prejudice had stung many Africans to set up their own churches rather than face segregation and humiliation in the white man's place

¹ Shepperson and Price, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

² Bruce, Philip A.: *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman*, New York, 1889. Quoted by Shepperson and Price, *op. cit.*

³ Ethiopianism, as a term, had its origins in Biblical texts, but is believed to have taken on more direct association with political nationalism after the defeat of the Italians at Adowa in 1896 by the Ethiopians (Abyssinians).

of worship”.¹ Yet there was more to this development than a mere desire for one’s own place of worship cleansed of white domination. Shepperson and Price, in fact, stress that the African independent churches “often provided a medium for direct political activity”.² Forman, too, points out that “Tile was a turbulent priest . . . [who] was jailed in 1885 for urging the chiefs not to pay their taxes”.³ With justice, Forman asserts that the Tembu Church was “the first real manifestation of African Nationalism” in South Africa.

A similar development took place in this period in the German Cameroons, with the formation of a breakaway Native Baptist Church. This church soon became “the centre of protest against German rule”.⁴ African political agitation, fanned by the Native Baptist Church, developed over land questions, reaching its height in 1911, when the Germans seized a large area of Duala tribal territory. There was also grave discontent over taxation. This movement, led by the African pastor Lotin Same, was undoubtedly an important element in the growth of the people’s struggle against foreign rule and its consequences.

John Chilembwe’s movement in Nyasaland was of a similar character. It, too, was connected with the very real causes of African discontent—land, labour, taxation, and involvement in European wars. And, like Tile in South Africa and Same in the Cameroons, Chilembwe encouraged the growth of national feeling. “He was not of one tribe, but for all tribes”, according to one informant quoted by Shepperson and Price.⁵

From the 1870’s until the end of the first world war, Ethiopianism, African religious nationalism, was a powerful influence in many territories of Africa; and always it threatened to “boil over into revolt against European rule”.⁶

African political organisations, which today exist in every African territory, are not entirely a post-1945 phenomenon. In fact, their beginnings in many places can be traced back to the commencement of the twentieth century and even earlier. In South Africa, for example, the first African political organisation, the Imbumba Yama Afrika, was formed in the Eastern Cape as

¹ Shepperson and Price: *op. cit.*, p. 73.

² *ibid.*, p. 426.

³ Forman, Lionel: *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴ Shepperson and Price: *op. cit.*, p. 426.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 409.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 73.

early as in 1882; in 1883, the Coloured people formed the African-der League (Coloured); and in 1884 a Native Electoral Association was formed in Kingwilliamstown. In the same year, John Tengo Jabavu founded the first African political newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, and in 1902 the African Political Organisation (APO), embracing all non-Europeans in South Africa, was formed in Cape Town. African Native Congresses were set up at the beginning of the century in the Transvaal, Natal and the Free State, and a Native Convention held at Bloemfontein in 1909; this was the first occasion on which African leaders had come together from all over the Union to discuss their common problems. It was from these beginnings that on January 8, 1912, the South African Native National Congress, forerunner of today's A.N.C., was established.

In Nyasaland, it was the early self-help associations—such as the Mombera Native Association, founded in 1920—which appear to have first brought the Nyasa people together in modern organisational form, although Dr. Hastings Banda has claimed that the origins of the Nyasaland African Congress can be traced back to 1912, when the A.N.C. was first formed in South Africa. In support of Dr. Banda's view, it should be mentioned that already at that time labour migration from Nyasaland to the Union was common—in fact, a Nyasaland Native National Association was created in South Africa in 1920 to safeguard the interests of migrant workers from Nyasaland then working in South African mines and industries—so that it was only natural for influences from South Africa to make themselves felt in Nyasaland.

In Northern and Southern Rhodesia, too, early welfare associations laid the basis for later national organisations—though in these cases the development belongs to a later period. Such associations, it must be remarked, were, in their original purpose, far removed from the struggle for national independence. In fact, one Livingstonian missionary, commenting on native associations in Nyasaland, said:

“These native associations, if rightly guided, are going to be very useful. They are excellent safety valves . . . The Governor has wisely taken note of them.”¹

¹ Quoted by Shepperson and Price: *op. cit.*, p. 499, n.

Early Native Welfare Societies in Northern Rhodesia certainly seemed to live up to such expectations. The Luanshya society, for example, stressed its desire "to co-operate with the government" and "with the District Commissioner". Native Welfare Societies were formed in Northern Rhodesia in 1932 and although they had a fluctuating influence they certainly contributed towards bringing the people together in organisational form and thus laid the basis for higher forms of association. In 1946, these societies came together to form a Federation of Welfare Societies which, in 1948, was reconstituted as the Northern Rhodesia Congress (the words "African National" were added in 1951, after the first president of the Congress, Godwin Lewanika, was replaced by Harry Nkumbula).

In Southern Rhodesia, organisations date from after the first world war, when chiefs and villagers formed the Southern Rhodesia Native Association, while the workers set up the Industrial and Commercial Union under the influence of this body's rapid growth in the Union of South Africa. From these origins the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress was born. It had a chequered and rather ineffective history. Other organisations—the African Voice Association led by B. B. Burumbo, a revived Southern Rhodesia Native Association, the All-African People's Convention—rose and fell until, in 1957, the old Southern Rhodesia Congress was re-born.

In Kenya, political organisations date from after the first world war. The movement between June 1921 and April 1922, in which Harry Thuku and Jomo Kenyatta played parts, gave rise to an organisation variously called the Young Kikuyu Association, and the East Africa Native Association. In 1925, after the suppression of this early movement, the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association and the Kikuyu Karinga Education Association were set up. The purpose of these associations was not to educate Africans in the typical colonialist fashion, but to teach the Kenya people about their own history and problems, and thus to impart to them a feeling of national consciousness and a desire to end colonial oppression. The schools movement was, therefore, an important element in the growth of the national struggle. (Similar independent African schools were established by John Chilembwe in Nyasaland.) In 1928, the Kikuyu Central Association was formed, with Jomo Kenyatta as its secretary. This Association was suppressed in 1940 as "sub-

versive", following its agitation against the land distribution in Kenya.¹

In West Africa, too, organisations date from the very beginnings of the imperialist epoch. In 1908, two African doctors in Lagos, Nigeria, organised the People's Union to defend African rights in general, especially in relation to land but also as a form of protest against the then proposed water rate. Shortly afterwards, and again in response to the Colonial Office's threat to deprive Africans in southern Nigeria of the right to own land, the Lagos Branch of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society was formed. This organisation also had branches in the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, and here, too, defence of African land was its main *raison d'être*. In 1920, at the invitation of J. E. Casely Hayford, a Gold Coast lawyer and journalist, and with the help of Dr. Bankole Bright, a Sierra Leone doctor, and Herbert Macaulay, a Nigerian civil engineer and journalist, a conference was held at Accra, with delegates from Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia, at which a decision was taken to establish the National Congress of British West Africa. This Congress disintegrated in 1930, says Nkrumah, "because it lacked the support of the masses".² In 1923, Herbert Macaulay established the Nigerian National Democratic Party, and in the same year the Union of Young Nigerians was formed. This latter body was succeeded by the Lagos Youth Movement, which, in its turn, made way for the Nigerian Youth Movement (1936). This, like the Youth Movement associated with Wallace Johnson in Sierra Leone, became an important mass organisation, and by 1938 could claim 10,000 members and nearly twenty provincial branches throughout Nigeria. It was not until 1944, towards the end of the war, that the Nigerian National Council was formed. Dr. Azikiwe became its general secretary, and Herbert Macaulay its president. With the affiliation of the Cameroonian organisations in Lagos, the name of the organisation was changed to the

¹ On June 1, 1947, the First Congress of the Kenya African Union was held at Nairobi, with delegates present from the Kikuyu, Luo, Masai, Kavirondo, Kamba and other peoples; its aim was to build a national front of all Africans in Kenya. By 1950, it had a membership of 100,000, with branches throughout the country. In support of its demands it collected a million signatures; but this only aroused the anger of the white settlers who successfully persuaded the government to declare a State of Emergency in 1952 and to ban the Kenya African Union in June 1953. Its heir today is the Kenya African National Union (KANU).

² Nkrumah, Kwame: Preface to his *Autobiography*, London, 1957.

National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.); and in January 1945, it held its Constitutional Convention.¹

In the Gold Coast (now Ghana), too, political organisations have a considerable history. As early as 1871 a number of chiefs and professional people set up the Fanti Confederation to agitate against legislation considered inimical to their interests and even to demand steps towards self-government. In 1897, in protest against the proposed Public Lands Bill, similar forces of chiefs and educated sections of the people established the Aborigines Rights Protection Society. Its agitation against the Bill was so successful that it was withdrawn in 1900 and replaced by the Concessions Ordinance which though it gave British courts some supervision over the validity of concessions, nevertheless made it clear that the African people still retained possession of their land. After this victory, the Society continued to lead protests against the various actions of the government which were detrimental to the interests of the African inhabitants of the Gold Coast.

The Sierra Leone branch of the Society compelled the governor of the colony to reject the Lever Brothers' bid to purchase land for plantations in that territory in 1905; and a similar campaign in Nigeria was no doubt largely responsible for the failure of Lord Leverhulme to obtain land in Nigeria for plantations in 1926. The consistent opposition of the people of West Africa to British plantations is, without doubt, one of the main reasons for the fact that today the dominant pattern in this part of Africa is that of the individual African farmer rather than the European capitalist plantation or farm which is so typical of South Africa, the Rhodesias or Kenya.

At the end of the first world war there was a considerable growth of discontent and an increased readiness on the part of the African people to protest and assert their voice. Bourret² says that in the Gold Coast in the opinion of missionaries, "some of the trouble was due to returned soldiers who had lost much of

¹ The Action Group was not formed until 1951, although its origins can be traced in the Pan-Yoruba cultural organisation, the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, which was set up in London in 1945 and in Nigeria in 1948. The Northern Elements Progressive Association (NEPA) was set up in 1945, and its successor, NEPU, in 1950. The Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was formed in December 1949.

² Bourret, F. M.: *Ghana—The Road to Independence 1919–1957*, London, 1960, p. 40 fn.

their respect for Europeans during their war contacts. Communistic propaganda, and echoes of the Pan-African movement all helped to feed the new spirit of dissatisfaction.' A similar spirit of revolt, on a much higher level, was to find expression in many territories after the second world war (see below).

Thus the movement of protest against the effects of foreign rule took many forms and arose from many different causes. Land and taxation have been major points of conflict between the African people and the colonialists from the very beginning—and to this day remain key causes of friction. But alongside such issues, other questions have increasingly come to the fore—the rights of African traders in opposition to the big foreign monopolies; the demand for credit for African entrepreneurs and the steps, as in Nigeria, for instance, to create African banks; the demands of African farmers for the right to grow the crops of their own choice and to receive better prices for them; demands for better education, for universities, for technical training, for the entry of Africans into positions of responsibility, and for the Africanisation of the civil service.

In the decade prior to the second world war such demands mounted rapidly. But in this period one can also detect a certain shift of emphasis, the entry of a new voice with its own demands and its own forms of action and organisation. The African working class, which had by no means been silent all these years, now began to make a stronger impact on the whole movement. The workers strove to organise, and strikes broke out—for higher wages, against discrimination, or in protest against the various forms of persecution and intimidation to which they were subjected.

On the basis of all this discontent, African political organisations developed. And now, more and more insistently, was raised the demand for Africans to have more say in the running of their own countries, to be no longer treated as second-class citizens in the land of their birth. From the dissatisfaction and strivings of all oppressed classes dawned a growing understanding that *political power* in the hands of Africans was essential to the elimination of all the evils from which the people suffered. It was, however, only after 1945 that this idea seriously seized on the whole people, was transformed into the burning desire and demand of all

Africans, and thus became a material force destined to sweep colonialism off the map of Africa.

In tracing the development of the independence movements in Africa one must pay attention to another important influence, and that is the series of Pan-African Congresses which, under the inspiration of Dr. DuBois, commenced in 1919. Not until forty years later, after Ghana had won independence, was it possible to hold such Congresses on African soil. Paris, London, Brussels, Lisbon, New York, Manchester—these were, perforce, the locations of the Pan-African Congresses. Owing to the conditions under which they were held, direct living contact with the movement in Africa itself was not always possible; delegates were often students or temporary exiles from Africa. Yet it would be wrong to assume that these gatherings were, in any fundamental sense, unrepresentative. They were, in a way, the voice and conscience of Africa; and increasingly they became the thinking advance-guard of the African movements, many of their adopted policies and declarations predating by a number of years the programmes of the African political parties found today in every territory. Further, a number of delegates to these Congresses were later to return home where they became the leaders of the national movements they initiated. Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah were amongst such leaders.

The First Pan-African Congress, held in Paris at the time of the Versailles peace conference, was attended by fifty-seven delegates. Its resolution, in addition to covering questions of land, labour, education, capital and the state, proclaimed the right of Africans to participate in the government, commencing with local and tribal government, and being gradually extended "to the higher offices of state; to the end that, in time, Africa is ruled by consent of the Africans". Thus, at an early date, the principle of full political rights for Africans was adopted, though at this stage it was seen as an eventual achievement rather than as an immediate demand.

The Second Congress was held in 1921, in London and Brussels. It was larger than the Paris Congress, there being 113 delegates. Of these, there were 41 from Africa, 35 from the United States, 24 representing Negroes living in Europe, and 7 delegates from the West Indies. Thus, it was still not fully representative of African opinion. The Congress adopted a "Declaration to the

World" which called for "the establishment of political institutions among suppressed peoples". It demanded "local self-government for backward groups", leading to "complete self-government", and included a demand for "the return of Negroes to their land and its natural fruits, and defence against the unrestricted greed of invested capital".

The Third Congress, held in Lisbon and London in 1923, was smaller than the Second, but it adopted a number of important resolutions in which it demanded a voice for Africans in their own governments, the development of Africa for the Africans and not merely for the profit of Europeans, and the organisation of commerce and industry so as to make the main objects of capital and labour the welfare of the many rather than the enriching of the few. Another most significant and far-sighted demand was that for world disarmament and the abolition of war; at the same time, bearing in mind the actual situation of the African people and the oppression and discrimination from which they suffered, the Congress also demanded the right of Africans to bear arms in their own defence.

The Fourth Congress was planned to take place on African soil, in Tunisia, but it was vetoed by the French authorities. The delegates therefore convened in New York, in 1927. There were 208 of them, but naturally with a heavy weight from the United States itself. Shortly afterwards, the onset of the world economic crisis resulted in the falling away of funds for the Pan-African Congress movement, especially from American Negro sources which played a major role in this respect. External activity was still to influence developments in Africa, however; this was particularly true of the world-wide campaign in support of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) at the time of the attack by fascist Italy. But the second world war interfered with such activities as the holding of Pan-African Congresses on a world scale, and it was not until 1944 that the threads could be taken up again.

In 1944, the Pan-African Federation, together with other African organisations based in Britain, combined with the Kikuyu Central Association of Kenya, the Sierra Leone section of the African Youth League,¹ and the Gold Coast Friends of African Freedom Society to hold a conference in Manchester.

¹ Despite its name, this was not strictly speaking a "youth" organisation, but a national organisation, the word "youth" being used here more in the sense in which we talk of the Young Turks, or the Young Egypt movement.

Conference proclaimed the unity of the African peoples and peoples of African descent throughout the world; self-determination and independence for African peoples and other subject races; equal rights and the abolition of all forms of racial discrimination.

Thus, from 1919 to 1944, African leaders met on a world-wide basis, to exchange experiences, discuss in common their problems and elaborate their demands and policies. Room prevents us from doing full justice here to the considerable detail with which these problems were examined and policies for their solution worked out; yet no real appraisal of the African national movements can be made without taking into account the work of the Pan-African Congress movement. There is one further aspect of its work which has influenced considerably events in Africa: by bringing together African representatives from all parts of the continent it enabled them to see what was common in their problems and thus helped to deepen that all-African solidarity which is playing such a significant role in African affairs today.

With the victory over fascism in the second world war a new phase commences in the struggle for African freedom. The period from 1945 to 1960 can be characterised as one in which the working class, organised into trade unions, advances to a central position in the national movement; political organisations acquire a mass character and are no longer confined to the most advanced territories but spring up everywhere; the people pass decisively from defensive protest actions against the effects of imperialist rule to the open challenge to colonial domination itself, to the demand for political power; the tide of anti-imperialist revolt engulfs the whole continent and direct colonial rule is swept away in most of Africa.

Elements of this phase are already discernible in the period between the wars, a period in which, arising from the struggles for partial demands in protest against the consequences of foreign rule, the African people begin to organise and through these organisations, political and trade union, to express their demands in programmatic form. As a consequence, demands, programmes and organisations begin to take on a territory-wide significance, national consciousness grows, and the demand for national independence, the ending of colonial rule and the placing of political power in the hands of the African people increasingly

becomes the central question of the day. Yet, even though these changes in the scope and character of the movements were already evident before 1945, it is only in the last fifteen years that they have become decisive, and thus mark a distinct new phase.

The demand for independence is not new in Africa. In 1868, James A. B. Horton, in his work *Political Economy of British West Africa*, advocated self-government for West Africa. The Fanti Confederation in the Gold Coast demanded self-government in 1871. Ten years later a Nigerian paper boldly declared:

“ . . . The present order of things will not last for ever. A time will come when the British colonies on the West Coast will be left to regulate their own internal and external affairs.”¹

Yet such demands had not, in general, entered the programmes of the people's organisations, nor were they yet taken up by the African people as a whole. In fact, an examination of political programmes and resolutions of African organisations in the period up to the second world war shows that reforms together with *participation* in government were the main content of the demands rather than the outright claim for immediate full independence, for one man one vote and majority rule, for African national independence. This was certainly shown, for example, in the first three Pan-African Congresses. Similarly, the South African Native National Congress of 1912 saw its task as being “to educate Parliament and Provincial Councils, Municipalities, other bodies and the public generally regarding the requirements and aspirations of the Native people” and to seek “equitable representation of Natives in Parliament or in those bodies that are vested with legislative powers or in those charged with the duty of administering matters affecting the Coloured races”.

The National Congress of British West Africa—although its use of the word “national” expressed the far-reaching aspirations of this body—went no farther than to demand, amongst other reforms, a Legislative Council in each West African territory, with fifty per cent African elected members. Similarly, when the Nigerian National Democratic Party was formed, it, too, despite its name, made no forthright demand for independence but advocated a number of reforms, including education, economic development and the Africanisation of the civil service. Even as

¹ *Lagos Times*, March 9, 1881.

late as 1938, the Nigerian Youth Charter was still prepared to "accept the principle of trusteeship as the basis of co-operation with the British Government in Nigeria".

In fact, as Dr. Dike has said of the Nigerian struggle for independence, "at the beginning, the fight was not so much for self-government but for a measure of participation in the existing government".¹ This, by and large, was true of most movements in Africa before 1945. Since then, however, the clamour for independence has become so loud that any African organisation failing to put this demand in the forefront of its programme commands no support from the African people.

It is sometimes suggested that oppression itself produces revolt. No people has suffered more from oppression and discrimination than the African people; yet it is not this which alone explains the dynamics of the present upsurge. Oppression existed throughout the European epoch in Africa; for more than 400 years the people have shed tears and blood. What is new, what has made the change in the past fifteen years, is not repression but the rapid break-up of the old Africa, the growth of a working class, intelligentsia and local capitalist class; that is to say, the creation of new class forces which, influenced, inspired and aided by the socialist world and by the independence movements of Asia, have been able to unite and to create a national consciousness which now embraces the entire people. It is this which has set in motion the great African liberation movement of the 1950's and 1960's.

That a new stage had been reached was obvious when the Fifth Pan-African Congress was held in 1945. Its actual preparations coincided significantly with the first Conference of the World Federation of Trade Unions, held in London in February 1945. The presence at this conference of a considerable number of trade unionists from Africa and the West Indies helped to give a new basis of representation and a new content to the Pan-African Congress which was to be held later in the year. At a preliminary delegate conference held in Manchester, in March 1945, representatives from African and West Indian organisations in Britain, together with delegates from the colonial trade unions backing the new World Federation of Trade Unions, drew up a provisional programme and agenda for the Fifth Pan-African

¹ Dike, Dr. K. Onwuka: "The Making of Nigeria", *Latitude*, July-September 1960, p. 27.

Congress. As a consequence, this Congress, held in Manchester in October 1945, fully reflected the growing mass organisations sprouting in Africa—political parties, trade unions and farmers' organisations—together with patriotic students and intellectuals temporarily resident in Europe. Past Pan-African Congresses, despite the efforts of their organisers, had been mainly gatherings of small groupings of intellectuals. This was almost inevitable under the conditions prevailing before 1945. But by the end of the second world war the world had been so transformed and the movements in Africa had made such progress that it was now the mass organisations, especially the trade unions, that were to be the dominant influence at the Fifth Pan-African Congress.

The resolutions adopted by the Congress expressed the change no less than did the basis of representation. In significant anticipation of current attempts to forestall African independence, the Congress denounced "partnership" along with "trusteeship" and "guardianship" as manœuvres which did not "serve the political wishes" of the African people. In its resolutions on West Africa and its appeal to the Labour Government on East Africa, the Congress drew attention to all the most pressing needs and demands of the African people—democracy, artificial boundaries, economic resources, industrialisation, land, rights for trade unions and co-operatives, foreign control of mining, exploitation by big European traders, mono-culture, racial discrimination, freedom of speech, press, association and assembly, taxation, education, the franchise, health and medical services, forced labour, and equal pay for equal work. It sent greetings to the peoples of India, Indonesia and Vietnam—all of them then struggling for independence—thus presaging Bandung and the Afro-Asian solidarity of the 1950's and 1960's. It further adopted a Declaration to the Colonial Powers which, *inter alia*, proclaimed:

"The delegates believe in peace. How could it be otherwise when for centuries the African people have been the victims of violence and slavery? Yet, if the Western world is still determined to rule mankind by force, then Africans, as a last resort, may have to appeal to force in the effort to achieve freedom."

Demanding autonomy and independence, the Declaration continued:

“ . . . We are unwilling to starve any longer while doing the world's drudgery, in order to support by our poverty and ignorance a false aristocracy and a discarded imperialism . . . We will make the world listen to the facts of our condition. We will fight in every way we can for freedom, democracy and social betterment.”

One cannot help but notice the difference not only in tone but also in the character and preciseness of the demands of the 1945 Congress in comparison with those of the pre-war years. The 1945 Congress, in contrast to the earlier ones, was a fully-developed, anti-colonial Congress, clearly internationalist in spirit, and influenced by socialist thought no less than by anti-imperialist struggle.

This is vividly brought out in its separate Declaration to the Colonial Peoples:

“We affirm the right of all colonial peoples to control their own destiny. All colonies must be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political or economic.

“The peoples of the colonies must have the right to elect their own governments, without restrictions from foreign powers. We say to the peoples of the colonies that they must fight for these ends by all means at their disposal.

“The object of imperialist powers is to exploit. By granting the right of colonial peoples to govern themselves that object is defeated. Therefore, the struggle for political power by colonial and subject peoples is the first step towards, and the necessary prerequisite to, complete social, economic and political emancipation . . . Colonial workers must be in the front of the battle against imperialism . . . Today there is only one road to effective action—the organisation of the masses. And in that organisation the educated colonials must join. Colonial and subject peoples of the world, Unite!”

We have come a long way from the First Pan-African Congress of 1919.

How decisively 1945 marked a watershed in modern African history is indicated by the 1946 Labour Department Report for Kenya, in which the Labour Commissioner wrote with evident anxiety:

"The African is now becoming politically and industrially conscious and this factor more than any other is determining labour supply and relations today. The paternal attitude to labour is not yielding results and many employers are disappointed that their welfare activities are not being appreciated. The African is now feeling his way towards the expression of his own individualism and this will show itself in the formation of political societies and trade unions."¹

The formation of the Kenya African Union in 1946 and the twelve-day stoppage of work by 15,000 workers in the Mombasa General Strike of 1947 fully bore out the anxious prophecies of this Labour Commissioner. The same process went ahead in other African territories, as shown, for example, by the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons in 1944, and the Nigerian general strike of 1945.

A key element in the growth of the African revolt in this period was the return of the African soldiers who had taken part in the second world war. African troops have seldom been an entirely safe and reliable force for imperialism, and their revolts and protest movements have played an important part in the development of African national consciousness. The mutinies of Congolese troops in 1895 and 1897 and of Sudanese troops in Uganda in 1897 are only three of a number of revolts of African troops in the last sixty years or so. Further research into the extent and character of these movements, and especially during the period of the first and second world wars and their immediate aftermath, would no doubt throw additional light on the growth of the African movements for independence. The second world war, in particular, gave rise to considerable unrest amongst African troops. Large numbers of these forces were recruited in many parts of Africa; they fought in distant lands, were caught up in the whole spirit of the anti-fascist war, and returned home very different men from when they left.

"Things will never quite be the same again," complains a special report on the African returned soldiers, submitted to the Governor of Kenya in April 1946.² Referring to mass meetings of 10,000 ex-soldiers being held at that time to voice their discontent, the Report continues:

¹ *Department of Labour, Kenya, Annual Report for 1946*, Nairobi, p. 6.

² Quoted in the *Report of the Labour Department, Kenya, for 1946*, p. 29.

“There is a new factor in the native areas and this must be met by a new approach. . . . on the whole, the soldier is definitely unwilling to return to work as an ordinary labourer. . . . Economic necessity may eventually drive him out to work for private employers, but not on present-day conditions nor at the present rate of wages. This economic necessity will have to be put across fairly carefully, or it will otherwise be regarded as yet another instance of the exploitation of the African by the White Settler. It is in any event bound to give rise to a feeling of unrest on the part of the African.”

Such manifestations of discontent on the part of African troops were not to be confined to Kenya. In February 1944, members of the Congolese armed forces mutinied at Luluabourg Barracks; in February 1948, unemployed ex-servicemen demonstrating in a procession in Accra were fired on by police, several of the demonstrators being killed or wounded; and in Nigeria, the Unemployed Ex-Servicemen's Union literally captured the large eastern town of Umahia, in 1951, and kept the European community and officers of the provincial administration incommunicado for several days.¹

A form of struggle which the African people have used to particular effect has been the boycott. As an oppressed people who, for decades, have been denied even the most elementary forms of democratic liberties, Africans have found in the boycott an additional weapon well suited to their circumstances and, at certain times, a valuable means of conducting partial struggles. Thus there have been bus boycotts (in South Africa, Kenya, and Southern Rhodesia), shop and trading boycotts (in South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, the Gold Coast, and Uganda), a boycott of labour recruitment (Pondoland), and tax boycotts in almost every territory. Similarly, various forms of civil disobedience—such as refusal to co-operate with the agricultural, forestry or fishing regulations of the colonial authorities—have, at times, been utilised by the African people in the course of their struggles.

The period from 1945 to 1960, which I have characterised as the third phase of the African anti-imperialist revolt, has been

¹ Coleman, James S.: *Background to Nationalism*, Cambridge University Press, 1958, p. 462 n.

one of such immense dimensions, pace and variety that it is only possible here to mention some of its main landmarks, and summarise its main lessons. It was, as we have seen, a period of rising national consciousness, a period of the formation and growth of African political organisations, dedicated increasingly to the aim of early political independence. It was equally a period of the establishment and building up of trade unions, and of great strike struggles. These working-class activities contributed decisively to the national movements throughout Africa. Speaking of Nigeria, Coleman¹ has pointed out that notwithstanding the relatively small percentage of wage-labour in the total population, "the main weight of active nationalist support came from the 100,000-odd clerks, artisans and skilled labourers", especially in government employment, transport, mining and trade. He adds the significant remark that "it is not the number of wage labourers or of salaried workers but their strategic position in the structure of the economy and the administration" which accounts for their important role in the national movement. In Nigeria, the struggles of miners, railway workers and United Africa Company employees were undoubtedly a key factor, contributing greatly to the heightened national consciousness of the Nigerian people as a whole, and not merely to that of the workers directly involved in these battles. The strikes against the U.A.C. were specially significant since this octopus was regarded by the whole people as a symbol of British imperialist domination. Coleman rightly says that the 1945 general strike in Nigeria "served as a dramatic opening of a new nationalist era".² He adds that one of the present leaders in the Northern Region told him that "the general strike of 1945 marked the beginning of racial and political consciousness in the north, although only a few northerners had participated in it". A similar effect was produced by the South African miners' strike of 1946, the Gold Coast general strike of 1950, the Kenya general strike of the same year, the big wave of strikes on the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt in the 1950's and the strike movements in a number of other territories. Yet most studies on the African national movements have paid far too little attention—and in many cases virtually none at all—to the growth and struggles of the African working class and trade unions. It is in part to make good this

¹ Coleman, James S.: *op. cit.*, p. 70.

² *ibid.*, p. 259.

omission that the following chapter of this book is devoted entirely to the problems of the African trade unions.

If 1960 marks the end of one phase of Africa's battle, a phase in which the struggles of the people are crowned, for the first time, with decisive victories and direct colonial rule is at long last swept away, a new fourth phase is also begun in this year. We have traced the anti-imperialist struggles of the African people from their early beginnings to their triumphs in the 1960's. Many different strands have been woven together to produce the multi-coloured independence flags which now fly proudly beneath African skies. Early armed resistance to conquest, opposition to involvement in the first world war, the protest movements and mutinies of African troops, "prophetic" and "messianic" manifestations, attempts to form independent African churches, and independent schools, Native Welfare Associations, defence of land and opposition to taxation and water rates, the struggles of African traders, farmers and capitalists against the big foreign monopolies, the demands and strikes of the growing working class, various boycott campaigns, the demands of the whole people for an end to racial discrimination and passes, for political rights and for democracy, the people's attempts to weaken the influence and power of feudal and conservative-minded chiefs, the spread of the ideas of socialism and, in some places, the formation of communist organisations or groups—all these have been welded together to form the modern national movements which are now freeing Africa from direct colonialist rule.

These very victories face the African people with new problems, which may be termed the fourth phase in Africa's modern history. From now, in 1960, onwards—while much of Africa still has to win political independence—the African people and their organisations in most of the continent will have the task of consolidating and defending their newly won political independence, and of completing their national-democratic revolutions. This requires the following up of their political victories over imperialism with the winning of economic independence, reconstructing their economies through land reform and industrialisation, establishing their own control over banking and trade, extending democracy and eliminating harmful tribal and feudal institutions, rights and customs, introducing economic and social reforms to improve the people's standard of living, creating

greatly increased educational facilities for the people and making possible the flourishing of African culture.

Such questions are receiving the increasing attention of the new African states, but few have yet had the opportunity to do more than make a beginning. Ghana and Guinea have, perhaps, had most experience in these matters; but even for them it is only an experience of a couple of years, and naturally many problems still remain. But just as the first victories of Ghana and Guinea inspired the rest of Africa to win political independence, so will the efforts of all the new African states to consolidate and strengthen their sovereignty influence one another. In no part of Africa has the movement advanced in isolation. Ghana's victory in 1957 and that of Guinea of 1958 would not have been possible without Bambata's Rebellion in 1906, the Nyasaland Rising of 1915, the Kenya Rising of 1921, the struggles of the Tanganyika coffee growers in the 1920's, the Nigerian Aba riots of 1929, the African soldiers' protests in the 1940's and the big strike struggles and political demonstrations of the 1950's. Great mass parties like the Ghana Convention People's Party, the Guinea Democratic Party, the Southern Rhodesian National Democratic Party and others, are, in a sense, the descendants of the African National Congress, first founded in 1912, of the National Congress of British West Africa, formed in 1920, and of the other early pioneering efforts on the continent of Africa to establish African political organisations.

It is imperialism as a whole which is the common enemy of the African people; and for that reason each blow struck against its rule in any part of Africa has assisted the struggles of the African people everywhere. As each blow, however small and relatively weak, has been struck against the wall of colonial oppression, so has some of the structure been knocked away; bit by bit the wall has crumbled, until today it is toppling down, and the African people are advancing over its ruins. The cocoa boycott in the Gold Coast in the 1930's, the big protest movements in Nigeria in the 1940's and early 1950's, the revolt in Madagascar in 1947, the Kenya Emergency in 1952 and the following years, the crisis over the Central African Federation since 1953, the Treason Trial, Sharpeville and Pondoland in the Union of South Africa, the Portuguese massacre of Africans in S. Thomé Islands in February 1953 and the mounting wave of revolt in Angola in 1961, the present wars in Algeria and Cameroun, the current crisis in the

Congo—these are but the more recent manifestations of a process which began even before the commencement of this century.

It is not intended, here, to write a history of all these movements. This is an important task which is yet to be achieved, and it is to be hoped that those best able to do this, the African people themselves, will turn their thoughts in this direction now that they are winning political independence and thus gaining new opportunities to carry out research into their own rich history. While much will be learnt from Africa's more distant past, it is particularly to her experiences in the twentieth century that one must turn in order to understand the modern independence movements and the problems which they now face.

CHAPTER TWO

AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS COME TO THE FORE

§ I TRADE UNIONS WIN RECOGNITION

IN examining the course of the African people's revolt against colonialism in the past two decades it is important to pay special attention to the role of the African working class and of its trade unions. That the period 1945-60, in which the struggle for Africa's independence has reached its greatest heights, has also been the period of the most rapid growth of African trade unionism and in which an unprecedented storm of strike battles has taken place, seems to have escaped the attention of a surprising number of writers on African affairs. Yet everywhere it has been the mass actions of the workers which have helped pave the way for the post-war upsurge of the national struggles and the growth of the national political parties and organisations.

It was the demonstrations of unemployed ex-servicemen in 1948 and the general strike of 1950 which led to the victories of the Convention People's Party in Ghana. In Nigeria it was the general strike of 1945, the shooting of the miners at Enugu in 1949 and the general strike which took place in protest against this massacre, followed by the successful strike against the United Africa Company in 1950, that gave such a great impetus to the N.C.N.C. and the whole Nigerian national movement in the post-war period. In Kenya, the general strike of 1950 preceded the "emergency" of 1952. The great miners' strike in the Union of South Africa in 1946 was a turning point in the post-war development of the African people's struggle in that country. The series of powerful strikes in Northern Rhodesia, especially

in the Copper Belt, in 1935, 1940, 1952, 1955, and 1956, served to shake up national feeling throughout Central Africa both before and after Federation. The big strike wave in Tanganyika, especially on the European-owned sisal estates, in 1956, 1957 and 1958 has led to a tremendous strengthening of the Tanganyika Africa National Union (TANU) and the national movement in this latter period. The advances in Guinea and other French African possessions were prefaced by a whole series of strikes, demonstrations and other actions by the working class in the 1940's and 1950's, especially for the Labour Code. And it was the action of the unemployed African miners demonstrating against their plight on the streets of Léopoldville, supported by tens of thousands of dockers, railwaymen and factory workers, which sparked off the big surge forward in the movement in the Congo at the beginning of 1959.

It is noteworthy, too, that in most African territories the formation of trade unions preceded the establishment of the powerful national and political organisations which exist today.

No one would argue that the modern anti-colonial revolt in Africa is purely a working-class struggle, nor that the participation and role of other sections of the population in the national movements is not of key importance. Yet the efforts of the workers have been of such weight and significance that an examination of their experiences is fundamental to any understanding of the political storm that has already won major victories for the majority of the African people.

Solely by Repression

The general attitude of most European employers of African labour at the beginning of the twentieth century (and, fundamentally, the outlook of most of them to this very day) is exemplified in the words of Ewart S. Grogan, later to be a strong advocate of the "hang the lot" policy during the 1952 Emergency in Kenya.

Writing in 1900¹ he said that what was needed was "a good sound system of compulsory labour"; Africans "should be compelled to work so many months in the year"; and he cynically added that this forced labour should be called "compulsory education". In deciding African wages, he went on, the rate should be "a very low one". Sweeping aside all humani-

¹ Grogan, Ewart S., and Sharp, Arthur H.: *From the Cape to Cairo*, 1900.

tarian considerations as sentimental nonsense, he declared "grotesque" the proposal that a European in charge of a district in Africa "must not give more than twenty-five lashes to a native".

This brutal feudal policy towards African labour, as events were to show, was all too often adopted by European employers in Africa, as well as by the governmental authorities concerned, even if the latter did not lapse into quite such crude outpourings as did Ewart Grogan.

Prior to the second world war African workers—with the exception of those in the Union of South Africa and, for a short time during the French Popular Front of 1936 to 1938, those in the French African colonies—were, to all practical purposes, denied any trade union rights.

Attempts by African workers to organise themselves, to set up trade unions and to conduct struggles to back up their demands were, in the main, crushed by sheer force.

British domination over the workers of Africa was maintained solely by means of repression. Trade unions were illegal in practically every British-held territory. In fact, Mr. James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the Colonies in the last Labour Government, has stated that in 1930 there were only three registered trade unions in all colonial territories.

Trade unions for African workers—and some were formed in this period—led a very precarious existence and were usually short-lived. They either were crushed by the employers and the governments or they tamely accepted official policy, lost the workers' support and so languished and eventually died.

In general, attempts to form trade unions, to organise workers, to hold meetings, take part in processions or publish material regarding workers' conditions were simply regarded as forms of conspiracy or revolt, and duly dealt with. Naturally, struggles were nevertheless mounted and strikes were not unknown. But they were looked upon by the authorities as attempts at revolution, and were met by the full force of the law, the police and the military. Those who attempted to organise workers so as to secure redress for their grievances were marked men and, if caught, received little sympathy from the authorities. Prison or exile were the most frequent sentences. And collective action always ran the danger of being replied to by baton, bayonet or bullet.

Despite this repression, the African workers struggled heroically for several decades to improve their conditions and win the right to organise. In fact, the first recorded African strike took place in 1874, when workers withdrew their labour in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In the Union of South Africa, too, there are reports of African strikes at the end of the nineteenth century, even before the first-known strike there of white workers. There are records, too, of a railway strike in Sierra Leone, in 1919; a railway strike in Nigeria in 1921; and a strike on the French-Niger railways in 1925. In Nigeria the first trade union, that of workers in the public services, was set up in 1912.

In South Africa big strike struggles developed after the first world war, during 1919–20, outstanding amongst these strikes being that of the Cape Town dockers and railwaymen. This development in the Union of South Africa brought into being the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (I.C.U.), a large general union, containing all the problems and weaknesses of other early efforts in the west to form "one big union". As a result of internal weaknesses and repression by employers and the government, it rapidly disintegrated and is now only a memory in the minds of African workers; but, at its peak in the 1920's, the I.C.U. had a membership of more than 100,000.

But despite these important and courageous pioneering efforts, the period before 1945 can be characterised as one of only the first beginnings of African working-class organisation; a period, moreover, in which imperialism was able to prevent the emergence on a mass scale of African trade unions.

Typical of the inter-war period was the fate meted out to the workers of Kenya, whose organisational efforts stretch back a considerable way, long before the 1952 Emergency period.

The period 1921–3 saw a great upheaval in Kenya. Widespread discontent occurred, following the first world war. Economic instability resulted in unemployment; there was a further wave of land evictions to make room for British settlers; a partially successful attempt was made to cut African wages by as much as a third; and a sharp rise was imposed in the poll tax which all Africans had to pay. Added to these grievances, which were already causing burning resentment, was the question of forced labour.

On June 24, 1921, a protest meeting was held at Dagoretu with the aid of the newly formed Young Kikuyu Association, at which

passionate denunciations were made of the forced labour of young women and girls. Specific mention was made of sixty who had been taken to work on a European estate the previous month, and a list was given of those who had been violated when working on these farms.

“Old men, the speakers continued, were being forced to work on private roads; the registration system was proving intolerable; heavy fines were being imposed on Africans cutting wood; cattle were being purchased under compulsion below market price. Legislation affecting the African people was being passed without their knowing anything about it until they were fined or imprisoned for non-compliance. No Government education was provided for their children. ‘When we went to do war work,’ they said, ‘we were told by His Excellency the Governor that we should be rewarded. But is our reward to have our tax raised and to have registration papers given us,¹ and for our ownership of the land to be called into question; to be told today that we are to receive title deeds and tomorrow for it to appear that we are not to receive them?’ ”²

In the following months many meetings took place. Thousands flocked into the organisation. In Nairobi over 20,000 workers were enrolled at one meeting. Great mass meetings and demonstrations were held throughout Kenya. Groups of men and women went from village to village, arousing the people and organising them. Even young children, who had been forced out of school in order to work on European farms, took part in the campaign, creating popular songs about the association and its leader, Harry Thuku,³ a young Kikuyu telephonist who had been employed at the Treasury.

A general strike was called—the first in Kenya and one of the earliest recorded on the African continent. Thousands quit their jobs. Workers on European farms and plantations stopped work. Domestic servants refused to cook and serve food for their British employers.

¹ The hated *kipande*, or registration certificate, which Africans were obliged to carry.

² Pankhurst, Richard K. P.: *Kenya: The History of Two Nations*, p. 59.

³ In later years Harry Thuku became a supporter of the colonial government.

After false promises had been made that taxation would be reduced and wages increased—a manoeuvre which called the strike to a halt—British imperialism met this justified activity of the people with the full weight of imperialist terror. The King's African Rifles, an African regiment under British officers, was mobilised. Troops surrounded Thuku's house, and on March 15, 1922, he and his brother were arrested. All records and documents of the Association were seized and taken to police headquarters.

Again the workers came out on strike, and a huge procession marched to the prison where Thuku was imprisoned to demand his release. The government replied by bringing out troops with armoured cars and machine-guns. Before the crowd could disperse the troops were ordered to open fire. A massacre ensued. It is difficult to ascertain precisely how many fell victim, but a letter published several years later in the *Manchester Guardian*,¹ written by a European who had witnessed the slaughter, gives the number of killed alone as 150, apart from the hundreds wounded, a number of whom are believed to have later died and their deaths to have been kept secret by their relatives for fear of retaliation from the authorities.

Mass arrests followed. Hundreds were given from two to three years' imprisonment, and others were fined for being absent from work without the permission of their employers.

Thus the first large-scale attempt by the working people of Kenya to organise met with stern repression and was crushed.

No better fate met the railway workers of Sierra Leone. In 1926, after repeated struggles and strikes, they formed the Sierra Leone Railwaymen's Union, drew up a list of demands and presented them to the European manager of the railways. The government replied by the immediate dismissal of a number of the men's leaders, and when the workers struck in protest against this high-handed action of the management they were met with wholesale repression. Once again a normal industrial action by workers was treated by the government as if it were a fundamental challenge to the existing system, the Governor going so far as to declare in a speech to the Legislative Council that "it was a revolt against the State by its own servants".

Workers in Uganda received similar treatment, an attempt to form trade unions in 1929 being crushed. While meeting in a chapel, the workers were suddenly attacked by British officials

¹ March 20, 1929.

accompanied by armed police. Five workers were killed and thirty wounded. Once again the local authorities and the Colonial Office in London justified this brutal action as a necessary measure against "sedition".

When workers at the Ariston Mines, in the Gold Coast, came out on strike in September 1930, in protest against a proposal by the Company to introduce a quarterly system of paying wages instead of monthly payments, the European managers and their staffs formed a vigilante squad (forerunners of the armed planters in Malaya after 1948, and the armed settlers in Kenya after 1952) and marched on the village where the African miners were holding a meeting. Without warning the armed squad fired into the crowd of miners and their families, killing five and wounding ten.

This pattern of repression continued throughout the inter-war period in Africa, though it was not always able to prevent African workers from winning partial victories. Thus when in October-November 1929 seamen in Bathurst, Gambia, struck for sixty-two days, to be backed later by a general strike lasting twenty days, despite an armed raid on the workers by the police, in the course of which some forty workers were wounded, the government was compelled to grant recognition to the Seamen's Society, to concede a wage increase and give a guarantee that there would be no victimisation. This general strike was the first in Bathurst's history, and was fully backed by the Bathurst Trade Union to which the Seamen's Society affiliated during the strike.

This victory in Gambia was the exception rather than the general rule, and does not change the general pattern in this period, which was one of repression, the crushing of strikes by armed force, and the prevention and stamping out of efforts to form trade unions. This policy was followed irrespective of what party was in office in Britain. Tory, Labour or "National" governments—there was little, if anything, to choose between them when it came to a question of "dealing" with "trouble" in the colonies.

In Northern Rhodesia, African miners on the Copper Belt were shot down when they struck in 1935 against increased taxation, and as late as 1940, when they struck again, this time for higher wages, police and troops intervened, and the troops opened fire, killing seventeen Africans and wounding a further sixty-three.

When a strike broke out in Mombasa, Kenya, in 1939 (it began with a strike of dock workers for higher wages but was quickly joined by other sections of workers throughout the town), police aided by reinforcements from Nairobi attacked the pickets, and an estimated five hundred workers were thrown into jail. In the same period a strike took place in the port of Tanga, in Tanganyika. Here, too, the strike began as a limited action for higher wages—this time by lighterage workers—and spread to other sections, including those engaged on the railways and in public works. Police, special constables and troops were called in. Pickets were fired on, one worker being killed and others wounded.

It is important to bear these pre-war struggles in mind—as well as the still bigger strike battles that took place after 1945—for the Colonial Office and the Fabians have combined to foster the myth that trade unionism in Africa was not the result of African effort but the fruit of British generosity.

“An important difference between the development of trade unions in colonial territories and in this country,” alleges Walter Bowen,¹ “is that the colonial unions *have not had to sustain a long and sometimes bitter struggle* to secure their legal rights.” [Own italics.—J.W.]

In the same fashion Luyt² argues:

“African workers are cutting-in on the trade union progression at an intermediate stage, a stage reached by *long years of struggle and sacrifice of which they know nothing . . .*” [Own italics.—J.W.]

Similarly the Fitzgerald Commission declared:³

“We would now be failing in our duty if we did not speak to the members of the Trade Unions of Nigeria with brutal frankness. We would first remind them that most of the things which are now regarded as the inalienable rights of the workers

¹ Bowen: Walter: *Colonial Trade Unions*, Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1954, p. 4.

² Luyt, R. E.: *Trade Unionism in African Colonies*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1949, p. 6.

³ *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disorders in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria (November 1949)*, Col. No. 256, 1950, p. 13.

have only been gained after a century of struggle by their fellow workers in the United Kingdom. The Nigerian worker should therefore consider himself fortunate that *he is not faced with a similar struggle* and that those hard won rights are available to him today if he chooses to act with reason." [Own italics.—J.W.]

It is almost incredible that these latter words could be uttered by a Commission actually enquiring into, and in the process whitewashing, the shooting and killing of twenty-one African mineworkers who were demanding higher pay. The sting in the tail of the Commission's remarks—"if he chooses to act with reason"—will not be lost on the reader.

How generous British imperialism was in "permitting" Africans to form trade unions, and how bitter and sustained was the struggle which African workers had to wage both before and after the second world war, first in order to win trade union recognition, and then to defend the limited trade union rights which had been won, is the subject of this and the subsequent chapter. From the facts already given and from those which follow it can be seen that the real picture, far from being the officially presented one of African workers being "enticed" into trade unionism by well-disposed colonial governments, is, in fact, one of continuous repression and violence. The African working class has literally had to fight every inch of the way to win and maintain trade union recognition, and even to this day its rights are constantly violated.

Old Wine in New Bottles

Already by the eve of the second world war the development of working-class struggles in the colonies was compelling British imperialism to modify its tactics.

The large-scale demonstrations which shook the British West Indies in 1937 were regarded as a clear warning signal. It was obvious that the old methods of rule were insufficient. New additional methods had to be found to enable Britain to maintain its hold on the colonial empire. The Forster Commission, and later the Moyne Commission of 1938-9, which were set up by the British Government to enquire into the causes of the West Indian disturbances and to advise the government on what steps it should take in order to avoid a recurrence of such developments,

indicated the new policy that was being prepared. Under government control tame "trade unions" were to be developed, which would co-operate with the employers and the government, and act as a cover under which the government could set to work to destroy the genuine militant organisations of the workers.

But this new policy was not adopted without considerable doubts and fears. Further pressure from the workers was necessary before British imperialism could be forced even into this partial concession on the question of legalising and recognising trade unions in the colonies, and especially was this true of Africa.

As late as 1939, in the Mombasa Enquiry Report, following the two weeks' strike in this important port in Kenya referred to above, Mr. P. de V. Allen, the Labour Commissioner for Kenya, was declaring:

"I am not in favour of trade unions for natives; the time is not ripe for this."

In speaking like this, Mr. Allen was not only echoing the traditional employers' view towards workers and trade unions, but equally the traditional racist view that Africans were "too backward" to be given the freedom of association.

That such discouragement of African trade unions was not limited to words, but backed up by the whole weight of the government's Labour Department in Kenya, is revealed by the same Mr. Allen in his Labour Department Report, 1942, in which he declared:

"I have no hesitation in saying if it had not been for a strong Labour Department, Kenya labour troubles in 1942 would have been much more serious and critical. The African labourer is awakening to the fact that he is holding a very strong hand."

But even if the Kenya employers and government, always amongst the most vehemently opposed to African aspirations, were reluctant to make a change, the African workers were on the move and could not be denied indefinitely.

The dilemma facing British imperialism in that period was

partly expressed by Hailey, writing in his pre-war edition of the *African Survey*:¹

“It may be questioned whether African workers are in general sufficiently advanced in capacity for organisation to form effective trade unions, or whether, in territories for which the state has assumed a full responsibility for their working conditions, such unions can serve any useful purpose. Experience has shown, however, that some collective means for the ventilation of grievances which may otherwise remain unknown to the authorities until disorders break out, is desirable.”

Of course, British imperialism eventually allowed the formation of trade unions by Africans, not so much to detect grievances which would remain unknown to the authorities if it were not for popular demonstrations and strikes but simply because of the pressure of the workers, who were determined to set up organisations and fight for their interests.

In his official report, *Trade Union Organisations and Industrial Relations in Trinidad*, prepared for the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1947 following on the riots in the Trinidad oil-fields, F. W. Dalley, a right-wing trade union leader, quotes with obvious approval the Forster Commission plea for “better relations between employer and employed”, not only in order to avoid a repetition of 1937, but also because “*since the strike, labour had made a serious attempt to organise itself into Trade Unions.*” [Own italics.—J.W.]

In other words, despite the employers and the government, the workers were finding the way to break through illegality and repression, to set up their trade union organisations and to conduct strikes for better wages and conditions. This was a process which the government could no longer prevent. Its only alternative, therefore, was to try to head off this development by forming government-controlled “unions”. Thus the Commission recommended “the encouragement of *authorised unions along recognised trade union lines by a new Labour Department*”. [Own italics.—J.W.] Here, then, was the pattern—unions, controlled by the government, to ensure undisturbed profits for the employers.

Throughout the war, therefore, legislation was introduced in

¹ Hailey, Lord: *An African Survey*, O.U.P., 1938, p. 698.

colony after colony, to make trade unions legal. In 1939 a Trade Union Ordinance was introduced in Nigeria; a similar Ordinance came into force in Sierra Leone in 1940, in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1941, and the same year saw one introduced into Tanganyika, too, while in 1943 trade unions were legalised in Kenya. And so it went on.

Yet, as we shall see later, whilst being compelled to allow the formation of trade unions, the Colonial Office took good care to see that its very trade union legislation was accompanied by so many "ifs" and "buts" and restrictions as severely to hamper the further development of trade unionism in Africa (and other colonies, too, for that matter) and ensure their being brought under government control.

It was only after the second world war that this new policy really began to be put into operation—and for obvious reasons.

The experiences of the war against fascism and the victory won in that war helped to unleash a great movement for democratic advance and national liberation in the entire colonial world. The workers, alive to the possibilities in the new situation, rapidly developed trade union organisation and thus forced out of a reluctant British imperialist government not only legal recognition of trade unions but a certain freedom to exercise that right in practice.

It is noticeable that one of the outcomes of the war was the formation of trade union centres throughout the colonial world. The years 1945 and 1946 were particularly outstanding in this connection, especially in Asia. April 1945 saw the formation of the Congress of Labour Organisations of the Philippines, June 1945 the All-Burmese Trade Union Congress, August 1945 the All-Korean Federation of Labour, 1946 the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, May 1946 the Viet-Nam C.G.T., and December 1946 the All-Indonesian Trade Union Centre (S.O.B.S.I.).

This wave of trade union activity burst over Africa, too, breaking through the rigid ramparts which for long had kept the African workers in check; and the formation of the Egyptian Trades Union Congress in May 1946, of the Trade Union of Workers of Tunisia (U.S.T.T.) in October 1946, and of the General Confederation of Unions of Morocco in 1946, was paralleled by the setting up of the Nigerian Trades Union Congress, the Non-European Council of Trade Unions in the

Transvaal, trade unions in the Gold Coast and in other African territories.

It thus became increasingly difficult for Britain to maintain its domination over the colonial workers in the old way, solely by repression, since the colonial workers were clearly unwilling to continue living in the old way and, moreover, were demonstrably powerful enough to make the old way inoperative.

Further, the promises made by the British Government during the war, and the ideological effect of the victory over fascism on the minds of the British workers, made it more difficult for the British Government to justify to the British workers the complete suppression of trade unions in the colonies. Important, too, has been the role played by the representatives of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in the councils of the United Nations, where they have consistently exposed colonialism in all its manifestations.

An important factor which British imperialism had to take into account was the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions in 1945. This powerful international trade union organisation included within its ranks not only trade unions from capitalist countries, but also trade unions from the socialist countries as well as from colonial and former colonial countries. Thus the overwhelming majority of the organised workers of the world were embraced by the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.), whose declared policy was, from the very outset, one of moral and material help to colonial workers and opposition to every form of imperialist oppression.

In the light of all these developments the Western Powers were compelled to seek new methods of keeping the workers in check. First, they strove to divide and weaken the W.F.T.U. Secondly, as already indicated, they had to find new methods of dealing with the growing trade union movement within the colonial territories.

Report after report reveals the aim of this new policy which historical necessity had forced on the British Government.¹ Thus

¹ In his recent book on the Cameroons Development Corporation Workers' Union (*A West African Trade Union*: Oxford, 1960) W. A. Warmington explains that one result of the 1945 strike in the Cameroons plantations was "to make both the management and the Government consider the advantages of a responsibly led workers' organisation in preventing disputes from attaining the proportion of strikes . . ." (p. 23). He adds that a further result was that the Labour Department took steps "to exert its influence on trade union development".

Major G. St. J. Orde Browne, Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in his report on *Labour Conditions in East Africa* (1946) stresses the need for the appointment of Trade Union Advisers

“to ensure that the growth of a trade union movement—*already perceptible in East Africa*—should be on sound and well-proved lines . . . With the help and advice of a practical exponent, the inexperienced unionist will learn proved methods of conducting business, and will be encouraged to conduct negotiations in a reasonable fashion, instead of indulging in the extravagant demands, backed by the threat of immediate strike, which formerly served only to alienate employers.”
[Own italics.—J.W.]

Facts were later to show that “sound and well-proved lines” meant “ready to give in to the employers”; and “inexperienced unionist” meant “workers fighting for their just demands which only the employer regards as extravagant.”

Similarly, the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disorders in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria* (November 1949) admits that many government officials “considered the unsophisticated African was not yet ready for the introduction of . . . trade unionism”, but that facts had to be faced. “. . . There can be no turning back the hands of the clock now. Trade unionism is part and parcel of the law of Nigeria; it cannot be ignored; it must be made to work.”

Perhaps the clearest exposition of this new British policy towards trade unions in the colonies is to be found in *Trade Unionism in the African Colonies*, a thesis written in 1949 by R. E. Luyt, who later became trade union adviser in Northern Rhodesia and subsequently Labour Commissioner in Kenya. In this booklet he writes:

“African workers, growing rapidly aware that it is in their interests to organise and act collectively . . . will organise and will act collectively whether governments or employers or anyone else wish to permit it or not. And such non-permitted, possibly illegal, collective action and organisation, by virtue of being illegal or without recognition, tends to be led by men more revolutionary and more irresponsible and less reasonable than the accepted and recognised trade union leaders have been.”

And so, concludes Luyt, in order to prevent the African workers developing their own militant trade union organisations, it is better to give them "encouragement and aid" so as to ensure that they are led by "the better African workers" and so "behave more responsibly and usefully"—usefully, that is, to the employers.

Clearly the question of trade unions in the colonies could no longer brook delay. Life had to be faced, and a way found to make concessions on paper whilst hoping to retain domination in reality.

An obvious parallel can be seen here with the wider question of national independence. It is fashionable these days, especially among the most vociferous former opponents of national independence for African and Asian countries, to make great play over the political independence gained by so many of these countries. India, Burma, Ghana and so on, have been *given* their freedom by a generous Britain, it is argued.

The facts are that the peoples of these countries *fought* British imperialism for their freedom over many decades. Thousands were imprisoned, shot, wounded, batoned in the numerous mass actions which the working people of these countries waged in the 1930's and 1940's for their national independence.

When political independence was at last conceded, it was done in a form, and with the hope, that the independence would be only superficial, that the new arrangements, "constitutions" and the rest, combined with the economic stranglehold which Britain still retained, and with the British officials who would be left behind to carry on as "advisers" in one field or another, would be sufficient to enable British imperialism to continue its rule in a new guise.

But whatever the intentions of British imperialism—and no one would deny that the shackles still tying the "freed" peoples are not inconsiderable—events have shown only too clearly that even the formal granting of independence, the mere opening of the door half an inch, as it were, has started a process which cannot be easily halted. With their foot in the now open door, the colonial people are pushing it open wider and wider, each month enlarging the area of their freedom, providing themselves with ever better ground on which to fight, narrowing the basis of their enemy, and advancing ever more rapidly to their full victory, to their complete liberation.

The calculation of British imperialism when it made con-

cessions on the trade union front was similar to what it had in mind when it gave way on the political front. In both cases it was a question of making a virtue out of necessity. And, as we shall see, on the trade union front, too, whatever may have been the intentions and hopes of British imperialism in reluctantly making this concession—for the winning of the right to form trade unions *was* a concession, despite the restrictions with which it was accompanied, and despite the hidden purpose behind the concession—the African workers seized it with both hands and, after many bitter struggles and set-backs, have made the end result not quite what British imperialism originally intended.

We have already seen how the development of working-class struggles in the colonies in the last twenty years compelled British imperialism to seek new weapons in order to try to weaken the colonial trade unions, bring about divisions within their ranks, and reduce their fighting strength. If it could not prevent the development of trade unionism in the colonies, then at least it intended to try to ensure that such trade unions developed on “sound lines”—by which it meant on lines approved of by Washington, Whitehall and by the big monopolies which drain off millions of pounds profits from the colonies every year.

Trade Union Advisers

British imperialism fashioned a special weapon for this task—trade union and labour advisers. These advisers are safe right-wing trade union officers, or, more often, Ministry of Labour officials with no trade union background at all.

The fact that Tory governments experience no difficulty in co-operating with these advisers is itself a striking commentary on their character and on their function in relation to the carrying out of Tory policy in the colonies.

It is important to understand that trade union advisers are actually part of the government's apparatus. An attempt has been made in Britain to create the illusion that they are somehow independent of the government, and constitute a gesture of solidarity from the British trade unions to the colonial workers. Credence is given to this by the fact that the General Council of the British T.U.C., as its annual reports to Congress show, gives full support to this system and policy. In actual fact, however, the advisers are part and parcel of the government, and are actually employed officially by the Colonial Labour Depart-

ments, which pay their salaries and give them their instructions.¹ The title given to these officers varies from territory to territory. In some cases, the trade union adviser is listed as "Industrial Relations Officer"; sometimes simply as "Labour Officer". But whatever the title, the character of the work remains the same—and that is to fight militancy in the trade union movement, and encourage class collaboration. Many of the Colonial Labour Department Reports reveal that these Labour Officers play a prominent part in drafting the anti-trade union legislation of which there has been so much in the past fifteen years.

They also participate in labour recruiting schemes in African territories, under which cheap contract-labour is provided for European farmers. An interesting sidelight on their character is the revelation that part of their duties is to *advise the employers on how to develop and strengthen their organisation vis-à-vis the workers.*

It need not be thought that the advent of trade union advisers has lessened the oppression. On the contrary. One need only look at what has happened to the working class in the colonies in the last decade or so to see this—the shooting down of twenty-one miners at Enugu in Nigeria, in 1949; the killing of five sugar workers at Enmore, British Guiana, in 1948; the shooting down of workers in the Gold Coast, 1948; the arrest and imprisonment of trade union leaders in Cyprus and Hong Kong; the deportation of Makhan Singh and other trade union leaders in Kenya, and the dissolution of the East African Trade Union Congress, 1950; the ruthless crushing of the Wankie coal strike in Southern Rhodesia in 1954; the smashing of the Tanganyika dockers' strike and arrest of the union leaders in 1950; the ruthless driving underground of the 300,000-strong Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions in 1948, the arrest, jailing, torture and shooting of thousands of its members and scores of its leaders, with the remainder hunted like criminals, with prices on their heads; the banishment of the militant miners' leaders of Northern Rhodesia in 1956; the shooting down of strikers in Sierra Leone in 1955; the wholesale arrest of striking busmen in Nairobi in 1958; the arrests and shootings of workers on strike in Aden in 1958, and in Tanganyika plantations in 1958 and 1959; the arrests of 168 railwaymen in Nigeria in 1959, together with the sub-

¹ The only exception to this has been Malaya, where the Trade Union Adviser was directly responsible to the Governments of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya.

sequent imprisonment of their leader, Michael Imoudu, who was also President of the Nigerian T.U.C.; and the police batoning of strikers at a tea plantation in Cholo, Nyasaland, in July 1960.

The last few years have seen a whole spate of new anti-trade union laws and emergency regulations from colonial governors, outlawing strikes, restricting genuine trade unions, interfering with freedom of speech, press, assembly and organisation. Trade union papers have been repeatedly suppressed in the colonies, editors jailed and fined.

This repression is only the other side of the coin. It is not an alternative to the policy of tolerating tame trade unions, but the iron fist which the imperialists still wield whenever the workers step out of line. This is how Luyt, in the booklet quoted above, attempts to justify this policy:¹

“The challenge to the state by irresponsible labour forces is a potential danger in the African colonial areas, perhaps not evident at present, but none the less potential. And it will have to be watched.

How to avoid it without being hostile to the whole trade union movement and provoking explosion?

The answer seems to be to foster and aid trade unionism in its early stages . . . showing generosity and sympathy; to do all possible to attract the best men as leaders; to remove as far as possible conditions and restrictions in the economic and racial fields which irritate, provoke discontent and provide fertile soil for Communism and to give organised labour adequate political opportunity as it develops.

At the same time in this frail, human world it is unreasonable to expect that African trade unionism will forever move along a healthy responsible path and when it does not, we must have faith in ourselves and act vigorously to put matters right. Generosity and sympathy towards the movement are essential but that does not include unlimited freedom for anarchy and disorder, contrary to the community interest. Such tendencies must be checked and checked hard.”

There you have it in a nutshell. “Generosity” towards trade unions if they “move along a healthy responsible path”; that is,

¹ Luyt: *op. cit.*, p. 42.

if they allow the imperialist government and employers to trample all over them. But if they dare stand up and demand their rights, then they will be "checked, and checked hard".

It is therefore clear that for British imperialism the aim is still that of holding down the colonial people in order to exploit them for the purpose of profits. All that has changed is the introduction of a new weapon to assist in achieving that aim.

What is the role of trade union advisers? An examination of their activities as well as of their speeches and publications makes it abundantly clear that the advice they give is employers' advice, and that it has the effect of assisting the employers and not the workers. The role of these advisers can be summarised as follows: to spread ideas of class collaboration; to prevent strikes; to safeguard profits; to help governments frame anti-trade union legislation; to prevent trade unions participating in the struggle for national independence; to prevent trade unions taking an interest in political questions; to isolate colonial trade unions from militant trade unions in other lands, and especially from the World Federation of Trade Unions; to denounce militant trade unionists and expose them to government persecution: and to win colonial workers to support imperialism in the cold war so as to have a safe rear in the event of actual war.

"Feel Friendly Towards Your Employers"

One medium through which trade union advisers spread their anti-trade union ideas is the various handbooks and guides which they issue in the colonies. Take, as an example, the handbook *What is a Trade Union?* by J. S. Patrick, trade union adviser for Kenya. Mr. Patrick, a former member of the Transport and Salaried Staffs Association, starts by defining what a trade union is:

"A trade union is not an organisation with political aims, it is an association which has as its main object the regulation of relations between workers and their employers."

Are these views of Patrick commonly accepted by the British trade unions? No, they are not. For example, even the T.U.C.'s own Model Rules for the guidance of colonial organisations—which are themselves open to criticism—admit that among the objects of trade unions are:

“To obtain and maintain just and proper wages, hours of work and other conditions of labour, and generally to protect the interests of members . . . The furtherance of lawful political objects affecting labour.”

Again, Rule 2D of the Transport and General Workers' Union provides for “the furtherance of political objectives of any kind”. Rule 1 of the Amalgamated Engineering Union mentions “the furtherance of political objects”.

But Patrick goes even farther. He claims that:

“Trade unions are formed so that strikes can be avoided. Trade unions try to make sure that workers and employers understand one another . . . The value of a worker to his employer depends on the kind of work he does and how he does it. Good, hard work is of more value than bad, lazy work. Good workers who work hard can expect to get better wages and conditions than bad, lazy workers.”

So the role of the trade unions to fight the employers in order to secure better wages and conditions for their members is replaced by the conception that good wages and conditions are a reward given by the employer in return for hard work by the workers. Class struggle is replaced by class collaboration, and the unions turned into an employers' weapon to ensure increased production and higher profits.

The handbook which Patrick has written for Kenya trade unionists is no isolated example. Precisely the same employers' ideas are put out by trade union advisers in all the colonies.

A pamphlet, *Your Trade Union*, produced on the Gold Coast,¹ says:

“Trade unionism, if it is to be for the good of its members, and for the people of this country, should avoid strikes. Indeed, trade unions are really formed to avoid strikes whenever possible. Experience shows that strikes are not of any benefit either to the worker or the employer. Trade unions are formed to try to make sure that workers and employers understand one another. The worker is important to industry, but he must remember that the industry is also very important to him. If

¹ Prior to Ghana gaining its political independence.

the employer or employers are unable to keep their business going, the workers will have no work . . . If the industry fails and becomes poor the worker will become poor because there will be no money to pay him. . . .”

Thus, in a variety of ways, the trade union advisers attempt to spread the illusion that workers and employers have a common interest. But there can be no common interest between the exploiter and the exploited, between the robber and his victim. The high profits made by the big European and American companies operating in the colonies have been made by keeping wages at starvation level. Every attempt by the workers to improve their conditions—whether by higher pay, shorter hours, or better conditions of work—is regarded by the employers as a threat to their profits. That is why they strenuously resist every effort of the colonial workers to make any radical improvement in their wretched plight.

By spreading their anti-working class ideas of collaboration with the employers, the trade union advisers are aiding the interests of the latter and their profits.

Typical of the advice which trade union and labour advisers preach to African workers is the booklet *African Trade Unions* by W. S. Mare, written for African workers with “the help and advice of W. J. Stubbs, Esq., of the Labour Commissioner’s Office, Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia”.

Here are some of the most precious jewels in this casket.

“Employers are usually not nearly so bad as some people would like to pretend they are” (p. 29).

“Do not approach your management in a crowd . . . If you all go together it is impossible not to make a slight disturbance and the management may think something serious has gone wrong when all you want is to invite the manager to come and see a boxing tournament you have organised—and to mention that you would be rather pleased if perhaps a cup could be presented.

If you can feel friendly towards your employers, your life will be happier; and a wise employer will not forget that contented workers will give him greater production” (p. 30).

“The Unions also have a duty to see that employers are treated fairly by members . . . ” (p. 61).

“Your demands, then, as Trade Unionists, must be to get a fair share of the profits but not to take all the profits because then the factory will close down, whether it is privately owned or run by the State. And you yourselves can help to increase profits and then there will be more to share among everybody” (p. 71).

The whole weight of this booklet is to persuade African workers not to struggle, not to organise mass actions, not to take part in strikes, but to be friendly to the employer, to co-operate with the employer, to increase production and to increase profits.

These, of course, are employers' ideas—and although it can be argued that, in essence, they are identical with the ideas of the “higher productivity” and “wage freeze” school of trade union leaders of the General Council of the British T.U.C., no trade union leader could present them to an audience of British workers in such a blatant, unadulterated way and expect to get away with it.

African workers, too, are not hoodwinked by such propaganda—their whole experience of life runs counter to it. Yet that such ideas should be put out with the backing of a labour adviser in a British colony should be adequate proof, if more were needed, of the role being performed by these individuals.

It will not pass unnoticed that these ideas of class collaboration—“love your employer” and so forth—are very similar to the teachings of the Moral Rearmament movement. And it is therefore no very great surprise to find that the M.R.A. carries out extensive activity in Africa, directing particular efforts towards the trade unions.

The government and right-wing trade union and labour leaders in Britain are well aware of the importance of waging an ideological struggle amongst the colonial working class. They go to no inconsiderable lengths to wrench them from their militant anti-imperialist modes of thought, and to inculcate instead the ideas of class collaboration, which in colonial territories means collaboration with the foreign imperialist oppressor. Thus the Rt. Hon. James Griffiths, M.P., complains that the colonial worker regards his trade union “not as an organisation of workers

to improve the conditions of their employment, but as a shield and protector against 'colonialism'".¹ It is precisely in order to prevent trade unions acting as the shield and protector of the colonial workers against all forms of colonial oppression, discrimination and exploitation, that the British Government, with the approval of the General Council of the T.U.C., has built up its widespread system of trade union advisers and labour officers.

Trade union advisers do not confine their activities to publishing pamphlets and making speeches in favour of collaboration with the employers and the imperialist authorities. They take an active part in assisting the authorities to disrupt the trade unions, to victimise militant workers, to force unpopular, unrepresentative right-wing elements into the leaderships of trade unions, to draft anti-trade union legislation and to suppress militant trade union organisation and struggle. A considerable part of their activity is devoted to preventing strikes, or intervening so as to bring them to an early close to the detriment of the workers and to the advantage of the employers.

In Tanganyika there took place in 1950 a strike of dockers at Dar-es-Salaam. Troops were called in as well as naval ratings from H.M.S. *Loch Quoich*. Pickets were fired on, as a result of which one worker was killed and seven wounded. Over eighty arrests of strikers were officially reported, including the entire Executive Committee of the Dockers' Union. The Labour Department, whose officials advise the trade unions, quotes the forcible breaking of this strike with apparent approval. For several years, following this repressive action and the destruction of the union, the trade union movement virtually ceased to exist, and in its place the trade union adviser tried to sponsor house associations which were intended to promote "a spirit of co-operation in securing the efficiency of the undertaking".

We have already indicated the character of the material issued in Kenya by the trade union adviser, J. S. Patrick. In view of this it is not surprising to learn that during Mr. Patrick's period as trade union adviser, trade unions in Kenya were under constant attack even prior to the 1952 Emergency. In January 1949, the government introduced a "wage freeze" Bill, and strike restrictions on railway workers and government workers. In July 1949,

¹ "The Trade Unions": An article in *The Times Review of British Colonies*, autumn, 1952.

it introduced a new Trade Union Registration Ordinance restricting trade union rights; a Bill introducing forced labour; and a Deportation Ordinance. In January 1950, further emergency powers were given to the Governor, allowing him to ban strikes and to use all measures to enforce bans. In May 1950, the government arrested Makhan Singh, Secretary of the East Africa T.U.C. and its President, Fred Kubai. These arrests were followed by a general strike in Nairobi, the capital. Police, troops, R.A.F. planes, armoured cars, Bren-gun carriers—all were used to break the strike. Hundreds were arrested. Kubai was framed on an "attempted murder" charge, but later acquitted. Makhan Singh was eventually banished to a remote village, Lokitaung, without trial. During this same period the East Africa T.U.C. was suppressed by the government.

This attack on the Kenya trade union movement was deliberately planned, and the Labour Department makes no effort to hide this fact. On the contrary, it boasts about it. Referring to the 1950 general strike, the official Labour Department Report says "the strike broke down due to careful *preliminary planning* . . . For some time past, the whole question of lack of industrial organisation had been undergoing examination in the light of the policy that the Trade Union Movement should be encouraged to develop slowly. *With the disappearance of the Trades Union Congress and its Communist leader off the scene, the field was left clear for this policy to take shape.*" [Own italics.—J.W.]

The 1951 Report reveals the part played by the trade union advisers and labour officers in assisting the Kenya Government to draft its new Trade Union Ordinance of 1952. This Ordinance introduced a whole series of crippling restrictions on trade union activity, and was one of the worst Ordinances of its kind ever introduced in a British colony. It enforced compulsory registration on trade unions, and gave the Registrar absolute powers to decide whether or not a trade union should be given the right of legal existence. He was also given power to interfere with the union's election or appointment of officers, and to exercise control over union funds. The Ordinance further encouraged the formation of "company unions" in place of genuine trade unions, and enforced the same restrictions on picketing as were introduced in Britain by the hated Trades Disputes Act in 1927. The British T.U.C. General Council's Report for 1952 had the audacity to refer to this shocking Ordinance as "one which will give the

workers in Kenya the opportunity to develop bona fide trade unions”.

With the opening of British imperialism's reign of terror in Kenya, in October 1952, genuine trade unionism was almost wiped out. It was only by slow, patient, courageous work that the workers were able to reorganise; but, as we shall see later, they are still faced with grave difficulties and handicapped by considerable restriction.

It is perhaps indicative of the character of the advice given by the trade union advisers that whereas the workers have become increasingly critical of them, the employers, who were initially somewhat sceptical and not a little apprehensive of the results of the new policy, were quickly won over and, in some cases, became the most outspoken defenders of the system of trade union advisers.

One trade union adviser who won the plaudits of employers was Mr. Edgar Parry, who later became assistant labour adviser at the Colonial Office. He was formerly a district organiser of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. His work as trade union adviser was carried out in Sierra Leone, West Africa. His appearance in Sierra Leone was at first greeted by the employers with some hesitation.¹ These doubts did not last long. As soon as “they appreciated that good trade unions were not centres of discontent” but that they would, in fact, make things easier for the employers, “co-operation was quickly forthcoming”. In fact, so successful, from the employers' point of view, were the wage-fixing boards and councils which Mr. Parry set up that following their establishment it was claimed that “there has been no official strike in Sierra Leone, and employers, far from deprecating the work of the boards, *now fight for their retention if any suggestion arises from employees of by-passing them*”. [Own italics.—J.W.]

In the following section some details are given of the various struggles which the African workers have had to wage for the defence of trade union rights in the very post-war period when the new policy of permitted trade unionism has been operating. In all these trials which the African workers have had to face it should be remembered that the trade union advisers have sided with the employers and governments against the workers and their unions.

¹ *West Africa*, December 20, 1952, p. 1181.

“Use a Thorn to Oust a Thorn”

Despite the policy pursued by the trade union advisers and by the colonial governments, with their hopes of converting the workers' organisations into docile partners of the colonial system, and notwithstanding the calculations of the imperialists in conceding trade union recognition when forced to, the emergence of trade unionism in Africa has been a major factor in the period since the second world war. In fact, its significance has not been lost on the imperialists who, finding themselves compelled to recognise the facts of life, have tried to come to terms with reality and win the unions to their side.

Imperialism has been far-sighted enough to recognise that here was a powerful new force which would not limit itself to narrow trade unionism, but would increasingly emerge on to the high road of political and national struggle, where its role could be decisive in helping to carry the independence movements to a new stage of radical reconstruction of colonialist economy and social life. For this reason the authorities have done everything possible, by argument and, where they felt it necessary, by legal enactment or restrictive action, to keep the African trade union organisations isolated from political and national struggles.

One of the most severe crises that faced the Kenya trade union movement in the post-1952 phase was precisely over the question of the trade unions' concern with political matters. And as late as 1960 the question of trade union affiliation to the newly formed Kenya Africa National Union was so strongly opposed by the imperialist government that the severance of all such links was made a condition for legal recognition of the party.

Similar difficulties have faced trade unions in other African territories, where the imperial authorities and the settlers have worked hard to wrest the unions away from any form of co-operation with the national movements.

In Northern Rhodesia, for example, one of the main reasons for the official hostility to the militant African Mine Workers' Union was its long association with the national movement. Thus as early as 1951, when the Federal scheme was being discussed in the three Central African territories, trade unions in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia declared their firm stand against Federation and their readiness to struggle with the whole people against its imposition. In fact it was the very strength of

this feeling, backed by the organised strength of the African unions, which led to the breakdown of the Victoria Falls Conference in September 1951, and the consequent temporary postponement of the Federation. The establishment of the Federation in 1953, against the clearly declared wishes of the seven million African people, opened a new phase in the African people's struggle; but the unions continued to maintain their alliance with the national movement and their opposition to the Federation. It is significant that the Branigan Commission¹ in 1956 condemned the African miners' union leaders on the grounds that they were not actuated "by a desire to protect and further the legitimate interests of the African employees but to achieve political or nationalistic advancement of all Africans generally in the Territory".

The Report quoted the copper companies as complaining that many of the union officials "were also officials or members of the African National Congress",² that the union's links with the African National Congress were shown by the fact that "on occasions African National Congress leaders had made political speeches at Union meetings and Union leaders had made political speeches at Congress meetings".³ No doubt it was the stand of the African Mine Workers' Union leaders on political matters which was one of the causes for the attack made on them in 1956.

In Southern Rhodesia, where many leading trade unionists are leaders of the national movement, the Whitehead Government representatives complained to the Beadle Tribunal⁴ that the holding of trade union posts by members of the African National Congress was evidence of a Congress plot "to infiltrate and obtain control of other African organisations". It is generally believed in Southern Rhodesia that an additional reason for rounding up Congress leaders in February 1959 was also to make possible the detention of key trade union leaders so as to facilitate the passing of the reactionary Industrial Conciliation Act.

In Tanganyika, too, amongst the complaints repeatedly made

¹ *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Unrest in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia*, November 1956 (the Branigan Report), p. 35.

² Then the main vehicle of national expression in Northern Rhodesia, supplanted by the Zambia Congress, now the United National Independence Party.

³ *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁴ An official tribunal set up to review the cases of detained Congressmen in Southern Rhodesia after the declaration of the State of Emergency in 1959.

by the European sisal estate owners against the Tanganyika Sisal and Plantation Workers' Union is that its leaders carry on propaganda for national independence, and in support of the Tanganyika African National Union.

In Uganda, a recent book¹ informs us, "It is the Government's aim to insulate trade unions . . . from politics and there is some pride in having been successful until now."

Of significance, too, was the visit of two I.C.F.T.U. representatives, Millard and de Jonge, to the Union of South Africa in 1959. During their stay in that country, in April 1959, they had talks with leaders of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (S.A.C.T.U.), the only union body in South Africa which is organising the unorganised African workers (it has some 40,000 members) and which is in alliance with the African National Congress and other democratic organisations fighting for a new democratic South Africa. In the course of discussions, the I.C.F.T.U. leaders tried to persuade S.A.C.T.U. to break its association with the Congress Alliance and abandon the fight for the Freedom Charter. The I.C.F.T.U. representatives met with a most fitting rebuttal, the S.A.C.T.U. general secretary declaring: "We wish to make it quite clear that any measures taken, under whatever pretext, to disrupt our Congress or the Congress Alliance, will meet with the most determined rebuff from the working people of South Africa."²

It is, of course, impossible for trade unions to attempt to dissociate themselves from politics without weakening their fight on behalf of their members. There is no such thing as a "non-political" trade union; the question is whose politics shall the union follow. In the conditions of present-day Africa, in which the workers and their union organisations are compelled to face every sort of repression and intimidation from the colonial powers and the big monopolies, there can be only one answer—the politics of national liberation.

That the unions in Africa should play a most active part in the political struggle for national freedom has been expressed time and again by African national leaders.

Sékou Touré, the President of Guinea and himself a leading figure in the African trade union movement, being President of

¹ Elkan, Walter: *Migrants and Proletarians*, Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 65.

² *Workers' Unity*, Vol. 5, No. 32, July 1959, p. 5.

the General Union of Negro African Workers (G.U.N.A.W.),¹ has pointed out:

“The trade union is a tool which workers can use to defend their interests in every field. If the workers are agreed that the labour movement should be part of a great revolutionary movement for the emancipation of African society, then they cannot but turn their attention to all political, economic, social and cultural matters . . . Since colonialism itself is a political system, the African labour movement must either give its preference to another political system, one of liberty, democracy and justice or go on suffering under colonialism by refusing to have anything to do with politics. Trade unions should always be consciously allied to political parties and associations sharing the same ideas and aims.”²

The same points have been made, on a number of occasions, by Kwame Nkrumah. Speaking at the All-Africa Trade Union Preparatory Conference, at Accra, in November 1959, he declared:

“The trade union movement in a colonial territory cannot divorce itself from the national struggle for political independence.

Indeed, in a colonial territory, the struggle for freedom and independence is inextricably bound up with the success of the Trade Union Movement . . .

It is only under genuine conditions of political freedom that the workers can have the opportunity to assert themselves as human beings and defend their rights for better conditions and for a better way of life.

The first duty of all organisations existing in a colonial territory is for these forces in that territory to unite in the fight for the nation's liberation.”

Similarly, Chief A. Luthuli, President General of the African National Congress in the Union of South Africa, has declared:

“There is a Zulu saying that if you are pricked by a thorn

¹ Known in Guinea as UGTAN, from the initials of its name in French.

² Touré, Sékou: *Ghanaian Worker*, May 14, 1959.

you also have to use a thorn to get it out. Workers are oppressed by political action; they must take political action in reply.”¹

Such appeals have not gone unheeded by the workers and trade unions in Africa. To one degree or another, the unions have played a part in the national movements of their countries, the most politically aware of them a key part. The political role of Sékou Touré (Guinea), Abdoulaye Diallo (Soudan), Ruben Um Nyobe (Cameroun), George Nyandoro (Southern Rhodesia), Joshua Nkomo (Southern Rhodesia), Wallace Johnson and Siaka Stevens (Sierra Leone), S. B. Marks (South Africa), and many others who were reared in the trade union movement of their country, symbolises the important participation of the African trade union movement in the struggle for national emancipation.

In the conditions prevailing in Africa south of the Sahara, where in no territory does the working class possess its own separate political party, neither of the British Labour Party type nor on the basis of Marxist ideology, the trade unions play a particularly important political role. They not only mobilise the workers to take their part in the general national movement but act as a medium for the workers' political expression on all major questions concerning the struggle for national independence.

§ 2 “STOP FIDDLING WITH TRADE UNION FREEDOM!”

As we have seen, British policy towards the colonial workers and their trade unions in the period commencing with the second world war was the encouragement of “sound” or “responsible” trade unions under leaders who could be relied upon not to push the demands of the unions too far nor to carry their activities beyond a certain limit acceptable to the government and to British employers in the colonies.

Essential to the carrying out of this policy was the installation of trade union advisers. Equally essential was a whole body of legislation intended to place the unions in halts and even to give a somewhat thin legal covering for their complete suppression if, in their activities and demands, they appeared to be going beyond the severely limited area which the government, in its own mind, had pre-ordained for them.

¹ *Workers' Unity*, Vol. 5, No. 31, May 1959, p. 1.

Compulsory Registration

The key weapon in this arsenal of law was the whole system of trade union registration. In Britain, as is well known, trade unions are entirely free to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to register as a "society" within the meaning of the law. There is no compulsion on them to do so, nor is there any action taken against them by the government if they decide not to register. Furthermore, the British Trades Union Congress itself is not registered—and there has never been any compulsion on it to do so by any British government, whether Tory, Liberal or Labour.

In the British colonies an entirely different system operates, a system which has been particularly disastrous to the unions in many instances, in Africa no less than in Asia. The kernel of this system is that registration of trade unions is compulsory, and that the Registrar of Trade Unions in each colony has been given supreme controlling powers over the unions, enabling him either to refuse registration to a union or to take away its registration if already registered. And under colonial law a union which is not registered is an illegal union and is almost always treated as such by the government, and ruthlessly destroyed. Funds, property and premises are confiscated, and union leaders arrested and imprisoned.

Considerable powers are placed in the hands of the Government Registrar to interfere in trade union activities, to examine records and accounts, and to object to officials even when they have been duly elected by the members.

In some cases, the law grants the Registrar powers to de-register or refuse registration to a union if he alleges that its officials are unsuitable. In consequence, subservient "leaders" are sometimes imposed on trade unions, so as to bring the organisations under the control of the government and the employers.

This is well borne out by the experiences of the Cameroons Development Corporation Workers' Union where, as Warmington points out, "the Registrar of Trade Unions has . . . occasionally tried, *by threatening to use his ultimate legal sanctions* (withdrawal of registration, the prosecution of unions and their officials, actions against individual members or officials for the return of misappropriated property, etc.)" ¹ [own italics.—J.W.],

¹ Warmington: op. cit., p. 10.

to bring about a change in union policy. Encouraged by this anti-union attitude of the Registrar, the employers have often challenged "the representative character of a union which showed any sort of militant attitude, frequently countering strikes and threats of strikes by the summary dismissal of all strikers and engagement of new staffs, and occasionally indulging in the practice of unexplained transfers and dismissals of active unionists, even in the middle of negotiations in which the individuals concerned were engaged,"¹

The manner in which the employers and the government (through the Labour Department) worked hand in glove to bring the C.D.C. Workers' Union under their control is well brought out by the events of 1956. In the middle of that year the union threatened to call a strike unless the Corporation recognised it. The Corporation thereupon announced that it had not withdrawn recognition from the Workers' Union, but that it refused to recognise "the present General Secretary and executive committee, whose election it considered unconstitutional".² The Labour Department then stepped in and insisted on new trade union elections being held under its own supervision. This action, and the method for the election laid down by the Labour Department, were a complete flouting of trade union democracy and trade union rights. The supervision of union elections by an outside body, admits Warmington,³ "in effect meant carried out by" that body, although "no provision in the union's constitution could be invoked to cover this". Furthermore, "all employees of the Corporation were going to be given the opportunity to vote, whether or not they could prove membership".

The Labour Department imposed two further incredible conditions: "that the union should no longer employ full-time 'field-secretaries', or organisers, on whose shoulders much of the branch work had fallen"; and that senior executive and technical staff members of the Corporation, from which a number of union executive members was drawn, should no longer be allowed to remain members of the union.

Such is the kind of "aid", "advice" and "guidance" which Labour Departments and trade union "advisers" impose on African trade unions. The reasons, of course, for this remarkable behaviour on the part of the Labour Departments and their staff is, as already explained, to remove militant leaders from the

¹ Warmington: *op. cit.*, p. 11.

² *ibid.*, p. 42.

³ *ibid.*, p. 43.

unions and substitute in their place Labour Department puppets who will act "with moderation" and co-operate with the government and the employers. If, in this process, trade union democracy is thrown overboard, certainly the Labour Department is not going to shed any tears.

"As regards the lack of the democratic element in the choice of leaders and control of policy," argues Warmington,¹ "this is no doubt to be deplored if one regards the theoretical basis of the English model to be important. On the other hand, *it may be much easier for leaders whose authority is autocratic rather than popular to pursue moderate and constitutional [sic!] policies*". [Own italics.—J.W.]

This outrageous behaviour of the Labour Department in the Cameroons is no different to what takes place in all British-administered territories. Direct government intervention in trade union affairs and elections, admits Warmington, is "peculiar to the British dependencies".²

If unions object to this scandalous procedure, they are likely to be de-registered and suppressed.

Events in Kenya show how the registration system can be used to cripple militant trade unions. In May 1950, Fred Kubai and Makhan Singh, President and General Secretary respectively of the East Africa Trades Union Congress, were arrested on a charge of being responsible for leading an organisation which was not registered and which was therefore illegal, although the law laid it down that the only trade union organisations that could register were those catering for workers in the same trade—thus clearly excluding federations or trade union centres. The East Africa T.U.C. could not qualify on that basis, although it was composed of affiliated trade unions which themselves were registered. Despite this, judgment was given against the trade union leaders of the East Africa T.U.C., and the organisation was suppressed by the government.

Barnes has pointed out that "trade union rights which are customary and legal in Britain, such as that of peaceful picketing and the guarantee of unions and their officials against actions of tort, are either not recognised in colonial legislation, or recognised in forms which make the rights almost impossible to exercise in practice".³ He adds that there is "a strong tendency to treat

¹ Warmington: *op. cit.*, p. 123.

² *ibid.*, p. 126.

³ Barnes, Leonard: *Soviet Light on the Colonies*, London, 1944, p. 129.

Government Labour Officers as substitutes for trade union organisation", and that social insurance, although it "hardly exists in any British dependency", is generally not allowed as a trade union activity. In fact, "official thinking avoids the idea that trade unions might be used in developing it. In some territories the idea is formally outlawed." And this despite the appalling lack of social security in all British colonies.

For several years Northern Rhodesia remained outside much of the industrial legislation operating in other parts of British Africa. But from 1955 onwards the trade unions of Northern Rhodesia, too, were brought under the same control, and placed in the same strait-jacket as that generally obtaining elsewhere in Africa, through the introduction of an Amendment Bill to the Trades Disputes Ordinance.

The *African Mineworker*, organ of the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Union, in its June 1955 issue, voiced the feelings of all African workers towards this Bill when it declared:

"We shall oppose very bitterly this proposed legislation. It is not the duty of this government . . . to suggest that it should interfere with the employment of officers, nor tamper with union funds.

May we make it perfectly clear that the employment of officers and the spending of union funds are controlled by the union's constitution . . . We shall not allow any fiddling with trade union freedom . . ."

Despite the workers' opposition, this Bill became law and came into operation as from April 1, 1957. In its final form it lays down that every union will be either compelled to register or be dissolved. If any union fails to register within six months and refuses to dissolve, then every officer of the union will be liable to a fine of up to £5 for every day of its continued existence. Any union which is struck off the register by the Government Registrar of Trade Unions must immediately dissolve.

This means that the very existence of a trade union will now be largely dependent upon the decision of the Registrar. The government holds a pistol at the head of each union and says: "You either register or cease to exist. And if we want you to cease to exist we shall refuse to register you!"

“Essential Services”

Another key weapon in the arsenal of colonial legislation regarding industrial matters is that pertaining to “essential services”. Most territories in British Africa include in their legislation provisions to render strikes illegal in what are known as “essential services”. These usually include transport, communications, electricity, water, and hospitals. Colonial governors, however, also have the power to declare a State of Emergency whenever they judge fit—and the threat of widespread strikes is usually sufficient to call such a Declaration into play. Under Emergency Powers, governors can add to the scheduled list of “essential services” laid down by law additional services whose continued operation they deem essential for the running of society. It can easily be seen how these powers can be utilised—and have often been so used, in fact—to prevent African workers taking industrial action or, if such action has already commenced, to use the powers under the Emergency and the Essential Services clauses to prosecute trade unions and their leaders for organising and taking part in illegal strikes.

This was done, for example, during the 1949 strike in Nigeria following the Enugu incident. It was done again in Kenya, in 1950, when a general strike broke out following the government’s suppression of the East Africa T.U.C. and the arrest of its leaders.

More recently, too, these powers have been employed. Mr Dennis Akumu, the General Secretary of the Mombasa Dock Workers’ Union, stated at his press conference in London in August 1958 that the trade unions in Kenya were unable to get better conditions for their workers in docks and railways, and that any attempt to force the issue in these industries by strike action had to face the contingency of government prosecution since these were scheduled as “essential services”. It was under this provision, he said, that the bus workers of Nairobi were arrested and charged earlier in the year.

So widespread has become this practice of colonial governments using the “essential services” ordinances to stifle trade union action, that the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress felt obliged to make reference to it in its 1958 Report to the annual T.U.C. This Report points out that the Essential Services Legislation operates in seventeen British

colonial territories, where it is applied in the most sweeping fashion. In Tanganyika eighteen services are scheduled as essential. They cover virtually *all industries* except agriculture and mining. In Kenya the list covers sixteen services. And in a number of other territories the list is considerable.

In a letter to the Colonial Secretary on June 5, 1958, the General Council of the British T.U.C. pointed out that "to schedule services on such a scale must imperil the whole policy of encouraging voluntary methods of settling industrial disputes and of buttressing these with arbitration machinery where voluntary methods fail".

The T.U.C. contention that the definition of "essential services" is spread over too many industries is not, in the eyes of African workers, the real issue. What is at stake is the whole principle. British workers know, from bitter experience, how such legislation, introduced into Britain during the war, was used against them in the early post-war period, especially in the docks and in the gas industry. It was only spirited and firm opposition from the workers which compelled the withdrawal of this legislation.

African workers have no more liking for this type of legislation than their brothers in Britain. That is why they demand not the modification of this law but its complete abolition.

"We Want Freedom of Association"

Government policy in Southern Rhodesia is yet one more proof of the hollow nature of the official claim that steps are being taken to "encourage trade unions" for Africans.

Until very recently the status of African trade unions in Southern Rhodesia was very similar to that in South Africa. Under the former Southern Rhodesian Industrial Conciliation Act (the only Act, incidentally, which recognises the workers), *Africans* were not included. Incredible, but true. Africans were not recognised as "employees" but as "native labourers". And since they were not "employees" under law in Southern Rhodesia, they had no safeguard under law in trade union matters.

The one exception to this rule was the African railwaymen who, following a strike in 1945, won legal recognition for their union.

The government's treatment of the strike of 9,000 African coal-miners at Wankie Colliery, Southern Rhodesia, early in 1954, shows only too well its real attitude towards the just demands of

the African workers and their efforts to obtain a hearing. The government's reaction to the outbreak of the strike was immediate. Using its emergency powers, it rushed armed police, armoured cars and four companies of troops from Salisbury and Bulawayo to Wankie. The strike was declared illegal, meetings were banned, pickets and strike leaders arrested. The compounds were surrounded by troops and machine-guns, the workers' food supplies cut off, and a dusk-to-dawn curfew introduced. A scab service of European office workers was put into the mines, but they were unable to do much—and when the government appealed to the Northern Rhodesian European Mine Workers' Union to supply 400 blacklegs, the N.R.E.M.U., to its credit, rejected the request.

The Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, Mr. Garfield Todd, delivered an ultimatum to the African strikers: "Go back to work, or go home!" Most of the African miners at Wankie came from Northern Rhodesia, and the Prime Minister's threat was to clear them out of Southern Rhodesia altogether. As the strike was declared illegal, and the strikers threatened with criminal prosecution under the Master and Servants Act, it can be seen to what lengths the government was prepared to go to intimidate the workers and crush the strike. Despite this, the workers stood firm for five days. In the end about 1,000 of them quit the mines and went back to Northern Rhodesia, and the rest returned to work, following a government promise to investigate their grievances.¹

The industrial unrest in Southern Rhodesia, and especially the Wankie coal strike, led to fresh fumbleings on the part of the government towards legalising trade unions for African workers; fumbleings, because of the ambivalent attitude taken up on this matter by ruling circles in Southern Rhodesia.

Like their counterparts in South Africa they have tended not to subscribe to the Colonial Office policy of allowing "responsible" trade unions for Africans. They have seen the results of this

¹ That the attitude of the white rulers of Southern Rhodesia towards the African workers remains the same is borne out by the experience of the Kariba Dam. In the course of its construction scores of workers—some estimates say 200—lost their lives. When, in February 1959, incensed by a further disastrous accident, the workers expressed their pent-up feelings by striking and demanding an increase in their miserable pay of 4d. an hour, the strike was suppressed by force and became, in fact, one of the excuses used by the Federal Government and the white settlers of Central Africa to outlaw the African National Congress organisations in the Federation and to declare a State of Emergency.

policy not far from home, on the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt. And they would much prefer to continue as in the past, ruling solely by the whip and the gun. But here, too, historical forces have been at work. The African working class in Southern Rhodesia has grown rapidly in the past decade and now numbers more than 600,000. Further, workers have learnt to organise and struggle and, despite the restrictions placed upon them by the industrial legislation of the country, have formed trade unions and set up a Southern Rhodesian African Trades Union Congress.

In order to head off this growing movement and bring it under control, the government introduced in 1957 a new Industrial Conciliation Bill.

In its original form the Bill came under heavy fire from the African trade unions. A memorandum to the British Parliament, issued at the time by six African trade unions affiliated to the Southern Rhodesian T.U.C.—the Commercial Workers' Union, the Butcher Workers' Union, the Transport Workers' Union, the African Railway Workers' Union, the Artisans' Union, and the Waiters' Association—pointed out the grave difficulties which were facing African trade unionists in Southern Rhodesia. Union officials were banned from entering the precincts of the Kariba Dam site to contact union members and, on another occasion, were arrested because they held a meeting of workers, after working hours, at the Grain Marketing Board. When a representative of the British T.U.C. visited Southern Rhodesia in 1956 and held discussions with African trade unionists, security police questioned them after the meeting and took their names.

The Memorandum also drew attention to the way Pass Laws were used to hinder the movement of trade union organisers, and further pointed out that the Land Apportionment Act prevented the union from acquiring premises in town where the members worked.

“African workers,” they pointed out, “contribute so much to the development of the cities that it is disturbing that organisations that look after their interests cannot hire an office constructed by themselves.”

In making these criticisms in their Memorandum and declaring “We want freedom of association”, the six unions asserted: “The country is turning drastically into a police state.”

The law has now been passed under the title of the Industrial Conciliation Act, 1959; it has been operating since January 1, 1960. In its final form this Act fully bears out the criticisms made by the six African trade unions several years previously. The trade union section of the Bill is clearly modelled on the existing legislation passed in 1945, and reproduces almost entirely the very words used in the 1945 Act. There are, however, a number of restrictive clauses which, while extending trade union rights to African workers, give wide powers to the government to keep this development in check.

Before specifying these restrictive clauses, it is worth noting an essential reason for these changes. The 1945 Act did not cover Africans since, as has been explained above, they were not classified as "employees". But the whole point about this new Act is that, under the pressure of events themselves, it has had to make provision for organisations of *African* workers in addition to those of European workers whose rights are specified in the 1945 legislation.

On paper, of course, the clauses inserted to control the African unions are also a threat to the European unions, though in the existing set-up in Southern Rhodesia it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the European unions are likely to find themselves facing the same strict application of them as the African unions.

The first striking difference in the new Act is in the "registration" section. The former 1945 Act provided that the Registrar (or Chief Industrial Officer, as he was then called) should not register a union until he was satisfied that its constitution did not contain provisions which were "not in the interests of the effective functioning of the union, or contrary to the public interest". The new Act greatly strengthens the Registrar's hand by stating that unless he is satisfied that the union "is a responsible body and reasonably capable of taking part in the negotiation of matters of mutual interest between employer and employee", it shall not be registered. Thus the new Act not only adds a new and hopelessly vague test for the union to pass before registration, but it puts in issue the union itself rather than merely the written constitution, and also effectively transfers the "burden of proof" from the Registrar to union, which now has to prove positively that it is a "responsible body".

Whether a union is "responsible" or "irresponsible" is clearly

not a fact which can be determined easily in law. It is a question of opinion, determined above all by the interested standpoint or class attitude applied in making such a judgment. To an employer, a union is responsible if it makes only modest demands, or none at all. To a worker, a union is responsible if it really fights for the workers' demands and in their interests. But if it does that, it immediately becomes irresponsible in the eyes of the employers. And since the Southern Rhodesian government is in the hands of the big white farmers and company owners, and the Registrar is their appointee, it is only too obvious from what standpoint the Registrar would judge the responsibility or otherwise of an African trade union.

The new Act does not officially introduce compulsory registration, but by the checks and controls it places both on registered and unregistered unions it has taken substantial powers to supervise all unions and to intervene in their affairs.

Apart from the virtual certificate of "responsibility" demanded of them, registered unions are also prohibited from establishing or using funds for political purposes (a right which all trade unions in Britain may enjoy). They cannot even use their funds to make payments to a trade union federation which is itself permitted to use its funds for political purposes (thus no affiliation fee or strike solidarity could be paid to such a body). Neither can they "accept any moneys or services from any organisation which is permitted by its constitution or otherwise to use its moneys or funds for political purposes"—which clearly disqualifies registered unions in Southern Rhodesia from accepting any help from the British trade unions. Strangely enough, neither the British T.U.C. nor the I.C.F.T.U. appears to have made any protest concerning this new legislation.

Unregistered unions are allowed for in the new Act—but these, too, come under the control of the Industrial Registrar to whom they must submit copies of their constitution, audits, election results, minutes, membership records, etc.

Unregistered unions are also subject to the same limitations on political activities as registered unions. Moreover, if they do not comply with all the requirements of the law they can be dissolved.

Thus all unions in Southern Rhodesia, whether registered or unregistered, are now very closely supervised by the authorities.

The Act also places severe restrictions on the use of the strike weapon, making strikes in many instances a criminal offence.

Taking part in or inciting others to take part in an illegal strike is punishable by a maximum fine of £500, or not more than three years' imprisonment, or both.

The new Act also requires unions to be multi-racial—but there is a purpose behind this which has nothing to do with working-class solidarity.

In fact, the government has provided a specimen constitution for trade unions to which they will be expected to conform before they are granted legal recognition. This constitution, confessedly designed to safeguard "skilled and minority interests", that is, European interests, lays it down that membership of unions shall be divided into three categories—Grade A (journeymen), Grade B (semi-skilled operatives) and Grade C (unskilled labour). In practice, all Grade A and most of Grade B will be Europeans, while Grade C will be entirely African. In all cases of voting or taking of ballots in the union, Grade A votes count as four times and Grade B twice those of Grade C. The executive committee of each branch must have a chairman, vice-chairman, five Grade A members, two Grade B, and one Grade C. As if this blatant discrimination were not sufficient, the government has granted the Registrar of Trade Unions the right to increase the representation of "skilled and minority" (i.e. European) interests on the union governing bodies from the branch level upwards, in order to ensure that these interests have "adequate representation".

That the views of most European trade unionists in Southern Rhodesia are, unfortunately, very similar to those of the employers when it comes to the question of African trade unions was shown by the discussions at the 1955 Conference of the Southern Rhodesian T.U.C.

"All speakers," says Leys,¹ "were impressed by the danger of recognising independent African trade unions, while it was widely conceded that some African industrial organisation was inevitable."

A Mr. Taylor, of the Typographical Union—a typical exponent of white supremacy—referred to "one of the big dangers that we face—a big mass of blacks paying minimum contributions

¹ Leys, Colin: *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, O.U.P., 1959, p. 116.

and producing maximum capital, with the power that goes with it . . .”

A memorandum on the Bill from five European unions argued:

“. . . that the duties and responsibilities of modern trade unionism cannot be foisted upon people who are only beginning to emerge from the state of feudalism in which they have lived for some time.”

The employers, too, claimed that the Africans had not yet “developed to a state of reasonable understanding of the powers which it is proposed they should have”.

Other Fetters

All that has been said above does not fully exhaust the legal fetters with which African trade unionists have to contend. There are extremely severe restrictions on the freedom of the press, and workers' publications are naturally major sufferers in this matter. Comment and criticism which would, in Britain, be regarded as quite normal and not at all excessive, is often regarded in Africa as dangerous, and becomes the subject of a court case for “libel” or “sedition”.

Sometimes, when the government wishes to find a pretext for putting a trade union leader in prison for a period, then an article in the press becomes the ready-made excuse. It was on this basis that Gacim Ammin, one of the leaders of the Sudan Workers' Trade Union Federation and a leader of the Railway-men's Union, was imprisoned. One of his offences, in the eyes of the colonial authorities, was to criticise and expose the activities of the government trade union adviser. Similarly, John Reich, General Secretary of the Uganda Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union and Vice-President of the Uganda Trades Union Congress was reported¹ to have been sentenced to six months' imprisonment² on a charge of libelling Kilembe Copper Smelter Mines Limited and the Smelter Superintendent. The libel arose out of a letter written by John Reich to J. T. Simpson, a director of the Kilembe mines and Chairman of the Uganda Development Corporation, complaining about the ill-treatment of African workers.

¹ *The Ghanaian Worker*, April 25, 1960.

² The Uganda High Court has since changed the sentence to a £50 fine.

Other hazards, too, have to be faced by trade union leaders in Africa. Sometimes, as happened to Dixon Konkola, former President of the Rhodesian African Workers' T.U.C. and President of the Railwaymen's Union, imprisonment is imposed for leading a campaign against the colour bar.

Then there was the case of R. Puta, a leader of the Northern Rhodesian African mineworkers, who was imprisoned for exposing the mining companies' use of "tribal representatives" against the union. The legal charge was that he had "threatened" these company agents.

Always there is the legal excuse, the legal fiction, ready to hand, to be used against militant trade unionists and against those trade union organisations and leaders who really stand up for the rights of African workers and assist them to struggle for social and political justice.

And on top of all this, there are the daily harassments, the hundred-and-one forms of daily intimidation—openly being followed by the police, the obvious tampering with the post, the victimisation from job to job, the denial of a passport to travel to an overseas conference or to a trade union school, the arrest on a flimsy charge, the smear campaign in the press, the threats from the police or from the Registrar of Trade Unions, or banishment to a remote corner of the territory, cut off from relatives, friends and organisation.

Even the possession of literature can earn the displeasure of the authorities. To trade unionists in Britain the very idea that publications dealing with trade union matters should be banned will surely be obnoxious. Yet this is often the case in Africa, for not only is socialist and communist literature usually banned—and many liberal and democratic books and publications—but also a number of publications dealing with trade union matters.

Of course, these restrictions do not always have the result the authorities desire. Africans, no less than other people, are too awake in the year 1961 to be intimidated in this way; and yet they do very definitely suffer from the effects of such bans on literature.

There is another method by which the colonial authorities try to weaken trade unionism. Although it is usually alleged that "we are all in favour of trade unions in the colonies nowadays", it is really striking, when one makes a thorough examination of the post-war history of the African trade union movement and

studies both the industrial legislation as well as the policies and actions of the governments and the employers towards the trade unions, to note the alacrity with which the idea of genuine trade unions, democratically controlled and acting in the workers' interests, is repeatedly pushed aside in favour of varying forms of "works committees" or "staff associations".

Thus, in the 1957 Industrial Conciliation Bill for Southern Rhodesia the conception of "Works Joint Committees" was proposed. In Kenya the 1952 Trade Union Ordinance advocated "Employees' Associations", "Employees' Organisations" and "Staff Associations" as alternatives to trade unions. In Sudan, in the period of struggle for trade union recognition after the second world war, the authorities tried to popularise works committees as a preferable alternative. In Northern Rhodesia various methods were essayed to weaken the African Mine-workers' Union, culminating in the formation of a Staff Association. And in Tanganyika the government and employers have made continual efforts to set aside, or reduce to nought, the position of the trade unions in the sisal plantations, imposing instead a form of "joint consultation" which allows the employers to determine who will represent the workers.

In Uganda, apart from the encouragement of "sub-trade unions", which may only collect funds once a year, and then only for office expenses and welfare, the Labour Department, ever since 1950, has urged employers to set up works committees. These bodies, says a recent study,¹ deal with "working hours, wage rates and differentials, annual holidays, and a host of other subjects which are excluded from joint consultation in Britain" where such matters are regarded as the prerogative of the unions. In consequence of this government-sponsored diversion from trade unionism, there were, by 1957, ninety-seven works committees in Uganda, covering 90,000 workers, compared with under 10,000 workers in trade unions.

Yet, in the face of this, Elkan asserts that "if trade unions have not developed to any marked extent [in Uganda], it is not because the law discourages them".² Whatever the law, the government's Labour Department most certainly "discourages them".

It is interesting to note that as late as 1955 the East Africa Royal Commission Report was still expressing official hesitations

¹ Elkan, Walter: *op. cit.*, p. 69.

² *ibid.*, p. 59.

regarding trade unions for Africans,¹ and speaking with considerable enthusiasm of "works councils and joint staff committees", which it believed "should be encouraged", especially "in undertakings which are classified as 'essential services'".

This policy is unblushingly pushed forward behind the pretence that "Africans in East Africa display . . . little interest in trade unionism", although it is difficult to credit that the Commission was unaware of the forcible dissolution of the East Africa T.U.C. in 1950, of the suppression of a number of Kenya trade unions after the 1952 Emergency, of the arrest of the entire leadership of the Tanganyika port workers' union in Dar-es-Salaam in 1950, and of continual attempts to interfere with normal trade union work in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda.

A further weapon used against the African trade unions is banishment, a particularly savage form of repression which has been used on more than one occasion virtually to destroy an organisation. Nigeria, Northern Rhodesia and Kenya, in particular, have suffered through the employment of this type of punishment by the colonial authorities.²

In 1942, Nigeria's veteran trade union leader, Michael Imoudu, at that time President of the Railway Workers' Trade Union, led a great campaign for a cost-of-living allowance which compelled the government, for the first time, to compile representative wage statistics. The publication of these statistics made it impossible for the government to hide any longer the serious deterioration in the workers' standards since the world economic crisis, standards which suffered still more heavy blows after the commencement of the second world war. This revelation, followed as it was by spirited actions by the workers, obliged the government to grant a fifty per cent cost-of-living increase to all workers in both private and government employment. But the government took its revenge, and Imoudu was banished to a remote area and not allowed to return until May 1945, three years later.

Kenya's Ordeal

Kenya has been a constant victim of this form of punishment

¹ *East Africa Royal Commission Report*, Cmd. 9475, June 1955, pp. 161-2.

² The Government of the Union of South Africa, too, has made repeated use of the banishment weapon in recent years, an outstanding case being that of Mrs. Mafeking, a mother of eleven children and President of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union.

and repression, as indeed she has of every form of "legal" violence known to African workers. So considerable has been the spate of anti-trade union legislation and police violence in the past decade, and so interwoven with this repression have been the continual attempts of the authorities to behead the workers' movement by imprisoning or banishing its leaders, that it would not be out of place here to describe, in some detail, the treatment meted out to the workers and trade unions of Kenya by the government and the employers.

General strikes took place in the port of Mombasa in 1939, 1944 and 1947. The 1947 strike was in demand for higher wages and lower house-rents. The strike was called by the African Workers' Federation and the Railway African Staff Union, and was joined by hotel, shop and domestic workers. Police and troops were used to intimidate the strikers. After the strike, Chege Kibachia, President of the African Workers' Federation, was banished without trial to a village in North Kenya.

In September 1947 a strike took place at the Uplands Bacon factory. Again police violence was used against the workers, twenty-two of them being arrested. Of these, twenty were sentenced to two years' hard labour. During the strike police fired on the workers, killing three of them.

The rapid development of the trade union movement that followed in the next few years made the authorities extremely nervous. Bill after Bill was rushed through the Legislative Council to limit the possibilities of trade union organisation and activity. Arrests, sentences, banishment, "frame-ups", and the employment of armed force, were utilised in a vain attempt to crush the spirit of the workers of Kenya.

In September 1948, Makhan Singh, the Secretary of the Labour Trade Union of East Africa, organised a Cost-of-Living and Wages Conference, the first of its kind ever held in Kenya. Delegates from more than sixteen trade unions and associations participated, representing more than 10,000 African and Asian workers. Again the imperialists struck at the movement by the immediate arrest of Makhan Singh. A deportation order was made out against him, despite the fact that he was a legal citizen of Kenya, having been resident in Kenya since 1927 apart from a short stay in India. He was later released, but his certificate of permanent residence was refused after new legislation had been introduced in 1949.

In January 1949, the government and Railway Administration workers were banned from taking part in "political activity" or joining "political associations"; and the importation of working-class periodicals from Europe and other parts of the world was prohibited. A wage-freezing Bill—called the Compulsory Trade Testing and Wage Fixing Scheme—was introduced. This was followed, in July 1949, by three vicious pieces of legislation: a Trade Union Registration Ordinance, aimed at destroying the militant trade unions; a "Slave Labour" Bill, introducing forced labour at starvation rates of pay; and a Deportation Ordinance giving new powers to the government to deport militant trade unionists.

In January 1950, further legislation was introduced, outlawing strikes in "essential services" (water, electricity, health, hospital, sanitary, transport) and giving the governor power to declare any strike illegal by adding to the list of "essential services". This Bill was accompanied by an Ordinance amending the Emergency Powers Ordinance, 1948, which gave the governor sweeping powers to deal with strikes, including complete control over all industry, trade and transport, powers over property and persons, delegation of exceptional powers to persons named by the governor, complete censorship or suppression of all publications, power to exact money from individuals, powers of arrest, search, detention and deportation, and suppression of public meetings and processions.

All this repressive legislation was bitterly opposed by the Kenya trade union movement which recognised that its aim was the virtual destruction of trade unionism.

An extremely important stage in the development of the Kenya trade union movement was reached on May 1, 1949, with the formation of the East African Trade Union Congress under the leadership of Makhan Singh. Because this was a major step towards working-class unity the authorities did everything possible to destroy the new body. They noted with alarm the rapid growth of the E.A.T.U.C. from 5,000 members at its inception to 10,000 by the end of 1949, and they knew only too well that the strike struggles of 1949, especially the successful sixteen-day strike of 2,000 transport workers, were a sign of bigger strike struggles to come in 1950.

Throughout 1950, backed by their new array of anti-trade union legislation, the authorities intensified their drive against

trade unionism. In February 1950, the police banned all meetings organised by another organisation, the East African Workers' Federation. At the same time Daudi Unda and Japhet Banks, Acting President and General Secretary respectively of the East African Workers' Federation, were arrested and charged with being "rogues and vagabonds". They were later sentenced to four and six months hard labour respectively. The Mombasa police also raided the office of the Federation and seized all account books and membership lists. In March 1950, Fred Kubai, President of the E.A.T.U.C., was refused a passport to visit Europe for the purposes of studying trade unionism.

On May 15, 1950, Fred Kubai and Makhan Singh, General Secretary of the E.A.T.U.C., were arrested following a raid on their office by the police. They were accused of being officers of a body which had not been registered and which, under Kenya trade union legislation, should therefore have been dissolved. Judgment was given against the E.A.T.U.C., and the two arrested leaders were fined 110s. each.

Following this arrest of Fred Kubai and Makhan Singh, a general strike took place in Nairobi. Unprecedented armed force was used against the workers. One would have thought a war had broken out. Not content with baton charges and tear-gas, the government employed Auster "spotter" aircraft, R.A.F. planes, Bren-gun carriers, armoured cars and armoured trucks. By May 23, it was reported in the press that at least 300 workers were behind bars. On the same day Chege Kuburu, a leader of the E.A.T.U.C., was sentenced to eleven months hard labour on a charge of declaring a strike in essential services. Further arrests took place on the following days until the workers decided to end the strike and return to work. Following the strike, Mwangi Macheria, a leading trade unionist, was also sentenced to twelve months hard labour for declaring an "illegal strike".

Then the imperialists turned their attention to Makhan Singh and Fred Kubai once again. Kubai was arrested on a charge of "attempted murder", held in custody and refused bail. He was later acquitted. Makhan Singh was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment on a charge of perjury. After serving eight weeks, he was acquitted by the Supreme Court—only to be immediately re-arrested under a Restriction Order prepared by the governor. Under this Order he was banished to a remote

village, Lokitaung, without trial and without right of appeal. He is apparently still there.

One would have thought that, with all the preceding legislation, every safeguard in the eyes of British imperialism had been taken to prevent trade union activity. But, no! Still further legal checks were deemed necessary. Modern history surely knows no example of such an avalanche of laws and actions against a colonial trade union movement as that which hurtled down on the heads of the workers of Kenya in the short period of 1948-52. What a striking testimony it was, not only to the fears of the British settlers and the Colonial Office, but equally to the determination, courage and devotion of the workers of Kenya!

It proved impossible to break the back of this indomitable working class—and if we look, now, at the fresh anti-trade union legislation of 1952 it is not so much because of its effectiveness to hold back the working-class movement, but because of its revelation of the continued hostility of the British authorities towards trade unions in Africa and its exposure of the oft-repeated claim that since the second world war successive British governments have “encouraged” trade unionism in Africa.

Ralph Millner, a British lawyer who made a thorough analysis in 1952¹ of the new Trade Union Ordinance which became law on April 25, 1952 points out:

“The most insolent proposal contained in the Act is that of unions ‘on probation’.

Probation is a system well known to English law and is normally used by criminal courts, which have power to place criminals and other persons under strict supervision, in order that their every-day conduct can be observed and guided.

Kenya’s new law will not bring the trade unions under the system operated by the criminal courts, but will place certain trade unions under the supervision of the Registrar of Trade Unions, appointed by the governor . . .

It is in connection with applications for registration that the proposal for ‘probation’ is brought in. When a trade union applies to be registered, the Registrar is to have an absolute discretion to defer registration for three months; if he does so, the union is a ‘probationary trade union’ during the three-month period.

¹ See *World Trade Union Movement*, No. 16, 1952.

At the end of the three months, the Registrar has power either to grant or refuse registration.

The inspiration for this arrogant piece of legislation seems to have come from Malan's South Africa, where the idea of 'probationary' unions has already been mooted."

The declaration of the State of Emergency in Kenya in October 1952 was, of course, a heaven-sent opportunity for the British authorities to try to complete the destruction of the Kenya trade union movement. One of the few remaining organisations, the Labour Union of East Africa, was forced out of existence, and its leaders arrested.

Nor was Fred Kubai forgotten. He was amongst the first to be arrested—and his whereabouts remained, for a long time, unknown to his friends in Britain. It was only his signature, alongside that of his fellow prisoners, on the dramatic and moving letter from the detainees in Lokitaung in 1958, that revealed where he was. More recently, a petition presented by Jomo Kenyatta and others to the Kenya Government and demanding the right of the African political leaders being kept in restricted conditions to conduct political talks with the officials of the existing African political organisations, KADU and KANU, revealed that Fred Kubai was being kept under restriction at Lodwar, Northern Kenya.¹ He was, in fact, one of the signatories to the petition.

From the foregoing it should be abundantly clear that far from the colonial authorities encouraging trade union growth (as it is so often claimed), every possible legal weapon, backed by force if necessary, and always accompanied by intimidation, interference and disruption, has been pressed into service in an attempt to bring African workers and their organisations completely under the thumb of the foreign monopolies, white settlers and colonial governments in Africa.

African workers had to battle for over four decades, in the teeth of bitter opposition from the authorities, to establish their trade unions. In the last fifteen years they have faced an equally fierce struggle to maintain the organisations they have formed, democratically elect their own leaders and officials, and use their trade unions for the purpose for which they were set up, namely

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, August 19, 1960.

to bring about a radical improvement in working and living conditions.

It has often been said that imperialism teaches by negative example. If African trade unionists have learnt one important lesson from the savage onslaughts they have had to face in the past forty years, it is that there can be no advance for the African working class unless imperialist domination is ended. Experience, in fact, has confirmed that trade union freedom can never be secured under the colonial system.

§ 3 "WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF SLAVE WAGES"

The attempts of the imperialist authorities to destroy genuine trade unions and foster in their place tame organisations have been motivated by two major considerations. One—as has been seen above—has been to keep the organised workers away from politics and the national struggle. The other, of equal importance in the eyes of the European rulers, has been to hold the workers back from struggling for higher wages, since cheap African labour has been a lynch-pin in the whole system of colonialism.

This attempt has failed. Indeed, the greatest strikes in Africa for higher wages have taken place precisely in the past fifteen years—and these have been strikes outstanding for their duration and for the bitter determination with which they have been fought. Before the second world war the most common pattern (though there were naturally exceptions) was for spontaneous sudden strikes of short duration; but in the post-war period Africa has been the scene of a remarkable series of well-organised, lengthy strikes, often resulting in important successes for the workers. Sometimes these strikes have lasted many days, such as the Nigerian general strike of 1945 (44 days), the strike of 55,000 Nigerian tin miners in 1955 (18 days) and the building workers' strike in 1956 (10 days), the Ghana gold mineworkers' strike of 1947 (5 weeks), and general strike of 1950 (10 days), and the Tanganyika railways strike in 1960 (11 weeks). Tanganyika has also seen a big wave of strikes in the sisal industry in the past few years, while important strikes have taken place in Southern Rhodesia (Wankie and Kariba), in South Africa (especially the week's strike in 1946 of 100,000 African miners), in Kenya (general strike of 1950 and, more recently, strikes of dockers and

railwaymen), in French West and Equatorial Africa throughout the 1950's, and in Northern Rhodesia, especially the long and powerful strikes of the African mineworkers.

The majority of these strikes have been for higher wages but, because of the conditions under which African workers and trade unions have to fight, they have inevitably been linked with the fight to win and defend trade union liberties.

There is no space here to deal in detail with all the major strike struggles that have taken place in Africa. But two examples are provided to illustrate the problems facing African workers and the key role which wages struggles have played in giving the whole people a deeper understanding of the national struggle. The examples taken—that of the African mineworkers in the Union of South Africa and that of the copper miners in Northern Rhodesia—both embraced large numbers of African workers and involved strikes of intense bitterness and stubbornness. The immediate issue in both cases was wages, but in every phase the defence of trade unionism rapidly became a central question. It is no accident that both of these important struggles concerned miners, for exploitation of mineral wealth and of African mineworkers lies right at the heart of the imperialist robbery of Africa.

The outcome, both in the Union of South Africa and in Northern Rhodesia, was a severe set-back for African trade unionism. But for the imperialists the victories were pyrrhic, for their short-term successes were only won at the cost of a much greater political consciousness and national awareness on the part of the African miners directly involved and on the part of the people as a whole. Neither on the Copper Belt nor in South Africa will things ever be the same as they were before these strikes took place.

The Veil is Lifted

The great African miners' strike on the Witwatersrand in 1946 is one of the most significant strikes in the history of the entire African continent.¹ On August 12, 1946, some 100,000 African miners began a week's intense battle, against the most savage police terror, in support of a demand for a wage of 10s. a day. Previous to the strike the African miners had organised the

¹ For most of the material on the strike the author is indebted to an article by Alan Doyle in *Fighting Talk*, August 1954.

African Mine Workers' Union under the presidency of J. B. Marks, one of Africa's most remarkable leaders. This union had itself to be formed in the midst of police attacks, spying, arrests and victimisation. The Chamber of Mines, with its usual arrogance, refused even to acknowledge the existence of the union, much less negotiate with its representatives. To sidestep the union and its demands, the government set up a commission under Judge Lansdowne to enquire into African miners' wages and conditions. Despite the overwhelming case submitted to the Commission by the African Mine Workers' Union, the Lansdowne Commission's final recommendation was for a miserly 3*d.* a day cost-of-living allowance. Its report openly argued in favour of the cheap wages system, claiming that the miner's wage was not really intended to be a living wage, but merely a supplementary income. Supplementary to what? To the land, from which it alleged the African miner's basic income could be derived. This was in the face of the appalling conditions and acute starvation in the Reserves, described in considerable detail by the African Mine Workers' Union in its evidence to the Commission.

The African miners and their union tried from May to July to bring about a change in the attitude of the Chamber of Mines. But there was no response. At a huge mass conference, held on August 4, 1946, the miners decided on strike action. Their plight and equally their spirit was expressed by one delegate who declared:

"When I think of how we left out homes in the Reserves, our children naked and starving, we have nothing more to say. Every man must agree to strike on August 12. It is better to die here than to go back with empty hands."

Many of them were to die before the strike was over. The reply of the mineowners and of the Smuts Government was to crush the strike by violence. To force the miners back to work the police batoned them, used bayonets and even fired on the strikers. When workers were forced down the mines at bayonet point, they started an underground sit-down strike. Police entered the mine and brutally drove the miners up—"stope by stope, level by level", said the papers—to the surface, where they were beaten up. For five days, despite this terror, the shooting on

demonstrations, the arrests of hundreds of miners and every possible form of intimidation, thousands of miners stood firm and many mines were shut down. But the police violence was too great, the union not firmly enough established yet, and the movement of the African people in the Union of South Africa as a whole not yet developed to the level it has attained today. Thus the strike could not be sustained, nor could the miners' union survive the intense repression that followed the strike. Thousands of union members were sacked, hundreds arrested and committed to trial, and the mining compounds turned into concentration camps from which union organisers were rigidly excluded. Innumerable police raids took place on offices and homes.

“The veil was lifted: We saw the South African state mobilised and rampant in defence of cheap labour and big dividends for the landlords . . . The miners' strike was one of those great historic incidents that, in a flash of illumination, educate a nation, destroy lies and illusions. The strike transformed African politics overnight. The timid opportunism and servile begging for favour disappeared . . . In a very profound sense, August 12, 1946, marks the true beginning of the South African people's fight for freedom.”¹

Lesson from Northern Rhodesia

The experience of the Northern Rhodesian mineworkers, too, is of special importance to an understanding of the struggles of the African people throughout the continent.

The long, protracted struggle for higher wages, against discrimination, for education and training, for access to skilled jobs, for trade union and democratic rights, expresses in a very sharp and highly developed form the problems of African workers in all territories.

What has happened on the Copper Belt is also valuable for other reasons. It illustrates in a remarkable fashion that the emergence of African trade unions, highly organised and willing to struggle, is a key factor for raising African wage levels. Equally it shows that every penny increase has meant a bitter battle, resulting in ever-mounting attacks on the union and the taking away of many of the trade union rights which the workers had previously won. Even if some social commentators like to argue

¹ Doyle, Alan: *op. cit.*

that African trade unions are as yet too weak and insufficiently mature to win higher wages for their members, the frenzied reaction of employers and colonial authorities to every union struggle for more pay and their deep-seated hostility precisely to those unions and union leaders who campaign to end the disgraceful slave wages system is a real gauge of the role which African trade unions already play, as well as of the potential they represent in the effort to change radically the whole wage structure for African workers and to raise it to a civilised level.

The story of the African copper miners in Northern Rhodesia is a drama in five acts. Four of the acts have now been played—the fifth is yet to come.

The first act was played out in the period before trade unionism came to the Copper Belt. The large-scale production of copper did not start here until 1931. Yet by 1935 the first strikes had taken place, six Africans had been killed and a further twenty-two injured when police fired on the strikers.

This strike was touched off by an increase in the poll tax in the mining districts from 12s. 6d. to 15s. But evidence given to the Commission of Enquiry which followed revealed that the root cause of the problem was the low wages paid to the Africans, coupled with the wage discrimination of which they were indignant witnesses every day. This is shown, for instance, in the following statement made by an African clerk to the Commission:

“The natives have seen that they started work at the same time as the Europeans and the European at once is able to buy a motor car and he gets a lot of food at the hotel. The natives complain about this. They compare the wages of the Europeans with the wages of the natives. They do the same kind of work, for instance, the natives working underground are supervised by a European who only points out to them the places where they should drill holes. After doing this the European sits down and the natives drill holes. The natives know where the holes should be drilled, they have been doing that work for some time and they know and understand the work.”¹

¹ Evidence taken by Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Disturbances on the Copper Belt, Northern Rhodesia, July-September 1935, Lusaka, p. 757.

An African policeman who did duty in the Luanshya township compound said that he had often heard African miners discussing their problems and voicing their complaints, common amongst which was that "the Europeans were cheating them because they did not pay them enough wages".¹

Further strikes broke out in March 1940. This time seventeen Africans were killed and sixty-nine wounded. The strike arose out of demands for higher wages to meet the rising cost of living, for better housing and improved sanitary conditions in the compounds. Dr. Hinden adds that a "deeper cause of the trouble was the fantastic differences between the wages and amenities enjoyed by the European workers and those granted to the Africans".² And there is no doubt much truth in her contention.

It is certainly a telling contrast that, only two days before the African miners' action took place, a European miners' strike on the Copper Belt had ended with most of the European miners' demands being conceded by the copper companies. For the Africans, however, the companies had a different answer—and the dead and wounded were the bitter fruit of the employers' determination to continue benefiting from a low wage system for Africans.

Some improvements in wages and welfare followed this strike, but, more significant still, the companies and the government had to do some quick thinking over the whole question of African workers' organisation and representation. There was still considerable reluctance to grant trade union rights to Africans, but clearly something had to be done. The Forster Commission, which had been appointed in May 1940 to investigate the strike and its accompanying episodes, expressed official thinking in these words:³

"For trades unionism, as trades unionism is generally understood by the British worker, the African worker in Northern Rhodesia is clearly not ready . . . It is none the less necessary that some scheme should be devised to make articulate mass grievances and to ensure that such mass grievances are properly brought to the notice of the managements."

¹ *op. cit.*, p. 331.

² Hinden, Dr. Rita: *Plan for Africa*, London, 1941, p. 56.

³ Taken from the *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Unrest in the Mining Industry in Northern Rhodesia in recent months, 1956* (The Branigan Report), p. 13.

Taking the advice of the Forster Commission, the copper companies decided to by-pass trade unions for Africans and in their place they introduced throughout the industry a general system of tribal representatives for the purposes of consultation. It soon became clear, however, that this system was woefully inadequate to the situation, and in 1943 "boss-boys' committees" were set up alongside the system of tribal representation. A rough division of labour was established, the tribal representatives¹ concerning themselves with living conditions in the compounds, and the boss boys attending to purely industrial matters.

Pressure for genuine trade unionism continued, however, and in 1947 the copper companies stated to the Dalglish Commission that they were prepared to grant recognition to an African trade union "provided they were satisfied that [it] was a representative one". But there was still a further hurdle to be jumped before Africans were allowed their union, and in 1948 the boss-boys' committees were changed to "works committees", composed of representatives of African workers in all departments in the mines.

These works committees only lasted a few months before the insistence of the African mineworkers pushed aside the last barrier, and won the right to set up four African mineworkers' unions at the four major mines. In May 1949, these four separate unions were amalgamated to form the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Trade Union, and in August of the same year the companies gave the union official recognition.

"A New Power has Arrived"

With the formation of the African miners' own union we come to the end of Act One of the Northern Rhodesian drama and enter on Act Two—an act characterised by the growth and consolidation of the union, with subsequent gains, in terms of better wages and conditions, for the men.

In a short time the majority of the 35,000 African miners had joined the union. Backed by this organised strength the union was able, in a few years, to achieve wage increases, a cost-of-living allowance and a profit-sharing bonus, as well as the gradual conversion of a number of payments in kind into a cash addition

¹ These tribal representatives continued to function until as late as 1953; and even subsequent to that the mining companies tried to resuscitate them as a weapon against the union.

to basic wage rates. As a result of these efforts African wages were soon standing at levels seventy-five per cent above those existing at the time of the formation of the union.

In 1952 took place the biggest strike struggle so far conducted on the Copper Belt. The 1952 strike was, in fact, one of the most remarkable African strike struggles in the history of the entire continent.

It has already been noticed that in 1935 and again in 1940 African copper miners' strikes had resulted in bloodshed and loss of life, with the result that the miners were forced back to work after being out for only a few days. African trade unionists contend that on both these occasions it was the provocative attitude of the companies that led to the incidents resulting in the police firing on the workers.

In 1952, however, the African miners were organised and prepared. This time they proved that they could conduct a protracted strike, with 100 per cent unity and perfect discipline. They demonstrated that they were strong enough and wise enough to avoid being drawn into any provocative traps by the mining companies. Therein lies one of the most significant features of the strike.

The strike arose out of a wage demand of the African mine-workers. The average *earnings*, for 30 days' working, including overtime and all bonuses, paid to African surface workers in the mines at December 1951, was 74s.—and for underground workers 89s. 2d.¹ That is, less than 2s. 6d. a day for surface workers, and less than 3s. a day for underground workers.

Despite the low pay and poor housing, there is no system of social security in Northern Rhodesia. Unemployed, destitute or disabled workers are callously asked, in the words of the colony's Annual Report, to rely on "the duty of the family to look after its destitute or disabled members". In a population of 1,500,000, there were at the time of the strike 22,680 estimated cases of leprosy. The death rate from typhoid was described as "unpleasantly high".²

In its few years of existence, the African Mine Workers' Union had fought, not without success, against these appalling conditions. In September 1952 it presented a demand for an increase of

¹ *Report of the Labour and Mines Department of Northern Rhodesia for 1951*, published in 1952.

² *Annual Report of the Health Department, Northern Rhodesia, 1950.*

2s. 8d. per shift. African miners work on an average twenty-seven shifts a month, so that the demand was equal to an increase of about 2s. 6d. a day. No one could seriously argue that the Northern Rhodesian copper miners did not need a wage increase. Nor could it be argued that the big British and American copper companies could not afford to pay it.

For years the copper companies had been extracting millions of pounds from the country. But never had profits been so high before. For the year ended June 30, 1950, total profits of Roan Antelope were £8,280,000, and for Mufulira £8,270,000. Both these firms are subsidiaries of the Rhodesian Selection Trust, which itself is controlled by the American Metal Company, a subsidiary of Morgan. On October 23, 1952, three days after the commencement of the strike, Rhokana Corporation, which is controlled by Rhodesian Anglo-American, announced a total profit of £12,116,000 and a dividend of no less than 225 per cent. The fourth of the main mining companies is Nchanga.

The wage demand of the African copper miners would have cost the companies less than £2,000,000 a year. The *Manchester Guardian* admitted:

“The increase is not in itself unreasonable, in view of the rising cost of living and the high profits of the companies.”

In fact, the Chamber of Mines did not itself dispute its ability to pay. How could it in the face of such enormous profits?

Nevertheless the companies refused the demand, but made a small offer of 3d. a shift, and later 6d., which the union rejected. All attempts on the part of the government to persuade the union to let the matter go to arbitration were likewise turned down, the union members being determined to demonstrate the strength behind their demand. A strike ballot was taken, resulting in 23,585 favouring strike action, and 113 against. (Some 5,000 members of the union did not vote, and there were another 10,000 African miners not yet in the union.) Backed by this solid support, the union executive called out the men on October 20, 1952.

Immediately after the ballot, the Northern Rhodesian correspondent of the *Financial Times* (October 14, 1952) was already seeing the writing on the wall: “Clearly a new power has arrived in Africa whose potentialities are tremendous.”

Until this strike, the companies and the government regarded

the African Mineworkers' Trade Union as a tiger without teeth. They estimated that in the event of a strike, the non-members would scab and thus give the opportunity for staging a provocation; or alternatively, that the workers would be forced through starvation to submit after a few days. The strike thus became a show of strength, and the union's guiding words became "self-discipline and control".

When the strike had lasted for several days, the capitalist press began to suggest that there would be a return after a week because of lack of food. When it entered its second week, the Chamber of Mines' own paper, the *Northern News* (October 28, 1952) gave up hoping for a quick return and urged the leaders to call off the strike because they had already "demonstrated their power to hamstring the country's only major industry" and "because the course of the strike so far has demonstrated that the African union as a whole is amenable to discipline . . . and that it can conduct a *total* strike in a peaceful and ordered manner". The facts could hardly be hidden. Thirty-nine thousand workers responded to the Supreme Council's¹ call on October 19—the total African labour force on the copper mines, including union members and non-members, and those who had voted for strike action and those who had not. To 3,000 the union then issued permits to maintain essential services in the mines. When, after three weeks, the Department for Labour and Mines suggested that a return to work would see the companies make a substantial offer, the Supreme Council of the union decided to recommend to the men that they return to work. The miners' high sense of discipline enabled a united acceptance of the majority decision, and a united return to work.

Having demonstrated its strength by strike action and having demanded and secured the appointment of an external arbitrator and the right to nominate an assessor, the union then agreed to submit the dispute to arbitration.

The arbitration award provided for an increase in pay of 1s. 2d. per shift for the lowest paid, up to 1s. 8d. per shift for the highest. The new rates meant an increase of eighty per cent in basic pay for the lowest, and fifteen per cent for the highest. They cost the companies £750,000 extra per year. Although the award did not concede the full demand of the union for 2s. 8d. a shift

¹ A union delegate body which, in effect, controls the Executive Committee on behalf of the members.

increase, it represented a considerable advance over the companies' original 3*d.* and then 6*d.* per shift offered before the strike. For the lowest paid, it represented a substantial change, although the basic wage was still left scandalously low compared with the cost of living, the work performed, the profits of the companies and the wages of the European miners in Northern Rhodesia. Nevertheless, on the whole, it could be justly claimed that the award represented a victory for the union, a victory only made possible through the miners' united strike action.

An interesting sidelight was that the wage advance won by the copper miners had a wide effect throughout the Rhodesias. On January 29, 1953, the day after the award was announced, the *Financial Times* moaned: "There is the danger that the new wage levels will hit hard other industries less well able to pay them." The very same day the Rhodesia Broken Hill Development Company (lead-zinc mine), though it had not been involved in the dispute, announced that it would adjust its wage scales in conformity with the new award. And the Salisbury correspondent of the *Financial Times*, forecasting an enquiry into wages by the Southern Rhodesian Government, wrote on the following day:

"Such action would be designed to forestall industrial unrest and possible strike action, following the announcement of the relatively generous award made to the Copper Belt workers, by reassuring Africans in Southern Rhodesia that their needs are receiving sympathetic consideration."

And yet there are people who attempt to persuade African workers that strikes are "irresponsible" and "senseless"!

Not only did the strike prove that the tiger had teeth but it increased the tiger in size. Before the strike the union membership in the copper mines was 28,000; after the strike it was 31,000.¹ Proudly, the Supreme Council of the union was able to declare on the suspension of the strike: "A new page in the history of the N.R.A.M.T.U. has been opened. The strike is evidence of the solidarity of the Black labour force."

This claim by the Supreme Council was virtually endorsed by the London *Financial Times*, which revealed the fears of the

¹ The union also had over 2,000 members in the Broken Hill lead and zinc mines.

copper companies and their hatred towards the African Mineworkers' Trade Union, when it wrote on November 10, 1952:

“... It cannot be denied that this strike has caused feelings of uneasiness about the future . . . This is not trade unionism or collective bargaining in the accepted sense of these terms, and the dangers inherent in this racial approach to employment problems are obvious.

One now begins to see the virtue of Southern Rhodesia's policy of not officially recognising African trade unions until they are truly representative bodies, created and controlled by the workers themselves.”

When the *Financial Times* referred to “truly representative bodies, created and controlled by the workers themselves”, it is obvious that what it really meant was the establishment of trade unions that would co-operate with the employers and the government in maintaining a system of low wages and high profits. The desire on the part of the copper companies to restrict African trade unions in the same way as has been done in Southern Rhodesia can be well understood when one examines some of the outstanding features of the strike.

In order to avoid being starved into submission, and to prevent the possibility of a food shortage being used as a means of provoking an incident (as was done in 1935), the union arranged well in advance for the miners to lay in stocks of food. It further made arrangements with rural areas to send in food free, if required; and it dried, salted and stockpiled meat, thus creating its own reserve larder.

The union was able to obtain the open support of the tribal chiefs. This was in marked contrast to previous strikes, before the formation of the union, when the government persuaded some chiefs to appeal to their people to return to work.

The union took great care to ensure that close relations were maintained with its members at the Broken Hill lead-zinc mine. Taking advantage of the fact that the Broken Hill management has an agreement with the copper companies to maintain the same wages for African miners the union decided not to call out its members at Broken Hill, since a victory for the copper miners was bound to affect directly the lead-zinc miners. A mass meeting of lead-zinc miners showed their understanding of this gesture,

and their solidarity with the copper miners, by agreeing to impose a levy on themselves of 5s. a month.

The union executive, throughout the period of the strike, issued constant statements to the press, challenging the distortions and allegations of the companies, and confidently stating its own case on behalf of the African miners.

At every stage there was close contact between the union leadership and the membership, and the members were consulted through regular branch meetings on every major step taken.

Thus ended the Second Act in this long, grim drama. This act had resulted in a great victory for the African miners in their battle to "end slave wages". True, wages were still pitifully low, and the increases won did not enable the African miners to climb out of their abyss of poverty. Yet the concessions were significant as a portent of what could be won by struggle and by maintaining the unity and solidarity of the entire African labour force on the Copper Belt.

African "Advancement"

Undoubtedly this success for the union caused great anxiety amongst the companies. They realised only too well that, unless the union was seriously crippled, still more substantial wage concessions would be wrung from them. The government and the copper companies therefore increased their efforts to break up the high degree of unity, discipline and militancy which had been so clearly demonstrated by the African miners.

First, they resurrected "tribal representatives" from oblivion and elevated them to positions of authority in the hope that this would reduce the influence of the union and spread disunity among the workers. But the development of a working-class consciousness and of a unity transcending that of the tribe, reduced these efforts to nought. For his militancy in opposing this crude manoeuvre, the Vice-President of the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Union was jailed for four months.

The "tribal representatives" scheme had to be abandoned not only because of the militant opposition from active members of the union, but also because the companies could evoke no enthusiasm for tribalism amongst the mineworkers themselves.

Epstein¹ has noted that as early as the 1940 strikes it was

¹ Epstein, A. L.: *Politics in an Urban African Community*, Manchester University Press, 1958, p. 81.

becoming evident that “the African workers were coming to regard themselves as industrial workers as well as members of different tribes”. The “final defeat and abolition” of the Tribal Elders on the Copper Belt, he points out, “came with the emergence of the African Mine Workers’ Union”.¹

How decisively the African copper miners had turned towards trade unionism and away from tribalism is shown by the voting figures in March 1953 on the issue of whether or not tribal representation should be retained on the Copper Belt. Of the 35,000 miners, 84·8 per cent voted. Of those who voted, 96·9 per cent opposed retention of tribal representatives, and a mere 3·1 per cent were for retention.²

Years of contact and joint struggle had produced profound changes amongst the workers from various Northern Rhodesian and Nyasaland tribes. A class-conscious proletariat was clearly emerging, and this was a significant new factor in the situation.

Next, the Moral Rearmament (M.R.A.) organisation was called in by the companies to influence the leadership of the union. This organisation, whose agents preach out-and-out class collaboration and the abandonment of struggle, helped to establish a company union called the African Salaried Staff Association. This gained little support at this stage, except from clerks and boss-boys.

But the companies had not exhausted all the weapons in their armoury. There were still other ways open to them to weaken the stand of the African miners and to drive a wedge into their ranks. And they now intensified their efforts to play off the 6,000 highly paid European miners against the 37,000 poorly paid Africans, and to establish a small, better paid African section which would become a focus for disunity inside the African miners’ organisation.

It would perhaps be helpful, at this point, to explain a little about the background to the Northern Rhodesian copper mines dispute, and to indicate the basis of the wage discrimination operating there.

In Northern Rhodesia two large trusts dominate copper production: the Rhodesian Anglo-American Corporation (Rhoadlo), which, despite its name, represents mainly British and South African capital; and the Rhodesian Selection Trust, mainly dominated by the American Metal Company. These two mono-

¹ Epstein, A. L.: *op. cit.*, p. 85.

² *ibid.*, p. 100.

polies between them control the four great copper companies—Nchanga and Rhokana (with the more recent and less important Bancroft and Kansanshi) belonging to the Rhoanglo group, and Roan Antelope, Mufulira and the more recent and smaller Chibuluma belonging to the R.S.T. group.

The importance of the Rhodesian Copper Belt can be gauged from the fact that in volume it now occupies third place in the world for the production of copper, after the United States and Chile; that the value of copper it produces is equal to about a quarter of the entire net domestic output of the Central African Federation; and that the value of copper exports are between a half and three-fifths of total exports from the Federation.

Clearly copper constitutes an absolute key element in the present economy of Central Africa. But it is more than that. It is also a source of huge profits for the companies which not even the temporary drop in the world price of copper can hide. It has been estimated, for example, that in the ten years between 1945 and 1954 the Rhokana Corporation was able to pay out total dividends equal to fourteen times its original capital. Throughout the 1950's the Corporation's dividend had never been under 200 per cent; in 1957 it actually reached 350 per cent. The profits of the other three main companies, though not as high as those of Rhokana, have been of the same exceptional order, dividends of 100 per cent and higher not being uncommon. In recent years gross profits have totalled £40-£50 million per annum, and even more.

It is of importance to appreciate the source of these really phenomenal profits. An estimation made in 1956,¹ based on the 1954-5 profit figures, is very revealing. It shows that the average profit per worker was £1,268, and the average wage (African and European) was £298, thus giving a profit rate of 425 per cent. Yet this is only part of the picture.

“This enormous average rate is in itself indicative of the degree of super-exploitation in the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia, but it does not show that racial discrimination throws the full weight of exploitation on to the African labour force. The comparison of average profit per worker (£1,268) with the average European wage (£1,417) brings down the rate to

¹ Wetzler, Jean: “How the African Copper Miners are Robbed”, *World Trade Union Movement*, May 1956, p. 39.

89 per cent, while in relation to the African average (£105), the rate reaches the fantastic percentage of 1,208 per cent.”¹

Average cash earnings for European miners were £1,943 in 1955; £2,295 in 1956; and £1,899 in 1957.²

The companies have consistently striven, not without success, to utilise this immense differential between African and European wages to weaken the fight of the African mineworkers. Making use of this artificial division they were able to persuade many of the European mineworkers, against their own fundamental and long-term interests, to blackleg against the African miners during their strike of October 1952. On other occasions since then they have continued to play off European workers against Africans, assisted in this policy by the leaders of the European Mine Workers' Union who are largely influenced by racialist ideas.

It is important to remember that the European Mine Workers' Union actually started as a branch of the chauvinist South African Mine Workers' Union, which is dominated by the most extreme policies of Afrikaaner nationalism. When Mr. Charlie Harris, the then secretary of the South African Mine Workers' Union, visited the Copper Belt in 1936 and set up a branch of his union, the press reported that he spoke of his desire “to help make Northern Rhodesia a white country”. He added that he “was surprised to find that the Native had actually encroached upon not only unskilled labour, but skilled labour in this territory and he asked what was going to happen to the white men in this country if they were not organised . . . The white man's rights must be protected.”³

It was in this spirit that the European Mine Workers' Union was born; and, fundamentally, this has remained its policy ever since—“to protect the white man's rights”.

From 1952 onwards the copper companies pressed for a relaxation of the European miners' monopoly on skilled and semi-skilled jobs. They have sought such relaxation mainly in order to separate out a handful of Africans who would be given skilled jobs at higher rates of pay. They hoped that this process would bring about a division in the ranks of the African miners, giving

¹ Wetzler: *op. cit.*

² *Northern Rhodesian Chamber of Mines Year Book for 1957*, Kitwe, 1958.

³ Quoted in *Rights and Liberties of Africans, No. 2: South African Native Policy*, p. 14, published in 1937 by the London Group on African Affairs.

them the impression that their path to advancement was a long-term one of becoming higher-paid skilled workers and thus dampening down the mounting pressure of the African miners for a substantial wage increase for the ninety per cent of unskilled who, under existing conditions, have no real prospect of acquiring skill and whose wages are scandalously low.

This tactic of the copper companies was well exposed in the *Economist* which, in relation to the 1955 strike, said:¹

“The constructive issue is for the Africans to get a ladder of advancement to take the minds of the best of them off their ill-directed strike. That would not be rewarding irresponsibility, but a shrewd investment in African privilege.”

A “shrewd investment” for the companies—but not for the African workers.

“Advancement” has always meant more to the African miners than the principle of being allowed to do semi-skilled or even skilled work, which would provide an opening of only a few hundred skilled and semi-skilled posts to Africans. (The Forster Commission recommended a total of only 331 vacancies into which African miners could be advanced in a period of *five years*. Even by the end of 1957, after the “advancement” proposals had been operating for two years, only 621 Africans had been promoted to “advanced” jobs and 331 were being trained or awaiting vacancies.)² To African miners real advancement means a general up-lift in the wage levels of all the African miners, especially the mass of grossly under-paid unskilled.

The leaders of the European mineworkers have limited their stand to a professed adherence to the principle of “equal pay for equal work”, but they have accompanied this demagoguery with repeated blacklegging on African workers on strike, thus assisting the companies and openly betraying the interests of the African mineworkers.

African miners argue that if the European mineworkers’ leaders were genuine in their pretended stand on trade union principles, they would help to raise the basic pay of the unskilled African miners and would cease to scab on their strikes.

The African miners realise that the question of “equal pay for

¹ January 29, 1955.

² *Northern Rhodesian Chamber of Mines Year Book for 1957*, p. 7.

equal work” is of fundamental and long-term importance, and that the attainment of “equal pay” requires the conquest of certain social and political conditions which will open the way to “equal work” for all Africans. At the same time, African miners fully understand that the central immediate wages demand, and the one best suited to mobilising and uniting the overwhelming majority of the miners, is that of raising in a radical fashion the low wages of the mass of unskilled workers, who have at present no opportunity to engage in “equal work”, let alone to receive “equal pay”.

Dixon Konkola, a former leader of the North Rhodesian African T.U.C. and President of the Railwaymen’s Union, has put the viewpoint of African workers in these words:

“What we want is a *general* increase in our standard of living but the companies and the government are strongly opposed to this demand. Their tactic is to lead us into a dead-end. They are trying to tie us up in endless discussions on the necessity and ways and means of ‘advancing’ Africans to the technical level of Europeans. Any wage increases will be dependent on higher qualifications and greater productivity.

This so-called ‘advancement’ is unacceptable to us. How can all our workers, or even the majority of them, acquire the same technical qualifications as Europeans when the latter, who themselves stipulate what qualifications should be held, refuse us the means of getting them, including even primary education? How can we ‘advance’ when Africans stagnate in huts lit by ‘kolombondo’ (wicks soaked in oil and placed in old cans or jam jars) and when they remain defenceless against disease?

It is the actual work we do, performed with our present qualifications, which is not sufficiently paid; and it is for the work we actually do with the qualifications we actually hold, that we claim increases. The matters in question are our wages, our standard of life, not our qualifications.

The slogan of ‘advancement’ is a dead-end also because it is an attempt to divide us. The employers ask for nothing better than to be able to set a handful of privileged workers against the vast mass of African workers.”¹

¹ This basic assessment still stands, notwithstanding the new agreement on advancement reached in November 1960, between the copper mines manage-

Despite all the efforts of the companies, the union continued to grow. During 1954, there were several indications of the growing will of the African mineworkers to struggle for their demands. In June they won, for the first time, annual holidays with pay and a pension for miners who were over fifty and who had over twenty years' service. When victimisation took place at the Roan Antelope Mine, the entire African labour force downed tools. And when the African General Workers' Union, composed mainly of building workers, struck for higher pay, the Nchanga branch of the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Union came out on strike in solidarity. This action of the Nchanga miners was a landmark in Northern Rhodesian working-class history. It was the first occasion on which African workers there had come out on a solidarity strike.

Towards the end of 1954, the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Union started to negotiate for a basic wage increase. It demanded an increase of 10s. 8d. per shift. This demand was of special significance. It represented an amount which would have increased the wages of African mineworkers by 200 to 300 per cent. True, even if won, the bulk of African miners would still have been earning only about 15s. a day, but in view of the then existing level of wages, not only amongst African mineworkers in Northern Rhodesia but also amongst African workers throughout the continent, it represented a far-reaching challenge to the whole imperialist policy of starvation wages. Its significance was well understood by the leadership of the African Mineworkers' Union which declared:

"We have had enough of slave wages; we are now determined to change radically the whole wage structure for African miners and to raise it to a civilised level."

It could not be argued that an increase of 10s. 8d. a shift could not have been met by the copper companies out of the enormous profits they make. It would have cost the companies less than

ment and the Northern Rhodesian European Mine Workers' Union. This agreement theoretically provides for a single ladder of promotion for all miners, from the lowest job to the highest, with ability as the only deciding factor. But no satisfactory arrangement appears to have been made to enable Africans to break into what has hitherto been a European preserve, and, through apprenticeship or technical training, acquire the necessary skills.

£7,000,000 a year. During the first few days of the strike which ensued, Mr. R. L. Prain, Chairman of the Rhodesian Selection Trust group of copper companies, admitted in a speech in London that the Rhodesian copper companies were making £40,000,000 profit a year before tax.

The companies flatly rejected the union's demands. After exhausting all channels of negotiation, the Supreme Council of the union balloted the members on the question of strike action. The result was 18,110 in favour of strike and 365 against. Armed with this overwhelming mandate, the union leadership issued a call for strike action to begin on January 3, 1955. The majority of the 37,000 African mineworkers immediately stopped work at the four main mines—Roan Antelope, Nkana, Mufulira and Nchanga. In fact, so solid was the response that the *Financial Times* admitted that over ninety-five per cent of the entire African labour force on the Copper Belt had answered the strike call. Only some 2,000 remained in the pits and these were miners maintaining essential services on the instructions of the union.

The African miners on strike were faced with every kind of provocation and intimidation by the employers and the government. Fourteen armed squads of police were brought into the area from the police training centre east of Ndola, and these police squads continually patrolled all the copper mines throughout the duration of the strike. Police reservists drawn from the white settlers were also mobilised.

In addition, the companies, with the apparent compliance of the leadership of the European Mine Workers' Union, persuaded a number of European mineworkers to scab on the strike, to enter the pits and to perform work normally done by African mineworkers. Some of the European mineworkers flatly refused to scab in this way. The official journal of the Roan Antelope branch of the European Mine Workers' Union said that the decision to scab would "forever remain an ineradicable slur on the good name of the union and its members" and it urged the European miners to press for a reversal of this scandalous decision.

Although the European Mine Workers' Union is affiliated to the Miners' International Federation (I.C.F.T.U. Trade Secretariat), it is significant that throughout the fifty-eight days of the strike neither the I.C.F.T.U. nor the Miners' International Federation uttered one word of condemnation of the European

Mine Workers' Union for its action in organising scabbing in this way.

Any hopes the companies may have entertained, through their control of the food-shops in the compounds, of starving the African miners into submission were defeated by the careful planning of the African Mineworkers' Union. For weeks beforehand, as in 1952, the African miners laid in stocks of food, sufficient for the duration of the long strike they anticipated they would have to wage.

At the end of the first three weeks, there being no break in the workers' ranks, the companies began to increase their threats. On Monday, January 24, they issued an ultimatum stating that all those who did not return to work on the following day would be immediately discharged. They added that they would give no undertaking to re-employ, at any later stage, those who had been discharged but would only choose those whom they wished; and that men re-employed in this way would be engaged as new employees on the lowest category of wages and would lose their past leave, pension and long-service benefits. They later added the threat to evict from their huts in the mining compound all the strikers and their families.

All these threats, provocations and displays of force had no effect on the unity of the mineworkers. The strike remained solid right to the very end and the overwhelming majority of those who had come out on January 3 were still out on the last day of the strike.

An outstanding characteristic of the strike was the international solidarity. The South Wales Area Council of the National Union of Mineworkers and the Scottish Area Council both donated £1,000 to the Northern Rhodesian African Mineworkers' Union. The feeling of the British miners resulted also in the Executive Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers sending £1,000. Many other British trade union organisations collected money and sent messages of solidarity.

At the end of fifty-eight days, having demonstrated in a decisive manner their determination and unity, the African mineworkers returned to work on March 2, 1955. In the face of this unity, the companies were compelled to withdraw their previous threats.

Although they added that they would now have a surplus of some 7,000 workers (several thousand new recruits, mainly from

Tanganyika, had been taken on during the strike), they undertook to re-engage all the African mineworkers at their previous rates of pay and without loss of leave, pension or long-service rights.

After the resumption of work, concessions were made by the companies in the form of a cost-of-living allowance and profit-sharing bonus. The basic pay claim for an increase of 10s. 8d. per shift went to arbitration, but was rejected.

Temporary Set-back

The Third Act had ended essentially in a draw. The Fourth Act was to see a new counter-offensive by the companies and the government, both of whom had become more than alarmed by the might of the organised African workers—this “new power with tremendous potentialities”—which threatened not only to wrest fundamental concessions from the copper companies but to act as a catalyst for other African workers throughout the Central African Federation and beyond.

The “advancement” plot was now pressed ahead still more vigorously, coupled with fresh moves to build up the Mines African Staff Association, which had been set up in 1953 after the 1952 victory of the African mineworkers. It was after the great fifty-eight-day strike that the companies began to operate the African “advancement” proposals. And it was in March 1955, almost immediately the strike had ended, that the companies intimated to the Mines African Staff Association that they were prepared to grant it recognition. As the companies themselves put it in their submissions to the Branigan Commission, they “considered that an organisation such as the African Staff Association would facilitate the growth of a strong and responsible African middle class, and a stable and level-headed body of African opinion”.¹ In May 1955 the companies gave the African Mineworkers’ Union six months’ notice of their intention to terminate their agreement with the union; at the same time they set out a list of proposed categories of supervisory and staff jobs which should be covered by the Staff Association, coupling this with a proposal to place such jobs on to a monthly salary basis in place of the existing “ticket” system.² It is clear that the

¹ Branigan Report: op. cit., p. 31.

² A “ticket” is a period of thirty working days, and usually covers a period of thirty-five to forty days.

aim of the "advancement" proposals was directly linked with the plan to divide the African mineworkers and build the Staff Association. Lomas, in a study on the Copper Belt,¹ points out:

"By systematic job evaluation, those jobs that were mainly supervisory or required a measure of skill or education, were placed in the 'staff' category; the preponderant remainder, mainly manual jobs, were placed in the 'ticket' category."

The companies, in fact, admitted that under their proposals "the bulk of advanced jobs would fall within the orbit of the African Staff Association".²

The union naturally resisted this blatant attempt to disrupt its organisation, demanding that the proposal to specify which jobs should be represented by the Union and which by the Association should be withdrawn, and that individual African employees should be free to decide to which body they wished to belong. But this freedom of choice was precisely what the companies did not want; and they therefore refused to agree to this request of the union. The union's fears, of course, were fully justified. The Branigan Report reveals that out of the 138 union leaders no less than 66 were involved, since their jobs, under the companies' proposed division of categories, had become supervisory and staff jobs. Thus nearly half the union leadership were being asked by the companies to abandon their union as a condition for "advancement". There could hardly have been a more blatant demonstration as to how the companies were using the plan for "African advancement" as a means of breaking up the union. No wonder that at a meeting of the African National Congress at Lusaka on June 11, 1956, the Congress General President stated of the Chamber of Mines: "It looks at the moment—and I have checked this up—as if they are trying to undermine Union leadership. They are taking all the intelligent and well-informed young miners into the Salaried Staff Association and using them to break down union strength."

Still pursuing their aim of weakening the union, the copper companies announced on June 21 that a previous option granted

¹ Lomas, P. K.: "African Trade Unionism on the Copperbelt", *The South African Journal of Economics*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 1958, p. 113.

² Branigan Report: op. cit., p. 17.

to miners in supervisory or staff jobs to receive ticket-to-ticket pay or monthly pay would be withdrawn as from July 1, 1956. This move was of considerable importance since monthly pay was associated in the minds of the African mineworkers with the Staff Association. As long as the option continued the union could still fight to represent ticket-to-ticket miners in supervisory or staff categories. When 620 African miners—out of 2,740 to whom the option had been applicable—refused to change over to monthly pay, 490 of them were put on other ticket-to-ticket jobs, involving loss of pay and status; 70 more resigned; and the remainder were dismissed. Clearly the companies were trying by every form of pressure and intimidation to break down the loyalty of the African mineworkers to the union they had built with such care, courage and self-sacrifice. It was a challenge which the union could not, and did not, allow to go unanswered.

Throughout mid-1956 the Copper Belt was shaken by a series of short but solid and well-organised strikes. Nchanga mine struck on May 23, Nkana on June 18, and Rhokana on June 20. Then on June 20 the Supreme Council of the African Mineworkers' Union decided to call out all ticket-paid African miners on the Copper Belt on June 22. The strike lasted three days, involving, according to the Branigan Report, 25,000 workers. Further strikes continued throughout July in mine after mine.

At the end of July began a series of exceptionally well-planned "rolling strikes", at the call of the Union Supreme Council. Each of these strikes was of three to five days' duration, each mine striking in turn. These "rolling strikes" continued until August 23. Five days later the union declared an indefinite ban on overtime; and further strikes took place in the beginning of September. In all, sixteen strikes took place between May and September 1956.

It is important to re-emphasise at this point that this entire series of strikes was in defence of the union and in protest against the companies' attempt to build up the Staff Association at the union's expense. Although the Northern Rhodesian African Mine Workers' Union—like all other African trade unions—has experienced difficulties in maintaining a high level of paid-up membership, the loyalty of the workers to the union has never been seriously contested even by those hostile to the union. In his interesting study Lomas¹ draws attention to the solid support

¹ Lomas: *op. cit.*

given to the union's strike call in the big strikes of 1952 and 1955, and adds:

"A similar virtually unanimous response to Union discipline was evident during the 'rolling strikes' of 1956. It is clear therefore that it has a power and prestige far greater than mere paid-up membership figures imply."

The whole strategy of the "rolling strikes", he rightly points out, "implies in itself a great measure of discipline".

In fact so considerable was the power of the union that the government rapidly came to the conclusion that, despite all its various methods of intimidation and pressure, it could not make any real breach in the workers' ranks without taking more drastic action. And so, on the night of September 11, 1956, the Acting Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency in the Western Province, in which the Copper Belt is situated, and early the following morning ordered the arrest of Matthew Nkloma, the general secretary of the union, together with twenty-five members of the union's Supreme Council. These most capable and devoted union leaders were then banished from the Copper Belt and denied the right to return.

The right-wing president of the union, Mr. L. C. Katilungu, who was absent from the Copper Belt almost entirely between June and September 1956, during the period when the union was facing its most difficult trial since its formation, returned after the Declaration of Emergency and after the arrests of most of the leadership. He immediately co-operated with the government to end the strikes, which finally came to a halt towards the end of September.¹

By virtually beheading the union and by breaking the African mineworkers' resistance to the "advancement-cum-Staff Association" plot, the companies ended the Fourth Act with a temporary victory. Flushed by this triumph, they lost no time in pressing

¹ Lawrence Katilungu, one of the few Africans who was willing to sit on the Monckton Commission, has been a frequent target of African criticism in Northern Rhodesia for many years. It is admitted, in fact, that his opponents "describe him as a stooge of the companies and the Government" (*East Africa and Rhodesia*, January 12, 1961, p. 543). By the end of 1960, feeling against Katilungu on the Copper Belt had become so strong that branch after branch demanded his dismissal, which was finally endorsed by the Supreme Council of the union early in 1961.

home their advantage. Their submissions to the Branigan Commission brought right into the open their real attitude towards the union—blatant, unconcealed hostility. It became quite clear that they were only prepared to tolerate a union on whose docile co-operation they could completely rely.

Thus, in their final proposals to the Commission at the end of October 1956, the companies' representative referred to "the state of affairs recently obtaining in the leadership and policies of the African Union"¹ in a context which made it abundantly clear that the companies were trying to arrogate to themselves the right to decide how the union should be run and what its policy should be. For instance, it was coolly proposed that:

"The Commission of Inquiry should recommend that the number of paid officials in any trade union should be:

- (a) limited to a definite number;
- (b) not exceeded without the Governor's consent; and that the present legislation should be amended to give effect to that recommendation."²

Further, the companies proposed legal amendments "to render illegal strikes which take place before the procedure or machinery which is laid down in the Ordinance or in any agreement has been followed",³ and they coupled that with a plea to make everyone taking part in such an "illegal" strike, or "counselling, inciting, instigating, aiding or abetting another to participate in an illegal strike, guilty of an offence". And, with breath-taking audacity they added that the amended legislation should provide that "the officials of the Union should be deemed guilty of the contravention *unless they can prove that they were not in any way responsible for the strike*".⁴ [Own italics.—J.W.] The aim of this becomes clear when one reads the very next two proposals of the companies:

"The Commission of Inquiry should recommend that the officials of a trade union *should be disqualified from office* for . . . the offence of having caused, or incited another to participate in, an illegal strike.

The Commission of Inquiry should recommend that the

¹ Branigan Report: op. cit., p. 35.

² *ibid.*, p. 36.

³ *ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 36.

present legislation should be amended to provide that the Governor shall have the power *to cancel the registration of a trade union if it takes part in or encourages any illegal strike.*"¹ [Own italics.—J.W.]

The dangerous threat implied in this proposal is only appreciated when one takes into consideration the whole machinery of compulsory trade union registration which obtains in Africa, and which was examined in the previous section.

These open threats to the union were coupled with gratuitous compliments to the Staff Association which showed completely where the companies' sympathies lay.

"The Commission of Inquiry should affirm that the formation of the Mines' African Staff Association and its recognition by the Companies was and is in the best interests of the industry and the Federation² and in particular of the African employees themselves."³

How deserving the Staff Association was and is of the companies' favour is best to be judged by its submissions to the Commission. These included a proposal to make illegal all strikes which take place "before going through negotiation, conciliation and secret ballot",⁴—a significant echo of the companies' attitude. The Association also favoured the introduction by the companies of "bursary and scholarship schemes for deserving African miners".⁵ It can be left to the imagination as to which African miners the companies would find "deserving". Finally, the Association made a pathetic plea that "the term 'boss-boy' should be discontinued and replaced by 'assistant ganger'".⁶

The European Mine Workers' Union representatives,⁷ to their credit, voiced their opposition to compulsory arbitration and to proposals to limit the number of paid union officials by law.

The Acting Labour Commissioner⁸ showed clearly on whose side he stood by his proposals to reduce the number of paid officials of the union, as well as the number of members of the Supreme Council. Like the companies, he obviously favoured

¹ Branigan Report: op. cit., p. 36.

² Branigan Report: op. cit., p. 36.

³ *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵ i.e. Central African Federation.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 42-3

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 49

concentrating union powers in as few hands as possible, apparently because of his knowledge that the number of "responsible" and "sound" trade union officials was not very great.

That the legislative proposals sought by the companies did not picture in the Commission's final recommendations is to be explained partly by reluctance to put clearly on paper such a body of clearly anti-trade union legislation. Further, the main objective of the companies—namely the beheading of the union by the removal of its most capable and militant leaders, and their replacement by those who were more prepared to co-operate with the employers—was already achieved.

The effects of this temporary victory of the employers were soon to be seen. A wage agreement was signed between the union and the companies, giving the lowest-paid miners a 15s. a ticket (i.e. 6d. a shift)¹ wage increase in exchange for a wage-standstill agreement lasting over eighteen months.

Thus the Fourth Act in the struggle between the African mineworkers and the copper-mining companies of Northern Rhodesia drew to a close with a victory for the companies. But this was a victory which could only be shortlived. Across the frontier Belgian mining companies in the Congo also thought at one time that they could ride out the African storm and live in an oasis of industrial and political peace. Those dreams have now been shattered. And neither will the Northern Rhodesian copper-mining companies for long be able to resist the efforts of African miners to end their "slave wages" and raise their whole wage structure "to a civilised level". The demand for Katilungu's resignation and the support for the United National Independence Party which swept over the Copper Belt in the last weeks of 1960 is undoubtedly the herald of a new round of battles.

Unions Win More Pay

Despite the temporary set-back it has sustained, the striking thing about the Northern Rhodesian African Mine Workers' Union is that over the few short years of its existence, by dint of grit, organisation, struggle and unity, it has revealed to African workers throughout the continent what concessions can be won, even under conditions of colonial rule, if the union remains united and is prepared to struggle.

¹ Compare this with the previous demands of the union for an increase of 10s. 8d. per shift.

This is strikingly confirmed in the study made by Lomas,¹ who proves conclusively his own contention that the Northern Rhodesian African Mine Workers' Union "has been amazingly successful in its prime function; that of improving the conditions of service of the labour force it represents". And as a test of this success, Lomas takes wages.

"It is evident," he states, ". . . that since the recognition of the union in August 1949, striking improvements in straight-time remuneration have taken place. Increases in minimum rates vary from 233 per cent (Group 8 surface) to 457 per cent (Group 1 surface), and increases in maxima from 227 per cent (Group 3 underground) to 272 per cent (Group 9 underground), depending on labour classification. Furthermore, it is of interest to note that the largest gains have been enjoyed by workers on minimum rates in the lowest wage groups. At the end of December 1956 about 67 per cent of the labour force was classified in groups 1 to 3; thus the mass of lower-paid unskilled labour has gained more than the more-skilled minority."²

This strikingly testifies to the success of the precise aim of the union—namely to concentrate on the mass of unskilled, lowly paid and not to be diverted into seeking "advancement" for a relative handful of semi-skilled at the top at the expense of the majority at the bottom.

That the union was the decisive force in bringing about this change is in no doubt as far as Lomas is concerned.

"The connection between pay increases and trade union pressure is direct in cases where the former have resulted from specific demands; where they have resulted from the automatic operation of the sliding-scale cost-of-living allowance and the profit-sharing bonus scheme their connection with trade union pressure is indirect in so far as these forms of remuneration were initially introduced as the result of specific demands. *The Union, therefore, can be given the credit for effecting, either directly or indirectly, the substantial improvements in straight-time remuneration that have taken place since its inception.*"³ [Own italics.—J.W.]

¹ Lomas: op.cit.

² *ibid.*, pp. 119–120.

³ *ibid.*, p. 121.

Of course no one should allow himself to become completely hypnotised by these *percentage* increases. As Marx once pointed out:

“If a man got two shillings weekly wages, and if his wages rose to four shillings, the *rate of wages* would have risen by 100 per cent. This would seem a very magnificent thing if expressed as a rise in the *rate of wages*, although the *actual amount of wages*, four shillings weekly, would still remain a wretchedly small, a starvation, pittance. You must not, therefore, allow yourselves to be carried away by the high-sounding per cents in the *rate of wages*. You must always ask: What was the *original* amount?”¹

On this basis the wages of Northern Rhodesian African miners are still “wretchedly small” and far from the “civilised level” which the union set out to achieve. Nevertheless they clearly show the extent of the advances won by the union by dint of united struggle. Evidently it is with good reason that the African miners “have come to see the union as their ‘*mfuti*’, their ‘weapon’ in the struggle for the betterment of their working and social conditions”.² There is no doubt, too, that the wages of miners on the Copper Belt have helped to pull up the wages of other workers in Northern Rhodesia to their present levels.

It is also interesting to compare the pay increases won by African miners in the unionised Northern Rhodesia copper-mining industry with those in the non-unionised South African and Southern Rhodesian mining industries. Figures given in the Branigan Report³ show that whereas the average per shift remuneration, including the value of the food supplied, paid to African miners employed by the South African Gold Mines was 43·1*d.* in July 1949, whilst that of African miners on the Copper Belt was 42·0*d.* at the same date, by July 1955 the South African figure was 60*d.*, while that of Northern Rhodesia was 93·4*d.* In other words, starting from virtually identical levels, wages in South African mines, in the period covered, rose by 39·2 per cent, while those on the Copper Belt rose by 122·4 per cent. A comparison over the same period, 1949–55, for Southern Rhodesian mines, gives the following:⁴

¹ Marx, Karl: *Value, Price and Profit*.

³ Branigan Report: op. cit., p. 9.

² Epstein, A. L.: op. cit., p. 190.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 10.

	<i>Southern Rhodesian Mines</i>		<i>Northern Rhodesia Copper Mines</i>
	<i>Excluding Coal Mines</i>	<i>Including Coal Mines</i>	
Average total remuneration per ticket in 1949	39/1	42/8	69/6
Average total remuneration per ticket in 1955	54/8	73/11	180/10
Percentage increase 1949-1955	65.5%	73.2%	160.2%

("Remuneration" here covers average total pay, including all bonuses, but does not include the value of payment in kind. The Northern Rhodesian figure here is calculated on this basis.)

The Southern Rhodesian figure is undoubtedly influenced by two factors. One is the higher wages won by strikes just over the border in the Copper Belt (see above for reference to the effect of the 1952 strike). The other is the 1954 strike in the Wankie coalmines, in Southern Rhodesia, which also resulted in wage concessions to the African mineworkers.

Thus, if the severe restriction and even total lack of trade union rights is one of the factors making for low wages for African workers, the converse is equally true—namely that where African workers have been able to set up trade unions with solid influence and with capacity and willingness to struggle, wage improvements can be won. Naturally, few African workers today believe that solely through trade union action can they bring their wages to a "civilised level". They realise only too well that the main barrier to higher wages is the colonial system under which they live. At the same time they know that even while still living under colonialism they can organise struggles for higher wages, often with success.

African labour has travelled a long way in sixty years. Gone are the days when a Grogan could do as he pleased. Despite the

repression and the persecution, the African workers have learnt to organise, to build unity, and to struggle. The era of the relatively peaceful exploitation of the African working people is over. "Relatively peaceful", for at no point was there complete passivity, as facts given above show. But whereas until the second world war imperialism could still dominate Africa, it can do so no longer. The African workers will no longer tolerate slave wages—and since, to end them, colonialism, too, must be ended, the African workers are making their full contribution to the struggle to destroy colonial rule in Africa.

§ 4 BUT YET IT MOVES

For about the first ten years after the second world war it appeared, at least on the surface, that the new policy of the British Colonial Office of sponsoring or installing pliant trade unions while eliminating, in one way or another, the genuine and more militant organisations of the African workers themselves, was paying off. Already by 1951, after a preliminary period in which the authorities had been feeling their way as to how best to pursue their new tactic, heavy blows had been struck against the trade unions in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Tanganyika, and attempts had been made to strike similar blows against the trade union movement in the Sudan.

But these initial imperialist successes, while undoubtedly damaging to the growing trade union organisations in Africa, were fairly rapidly to give way to a fresh advance by the workers, despite government manœuvres and still-recurring set-backs for the unions. Fresh break-throughs in a number of territories provoked new attempts by imperialism to regain its control over the unions, or else bring about their weakening in some other fashion. Thus any hopes which the colonial authorities might have nurtured that their new tactic would bring about a period of peaceful collaboration and quiet on the labour front have not been fulfilled. Instead there has been a series of ever-sharper skirmishes.

That this would happen should have been obvious to any serious observer of trade unionism in colonial countries. Kenya and Tanganyika, in particular, demonstrate very clearly that despite all the varying methods used by British imperialism to

hold the workers down, life continually asserts itself and the struggle breaks out ever anew, now in this town, now in that, first in one industry and then in another. Above all else, the continued striving on the part of the authorities to secure complete co-operation and subservience from the trade unions has failed utterly.

Kenya Workers' Heroic Fight

After the attack was launched against the people of Kenya in October 1952, the government, pursuing its now familiar policy, gave its blessing to the establishment of the Kenya Federation of Labour, based on trade unions officially registered by the government Registrar, in the hope that this officially recognised trade union movement would be "responsible" and "loyal", and discourage militant action.

Considerable damage was done to the trade union movement in Kenya under the excuse of the Emergency. The employers had all along looked for just such an opportunity as this and, once presented to them, they naturally made full use of it. Prior to the Emergency the registered unions had a membership of some 60,000. These 60,000 workers were a natural target of the troops, police and armed settlers. Many trade unionists were arrested and detained on allegations of being associates of the Mau Mau movement, although they were never convicted by a court of law.

Mr. Tom Mboya, General Secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labour, has pointed out¹ that many workers, especially in Nairobi but also in other towns in Kenya, were regarded as suspect because they were found in possession of a union card or some union literature. He adds:

"Cases have been known where possession of union cards have resulted in some workers being beaten up by members of security forces. Trade union offices have been subject to searches by police and documents seized in some cases. In one case during one of the large sweeps in Nairobi (Operation Anvil) two European officers, carrying out a search of premises, entered the Federation offices, and while one of them was asking the people found in the office to show their identity

¹ "Trade Unionism in Kenya", *Africa South*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January-March 1957.

cards the other went out in the corridor to continue the search. A few minutes later a shot was heard. In the office one of the trade unionists collapsed in his chair. The officer out in the corridor had fired through the dividing cardboard wall and shot the trade unionist through the hip. The Federation made a complaint to the authorities. An identification parade was held and the officer duly identified. He admitted having fired the shot. He was never committed for trial despite demands by the Federation."

Confirmation of this kind of behaviour towards the unions during the Emergency comes from a trade union source outside Kenya itself. When Mr. Martin Pounder, ex-Senior Assistant General Secretary of the British National Union of Railwaymen, visited Kenya in September 1953 to examine trade union conditions there, he was told that "many of the African trade union leaders had been arrested and detained without trial . . . It was stated that the Transport and Allied Workers' Union had its General Secretary, President and Treasurer all detained without trial".¹

As late as August 1958 Mr. Dennis Akamu, General Secretary of the Mombasa Dock Workers' Union, in a press conference in London, pointing out how existing regulations in Kenya were being used against normal trade union activities, made this striking indictment:²

"The Government and the employers under the present regulations can always remove the men elected by the workers. These suspicions and repressive laws and regulations requiring permits before holding public meetings, the possibility of one's speech being tape-recorded and the use of troops during strikes have convinced us that the Colonial Government does not mean to encourage the development of responsible independent trade unions and the fact that a former Mombasa trade union leader³ has been in detention for over ten years for organising a strike has further convinced us that the Government is definitely repressive."

¹ *Railway Review*, March 19, 1954.

² *Prod*, October 1958, p. 3.

³ This is presumably a reference to Chege Kibachia, former leader of the African Workers' Federation, who was arrested and deported to the Northern Province in 1947, following a strike of his organisation in Mombasa.

As an example of the government's repressive measures, he cited the 1958 strike of Nairobi busmen. Every single busman on strike—and there were several hundred—was arrested and charged with contravening the Essential Services Ordinance.

But all these actions, damaging as they may have been, were unable to fulfil the purpose they were intended to. They could not prevent the movement of the workers growing, nor their struggles to win better wages and conditions.

Both in Nairobi and Mombasa, traditionally the strongholds of the Kenya trade union movement, strikes and other forms of action have repeatedly broken out. The British Parliamentary delegation to Kenya, in its report issued in January 1954, called the situation in Nairobi "grave and acute", and revealed that for "several months" the workers had been organising a successful boycott of European-owned buses and other concerns. That the working class of Nairobi had been a constant thorn in the side of the government was shown by the repeated attempts of the latter, together with the military, to "clean up" the town. Under such actions as Operation Anvil, large-scale screenings, involving tens of thousands of workers, were carried out, and thousands of workers were detained behind barbed wire.

By March 1955 it was already clear that the government idyll of peaceful industrial relations had completely broken down. In that month the dockers of Mombasa, in defiance of the British military forces, went on strike for a wage increase of 2s. a day. Several thousand workers took part in the struggle, despite the drafting of armed troops into the dock area. Seeing that this failed to intimidate the workers, the employers then gave an ultimatum that all strikers would be sacked unless they returned to work at once. This, too, failed to have any effect, and the strike continued for six days, only ending when an immediate increase was awarded and indications given that further consideration would be given to the workers' claims.

Within twelve months another crisis had been reached in the relations between the authorities and the workers and trade unions of Kenya. At the beginning of March 1956 the British authorities in Kenya delivered an ultimatum to the Kenya Federation of Labour, threatening it with dissolution by the Registrar of Societies on the grounds that it had been carrying on political activities. This, in the eyes of the British authorities, was a double crime—first, because the trade union regulations

restrict trade unions to "non-political" matters, and second because under the Emergency Regulations no nation-wide political organisation or activity was allowed to the Africans. But despite legal restrictions, and despite the hopes of the British authorities, reality insisted on making itself felt inside the trade unions.

"With the almost total cessation of normal political life for Africans they (the trade unions) have achieved an increasing importance as the repository of African nationalist aspirations. They have proportionately aroused the suspicions of the Europeans."¹

And thus the Kenya Federation of Labour was threatened with extinction if it did not promise in writing to speak no word contrary to the policies of those who had the power in the land.

The threat arose from two facts: one, the activities and statements of the Federation and its officers, criticising the persecution of trade unionists and workers in Kenya; and two, the Federation's opposition to and exposure of the government's franchise proposals.

Repeatedly the Federation had drawn attention to the British authorities' interference with trade union activities, and to the injustices which the people of Kenya were suffering. On January 9, 1956, Tom Mboya, the Federation's general secretary, made a number of criticisms of the Kenya Government, stressing the atrocities committed by members of the security forces and the fact that "thousands of Africans are still being held in detention camps without trial".

In addition to this statement, Mr. Mboya issued a special Report concerning the attacks being made on the Kenya trade unions, which was sent to the British T.U.C. and to the I.C.F.T.U.

"It has been almost impossible," says the Report, "to do any constructive trade union work, in view of the constant arrests of trade union leaders."

So many trade union leaders were arrested that some unions had temporarily to close down. Twenty-nine trade union officials arrested in April 1955 were still in detention at the time Mr. Mboya issued his report, a year later.

¹ *The Times*, April 5, 1956.

The Kenya government's hostility to the trade union movement was also exposed by the Labour Member of Parliament, Mrs. Barbara Castle, who visited Kenya during 1955. Speaking in the House of Commons at the end of December 1955 Mrs. Castle said:

"... The trade union movement, which is recognised by the Kenya Government and affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (to which also the British unions are affiliated), has been shadowed and hounded by the secret police in Kenya.

When I was in Kenya meeting these trade union leaders it was said to me by more than one African: 'When you get back we shall pay for this.' Now it is reported that the offices of the Federation of Labour in Nairobi have been raided by the police, that documents were searched, files taken away . . ."

It is clear that the Federation of Labour was fully justified in exposing such gross violations of trade union liberties. That its criticisms of the franchise proposals were equally justified can be seen by examining these proposals. They contained seven qualifications to determine whether an African would get a vote, qualifications which meant, in practice, severe limitations on the franchise for Africans. For the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu peoples (who comprise nearly one-third of the whole African population in Kenya) there was a special provision that they must first pass a "loyalty test" set by the British district commissioner or have no vote at all. For all others over twenty-one there were further qualifications, including property and income requirements high enough to exclude most Africans; and educational standards having a similar restrictive effect.

For criticising such proposals and for exposing the attacks on the unions, the Federation was threatened with dissolution.

In face of the government's threat, the Federation of Labour issued a statement in which it declared that it must have the right to express an opinion on matters which were of direct interest to its members, and that these were not necessarily always those which are strictly to do with union business. Though the authorities rejected this statement, they extended by about three weeks the time limit they had set for the Federation to state, in writing, its readiness to confine itself to the narrowest trade union matters

and to steer clear of political questions. During this three weeks Sir Vincent Tewson, General Secretary of the British T.U.C., flew out to Kenya to discuss the matter with the Federation of Labour and with government officials.

As a result of the discussions held in Kenya the Federation of Labour, on March 29, the date fixed by the government as the time-limit, submitted a letter to the Registrar of Societies in which it said:

“We can state without reservation that it is our intention in future to respect the legal requirements which our continued registration demands. In view of the range of activities which are accepted as being without question the legitimate concern of the Federation, we believe that prior consultation between the Federation and the Government in regard to any marginal matters will avoid a repetition of present difficulties.”

Following the receipt of this letter the government withdrew its threat of a ban.

Clearly nothing was really resolved. The government and the employers may have hoped that, armed with this letter, they could fully harness the trade unions in support of their policies, and cripple the efforts of the workers to struggle for better conditions, trade union and democratic rights, and for national independence. But subsequent events have shown that it will take more than a piece of paper to prevent the workers of Kenya taking part in politics.¹

Tanganyika's Trade Unions

Kenya's experience has been echoed by that of Tanganyika. There, too, the workers rapidly organised themselves in the early post-war period and built up militant organisations, especially in the docks, only to see them crushed by the authorities. Strikes took place in Port Tanga in 1948 and in Dar-es-Salaam in 1950, and in both cases the government's reply was heavy repression. The 1950 strike resulted in the outlawing of the Dock Workers' Union and the arrest of the entire union executive, who were given terms of imprisonment of 1½ to 10 years; in addition, all the

¹ It is interesting to note that when the Kenya African National Union was set up in 1960, the government threatened to refuse it legal status unless it dropped Jomo Kenyatta as its president, and *unless it rejected trade union affiliations.*

funds and property of the union were confiscated by the government. Similarly, the African Cooks' and Washermen's Union was crippled by the action of the government in removing the leadership as being "unsatisfactory".

With this early union movement severely damaged, the authorities then saw their way clear to follow their tactic of sponsoring, under their own control, registered trade union organisations which would be "co-operative", present only such demands as the employers were readily prepared to grant, abandon the strike weapon, and cut themselves off from politics and the national struggle.

For a few years it seemed that this tactic might succeed—especially in view of the activities of the I.C.F.T.U. and the British T.U.C. which, on more than one occasion, sent representatives post haste to Tanganyika to dissuade workers coming out on strike. But subsequent years have largely seen the collapse of imperialist hopes. The workers, determined to better their conditions and play their part in the fight for national liberation, have fashioned trade union organisations which more and more are becoming the vehicles of the workers' own demands and struggles.

In September 1958, for instance, dock workers in Dar-es-Salaam struck for eight days, showing that the destruction of their union in 1950 had failed to destroy their spirits.

The struggle has been particularly sharp in Tanganyika's key industry, sisal, in which strikes for higher wages and trade union recognition have soared phenomenally, resulting, in February 1958, in the formation of a 30,000-strong National Plantation Workers' Union.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ON TANGANYIKA'S SISAL ESTATES*

Year	Number of Strikes	Number of Workers Involved	Man Days Lost
1955	21	3,927	5,205
1956	22	3,596	9,101
1957	48	29,470	125,459
1958	76	51,314	228,908

* Source: *The State of Industrial Relations in the Sisal Industry of Tanganyika: 1959.*

Strikes took place in 1959 and 1960 not only in the sisal industry but also on the railways, which witnessed a bitter

struggle in 1960 lasting several weeks. Both on the railways and on the sisal plantations the government has used repression and intimidation. Strike leaders have been victimised from their jobs on sisal plantations, many workers have been arrested during strike actions, and on a number of occasions police have used tear-gas and batons and have not hesitated to shoot at strikers, causing a number of casualties. During the railway strike, too, armed police were employed to help run trains with scab labour.

Despite the usual attempts on the part of government trade union advisers and leaders of the British T.U.C. and of the I.C.F.T.U. to wean the union leaders away from politics, the Federation of Labour maintains close ties with the Tanganyika African National Union. Individual trade union leaders stand as TANU candidates in elections and serve on its governing bodies.

Repeatedly, in the past ten years, the government has felt itself obliged to utter threats of dissolution against the very registered unions it allowed to be set up after the destruction of the militant organisations. On two occasions a general strike has only been averted at the last moment; the employers have conducted a running fight against the unions, especially in sisal, with ever-growing intensity; and strictures against the unions by the governor were for long a common feature of debates in the legislature. To say that relations between the Federation of Labour and the governor have been "strained" would be putting it at its mildest.

There is no doubt that in the case of both Kenya and Tanganyika it is not only the workers' struggles for their class demands which have made imperialism's new policy towards trade unions difficult to operate; the rise of the national movements, of which the trade unions rightly consider themselves an essential part, is also a key factor in this development. The heightened national feeling has made collaboration with the authorities, on the political front as well as the trade union front, a risky undertaking for any African leader. African sentiment, in general, rightly regards such collaborationists as puppets or quislings.

Nigerian Unions Struggle for Unity

From what has been said already it is clear that the African working-class and trade union movement has had to face and is still facing a whole range of acts by the authorities which are,

both in fact and purpose, detrimental to the real development of trade unions. Nothing illustrates this better than the experience of the workers of Nigeria. That today they can proudly claim some 250,000 organised into trade unions (which makes the Nigerian trade unions amongst the numerically most powerful in the whole of Africa) is due entirely to their persistence and courage and owes nothing to official "encouragement". On the contrary, like trade unionists in other British colonies, for more than a decade they have had to face bullets and prison in the cause of trade unionism. If an examination is made of their development in this period it will be noticed that a particular problem they have had to face has been the need to maintain trade union unity and the constant necessity to repair and strengthen that unity in the ranks of the workers whenever a breach has been made in it.

It was the economic crisis of the 1930's that marked the beginning of the mass movement of the workers of Nigeria. The catastrophic effect of the crisis on the Nigerian workers led to many spirited actions of protest, outstanding amongst which was the railway strike which, starting at Lagos, spread rapidly throughout the entire country, leading to the formation in 1932 of the Railway Workers' Union.

Following this, the trade union movement made further progress, and by 1942 there were 80 registered trade unions with a membership of 26,000. It was in that year that Michael Imoudu, the President of the Railway Workers' Union, led a great campaign for a cost-of-living allowance.

The banishment of Imoudu failed to halt the movement. By 1945 there were 103 trade unions, with 30,321 members, and a Trades Union Congress, embracing all the trade unions except the Federation of Government Employees and the Nigerian Union of Teachers. The Trades Union Congress had been established with the assent of the government Labour Department, which had hopes of maintaining the T.U.C. under its control and of persuading it to follow a policy of subservience to the government and collaboration with the employers.

The Nigerian workers, however, had other ideas, and were able to ensure that the T.U.C. functioned as an instrument of working-class struggle, rather than of collaboration with the employers and the government. As a result of the workers' efforts, the Nigerian T.U.C. called a general strike in 1945, which

lasted forty-four days and paralysed the country. The strike ended in victory for the workers, and the trade unions continued to grow.

At the end of 1948, however, divisions were fostered inside the T.U.C., and a new centre was established, the Nigerian National Federation of Labour. Taking advantage of this disunity, the authorities then turned to the use of direct methods of repression. On November 18, 1949, when 7,500 coal miners were on strike at the Enugu coalfields for higher pay, twenty-one of them were shot down in cold blood by police, and fifty wounded. This massacre of the coal miners, far from cowing the workers, led to widespread protests and strikes throughout the country; these had the backing of wide sections of peasants, shopkeepers, intellectuals, and others.

In the face of this nation-wide storm of protest the government was compelled to call off its tactics of repression, and once more the trade unions began to grow. By 1950 there were 149 unions, with a membership of 125,000, of which 74,000 were in the five biggest unions. The Nigerian National Federation of Labour was able to establish friendly relations with unions from which it had hitherto been isolated, and in May 1950 a united Nigerian Labour Congress was formed.

This was a high peak of the Nigerian trade union movement, and in August 1950 the then powerful United Africa Company Union¹ organised a successful strike against the company, resulting in the winning of a 12½ per cent cost-of-living allowance. Apart from its economic success, this strike also played an important role in deepening the hatred of the Nigerian workers and people against British imperialist rule, of which the U.A.C. was such an outstanding symbol.

Having learned from their experience after Enugu that direct repression was no longer easy, the authorities sought once more to sow divisions in the ranks of the trade unions. Through such activities it became possible for the government to bring about the collapse of an ill-prepared strike in December 1950, resulting in the virtual breakdown of the Nigerian Labour Congress in 1951. For the next two years the trade unions were faced with a crisis. There was disunity still in the ranks of the trade union

¹ This was not a "company union" in the normal meaning of the term, but a militant organisation set up by the workers and employees themselves in the U.A.C. as being an effective way of fighting this powerful monopoly.

leaders, including amongst the militants themselves, and serious arguments took place as to the best way to rebuild the trade union movement.

Meanwhile, important developments were taking place on the political front.

In 1953 a Constitutional Conference was held in London, with representatives from Nigeria and the British Government, who were empowered to draw up a Constitution for Nigeria. The decisions of this conference, in August 1953, marked a certain development in the strength of the national bourgeoisie, who were able to win some political concessions from the British rulers. The trade unions, in their turn, felt that the introduction of the new Constitution was a challenge to them to put their own house in order. Thus an inaugural conference was held in the autumn of 1953 to set up a new trade union centre. Militant elements, who had given leadership in former trade union struggles up to 1950, won considerable influence in the leadership of this centre, the All-Nigerian Trade Union Federation (A.N.T.U.F.). At first the government refused to recognise the new organisation, and at its second conference tried to get more moderate elements into the leadership. But it failed, and in fact the militant elements in the leadership were strengthened. By 1954 A.N.T.U.F. was so strong and well established that the government was at last compelled to give it official recognition.

By 1956, A.N.T.U.F., with forty-five registered trade unions totalling 181,000 members, embraced the overwhelming majority of the organised workers of Nigeria. Only six trade unions, including the National Union of Teachers, the Association of Local Government Employees, and a few smaller unions, remained outside this important trade union centre. A.N.T.U.F., by decision of its Second Annual Congress, affiliated neither to the W.F.T.U. nor the I.C.F.T.U.

During 1955 and 1956 A.N.T.U.F. faced considerable problems, and led a number of successful struggles. The third annual congress of A.N.T.U.F. was held from November 25 to 27, 1955, and was attended by 306 delegates. The spirit of the Congress was indicated from the very first, in the presidential speech of Michael Imoudu. "We workers, as members of a class, are one," he declared, "and it is in unity that our strength lies."

The report of the general secretary showed how the efforts of the trade unions in the past year had already scored successes, as

in the campaign for better and cheaper housing. Pressure by the unions had also resulted in the enacting of a Factory Ordinance, and in the winning of wage increases.

The general secretary, Gogo Chu Nzeribe, drew special attention in his report to the question of trade union and democratic rights, stressing that "conditions appear to be getting worse" and pointing out that "up to this moment we still cannot hold our trade union meetings without permits from the police". He further pointed out that many employers "continue to resist trade unionism in their establishments and try to dictate to the union how it must organise, who are to be its officers", and so on. Mentioning by name, in this respect, such well-known British monopoly firms as United Africa Company, Barclays Bank, John Holts and Elder Dempster, he went on to criticise the failure of the Labour Ministry to deal with these conditions which he characterised as "a direct violation of Conventions 84, 87 and 94 of the I.L.O., which have been ratified by the United Kingdom Government on behalf of her colonies including Nigeria".

With regard to the tin mines, which had been the scene of a big strike just prior to the Congress, delegates went on record in support of the miners, pressed for steps to be taken to secure greater unity and possibly final amalgamation of the mine-workers' unions into one single union, and declared in support of the complete transference of the mines to public ownership and control.

Congress strongly reaffirmed its stand in favour of independence for Nigeria, and its determination to fight for a united form of government. (This was in reply to those who wished to divide the country on the basis of Regional Governments, in order to play off one region against another, divide the workers, and so delay full sovereignty for Nigeria.)

Wages was one of the dominant concerns of the delegates. Congress ratified the figure of 9s. per day as the minimum wage for a general labourer and decided to launch a fight for this demand, as well as for children's allowances for those in the lower wage groups.

In ending his report to Congress the General Secretary declared:

"This Congress is a turning point in the life of our movement. From the first to this third Congress, we have merely tried to

build and consolidate. From a total membership of a mere 53,000 at the inaugural meeting in 1953, we have now reached the 181,000 mark out of a total organised labour force of about 200,000."

In the period immediately preceding the Congress, and in the months that followed, Nigeria was the scene of some of the biggest wage movements and strike actions in the entire history of her labour movement.

Outstanding amongst these actions was the strike of 42,000 tin and columbite miners who stayed out for eighteen days during November 1955, in support of their wage demands. With low wages and in face of the rising cost of living, the miners, through their two unions, the Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria African Workers' Union and the Nigerian African Mineworkers' Union, demanded increases in wage rates ranging from twenty-five to forty per cent for the various grades, annual wage increments, and production bonuses for columbite workers.

After a breakdown in negotiations owing to the resistance of the employers, the miners' unions gave the necessary twenty-one days' strike notice. Neither the employers nor the government thought that the miners would strike. But when the twenty-one days were up, the strike was almost solid. (The official figures state 42,000 were involved, but the unions estimate that nearly 55,000 stopped work.) Police were sent into the mining areas and many arrests were made, often merely on the requests of the European mine management or because of the calling of a trade union meeting. Solidarity from other sections of workers was immediately forthcoming, and there were, in fact, preparations for sympathy strikes if the struggle had continued any longer. Other sections of the population, too, such as traders and farmers, set up an *ad hoc* body to collect food for the strikers, to arrange credit, and to organise other forms of assistance.

A highlight of the strike was a twenty-two-mile march of 10,000 miners from Bukuru to Jos to protest against police brutality, and to win support from the population. This was the first time there had ever been a mass procession of workers with banners in a rural area. On their banners were such slogans as "Away with iron-fisted employers", "Minefield slave labour must end", "Strike for food, shelter and clothing".

Everywhere the procession was greeted by the people, and it

was given a great welcome as it finally entered the streets of Jos and paraded past the head offices of the big mining companies.

“Never in the history of the Plateau Minefield has there been such an organised strike as this . . .” declared C. Okei-Achamba, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria African Workers’ Union. The unions called off the strike after eighteen days on the basis of a promise by the employers to give an increase of twenty-five per cent, backdated to October 1954, and to victimise none of the strikers. Despite this promise, the two unions had difficulties in their negotiations with the employers following the strike and, in fact, negotiations again broke down. Their dissatisfaction with these protracted negotiations was so great that the demand for the nationalisation of the mines became more pronounced than ever.

It was against the background of the miners’ strike that the A.N.T.U.F. Annual Congress was held. Inspired by the struggles of the miners, and on the basis of the wages policy adopted by the delegates, workers in a whole range of industries engaged in battles for higher wages for several months, resulting in the winning of wage increases, ranging from 20 to nearly 100 per cent in some cases.¹

Strikes, sit-downs, stoppages, go-slows, demonstrations and other forms of actions involved post and telegraph workers, railwaymen, port workers, marine staffs, civil and local government employees. A significant strike was that in January 1956 when 40,000 building workers stopped work for ten days in support of their demand of 7*s.* 6*d.* per day for artisans and the payment of the Hanbury Arbitration Award to general labourers as from October 1954. Largely directed against the big British monopoly firms such as Richard Costain, Babcock and Wilcox, Johnson and Phillips and Bush Electric, the strike was successful and the workers’ demands were conceded almost 100 per cent.

But the Nigerian trade unions were not yet out of the wood. Following the holding of an African trade union conference under the auspices of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in January 1957, and the visit of American Federation of Labour leaders to West Africa, fresh attempts were made to

¹ For example, minimum wages for general labourers in Lagos were raised from 2*s.* 7*d.* a day to 4*s.* 8*d.*, and even greater increases were gained in other cases. Later, under the Hanbury Arbitration Award, November 1955, they were raised to 5*s.*

spread disunity in the ranks of the A.N.T.U.F. A "red scare" campaign was conducted against sections of the leadership, and a number of leaders quit the parent body and set up a small breakaway organisation. The workers, however, were not prepared to accept such a division, and even beyond the ranks of the working-class movement itself, as shown by editorial articles in the *West African Pilot*, there was serious concern over the unhappy events that had taken place and a strong desire to re-establish full trade union unity, with one trade union centre for the whole organised movement. After many months of discussions, campaigning and negotiations, the new centre was at last established at Enugu, in March 1959, with the veteran trade union leader, Michael Imoudu, President of the former A.N.T.U.F., as president of the new body, the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria.

Throughout 1959 and 1960 attempts were made to break the unity created around the new Trades Union Congress of Nigeria and, as on previous occasions, the "communist bogey" was the main weapon used in this disruptive game. Feeling that this alone was insufficient to bring about confusion and chaos in the trade unions, right-wing elements backed from outside (the I.C.F.T.U. now has a Regional Office in Lagos) attempted to swing the Trades Union Congress of Nigeria into the I.C.F.T.U. fold, although it had been previously decided at the Enugu inaugural conference that, in the interests of unity, the Trades Union Congress should have no affiliation with any international trade union body.

These activities resulted in the setting up at Lagos, on April 21, 1960, of a new body, the Nigerian Trade Union Congress, with Michael Imoudu as president and with affiliations from most of the unions. The new Nigerian Trade Union Congress has endeavoured to champion the interests of the Nigerian working class and, in the interests of trade union unity, has followed the policy adopted by the previous organisation at Enugu of remaining organisationally free from any connections with either the W.F.T.U. or the I.C.F.T.U. The rump Trades Union Congress of Nigeria is in the hands of the right wing, led by L. L. Borha, who works closely with the I.C.F.T.U.

Nigerian trade unionists, therefore, have still not fulfilled their life-long aim of establishing a single, united trade union centre for all Nigeria.

United Unions Help Pave Way For Ghana

The workers of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) have had to face many of the same difficulties as those with which the Nigerian trade union movement has had to contend. But in one respect there was a striking difference. In Nigeria the unions have been dogged by repeated dissensions; in Ghana the unions have remained united. There is no doubt that this was one of the factors which made it possible for Ghana to win its political independence before Nigeria.

In the period before the war, Gold Coast employers and the government took full advantage of the lack of working-class organisation, and wages (1s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. a day) were of the lowest, usually only providing half the cost of daily food for a family of three.

The very poverty and desperation of their situation compelled Gold Coast workers to seek a way out. More and more they turned in the direction of organising themselves. 1941 saw the birth of the Railway Workers' Union, which presented the workers' demands to the administration, backing them up with strike action when the government refused to take notice. Although this was already the period in which the government's new policy of encouraging trade unions was supposed to be operating, there was the usual display of police terror. All the union leaders were arrested and imprisoned, and many strikers were victimised.

But the strike had by no means been a failure. The action of the workers forced the government to make concessions and to review the salary and wages system of government employees and workers. Moreover, the railwaymen's struggle had inspired other workers, and shortly afterwards non-government workers, too, began to form trade unions. Prominent amongst these was the 40,000-strong Gold Coast Mines Employees' Union, destined in later years to conduct some of the most important strike struggles in Ghana's history.

The release by the government of the findings and recommendations of the two committees set up to review the salaries and wages for government-employed personnel led to fresh strikes which shook the entire country. Thousands of workers in non-governmental employment urged their unions to demand higher wages from the employers commensurate with the increases awarded to government workers.

It was soon clear to the workers that in order to face up to the joint front of the employers and the government, the trade union movement itself must be united. The need for a single, central organisation of the workers was apparent—and so there came into being the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress.

The next big test came when the Gold Coast Chamber of Mines began to oppose collective bargaining for workers in the mining industry. After long and fruitless efforts to persuade the Chamber of Mines, by peaceful negotiation, to yield on some of the demands the Mines Employees' Union put forward, the union called a strike in 1947. The response was solid, the workers staying out for over five weeks. As a result the government appointed a Commission to examine the wages structure of the miners, as well as to review working conditions, particularly safety regulations and conditions.

These early struggles of the workers were accompanied by a steady growth in organisation. There were soon over fifty unions in being, most of them in the Trades Union Congress. This period of trade union propaganda and consolidation of organisation was also one in which the trade union movement began to make its influence felt in the political field. The general demand of the people for national independence had been growing ever since the end of the war. This demand not only had its natural reflection in the trade union movement but the trade unions, in their turn, greatly influenced the national movement and rapidly became one of the main factors in the national struggle. In fact, it is to the efforts of the trade unions that much of the credit is due for the successes registered by the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.), the political expression of the struggle for national liberation.

From 1948 onwards the national struggle dominated the entire scene in the Gold Coast, and the workers added their voices to those of the rest of the population. In doing this they were influenced very much by the worsening economic situation in the country. Prices were rocketing, and an average family of three now needed not three shillings a day for food, but five shillings. But the minimum wage was only *2s. 6d.* a day.

Increasingly the workers of the Gold Coast were led to the conclusion that, in the face of the government's obvious unconcern with their desperate plight, a fundamental change was needed. Thus grew the demand for a Constitution which would

recognise the paramountcy of African interests in the Gold Coast.

A new chapter opened in 1949. Demanding higher wages, bonuses, health benefits, and holidays with pay, the workers went into action. A series of strikes shook the country, embracing key sections of the working class.

These actions by the unions took place at a time of mounting national feeling in the country. The Convention People's Party, under Nkrumah's leadership, formed in 1949, was soon to be followed by the launching of the Positive Action campaign. In this atmosphere every strike took on a political significance and was regarded by the people as a direct aid to the struggle for national independence.

At the end of 1949 there took place an historic strike. The Meteorological Department Employees' Union—not a very large organisation—called its members out on strike for higher salaries and improved conditions of service, as part of the nation-wide agitation then taking place. The government, deciding to challenge the mounting action of the workers and their trade unions, issued a statement to the effect that the Meteorological Department employees were civil servants and therefore bound by regulations forbidding them from taking part in strikes. The government followed this statement by letters of dismissal to all workers on strike.

The Gold Coast Trades Union Congress rightly regarded this as an important test case. If such employees could be classified as "civil servants" and, on that basis, denied the right to strike, then this was a dangerous precedent which might later be used by the government as a pretext to interfere with other legitimate activities of the trade unions. The Trades Union Congress was especially concerned, because the union in question held a Government Registration Certificate according to the Trade Union Ordinance and its legal status had never been challenged.

All efforts by the Gold Coast Trades Union Congress to persuade the government to change its attitude were unsuccessful. For three months negotiations dragged on, but the government was adamant. The Trades Union Congress then decided to act in the only way left to it, and on January 7, 1950, in response to the call of the Congress, thousands of workers throughout the country quit work. A general strike was on. Trains stood immobile in the stations. Offices were silent and deserted. No ships put in

to Takoradi harbour. The mines were empty. Building work came to a standstill. "The political and social revolution of Ghana had started."

The number of workers dismissed in the initial dispute by the Meteorological Department was eighty. But to protect these eighty victimised men, and in defence of the vital trade union principle that workers have a right to strike, the entire working class of the Gold Coast came out in solidarity for ten days.

In the face of this mighty sea of unity the government pulled out its last card, declared a State of Emergency, imposed a curfew, and arrested a number of trade union leaders as well as the leaders of the Convention People's Party. Amongst those arrested was Kwame Nkrumah.

By clamping down on the movement in this way the government had hoped to hold back progress in the Gold Coast. But conditions were no longer as in pre-war days, when it was possible to repress one section of the people in isolation from the rest. Now it was a question of trying to push back a resurgent nation. And when the people of the Gold Coast in 1951 exercised their hard-won right and went to the polls, those elected with the greatest majorities were the trade union and C.P.P. leaders jailed in 1950—and still in jail at the time of the election.

These united efforts by the workers and trade unions of the Gold Coast, and, in particular, the general strike of 1950, played a key part in preparing the way for the formation of the Republic of Ghana, thus opening a new chapter in the history not only of Ghana but of all Africa.

"The Genii of African Organisation"

In dealing with the problems and growth of the trade union movement in Africa we have confined our remarks mainly to the territories under British rule. In one sense the problems facing the workers have been the same in all territories—British, French, Belgian, Portuguese and including the Union of South Africa; namely, that the European employers and the governments representing their interests, have consistently, ever since the formation of wage labour on the continent, tried to prevent the emergence of powerful, militant, democratic, mass trade union organisations. Whether the official policy has been the downright

¹ *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, London, 1959 edition, p. 97.

refusal to tolerate unions in any form, as in the Portuguese territories; or whether the government has pursued a line, as in the Union of South Africa, of denying proper recognition to African unions and of persecuting them where they exist; or whether, as in most French and British territories, and latterly in the Belgian Congo¹ of accepting the inevitable and allowing legal trade unions to exist whilst attempting to bring them under government control—in all cases there has been the common aim to prevent the emergence of workers' organisations of the kind which would seriously challenge the right of European governments and employers to continue paying African workers starvation wages, and treating them, as Africans would unhesitatingly say, "as slave labour".

Yet, despite the intentions of the employers and the authorities, and despite, as indicated above, the employment against the workers of every form of repression, intimidation, discrimination and restriction, life has persisted. The working class has grown numerically. The last twenty years have witnessed the biggest period of mass strikes in Africa's history. And trade union growth has gone ahead.

At the time of the Northern Rhodesian miners' strike in 1955, the *Economist*² declared: "The genii of African organisation and solidarity will not go back into the bottle." The *Economist* spoke better than it knew—and, in fact, was describing an inevitable process that was not to be limited to the Copper Belt. Set-backs there have been, now in this territory, now in that. There has been a very big turnover of union membership, inevitable under the conditions of migrant labour which is so prevalent in Africa. Many union leaders have been imprisoned and banished. Organisations have been destroyed and trade union centres disrupted. And yet, when a total assessment is made of the whole

¹ As in British territories, the Congolese workers under Belgian rule had to conduct many struggles before they were conceded the right to form trade unions. It was only following the strike of employees in the Union Minière and the big demonstrations in Elizabethville (1941), and later the strikes in the port of Matadi (1945), that the Congolese workers were granted the right, in 1946, to form professional associations. But this right was only given, says Ruth Slade (*The Belgian Congo*: London, 1960, p. 27), "subject to government approval of each particular association; each had to be registered by the administration, and if registration was refused there was no appeal". The Belgians, in fact, were merely following the British pattern of government-controlled unions. The events of 1959 and 1960 demonstrated only too well the inability of the imperialists to make a success of this system.

² January 29, 1955.

period, and account taken of the experiences which have trained an entire generation of African trade unionists, it can be said that today not only is the African trade union movement numerically much more powerful than it was twenty years ago, but in its understanding, its experience, its cadre, and its mass influence, it has far outrun its early, faltering steps and stands out today as one of the major influences at work amongst the African people.

§ 5 WORKERS OF ALL LANDS . . .

Before the second world war the African worker was kept very much in isolation from workers in other lands. It was, of course, only natural that living under such miserable economic conditions he had no opportunity to travel to other lands, even if (a doubtful proposition!) the colonial governments had granted him the necessary permission, leave, passes, passports and so on to quit his native land.

Further, having no trade union organisation of his own, he was cut off from world trade union developments. The old International Federation of Trade Unions was very largely a European affair; African unions found no place in it, neither did their problems feature much in its work.

The lack of trade unions, the sheer misery and massive repression, all played their part in holding back any trends for African workers to come together, even on a continental basis, to exchange experiences and provide solidarity and aid to each other in time of difficulties.

The second world war changed all that. Not only did many African workers go overseas to take part in the fighting and return with new ideas, but the whole edifice of imperial power, first in Asia and then in Africa, went through such a period of storm and stress that after 1945 there was no possibility of preserving intact the closed system of the pre-war period.

The world trade union movement of 1945 represented a fundamental change to that which existed in 1939. Six short years had been sufficient to work deep changes both in the composition of that movement and in its outlook. And so 1945 witnessed the birth of the World Federation of Trade Unions—a body which did not repeat the pattern of the old International Federation of

Trade Unions, but was basically different in two respects. First, it embraced trade unions from the socialist world as well as from the capitalist world. Secondly, the trade unions of the colonial world joined its ranks. And included here were those of a number of African territories.

In Quarantine

This development was not at all to the liking of the Western powers, who quite early saw the consequences of African workers coming into contact with workers of other lands, in particular those of socialist lands.

Luyt, in his book already referred to, warned of the "dangers" of such international contacts in these words:¹

"Trade unions in African colonies will have increasing contact with the trade union movement in the outside world and in adjacent territories . . . Trade union conferences will be sorting houses for ideas and contact points for leaders. They can have good effects *but also dangerous ones.*" [Own italics.—J.W.]

Dangerous for whom or what Luyt does not specifically state, but his repeated references to this "danger" give one some inkling of his thoughts.

"Affiliation to the World Federation of Trade Unions and attendance at international meetings will mean direct contact with trade unionists from all corners of the world and from many of these corners comes great enthusiasm for 'improving' the lot of the African worker . . . the dangers are obvious. Africa is not yet at the stage where it can safely absorb all the ideas of foreign trade unionism or mimic all its practices . . . one must face the fact that international trade union contacts will have their effect on colonial trade unions and that these contacts will also be the entry points of many political ideas into colonial territories . . . whatever the motive, the effect of them may be considerable *and needs careful watching.*"² [Own italics.—J.W.]

The fear of international conferences, of contacts with trade unionists from other countries, and the plea made by Luyt for "careful watching", all express perfectly the attitude taken by

¹ Luyt: op. cit., p. 39.

² *ibid.*, p. 40.

the Colonial Office, and by leaders of the British T.U.C., which is to put colonial trade unions into a sort of quarantine, only permitting the invalid to receive approved visitors, at stipulated times, or to go for convalescence to "safe" resorts in the "free world".

In the very year (1949) in which Luyt's book was published a number of national trade union bodies, led by the British T.U.C., broke away from the World Federation of Trade Unions and shortly afterwards set up the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. One of the deeper causes of the divisions which had arisen in the ranks of the W.F.T.U. was precisely the divergent viewpoints taken towards colonial trade unions by the majority of unions on the one hand, who favoured all-out support for every effort of the colonial people to win their independence, and, on the other hand, by the orthodox right-wing elements, who, in this field as in so many others, tailed in the wake of their own governments on all essentials.

Charges were made, at the time of the division, that decisions of the W.F.T.U. to step up its support to colonial trade unions had been blocked by the breakaway unions, especially the British T.U.C. In particular, it was alleged that the British T.U.C. and other organisations which broke away from the W.F.T.U. had sabotaged the carrying out of the decisions taken at an earlier meeting on African trade union problems, held at Dakar. One decision of this meeting, which the British T.U.C. representatives would not even endorse in principle, called for a social security system for African workers equal to the systems prevailing in the West.

An effect of this world-wide division of the trade union movement was to divide the African unions, too. Trade unions in African territories under French control, being mainly affiliated to the militant French General Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.) kept their connection with the W.F.T.U. But those in British-held territories were forced out of the W.F.T.U. by governmental and other pressures. From now on, one of the tests which an African union had to pass before it received even tolerant recognition by colonial governments in British territories was its attitude towards the international trade union movement. If the organisation was affiliated to the I.C.F.T.U., then it would be registered, approved and even given some limited encouragement. If it went still further, and showed itself ready to co-operate fully with the colonial authority, then every form of governmental aid

and patronage was given to it. And in this policy the British T.U.C. went along happily with the Colonial Office.

If, on the other hand, an African trade union, after 1949, maintained any kind of contact with the W.F.T.U.—the reading of its literature, the sending of delegates to its conferences, the sending of correspondence or memoranda, not to mention open affiliation—then the full weight of government persecution had to be met, in all its forms.

Thus the French Government refused to allow the holding of a Pan-African Trade Union Conference in Douala, French Cameroons, in 1951; and a pamphlet published in preparation for this conference was banned in all the British-held territories of Africa.

Extraordinary efforts were made by the governments of the Western countries to prevent delegates from Africa attending the Third World Trade Union Congress, held in Vienna, in October 1953, and the Fourth World Trade Union Congress held in Leipzig, in October 1957. Every conceivable step was taken—refusal to issue passports or visas, blocking of funds, threats and intimidation by employers, police and government, interception of letters and cables, and even measures to prevent the utilisation of normal travel facilities, despite the advance payment of the necessary fare—in order to deny to African workers the possibility of establishing contact with their fellow workers in other lands and exchanging experiences with them.

W.F.T.U. Policy

Trade unionists in Africa need only contrast the treatment meted out by the Western powers to the W.F.T.U.—banned, persecuted, harassed in every way—with the warm welcome given by these same powers to the representatives of the I.C.F.T.U., in order to see that these powers, *who are colony-owning powers in Africa*, regard the W.F.T.U. as an opposition to their colonial system and the I.C.F.T.U. as an ally.

Wherever imperialist influences are strong in Africa, I.C.F.T.U. representatives can move freely, establish their regional offices and hold conferences. The distribution of their publications is encouraged and they have unhindered access to governmental authorities.

Despite the different treatment meted out to the W.F.T.U. and the I.C.F.T.U. by the colonial authorities—and no one would

underestimate the difficulties this has meant for the African trade union movement—history is on the side of the W.F.T.U. as far as Africa's workers are concerned, and against the I.C.F.T.U.

Neither repression nor deceit can prevent the African workers coming closer together, welding their unity on a continental basis, building up their relations with the outside world, and playing their part in the international trade union movement. Nor can all the bans in the world prevent, for ever, the African workers from discovering the truth about the respective roles of the W.F.T.U. and the I.C.F.T.U.

The W.F.T.U. consistently raises its powerful voice, the voice of a hundred million members, in support of the struggles of the colonial workers. On every colonial issue the stand of the W.F.T.U. is always clear and unequivocal. There are no ifs or buts. No excuses or exceptions. No reservations or hesitations. In whatever way is open to it, the W.F.T.U. fulfils its international duty and sides with the oppressed against the oppressors.

Repeatedly at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and at the International Labour Organisation the representatives of the W.F.T.U. have protested against the killing or persecution of African workers and the attacks against their organisations. In its publications, too, the W.F.T.U. has consistently explained to workers all over the world the plight and struggles of the African working class. The scandalous economic and social plight of the colonial workers was given special prominence at the 1953 International Conference on Social Security, organised on the initiative of the W.F.T.U. On the agenda, in the reports and the speeches at the Third and Fourth World Trade Union Congresses, the struggles of colonial people occupied prominent place, one of the major reports on both occasions being on the tasks of trade unions in the struggle against colonialism.

It was mentioned above that the Pan-African Trade Union Conference proposed by the W.F.T.U. to take place in Douala in 1951 was banned by the French Government. Nevertheless, the Preparatory Committee for that conference, which met in Paris, January 15 to 20, 1951, was able to draw up draft resolutions which are, in essence, a trade union programme for Africa. Included in this committee were trade union representatives from French Sudan, South Africa, Algeria, French Cameroons,

Dahomey, Madagascar and Dakar. The absence of delegates from British-held territories in Africa was due to two reasons: a number of the most militant trade unions had been temporarily smashed or crippled by the colonial authorities by that date (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Tanganyika); and further, the British colonial authorities did everything they possibly could to prevent any delegate escaping from their territories to visit Paris. The presence of a delegation from South Africa is only explained by the fact that, at that time, the full spate of apartheid legislation had not yet been enacted and some loopholes were still open.

The Paris meeting produced, amongst other decisions, three important documents—a draft resolution on the general struggle of the workers and people against colonialism; a draft programme of economic and social demands; and a draft resolution on organisational tasks facing the trade union movement in Africa.

A Programme for African Workers

The first of the three draft resolutions opens with an unequivocal condemnation of the colonial system:

“All the peoples of Africa suffer colonial exploitation.

The imperialist powers have seized the colonial territories by force and are maintaining their hold on them by force.

They have seized control of, and are exploiting for their sole benefit, the production of raw materials, minerals and agricultural produce, which they export without concern for the needs of the African people.

They have prevented the creation of industries, particularly heavy industries. They flood the countries of Africa with their goods. They invest capital in Africa in order to draw huge super-profits. As a result, the African people live in conditions of great poverty.

People’s and national culture is stifled. Forced labour, racial discrimination, violation of trade union rights and liberties, persecution and repression are part of their daily life.”

The resolution then proceeds to warn of the dangers of war, pointing out that “the imperialist governments need Africa for their military adventures. They need its strategic ores . . . They need its military bases . . . They need African youth as soldiers to be sacrificed in imperialist war.”

But despite the intensified colonial oppression which has accompanied the preparations for war "the mass movement for a better life and for liberation is developing".

Outlining the tasks of the African trade union movement, the resolution puts first "the fight to liberate the African people from colonial exploitation". It stresses that the colonial system "is the cause of poverty and repression and there can be no future for the workers of Africa as long as it exists".

Linked with this struggle African workers must fight for peace, "for war is desired by their main enemy, imperialism". The African workers, says the resolution, "have nothing to gain either from the preparations for war or from war itself".

On the question of the colour bar, and racial and national discrimination, the resolution does not limit itself to opposing these practices but makes a fundamental analysis of their real cause.

"The barbarous and slanderous theory of racial superiority is nothing other than an attempt to justify the most shameful and cruel form of the exploitation of man by man, to justify the right of the trusts and monopolies to establish their domination and make fabulous profits while paying labour practically nothing. This is why the colonists treat Africans as inferior beings, keep them in inferior posts, imprison them at will and even refuse them the opportunity of freely contributing to the administration of their own affairs."

A further section deals with "the development of the wealth of Africa in the interests of the people", emphasising that the African continent "is immensely rich in natural wealth; but as a result of colonial exploitation, this wealth has not been developed at all, or has been developed in a one-sided and distorted fashion because the imperialists seek to plunder Africa in order to make the biggest possible profits". The resolution therefore calls for the development of Africa "by modern methods", with the creation of "manufacturing industries" to produce goods on the spot, using Africa's rich natural resources, in order "to improve the living conditions of the people".

The final sections of this resolution deal with methods of action, the need for working-class and trade union unity, the necessity for creating an alliance between the African workers on the one

hand, and “the peasants, intellectuals and all democratic and patriotic forces” on the other. The resolution ends with a plea for international working-class solidarity, stressing that “the working class in metropolitan countries and the working class in colonial countries, both exploited and oppressed by the same trusts and the same governments, are united in a common fighting front”, which must be strengthened “not only in words, but by stronger organisational links and by joint action”.

The draft resolution on organisational tasks in the trade union movement in Africa contains much that is still valuable today for African trade unionists. Pointed advice is given regarding the functioning of trade union democracy—the effective participation of the membership in helping to decide policy, the regular election of leading officials and committees, and the regular reporting back of officials to the membership. Officials themselves should keep in close touch with the working class, “know and study the workers’ demands”, and encourage the workers to decide for themselves what action they should take in a given situation to back up their demands, bearing in mind that though there are many varied forms of action “nothing can be won without action” of one kind or another.

The resolution ends with sections on trade union education and publications. It points out that a trade union with no means of expression “is deprived of an important weapon in the fight for demands, wages and the education and documentation of its leaders and the workers”. With a realistic understanding of the problems of African trade unions, it advises that “it is far better to issue a single duplicated sheet than to wait to own a printed newspaper”.

The draft programme of economic and social demands is very comprehensive, and is of particular interest not only as a programme of demands but also as an indirect revelation of the dismal poverty and misery of the workers of Africa, and of their scandalous lack of real democratic and trade union rights.

The draft programme starts with an eleven-point section on trade union rights, covering freedom of expression, association, assembly, press, movement and travel; freedom for all workers to join the trade union of their own choice, to take part in trade union activity and assume responsible posts; freedom for unions to federate on a geographical, trade or inter-trade basis, and to maintain contacts with the international trade union

organisation to which it may be affiliated; prohibition of all bans, and of administrative and judicial measures against unions and their leaders, and a stop to interference in trade union affairs by the authorities; the right to strike and to take part in collective bargaining and sign collective agreements; availability of premises for trade union meetings; cessation of dismissals, imprisonment, fines and other forms of victimisation against trade unionists, and the righting of wrongs committed in this fashion; freedom for trade unions to participate in drawing up and putting into practice State measures on social and economic questions.

From the previous chapters it will be abundantly clear that every one of the demands on trade union rights listed in this draft programme is based on the actual experience of the African working class against whom such violations of trade union and democratic freedoms are practised daily.

The second section of the draft programme deals with the complete abolition of all measures of racial discrimination, and covers access to jobs, wages, working hours, holidays with pay, family allowances and social security, the penal system, prices and shopping facilities, freedom of movement, taxation and pass laws.

Then comes a section on forced labour, followed by one on wages and labour legislation, covering wages and a minimum wage, comprehensive social security, unemployment benefits and measures to check unemployment, annual paid holidays, the forty-hour week, the bringing of agricultural workers' conditions into line with those of workers in industry and commerce, prohibition of child labour, rights and benefits of women workers (access to jobs, prohibition of night work, twelve weeks maternity leave), safety and industrial hygiene.

Other points in the programme deal with education, health services, housing, and the land. On the latter question the draft programme emphasises the "restoration to the indigenous populations of lands expropriated by the colonists", calls for the abolition of special areas restricted to Europeans only, and asserts that "the land must remain at the disposal of Africans".

Dealing with the industrialisation of Africa, the programme says that this is "the guarantee of the raising of the living standards of the working masses". It further calls on the trade unions to demand "that exports and imports should be determined in

accordance with the interests of the African peoples and not to the profit of the trusts and metropolitan countries”.

The draft programme ends by giving consideration as to how finance can be raised to assist the industrialisation of African territories, bring about better agricultural production and develop social services.

It is nine years since the preparatory committee for the W.F.T.U.'s Pan-African Trade Union Conference elaborated this draft programme and its other documents, and possibly some of the points would today be presented in different fashion in the light of experience and in view of the changes that have taken place in Africa in this period. Yet, having said that, it is surprising how many of the ideas and recommendations contained in these draft resolutions and programme are not only still valid today but constitute a very real basis for trade union activity and policy in African territories.

African Solidarity

Even a cursory examination of these documents is enough to explain why the authorities do everything possible to prevent their message being received by African workers and why they try to keep African unions isolated from the W.F.T.U. and spread all manner of misleading stories about the nature and purposes of the World Federation. As a consequence of this imperialist activity, formal links between the W.F.T.U. and the African unions have been weakened, while, in contrast, the I.C.F.T.U. has been given every possible official encouragement. For a few years the I.C.F.T.U. was able to take advantage of this situation and to establish its connections in almost every colonial territory in Africa. But, significantly enough, the “wind of change” which has swept over Africa and blown colonial governments away in so many territories is also blowing down the last strongholds of the I.C.F.T.U.

More and more the I.C.F.T.U. is being seen by the African trade unions in its real colours. Its support for NATO, which is backing the French war in Algeria, and its opposition to Patrice Lumumba and the legitimate government of the Congo, have been amongst the most decisive factors in turning African workers against the I.C.F.T.U. Reports, too, that American and British funds have been used to try to buy over African trade union leaders have also played their part.

An additional reason for the growing hostility towards this body has been its attempts to prevent the establishment of a powerful All-African Federation of Trade Unions which would play a key role in helping to uphold the sovereignty of the new independent African states and to assist those countries still under colonial rule to win their independence. These efforts of the I.C.F.T.U. are doomed to failure. Powerful winds are blowing through Africa, compelling the coming together of all African trade unions, irrespective of international affiliation or political viewpoint, to unite in one body and in the struggle to end colonialism.

These winds could already be felt after the Afro-Asian conference of Bandung in 1955, and even more so after the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference of Cairo, December 1957 to January 1958.

There is no doubt that the conferences of Bandung and Cairo, each in its own way, paved the way for the two Accra conferences—the first for governments (April 1958) and the second, that held in December 1958, for organisations. Present at this latter conference were some 300 delegates from the liberation movements of 28 African countries, representing 200,000,000 people.

Though the decisions of the second Accra conference made no specific reference to the workers or their trade union organisations, the very spirit of the conference and its resolutions, and the presence of trade union delegates in all the proceedings, has had a most marked effect on the future development of the African working class and trade union movement.

The slogans that stretched across the conference wall at Accra—"Hands Off Africa! Africa Must Be Free!"—summed up the whole purpose and tenor of the conference. The conference adopted an important declaration against "Imperialism and Colonialism" which sharply condemned the political and economic exploitation of Africans by European imperialists and proclaimed the objective of achieving the independence and sovereignty of all dependent and colonial African territories.

The main emphasis of the conference—and delegates were unanimous on this—was the need to stand together in the fight against imperialism and for independence, and to hasten forward by whatever means were most appropriate in the given circumstances the liberation of each country at present under the heel of the Western powers.

Thus the immediate outcome of the conference has been twofold—a stepping up of the campaign in each colonial territory for political independence from colonial rule, and the strengthening of bonds of solidarity between the African independence and trade union movements throughout the continent, backed by specific measures to give organised expression to this growth of all-African solidarity. No longer do the Africans of Kenya, Congo, Algeria, South Africa or the Rhodesias fight in virtual isolation. The time-honoured working-class slogan “an injury to one is an injury to all” is increasingly becoming the watchword of the African liberation movements.

Inevitably such developments will lead to the African trade unions playing a clearer and more decisive role in the national liberation movements. The greater political cohesion expressed at the Accra Conference and embodied in its resolutions is producing greater trade union cohesion. The need for *national* unity to win independence must, sooner or later, find its parallel in *trade union* unity within each territory. And conceptions of trade union exclusiveness, whether they originate with the I.C.F.T.U. or with anyone else, are breaking down in the face of the inevitable march of history in Africa.

This has produced its effects on a continental scale, too. From conceptions of setting up regional trade union organisations, the idea has rapidly made headway that an All-African Trade Union Federation is essential. Accordingly, an inaugural conference for such a Federation was held at Casablanca, in May 1961.

Trade Union Autonomy

One problem which came to the fore during the preparations for this conference is that of trade union autonomy.

The division of the world trade union movement into the W.F.T.U. and the I.C.F.T.U. has meant, broadly speaking, the separate organisation of a revolutionary body and a reformist one. In many territories of Africa the maintenance or achievement of trade union unity meant the coming together, in one organisation, of both the revolutionary and reformist trends in the trade union movement, often on a compromise basis of recognition of the existence of the two trends and not through the decisive victory of one trend over the other. Unity achieved on such a basis could not easily lead to affiliation either to the W.F.T.U. or to the I.C.F.T.U., and any attempt to do so was

likely to split again the movement united after so much work and care. Therefore autonomy was the only solution. Such a policy was proclaimed, for example, by the All-Nigerian Trade Union Federation.

A further reason for the growth of trade union autonomy in Africa has been the influence of the national bourgeoisie in the ranks of the working class. The national bourgeoisie, and the national parties which they lead, as well as the new states they guide, are following a policy of non-alignment as between the two world camps of socialism and imperialism, although their struggle for independence brings them into opposition to imperialism, and their refusal to join western military alliances assists world peace. Non-alignment in politics is paralleled by non-alignment in international trade union matters, especially where the trade unions are closely linked to and influenced by the national parties under national bourgeois influence.

Consequently there has developed in the African trade union movement a powerful current in favour of trade union autonomy. In the context of present conditions in Africa, this trend towards autonomy has meant, in practice, a trend against the I.C.F.T.U., since it is this international body which, in the eyes of African trade unionists, is identified with colonial rule, and especially with American, British and French imperialism. It is significant that the remaining I.C.F.T.U. affiliates in Africa at the moment of writing are nearly all in the still-dependent British territories.

Nigerian trade union representatives at the Preparatory Conference for the formation of the All-African Trade Union Federation expressed the viewpoint of most African workers when they declared:

“The I.C.F.T.U. has used all means fair and foul. It has depended on the colonial powers for its main support. It has lavishly spent money to commission individuals in our trade union movements to carry out disruptive actions.

It has been shouting ‘Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!’ of ‘Communism’ to scare off militant trade union leaders who maintain that political freedom must be buttressed with economic freedom and fundamental human rights.”

Similar views have been expressed by many other African trade union organisations, notably those of South Africa, Ghana, Gambia and Guinea. Consequently, the founding conference of

the All-African Trade Union Federation, held at Casablanca in May 1961, decided that all its member organisations must end their affiliation to international trade union bodies within ten months. The W.F.T.U., owing to repression by the colonial authorities during the last decade, no longer has direct affiliations in Africa. The decision of the A.A.T.U.F., therefore, signifies above all a decisive break between African unions and the I.C.F.T.U.

The I.C.F.T.U. is not likely to accept this historical verdict without resistance. On the contrary, there are ample signs that steps are being taken to maintain I.C.F.T.U. influence in Africa—and in this, the I.C.F.T.U. will doubtless receive support from western governments.

In the long run, however, western attempts to control or influence trade union development in Africa must fail. The historic decision to set up an All-African Trade Union Federation signifies the breaking of a further colonial bond. African labour, like Africa in general, is standing up, and all relics of the previous colonial era are being swept away. Those who are sympathetic to the cause of African freedom and to African trade unionism cannot but welcome this development.

Fears have been expressed in some quarters that the African trade unions, by setting up their own, autonomous organisation, have become "isolationist" and have dropped overboard the principle of the international unity of the workers. In fact, both the Preparatory Conference and the founding Congress announced their readiness "to establish relations for co-operation and solidarity with all the workers of the world".

"There is no conflict" points out a Ghana trade union journal¹ "between the aim of uniting African workers and that of building unity between workers of all continents. But it should be clearly understood that African workers refuse to be treated as poor relations or stupid people who do not know how and are not to be trusted to handle their own affairs. A united African trade union movement will enter the councils of world labour as a full and equal partner."

Black and White Workers

There is one other aspect of the relations of African workers with other workers that needs comment. In certain territories,

¹ *Labour* (official monthly journal of the Ghana T.U.C.), May 1961, p. 24.

notably the Union of South Africa and the two Rhodesias, the existence of white, European, workers alongside Africans has meant an additional complication.

In South Africa there have always been two trends in the white trade union movement. There have been those who were prepared to work jointly with the African workers and who favoured a common organisation for both European and African workers. But there has also been a section which was utterly opposed to any kind of joint activity with African workers, and which has persistently backed the most extreme measures of racial discrimination and apartheid practised, to one degree or another, by successive Union governments, throughout the present century.

Notwithstanding this extreme chauvinist section, for quite a period, in certain trades, a measure of African-European trade union unity existed. In more recent years, however, as the Nationalist government pushed through its more extreme policies and measures and as the pressure became stronger, particularly after the government's drive to establish apartheid in the trade union movement itself, a considerable body of European trade union opinion succumbed and the South African trade union movement became more deeply divided.

To the government's attempt to split off the African (and Indian and Coloured)¹ workers from the European, the more militant African and European trade unionists replied by setting up the South African Congress of Trade Unions (S.A.C.T.U.), based on the principle of multi-racial unionism, and opening its ranks to both African and European workers, as well as to Indian and Coloured. This action by the militant workers of South Africa to set up a multi-racial trade union was fully justified in view of the government's drive to separate the African workers from the European; though, up till now, S.A.C.T.U. remains overwhelmingly African in its composition and the majority of European trade unionists will not associate with it.

This experience of South Africa shows how difficult it is to carry out, in practice, the basically sound principle of multi-racial unions. The reasons are not hard to seek.

Above all the South African Government itself—and the employers—have never made any secret of their hostility to

¹ In South Africa the term "Coloured" denotes persons of mixed racial origin.

Afro-European trade union unity, and have done everything possible to prevent the full flowering of such an alliance. It is significant that, to get their way, they felt compelled in the end to actually legislate apartheid into the trade union movement.

That their action did not meet with greater opposition from the European trade unions lies in the fact that, though both African and European trade unionists are workers, there are very big differences between them. The European worker in South Africa is very much a privileged person compared with the African worker. He constitutes a labour aristocracy which, in wages, education, residence, social status and general political attachment, has little in common with the poorly paid mass of unskilled or semi-skilled African workers who live a nightmare life of police persecution and yearn for their coming day of freedom.

But this is no normal division between skilled and unskilled workers, between a labour aristocracy and the rank and file. A far deeper and more fundamental division runs right through the ranks of labour in the Union of South Africa. On the one side are those who stand for full political, economic and social rights for the African workers. On the other side are ranged those who, in varying degrees, support the principle of racial superiority and discrimination, even if they do not all go the whole way in backing the government's apartheid measures and steps to maintain white baaskap.

Between these two fundamental trends there can be no real unity, even if, on certain particular questions, a temporary, partial unity may be achieved. Basic unity, and with it, multi-racial trade unionism, can only prosper and grow on the basis of white trade unionists giving full recognition to the just demands of the African workers and struggling, jointly with them, for a South Africa in which democratic government will, for the first time in its history, be established.

Until such time African trade unionists are likely—and with justice—to concentrate on organising African workers into trade unions. The stronger the organisation of African workers the more African trade unionism becomes a force in the land (even in unions with white membership, too), the greater will be the opportunities for winning over substantial sections of European workers to a policy of Afro-European trade union unity. Such

unity will never be achieved through any paternalist generosity on the part of strongly organised European workers towards weakly organised Africans. It is the strength of African trade unionism itself which will be the biggest factor and the most persuasive argument to convince European trade unionists in South Africa as to where their real, long-term interests lie.

This is even more so in the Rhodesias. There, too, the African workers are in favour of multi-racial unions in principle, but the application of this principle is quite another question. In Southern Rhodesia, African workers, not being eligible by law—until recently—to belong to recognised trade unions, were kept out of the European unions. The European unions had no *official* colour bar, but they accepted the barrier which the law put up, and usually added another of their own by only accepting into union membership workers who got the rate for the job, which meant equal pay for equal work. As a general principle in Britain, for example, this would be just and in fact an essential protection of the workers' interests. But African workers in Southern Rhodesia do not get the rate for the job, apart from the fact that the majority are unskilled workers performing jobs quite different to the European skilled or supervisory grades. The one occasion when African skilled artisans in the building industry in Bulawayo were granted by a government decision the rate for the job was followed by their immediate dismissal by their European employers. European unions made no protest against these dismissals.

During 1957, as we have noticed above, the government introduced new legislative proposals for African workers including a proposal for multi-racial trade unions. African trade unionists opposed this proposal. It may be asked why in South Africa the S.A.C.T.U. should fight to maintain multi-racial trade unionism, while in Southern Rhodesia the African trade unionists reject it. We have already seen the circumstances which influenced the policy of the S.A.C.T.U. In Southern Rhodesia the circumstances are quite different. The whole aim of the government legislation there was to create a form of unionism in which the African workers would play a completely subordinate role, the European workers occupying the leading positions and having the decisive say in policy making. The government Registrar would be expected to play a key role here, assisting the government to ensure that the unions remained in "responsible hands". African

trade unionists, quite correctly, opposed this proposal, and said they would prefer, for the moment, to have an organisation of their own. On the basis of having their own African trade union they would be prepared to discuss joint action and other forms of unity with the European unions.

That African workers in Southern Rhodesia are fully alive to the importance of inter-racial unity—in fact, more so than their white trade union colleagues—is shown by their offer to assist the European railway workers when the latter were on strike in Southern Rhodesia in 1955. This gesture of solidarity is in marked contrast to the lack of help usually displayed by the European unions when African workers have been on strike.

A somewhat similar situation to that in Southern Rhodesia exists in Northern Rhodesia, where there are separate unions for African and European workers. This is of special importance on the Copper Belt, where the two unions play a key role. Again, the European union has no official colour bar clause in its constitution, but its rigid insistence on “equal pay for equal work”, alongside its policy of hindering the African mineworkers from being employed on equal work, effectively debar Africans from membership. Under these conditions the African miners—and the same applies to other sections of African workers in Northern Rhodesia—formed their own trade union.

Here, too, unity is very difficult to realise in practice. As figures given earlier show, the wages of the African workers are but a tithe of those earned by European miners. It is important to realise that the bulk of these European miners in Northern Rhodesia, earning over £2,000 a year, living in spacious houses with subsidised rents, owning large cars, employing African servants, often owning a farm worked by African labour, have largely cut themselves off from any real working-class basis. They regard the defence of their privileged position as the real function of their union and, seeing that their privileges are rooted in a society based on racial discrimination and a denial of real democracy to the African working people, they are easily led, again and again, to support trade union policies which their fellow trade unionists in Britain would not lightly tolerate.

Thus they used their union strength to try and prevent African miners being employed on more skilled jobs; and when the African miners' union struck for higher pay for the mass of its

unskilled workers, the European union scabbed, despite the fact that both unions are members of the Miners' International Federation, the miners' trade secretariat of the I.C.F.T.U., to which the British National Union of Mineworkers also belongs. What is particularly scandalous about this is that the European union always argues that the cheap labour of the Africans is a threat to its own position and therefore calls for "equal pay for equal work"; but when the African workers try to raise the pay of their unskilled and, at the same time, try to secure entry of their workers into skilled jobs, the European union, still hiding behind its high-sounding principles, sets itself against the African workers.

It is true that not everyone in the European mineworkers' union agrees with these policies, and that voices were heard during the 1955 strike, protesting against the union's decision to scab on their African fellow workers. But unfortunately these voices are still a minority and have not yet been able to have a decisive influence on union policy.

Meanwhile African workers will continue to build up their own trade unions, confidently relying on their own strength while keeping open the way to unity whenever the white trade unionists are prepared to take that path.

It is just over twenty years since the outbreak of the second world war. African trade unionism was then in the midst of its painful birth-pangs. But today, a mere two decades later, two to three million organised African workers have strode confidently on to the stage. African trade unions are taking their place in the international trade union movement not as unenlightened pupils or poor relations, but as mature, developed organisations, experienced in struggle, and led by men who have faced batons, bullets and prison—apart from numerous other forms of intimidation and harassment—in defending the interests of the African working class.

The powerful wave of strikes that has swept over Africa in the past fifteen years has embraced millions of African workers, to whom it has given a new insight into the real face of their enemy and a new confidence and determination based on a sober appraisal of the strength and capacity of the African working-class movement.

This movement, already so decisive in Africa's struggle for

independence, will become much more powerful in the next few years. The building up of the economy of the new African States will mean a considerable increase in the number of African workers. And the new possibilities of trade union recruitment and organisation, in some cases encouraged by the new African governments, will result in a substantial expansion in union membership.

It is in the hands of these African trade unionists that the guidance of Africa's destinies will eventually lie.

CHAPTER THREE

GOING IN ORDER TO STAY

§ 1 THE WIND OF CHANGE

OVER most of the African continent the tide of colonialism is being swept back. But it does not retreat without a struggle. Desperately it seeks to retain its hold, if not by one means, then by another. Direct colonial rule cannot for long be sustained in those territories where white settlement is virtually non-existent or very limited; and even in the territories of east, central and southern Africa, especially Kenya and the Central African Federation, where white settlers constitute, in varying degree, an important economic and political factor, imperialism feels itself obliged to adjust itself to the changed situation, taking due account of the specific characteristics of each of these territories mentioned.

“For the European in East and Central Africa,” warns *The Times* (May 5, 1960), “the lesson is that the policy of sitting on the lid of the kettle is hopeless.”

In short, the old form of colonial rule no longer suffices. New methods are needed if imperialism is to protect its profits and maintain its influence in Africa. Where the old forms of direct oppression are still utilised as the sole method of rule—as in the Union of South Africa, and in Portuguese-held Angola and Mozambique—and where Africans are completely excluded from any semblance of political representation, few, if any, adjustments are being made. Yet, even here, some concessions may soon become necessary as the internal movements of protest grow, supported by the ever-increasing pressure of politically independent Africa which expands and becomes more powerful with every passing day.

The imperialist powers are well aware of this new situation; hence the various guises they are adopting in order to keep their bridgeheads in Africa. That astute defender of British imperialism, Sir Andrew Cohen, expressed well the new post-second world war tactic of the Colonial Office when he argued that "successful co-operation with nationalism is our greatest bulwark against communism in Africa".¹

Continuing his line of thinking he said:

"In the African countries . . . nationalist movements are bound to grow steadily more powerful . . . *The intelligent thing is for Governments to recognise this early, and by skilful anticipation to try and guide the energies of nationalists into constructive channels and to secure their co-operation in a programme of steady but not headlong advance.*"² [Own italics.—J.W.]

In the final pages of his book Sir Andrew returns to this theme and asks the rhetorical question: "What in fact is the Western world's interest in aiding Africa?" After a few polite phrases about "moral and humanitarian" considerations, Sir Andrew gets down to the real heart of the matter, stressing ". . . our need for raw materials from Africa and our wish to trade with these countries . . . Finally, there is a political interest—to help them remain stable and friendly to the Western world."³

This, in fact, is an anticipation of Macmillan's famous "wind of change" speech, a speech whose real import has been so drowned in a deluge of slush from government supporters and right-wing Labour leaders about Britain's allegedly new liberal approach to Africa that it is necessary to repeat here what the British Prime Minister actually said.

"The most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago, is of the strength of this African national consciousness. In different places it may take different forms, but it is happening everywhere. The wind of change is blowing through the continent.

Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact. Our national policies must take account of it . . . I sincerely believe

¹ Cohen, Sir Andrew: *British Policy in Changing Africa*, p. 61.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*, p. 114.

that if we cannot do so, we may imperil the precarious balance of East and West . . . As I see it, the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa will swing to the East or to the West. Will they be drawn into the Communist camp?"¹

This idea, of winning Africa "for the West", and presenting the issue as "working with African nationalism" or "losing Africa to Communism", is echoed by some Labour spokesmen. John Hatch, for example, argues² that "the African continent will be lost to the democratic world" unless the imperial powers "transform the imperial relationship" into a "partnership of equals". Thus Hatch is not concerned with the African struggle for independence from the standpoint of the African people, but from the standpoint of Western interests in the "cold war".

Even the late George Padmore, a leading exponent for many years of Pan-African sentiment, apparently followed the same line of argument, going so far as to assert that if the Colonial Office policy "based upon the principle of national self-determination for Africans by process of gradual constitutional reform" were pursued by the British Government, this "would be the most effective bulwark against Communism".³

The presentation of the argument in the form in which it has been put forward by Sir Andrew Cohen, Macmillan and the rest, as one of African nationalism *or* communism, is false. This is not the real issue in Africa today. The real issue is whether the African territories and people are to have genuine independence, complete sovereignty over their own policies, resources, economy, culture and military forces—or whether, despite the winning of political concessions up to and including political independence, they are to be still held firmly in the grip of imperialist monopolies, of those of the United States and Western Germany as well as those of the former colony-owning powers. If Africa is kept "with the West", this means that it remains within the orbit of imperialism and is thus held back from its full economic and social development.

What then is the significance of the "wind of change" speech?

¹ Macmillan, Harold: Speech to the House of Assembly in Cape Town, the Union of South Africa, February 3, 1960.

² Hatch, John: *Everyman's Africa*, London, 1959, pp. 232-3.

³ Padmore, George: *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, London, 1956, p. 20.

Simply that an official spokesman of British imperialism spelled out the new tactic, which had been tried with some success in Asia after 1945, and which now had to be utilised in Africa because "the growth of national consciousness is a political fact" which "our national policies must take account of".

The operation of this new tactic demands not the alliance of imperialism with the entire national movement—an impossible task, for the masses who back the movement are not to be so easily fooled or satisfied—but an agreement with a section of the national movement at the expense of the full economic, social and political development of the newly independent nation, and thus at the expense of the workers and peasants who comprise the main forces of the nation.

Imperialist experience in Asia—in India, Burma, Ceylon and Malaya—has shown that it is possible to grant *political* independence to a country but still continue imperialist *economic exploitation*, providing that, at the moment of granting independence, political power is placed in the hands of a class or a section of a class that might be hesitant to make a fundamental challenge to the imperialist stranglehold on the national economy, permitting it instead to continue more or less undisturbed, and with the working class kept under control so that the profit-making activities of the big imperialist monopolies are not unduly interfered with. A further imperialist calculation is that common class interests will result in the capitalists of the newly independent country staying within the fold of the imperialist camp, allowing the imperialists to maintain bases on the native soil, and entering into various military pacts and agreements. Hopes that such an outcome would follow have influenced British imperialism to make concessions to the growing capitalist class in Ghana and Nigeria.

It is in pursuit of a similar goal that de Gaulle and the French ruling class have nourished the French Community, and that Italy has made political concessions to Somali. Hopes are shared by ruling circles in the United States and in Western Germany that they, too, will be able to achieve success in Africa as a result of this tactic.

All neo-colonialist dreams, in fact, are based on the expectation of being able to find a foothold for imperialist activities *within* the national movement itself, to win over a section of this movement, subvert it into becoming an ally of imperialism and thus use it

against the fundamental and long-term interests of the new African states.

In some African territories, notably in West Africa, the African bourgeoisie, though small by Western standards and even in comparison with India, is nevertheless relatively important within the context of the African economy. As regards these West African territories, imperialism entertains high hopes. How successful the neo-colonialist tactic will be here, however, it is yet too early to judge. Suffice it to mention, at this point, that the imperialists themselves do not seem to be completely convinced as to the efficacy of this tactic, and therefore they do not place all their eggs in the basket of the African bourgeoisie. Reactionary feudal emirs have not been forgotten, nor the disruptive and obscurantist influences of tribalism. These and other divisive forces are held in reserve, as a form of pressure against the newly independent States, or thrown into battle, whenever the moment seems opportune, in order to create difficulties and hinder the advance of these States.

How the "wind of change" policy is being operated in the different areas of Africa, and what successes the imperialists have had with this new tactic, is examined at some length in the following pages.

§ 2 THE RIDER AND THE HORSE

In most of east, central and southern Africa, so ruthless has been the oppression of the African people, so absolute the tyranny of the imperialists and white settlers and so complete their monopoly in all fields of social, economic, cultural and political endeavour that the pattern of class structure and class relations differs considerably from that in most of West Africa, as, for example, in Ghana or Nigeria. The deliberate policy of the governments in the former group of countries has been one of seizing most of the land, or certainly the best land, and turning the African peasants into helots for European farms and mines. Efforts by the Africans to develop a prosperous agriculture of their own have been deliberately stifled. The same has happened with African commerce, transport, mining and manufacture, which have remained a monopoly, in most cases absolute, of the Europeans.

As a result most of these territories are remarkable for the fact

that an African national capitalist class or bourgeoisie has been scarcely able to emerge.

There are no statistics which can adequately show the extent to which an African capitalist class has been halted in its tracks in these regions of Africa but the known European domination of the entire economy and the reports of observers make it emphatically clear that imperialism has done its best to strangle the African bourgeoisie at birth.

The consequences of this policy are not without irony. In the period before the second world war when, in the main, African independence movements in east, central and southern Africa were at an early stage, the imperialists were able to coast along with some degree of tranquillity, basing their rule on the distorted class structure they had created. In the last decade, however, as the movement for national independence has risen ever higher, so have the imperialists turned, in desperation, in search of an African capitalist stratum on which they could rely as a prop for their system.

The chiefs are no longer the safe ally that they were. A number of them are turning towards the national movements. As for those who remain "loyal" and throw in their lot with colonialism, their too open identification with the whole system of imperialist oppression renders them of limited practical value in the face of an awakened people.

Nor are the white settlers, by themselves alone, a strong enough barrier to the advancing national liberation movement, whose pace and scope have compelled imperialism to find a new road-block.

In Search of an Ally

Hence the search for a new ally who will enter into partnership with the imperialists and white settlers, divide the national movement and help retain the territory as a safe field for foreign investment and a reliable base for war.

Report after report, document after document, speech after speech, reflects this search for an ally. If only a safe, reliable, conservative-minded "middle class" of Africans could be found, or, if not found, be created!

"A black African middle class with a stake in the country [is] of vital importance to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland," Mr. A. Lennox-Boyd, former Secretary of State for the

Colonies has argued,¹ adding further that it is "essential that this sort of social revolution should happen before people" find themselves "overwhelmed by political revolution".

Similarly, the Joint East African and Central Board places its hopes on the prospect that "*an African middle class will emerge*",² while the Bow Group of young Conservatives, bemoaning "the lack of a propertied African middle class of any significance" pleads that "*the creation of a flourishing middle class*" is very much in the interests of the Colonial Powers.³

The Federal Republic of Germany, too, in the general principles it laid down in October 1959, at its conference of German diplomatists at Addis Ababa, did not forget to emphasise that West Germany's policy towards Africa should take into account that "the social and economic structure must be stabilised *by the building up of a middle class*" in the different African territories.⁴

This African middle class, explains Leys,⁵ "is meant to come between the rest of the African population and the European population (of course it is the new *upper* class of the African population itself)". Further, it is hoped that it will follow "middle" or more moderate political views expressed in a readiness to accept the existing power balance between Africans and Europeans. It is, as Leys says, "a buffer class to be interposed between European supremacy and the Africans' challenge to it". And to win support from such a buffer class, the white oligarchy is prepared to make limited concessions as regards the colour bar to this very small stratum "which will then support the Europeans against making fundamental concessions".

As Clutton-Brock has ironically remarked of this conception in Central Africa:

"If some of the African population should start to think for themselves, they could be enrolled as hangers-on to the new economy and become 'the African Middle Class'; they would be kept satisfied with new suits and Coca-cola."⁶

¹ A speech at Weymouth, May 1, 1959. Quoted in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, May 7, 1959, p. 1053.

² *East Africa and Rhodesia*, April 23, 1959, p. 991.

³ *Crossbow*, April-June quarter, 1959. Quoted in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, June 4, 1959, p. 1171.

⁴ *The Times*, November 17, 1959.

⁵ Leys, Colin, and Pratt, Crawford: *A New Deal in Central Africa*, op. cit., p. 107-8.

⁶ Clutton-Brock, Guy: *Dawn in Nyasaland*, London, 1959, p. 37.

The “new suits and Coca-cola” are offered in various forms and guises; houses, education, land, wages, unions, co-operatives, votes—all come into the imperialist scheme of “encouraging an African middle class”.

“One clear thread which followed through much of the evidence we heard,” said the Plewman Commission Report, “was the importance of having in Southern Rhodesia a settled and contented middle-class urban African population.”¹

To achieve this aim in Southern Rhodesia a scheme of African house-ownership has been put forward. That this Tory ideal of a “property-owning democracy” is not taken too seriously by the African people in Southern Rhodesia is not surprising, seeing that in the past few decades the property they already possess, namely their land, has been increasingly taken from them, and their democratic leaders arrested and locked up in prison, while the Plewman Commission Report itself, which put forward the proposal for African house-ownership, has been quietly shelved.

Similar in intent to the house-owning schemes in Southern Rhodesia is the union and wages policy pursued in Northern Rhodesia. The aim of the “African advancement” policy of the copper companies, and of its sponsorship and backing of the African Staff Association, has been to create a small, privileged section of higher-paid Africans who would be given posts of more responsibility and skill in return for their collaboration with the mineowners. In fact, the companies have made no secret of their ambition:

“The Companies considered that an organisation such as the African Staff Association would facilitate the growth of a strong and responsible African middle class, and a stable and level-headed body of African opinion.”²

The same motive lies behind the governmental sponsorship and control of African “co-operatives”. Describing their development in Uganda “under the guidance of trained government officials”, Sir Andrew Cohen has explained:

“The object of all these schemes, both in Uganda and elsewhere, is to encourage the growth of an African middle-class.”³

¹ *Report of the Urban Affairs Commission*, 1958, Salisbury (Plewman Report), p. 41.

² Branigan Report, 1956, p. 31.

³ Cohen, Sir Andrew: *op. cit.*, p. 104.

John Gunther has spoken in similar terms of Tanganyika's Kilimanjoro Co-operative, saying that it "opens the way towards what Africa needs above all—the creation of a prosperous middle class".¹

As with homes, wages, unions and co-operatives, so with the land. The whole purpose behind the various schemes—land consolidation in East Africa, model farms in the Central African Federation, the general pressure for the commercialisation of African lands in all territories—is to create a small class of African farmers who, in the contentment of their new economic status would unwittingly act as a buffer between the white rulers and the maturing African agrarian revolution. Similarly, in the field of trade and commerce, ideas have been mooted for the encouragement of a small stratum of African dealers, or of African shareholders and administrative personnel in European enterprises.

Imperialism, however, does not lack merely an African capitalist class with whom it might be able to collaborate; it lacks too, in much of Africa, a sufficiently large African educated élite who would participate in this system of collaboration, providing personnel for certain managerial posts, for skilled occupations, for African doctors and teachers, and, of equal importance, acting as politicians who would accept "ministerial" posts in the colonial governments. To provide this cadre of an African intelligentsia, imperialism is ready to provide limited university facilities—and even to educate African and European students side by side in the same college. At the primary level, however, the schools are to continue on their present basis of race discrimination.

A number of other forms of racial discrimination have this same class basis. Africans who are "more responsible", "better educated", "more civilised" are offered all kinds of inducements of a strictly minor, peripheral character. The entry into various professions, the holding of political posts, even the possibilities of having a meal in a hotel hitherto reserved for Europeans—all this is held forth as a temptation for the "better educated" African. Such concessions, which themselves are in practice largely illusory, have no meaning even in theory for the overwhelming majority of Africans; as illiterate, poverty-stricken workers and

¹ Gunther, John: *Meet Central Africa*, London, 1959, p. 118.

peasants they have as much chance of enjoying a meal in a luxury hotel as they have of becoming kings of England.

This new economic and social policy of the imperialists of fostering "an African middle class"—which, in essence, differs but little from the policies pursued in the Belgian Congo of creating a class of *évolués*, or, in Portuguese African territories, of *assimilados*, and is even one of the calculations behind the Constantine industrial plan for Algeria—has its counterpart in the political field. This "stable", "responsible" middle class is to be granted limited *political* rights, too; it will be allowed to share in voting rights again on a most restricted basis; and, if it behaves, will be allowed a few posts at ministerial level.

It is, perhaps, in the Central African Federation that we can best observe how this system operates.

The "Partnership" Swindle

The pattern in all three territories is determined by the simple fact that the majority of the inhabitants, the 7,000,000 Africans, are ruled over by British imperialism and some 300,000 settler Europeans, who between them have seized all the key points of the economy and have established a state power and laws to maintain their domination. Up until the time of the Federation, in 1953, Southern Rhodesia had always followed a policy known as one of "parallel development" which, as *The Times* has commented,¹ "smacked of apartheid". In fact, as its name implies, it more than "smacked" of apartheid: it was in every way a policy of racial segregation, discrimination and oppression.

With the establishment of the Central African Federation the term "partnership", actually written into the Federal constitution, became the new polite formula for this policy. Since so much effort has been expended to persuade both Africans and people in other countries that "partnership" is a policy aimed at wiping out racial discrimination and intended to serve the best interests of the Africans, it is important to examine a little more closely its real purpose as admitted and formulated by its advocates, and to see, too, how this so-called partnership works in practice.

The artificial side of the theory runs something like this: In many parts of Africa, such as the Union, the Federation, Kenya, Tanganyika, there are not only the native Africans living there, but also Europeans or whites (as well as Indians and Arabs).

In order that the interests of all races may be safeguarded, a form of rule must be slowly evolved that will give adequate representation to each racial grouping in the apparatus of government and administration, and so prevent any single race dominating the others.

Superficially it might appear that this theory has something to commend it. But on examination it will be found that its sponsors have in mind something very different to this plausible-seeming theory. Furthermore, Africans correctly ask why it is that "partnership" and "multi-racial" states have only become popular with the imperial authorities and settlers since the African people have begun to campaign on a mass scale for their national liberation. Before the second world war, when the imperialists felt quite confident in their ability to continue holding down the African people, white supremacy was openly practised without the fig-leaf of "multi-racialism".

The first thing which should be made clear is that "partnership" is intended, in the minds of its supporters, to maintain the supremacy of the whites. The partnership envisaged is not, as the term might lead one innocently to suppose, a relationship of equality between the African community and the European community; it does not provide for the abolition of racial discrimination; nor does it, in any way, embrace any conceptions of the African people having a share, in accordance with their numbers, in the ownership and control of the land, the mines, and the enterprises. "Partnership" may mean something quite specific in dictionary terms; but in African politics it means something very different to its dictionary usage. In its definition of partnership, the Northern Rhodesian Action Committee of the Federal Party has stated that "partnership was not one between races in bulk, but between Europeans as a *whole* and certain selected African *individuals*".¹ This sums up very clearly the essence of the policy of "partnership", a policy which, in practice, is but a carrying forward of the slogan of Cecil Rhodes: "Equal rights for every *civilised* man south of the Zambesi." Or, as Sir Roy Welensky recently put it, the removal of racial barriers "between men of equal ability and equal standing".² As to who

¹ See Albinski, H. S.: "The concept of partnership in the Central African Federation", *Review of Politics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, April 1957, pp. 186-204. (Quoted in *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia* by Colin Leys, op. cit., p. 272.)

² Presidential address to the United Federal Party, Lusaka, September 17, 1959. *The Times*, September 18, 1959.

is to decide when an African is “civilised” or of “equal ability”—that is naturally left in the hands of the present rulers, the Europeans. And their intentions, as expressed crudely and forcibly by Welensky, leave no possibility of any doubts:

“We Europeans have no intention of handing over the Federation to anyone.

Even in a hundred or two hundred years’ time, the African shall never hope to dominate the Federation.”¹

The real meaning of “partnership”, therefore, is the retention of white domination under a new, and very obvious disguise. It is, in effect, little more than a change of *words*—and even the term itself is now so discredited in Central Africa that it has little value in those territories.

In one of his usual blunt moments, Lord Malvern, Welensky’s partner and predecessor as Prime Minister of the Federation, described partnership as “the same as exists between rider and horse”—the rider, of course, being the white settler, and the horse being the African.

Phoney “Fancy Franchise”

In no field is this intention to maintain white supremacy in the Federation, with the support of a small section of “responsible middle-class Africans”, seen more clearly than in that of elections and the franchise.

“The idea of an African middle-class,” says Leys² “which will be prepared to support the socio-economic *status quo*, and accept the existing political system as it is, played a central part in the electoral reconstruction . . . both schemes reflected the desire to find a nominally ‘colour-free’ franchise qualification which would in practice admit a small middle class of Africans to register, while not excluding any Europeans, and safely retaining control to European hands for the ‘foreseeable future’.”

Leys adds the comment that in the view of the Europeans “a middle-class African who will join one of the existing parties

¹ Quoted by Cyril Dunn: *Central African Witness*, London, 1959, p. 61.

² Leys, Colin: *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, pp. 288–9.

[i.e. the European-led parties—J.W.] is the 'ideal type' of the African whose standards are civilised and responsible".

Referring to the Tredgold Commission which issued its Report on the Franchise in 1957, Dunn pointedly says that the Commission

"... found no way of identifying the civilised man, but reverted to the hackneyed idea that income and education are the only tests."¹

He adds that the main aim of the settlers has been "to fix the results of any election in their own favour by excluding Africans or by reducing the value of their vote".

An examination of the actual electoral qualifications certainly bears out Dunn's strictures. Leys has shown² how in Southern Rhodesia, right from the commencement, the property qualification for voting was put far beyond the reach of the African, *and constantly raised to keep him out*. In 1898 the qualification was £50 annual income, property of £75 or a mining claim. In 1912 it was £100 income or property of £150. In 1951 it became £240 income or property of £500.³ With such property and income qualifications required for voting, the franchise for Africans was a long way over the horizon. None but a very select few could qualify.

The Tredgold Commission, far from recommending the abolition of this system of blatant racial discrimination, only found new, more complex and involved ways in which the system could continue. The Commission, in fact, made no secret of its aims, stating quite unashamedly its opinion that "*a country is amply justified in making an endeavour to confine the franchise to those of its inhabitants who are capable of exercising it with reason, judgment and public spirit*". It is in this sense that we have interpreted 'civilised and responsible persons', as used in our Commission".⁴ [Own italics.—J.W.]

In order to achieve its objective of a limited franchise the Commission added the concept of an educational qualification to go

¹ Dunn: *op. cit.*, p. 167.

² Leys: *op. cit.*, p. 191 et seq.

³ Guy Clutton-Brock makes the same point as Leys, stating that the franchise qualifications in Southern Rhodesia were doubled in 1951, and trebled, with certain exceptions, in 1958. (See *Dawn in Nyasaland*, p. 118.)

⁴ Tredgold Commission Report, 1957, Salisbury, p. 4.

along with the property qualification. Arguing that an “educational test” would be “obviously justifiable”, it added that “a means test may be supported on the assumption that, under our present economy, a man does not earn more than a subsistence unless he has certain qualities of mind and character. (This is the real justification of the means test, and it is only prejudice that rails against such a test as putting a premium on wealth.)”¹

And if the Europeans earn more than the Africans, then, apparently, in the eyes of the Commission this is nothing to do with colonialism and racial discrimination, but is simply due to the fact that the European has “certain qualities of mind and character” which the African evidently lacks. The seizure of the best lands and the mineral wealth, the enactment of legislation to debar the African from employment in skilled jobs, the restrictions and discrimination against African farmers—all these only too obvious causes of African economic inequality are simply dismissed with phrases, themselves racially inspired, of “certain qualities of mind and character”.

On the basis of its conception of a means test and an educational qualification for the franchise, the Tredgold Commission recommended an “ordinary voters” list for which the following qualifications were required: £720 annual income, or £1,500 property, plus literacy; or £480 annual income or £1,000 property plus Standard VI (Form II) education; or £300 annual income or £500 property, plus Form IV or its equivalent. In other words, the richer you are, the *less* educated you are required to be to have the vote. Since most Europeans would be in the top two income categories, they obviously are not expected to show any marked scholastic qualities. But any African capable of climbing into the £6 a week class has to show a more advanced educational standard than the richer European. Evidently, when applying its dictum that a man’s capacity to earn a higher income depended on “certain qualities of mind and character”, the Tredgold Commission set aside educational qualifications, or perhaps, to be more precise, decided that they applied in inverse ratio to income.

But this was not the end of the recommendations. In order to make a pretence of making some franchise concessions—and aiming, in the process, to net a handful of “middle-class, responsible, civilised” Africans—the Commission recommended a

¹ Tredgold Commission Report, op. cit., p. 4.

“special” category for African voters, based on £180 a year income qualification plus literacy. As a result, not only is there a most severe limit on the *number* of Africans able to qualify for the vote—and thus a *racial* limitation—but there is a clear *class* limitation, too. Excluded from the vote are the overwhelming majority of African wage-workers and peasants—those who feel most sharply on their backs the daily lash of racial discrimination, oppression and exploitation; only a relative handful of what may be termed middle strata can possibly qualify for the franchise. Leys points out¹ that in December 1956 there were only 550 African voters out of an African population of 2,290,000; in August 1957, there were 911, and a further 140 claims were being checked.

The Federal franchise for the whole of the Central African Federation follows the same pattern as that prevailing in Southern Rhodesia. The actual registrations of Africans for the November 1958 Federal election showed 642 in Southern Rhodesia, 89 in Northern Rhodesia, and 16 in Nyasaland; a total of 747 out of an African population of 7,000,000.

Leys has emphasised that the Federal franchise is even worse than the one used in Southern Rhodesia. It aims, he says, “to allay European racial prejudice by keeping to a minimum the concession of influence to Africans”.² How minimal this concession is, and how unashamedly the income qualification is designed for this purpose, is indicated in the Report of the African Affairs Board on the Electoral Bill. This Report states that the average income of Africans in employment in 1956 was £70 per annum, but adds that “the average income of all adult males will, of course, be far lower than this”. The average European income for the same year was about £1,100. The report has to admit that “although the income qualification applies to all persons irrespective of race”, the “practical effect” will be to exclude all “but exceptionally wealthy Africans from getting the vote”.

As Leys³ has remarked: “A rough comparison would be a franchise in Britain open only to surtax-payers.”

An additional obstacle to Africans wishing to qualify for the vote has been exposed by the Report of the Scottish Churches. This is the specific reference to property having to be “immov-

¹ Leys: *op. cit.* p. 231.

² Leys: *op. cit.*, pp. 239-40.

³ Leys, Colin, and Pratt, Cranford: *op. cit.*, p. 114.

able".¹ African wealth, in the few cases where it does exist, is largely in the form of livestock, which is most assuredly "movable". The most "immovable" property, land, is largely denied to African private ownership.

The educational qualifications, too, are a barrier through which only a relative handful of Africans can pass. Leys estimates only 70 Africans as being able to take School Certificate (Form IV) in Southern Rhodesia in 1955; while the number reaching Standard VI (Form II) in 1954 was 4,429. He rightly comments that the educational system "does not offer a wide avenue of advance to Africans who are unable to satisfy the highest, or even the middle, means qualification . . . secondary education is unattainable by all but a handful of African children, for lack of schools, and a complete primary education is available only to a small minority".² The inevitable consequence is that the gap between the races "which has hitherto preserved European dominance in the electorate"³ is widened.

In the light of such blatant machinery for keeping the Africans in subjection—with just a narrow loophole through which it is hoped to entice a handful of "responsible" and "civilised" "middle-class" Africans—Dunn's sharp condemnation of Central African "partnership" is fully justified.

"Let us stop deluding ourselves about Central Africa," he appeals. "Its present leaders are not trying to direct it towards any new form of race relationship. The whole aim of policy is to keep things as they are for as long as possible. Such plans as there are for African political advancement are intended only to confuse and frustrate African opposition, to justify the white community's present privileges in its own eyes and in those of the world, and to engage the support of the British Government . . . in practice the whites keep their civilisation behind a stockade and allow the blacks only a small share even of the material benefits derived from development."⁴

Perhaps the truest and sharpest commentary on the whole system of "partnership" is the Central African Glossary of

¹ *Report on Central Africa, including Supplementary Report*, Church of Scotland, March 1959, p. 10.

² Leys: *op. cit.*, p. 240. ³ *ibid.*, p. 240. ⁴ Dunn, Cyril: *op. cit.*, p. 238.

Political Terms as Congress Africans believe they are being interpreted:

Democracy: Government of a black majority by a white minority.

Franchise: A device for ensuring that democracy, as defined above, shall remain the system in Central Africa for the foreseeable future.

For the foreseeable future: For ever.

The vote: A dangerous weapon, safe only in the hands of persons with two thousand years of background.

Partnership: A political system existing in a multi-racial society where the blacks are kept permanently subservient to the whites and are persuaded that this is not the case.

Racialist: Any African who thinks that Africans ought to be the dominant group in Central Africa.

Non-racialist: A European who thinks that Europeans ought to be the dominant group in Central Africa.

Responsible African: Any African who consistently supports the European point of view.

Irresponsible African: Any African who campaigns in what he conceives to be the interests of his own people.”¹

Democracy—Or White Minority Rule

In order to win support in the West for their blatantly anti-democratic and racialist franchise system, the imperialists and white settlers have found themselves obliged to put forward some startling theories concerning the nature of democracy and its application to modern Africa. One hesitates to use the term “new” when describing these theories since, in all essentials, they are similar to the arguments used by the British ruling class in the nineteenth century to justify their refusal to allow universal, adult franchise in Britain without a property qualification.

The theory, as explained by Kenneth Bradley,² argues that democracy requires a section of people “fit to make a real contribution to society”.

“The people themselves must be good democrats . . .

Enough of them must be sufficiently healthy to produce a

¹ Quoted by Cyril Dunn: *op. cit.*

² Bradley, Kenneth: *Britain's Purpose in Africa*, H.M.S.O., London, 1959, p. 13.

surplus from the land over and above their own requirements and a reasonable output in industry. Most of them must be sufficiently prosperous at least to be free from want, and some of them must have acquired enough capital to develop their own commercial and industrial enterprises.

. . . A good many of them must have had enough education to be able to distinguish the genuine leader from the demagogue . . .

. . . There must be among the people a sufficient number of more highly educated men and women to provide the leadership, management and professional skills without which no democratic society can order its affairs.”

Leaving aside the false argument presented here that the lack of wealth in the hands of the Africans is due to their ill-health (the Tredgold Commission, it will be remembered, used the equally false argument that African poverty was due to a lack of “certain qualities of mind and character”), the whole of Bradley’s contention is basically a denial of democracy. “Most of them,” he asserts, “must be sufficiently prosperous at least to be free from want.” And since most of them, through no fault of their own but entirely due to the policy of their white rulers, are *not* “sufficiently prosperous to be free from want”, they are presumably to be denied the democratic right of the franchise.

Many variants of this presentation are to be found in the speeches of colonial officials, of Tory peers and M.P.s, and of white settlers and their political representatives. Thus the Duke of Devonshire, in the debate in the House of Lords on the Speech from the Throne,¹ opposed extending the franchise to Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, saying, “We in this country are in the position of parents or guardians of a growing child.” In the same debate, another Tory peer, Lord Milverton, asserted that “*the greatest enemy of democracy is universal suffrage* when it is applied to a people who have not yet the judgment and the knowledge and the education to use it for their own protection and for their own national interests”. “In Africa today,” thunders Mr. Richard Goold-Adams, “a universal franchise implies dictatorship, not democracy.”²

¹ November 5, 1959.

² Goold-Adams, Richard: *Sunday Times*. (Quoted in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, October 29, 1959, p. 203.)

The common idea running through all these various "theories" is that democracy is not what it is commonly believed to be; it is not even what Lincoln said it was—"government of the people, by the people, for the people". It is apparently "government of the people by a small minority of better-off, better-educated people, for safeguarding the interests of this minority". Or, as B. C. Okwu, Minister of State of Eastern Nigeria, has said: "Government for the minority by the minority."¹

It is precisely against the conception of "one man, one vote" that the whole effort of imperialist theoreticians is expended. Sir Roy Welensky has categorically declared that "the dogma of one man one vote would never apply to the Federation".²

"Multi-racialism", "partnership", "preparing people for democracy", "safeguarding minority rights"—these and other slogans are eagerly pressed into service by colonial governments to justify their refusal to concede the elementary democratic demand for universal adult suffrage.

The Labour Party, too, while not quite so blatant in its approach, fundamentally takes its stand on this same ground. True, it argues that *in principle* it supports "one man, one vote", but it has never asserted that this is a democratic demand which should be granted *immediately and unconditionally today*. It pretends that there is a "peculiar problem" in what it terms "the plural society", and that is "*how* it should become fully democratic".³ One would have thought that the "problem" was quite straightforward. The "problem", in fact, only exists for those wishing to prevent the *immediate* granting of democratic rights to the African people. The Labour Party approach to this problem, as expressed in its own publications, is essentially one of "pie in the sky", or "jam tomorrow, but not today". Thus it states that "*ultimately*, the people of each of the colonial territories have the right to determine which particular form of constitution . . . best suits their requirements".⁴ "Europeans and Asians must be prepared *ultimately* to accept unqualified African equality as the only permanent basis for democracy."⁵ But "*we cannot expect, however, to establish the common roll immediately everywhere*".⁶ Thus, while giving lip-service to the principle of universal suffrage or

¹ *West African Pilot*, Lagos, November 4, 1959.

² Statement on April 17, 1957.

³ *Labour's Colonial Policy: The Plural Society*, Labour Party, 1956, p. 31.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 35.

“one man, one vote”, the Labour Party supports, until some unspecified date in the future, the continuation of a restricted franchise for the African people. Though this is the official policy of the British Labour Party, it is doubtful whether many of its members would support it if given the full opportunity to discuss it.

“*Blundellism*”

In Kenya, too, there is the same attempt to foster “partnership”, though the idea is presented in different quarters with varying shades of emphasis. In Kenya, no less than in the Federation, the term is not intended, in the eyes of its sponsors, to mean equal rights. This restrictive meaning of the term is explained by its very advocates:

“The only idea of partnership that we can entertain with any sense of realism is one in which the senior partner bears the main responsibility and exercises major control, while the junior partner is recognised as having an interest in the business, sharing the responsibility and management to the extent that his ability merits. This is the only meaning which we can accept for the term ‘partnership’, and there must be no pretending to agree with any fanciful claims for immediate equality.”¹

The idea is not always presented quite so crudely as in these words of Dr. Wilson who, to make his point quite clear, refers to the senior partner as being the one “with larger financial interest”. But in essence, the policy advocated by Michael Blundell, the former Minister of Agriculture in Kenya and a leading settler, is the same. Mr. Blundell has gained a reputation as a representative of a new “liberal trend” in Kenya politics. As against the crude white *herrenvolk* line of reaction he argues for a “multi-racial” approach. Superficially he represents something new in Kenya politics. But a closer examination of his ideas and the programme of his new party, the New Kenya Group,² reveals that he, too, and his party, stand for the preservation of European interests and privileges, even if in a new, more cleverly concealed guise. His aim, says the *Observer*, “is to win time for an

¹ Wilson, Dr. Christopher: *Kenya's Warning*, Nairobi, 1954, p. 103.

² In November 1959 the New Kenya Group was transformed into the New Kenya Party.

orderly transfer of responsibility to an 'educated and responsible' African leadership *under conditions acceptable to the settlers*".¹ [Own italics.—J.W.]. Nothing could be clearer. It is understandable, therefore, that Blundell "tends to equate African nationalism and the demand for one-man-one-vote with 'black racialism'".² The policy document of the New Kenya Group, entitled "The Challenge of New Kenya", issued at the beginning of November 1959, declares:

"The application of 'undiluted democracy' through the premature introduction of a system of universal suffrage on a common electoral roll for all the people of Kenya would lead rapidly to chaos or dictatorship; to a complete loss of individual security and of individual freedom. We reject this course unreservedly."³

This, it can be seen, is similar to the policies of "partnership" as practised in the Federation. In place of one-man-one-vote and majority rule the New Kenya Group advocates political representation in accordance with people's "ability to appreciate and discharge their civil responsibilities".⁴ The judges of the African people's ability are presumably to be the present rulers of Kenya, the Europeans.

The intention to hive off a relative handful of "responsible, educated, middle-class Africans" who will collaborate with imperialism and the white settlers and divide the African people's movement is being pursued with the same deliberateness in Kenya as in the Federation. In every field the parallels are evident. Thus, as in the Federation, Blundell and his group favour multi-racial education at the university level, but not the primary; encouragement to a small African farming class, and the opening of the White Highlands to the few richer African farmers who can afford to pay for the land, but no handing over of the White Highlands to the mass of land-hungry Africans who crowd the Reserves; and the offer of minor political plums to selected Africans, but no universal franchise.

The Government of Kenya and the Blundell group evidently base their policy on the hoped-for emergence of a small stratum of African farmers, businessmen and professional workers. They

¹ *Observer*, May 24, 1959.

² *ibid.*

³ *East Africa and Rhodesia*, November 12, 1959.

⁴ *ibid.*

point to the growth of individual African coffee growers from 15,000 in 1953 to 75,000 in 1958—a fivefold increase.¹ However, the 1958-9 season's crop was valued at only £1,400,000, which is less than £20 a year for each African grower: within this figure there will be many with considerably less than £20, and only a small section with more. Certainly very few will have netted £100. Yet official quarters are placing considerable hopes in the political consequences which will flow from the land consolidation scheme. In fact, a leading member of the East African Section of the London Chamber of Commerce recently claimed that the transformation wrought by land consolidation in Kenya "is beginning to create an agricultural middle class of Africans with a vested interest in ordered progress, and if only time can be gained for this great change to spread there will be thousands of Africans with much to lose by political extremism, and therefore with no sympathy for it".²

Parallel with the emergence of a small section of African farmers earning more than wage-workers, there is a section of small businessmen emerging, too. Significantly, the President of the Central Nyanza African Chamber of Commerce announced in October 1959³ that a number of African trade associations, chambers of commerce, co-operatives, companies and farmers' associations, had been invited to a meeting in order to discuss the formation of a national businessmen's association. Apart from co-ordinating every aspect of African business life in Kenya, stated the president, the new association would also encourage the formation of African banking, insurance and finance firms.

Blundellism, as opposed to the more blatant advocacy of racial segregation and white domination, has its parallel expression in Southern Rhodesia's Garfield Todd and Northern Rhodesia's Sir John Moffat, both of whom propose more "liberal" policies towards the African people. In both cases it has been found difficult to persuade the white settlers to "go along" with such ideas, and as a result Garfield Todd has now retired from his own Central Africa Party, and his political future is uncertain.

The very emergence of a Blundell, a Garfield Todd and a Sir John Moffat is itself a reflection of the crisis of imperialist policy

¹ In 1946, according to A. T. Steele (*New York Herald Tribune*, August 7, 1959), there were only 786 African coffee growers in Kenya.

² Eagleton, H. F.: Speech reported in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, January 19, 1961, p. 562.

³ *East Africa and Rhodesia*, October 29 1959.

in these regions, being, in fact, an attempt on the part of a section of the European rulers to seek out a solution which will prevent the too-drastic and too-radical dismantling of Western influence. Even such a well-meaning liberal as Guy Clutton-Brock¹ falls into such an attitude, and looks forward to a "new partnership" between the African national movement and "big business, mining and industry" which is presumably to be allowed to retain its positions of hegemony within the economy. "Big business," claims Clutton-Brock, is one of "the most enduring forces for the foreseeable future". It is with such forces that he hopes the leaders of the African national movement will be persuaded "to fashion the pattern of partnership for the future of Central Africa".

There is no doubt that the policies advocated by the "Blundells" of east, central and southern Africa have much in common with the new "wind of change" tactic of British imperialism. To pursue this tactic, it is not sufficient for the British government to win allies among the top sections of the African national organisations; it must also strive to carry with it the majority of the white settlers. Basically, both white settlers and the British Government are pursuing the same aim: the retention of British economic, political and military influence in Africa. But there is an important difference between the two as to how this is to be achieved.

Hence the constant warnings and advice poured out in the direction of Salisbury and Nairobi by certain political figures in Britain and by sections of the press. As long ago as 1959 the *Economist* explained: "Above all, now, it must be made unmistakably clear to the Southern Rhodesian and Federal politicians and their supporters" that Britain "cannot, in the last resort, help to sustain or even tacitly support, a policy of continuing repression, under whatever guise. This is not because of the 'spinelessness' with which the sturdy Rhodesian likes to charge the British as a whole. *It springs from a simple calculation of the balance of British interests . . . in the world.*"² [Own italics.—J.W.]

The majority of white settlers—farmers, medium-sized capitalists, technicians, skilled workers—are not always so ready to adapt to the new situation as the big monopolies and the government. They see the local Africans only as rivals for their land,

¹ Clutton-Brock, Guy: *Facing 1960 in Central Africa*, Africa Bureau Anniversary Address, 1959, Africa Bureau, 1960, pp. 12-14.

² March 21, 1959.

their farms, their jobs, their privileges. And they want to continue to rule the African people as before. But British imperialism is playing for much higher stakes, for monopoly profits, for military bases, for "keeping Africa with the West". And, to that end, it is quite prepared to surrender many of the present privileges enjoyed by the small and medium settlers.

The settlers, however, are reluctant to grant the imperialist government the manoeuvring room it requires if it is to carry out its neo-colonialist policy. Nowhere have the "Blundells" been able to command majority support from the local European population. Consequently, British imperialism faces a deepening crisis in these territories. Matters have not yet become so acute as in Algeria where de Gaulle, manoeuvring for a small change in policy, found himself faced on the streets of Algiers and Oran by armed, angry *colons* who are not prepared to yield an inch. But the intransigence of the settlers in Central Africa and in Kenya is a major obstacle to the successful working of Britain's new "wind of change" policy, for this obstinacy, although it provides imperialism with a welcome excuse for delaying fundamental concessions to the African people, only serves in the long run to widen the rift between the settlers and the African people, heightens African national feeling and thus makes it more difficult for imperialism to "make a deal" with a section of the African leaders.

The Economics of "Partnership"

Behind the open discrimination practised against Africans by white settlers and imperialists in matters of the franchise, democratic and trade union rights, social conditions and race relations, lies a basic discrimination in economic matters. Not for nothing has Shirley Williams described conditions in the Central African Federation as "the economics of inequality";¹ for in no field more than in that of economics has the real swindle of "partnership" in Central Africa been more pronounced. It is a measure of the swindle itself that it has been possible to carry it through behind a noisy barrage of propaganda about the "economic benefits" of Federation—propaganda which cannot stand up for one moment in the face of the real facts of the situation.

Since Federation was imposed in 1953, European interests in

¹ Williams, Shirley: *Central Africa: The Economics of Inequality*, Fabian Commonwealth Bureau Research Series 215, London, June 1960.

land and industry, in all three territories, have gained at the expense of the African people, primarily the workers and peasants. In the Federation's mining industry, African wages shrank from just over 25 per cent of the value of gross profits in 1945 to about 8 per cent in 1956.¹ Whereas total wages and salaries (including those of European miners) together with operating costs came to 55.4 per cent of the total expenditure of the mining companies in 1949, with gross investments, royalties, taxes and dividends and royalties paid abroad accounting for 31.5 per cent, by 1956 the position was completely reversed, the first set of costs accounting for only 27.3 per cent, and the second leaping to 61.7 per cent.²

On the land, too, the African people have suffered. In Southern Rhodesia, the operation of the Land Apportionment Act and the Land Husbandry Act, not to mention the removal of thousands of Africans to make way for the Kariba Dam (a project, incidentally, which will feed the big European-owned mines, industrial enterprises and homes but provide no benefit to the African people), has proved disastrous to the African peasants, thousands of whom have lost their land as a result.³ Despite this already large-scale robbery of African land, still further measures have been taken since Federation to deprive the African people and turn still more land over to the Europeans. Thus, in Northern Rhodesia, an Order in Council in 1959⁴ extends to the African Reserves the right to grant leases of land to Europeans on the consent of the Governor. In Nyasaland under a 1952 Ordinance, African peasants living and working on European estates under a form of share-cropping called the *tangata* system have been largely deprived of this right, with the result that the number of families living under this system has been reduced from some 50,000 in 1946 to under 16,000 by the end of 1958.⁵

An indication of the slowing down of Nyasaland's development since Federation is that whereas in the four years prior to 1953 the net domestic product in the Nyasaland economy rose by an average of 16.5 per cent a year, since Federation the rate of increase has declined to 10.5 per cent.⁶ It is, perhaps, not an

¹ See the present author's *Africa—The Roots of Revolt*, p. 234.

² *ibid.*

³ *ibid.*, pp. 6 and 16.

⁴ Order in Council 296, Northern Rhodesia, 1959.

⁵ *Nyasaland: Report for the Year 1958*. Quoted in Shirley Williams, *op. cit.*

⁶ Williams, Shirley: *op. cit.*, p. 2.

entirely unrelated fact that the 169,000 men who found jobs outside Nyasaland in 1958 could send back to the territory only £1,750,000, while the 130,000 employed at home earned almost £7,250,000. Thus the increased migration of labour of men from Nyasaland has taken place at the expense of the growth of the indigenous economy.

African people have also had to bear the burden of increased taxation since 1953, as well as increased prices, especially of such things as "cheap cotton goods, footwear, cooking pots and iron tools, which are among the staple purchases of the African people".¹

It is sometimes argued that Nyasaland has gained from Federation since the Federal Government allocates a share of the Federal Tax to aid Nyasaland. Apart from the fact that these allocations are not spent mainly in the interests of the African people, several commentators have drawn attention to the fact that, since Federation, Nyasaland has had to transfer her customs revenues to the Federal Government. These customs revenues were formerly one of Nyasaland's main sources of revenue. Moreover, Nyasaland's losses in this way are greater than her gains.

"... Though Nyasaland gained a net £1·5 million through tax redistribution over the Federal area, she lost over all more than she gained, by the surrender of £2 million which she would otherwise have kept from customs and excise revenue."²

But quite apart from the question as to how Nyasaland has fared under Federation, it is clear from all the facts that in all three territories it is the Europeans who have gained, not the Africans. As Barber has stated:³

"One cannot escape the conclusion that the allocation of benefits from public expenditure has been weighted disproportionately in favour of Europeans. Not only has the European community gained far out of proportion to its numbers, but

¹ Williams, Shirley: *op. cit.*, p. 18.

² Sanger, Clyde: *Central African Emergency*, London, 1960, p. 82. See also Shirley Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-23.

³ Barber, William J.: A contribution in *A New Deal in Central Africa*, ed. by Colin Leys and Cranford Pratt, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

even the *absolute* sums expended have been much larger for Europeans than for Africans.”

Barber adds¹ that despite this discrimination as regards public expenditures, “the trend of post-federation budgets has been towards increasing the burden on the African consumer”. In the 1955-6 budget, taxes on the cheapest cigarettes, bought by Africans, were raised. In the 1956-7 budget customs duties, and therefore the end prices, were raised on the cheapest imported garments—again items intended for African purchasers. In the 1958-9 budget the subsidy on maize, the staple African food item, was reduced. The European farmers, who are the main suppliers of maize for the market, were not affected by this change, for the government continued to guarantee them an artificially high price.

Thus in the fields of profits, prices, wages, land, taxation, the “partnership” of Central African Federation is seen to be the now familiar one of that of the rider and the horse. It is this which helps to explain why the opposition of the African people to Federation, far from being quietened by their seven years’ experience of “partnership”, has on the contrary risen to such heights that the European horseman in the partnership is now riding for a fall.

“*Oppression and Hypocrisy*”

Malcolm Muggeridge has referred to multi-racialism as “just a device, like the non-nuclear club, for evading a dramatic, tragic and clear-cut issue. All over Africa the whites are going out. The most that can be done is to buy a little time with blood, oppression and hypocrisy”.² Nowhere is the “oppression and hypocrisy” more blatant than in the field of racial discrimination. In this respect Southern Rhodesia, despite the claims of its rulers, is amongst the worst offenders in the whole African continent.

If the scandalous measures of racial discrimination practised in the Union of South Africa find no detailed mention here, it is not because they lack importance. It is simply that racial discrimination in the Union is so universally known and universally hated that it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that South Africa and racial discrimination are synonymous terms in most

¹ Barber, William J.: *op. cit.*, p. 94.

² *New Statesman*, August 8, 1959.

people's minds. In fact the U.N. General Assembly debate in November 1959 on a motion to condemn the Union government's apartheid policies found only three powers unwilling to back this condemnation—Britain, France and Portugal, all three major colony-owning powers in Africa.

Before coming on to consider the manifestations of this discrimination in present-day Southern Rhodesia it is as well to recognise the basic economic and political reasons for this particular social phenomenon.

“In the first forty years of this century,” writes Leys,¹ “every available artificial means was employed, from taxes and pass laws to the Industrial Conciliation Act and the Grain Marketing Act, to squeeze from the country a standard of life which would increase the European population and make it secure. The African population was cleared from the bulk of the best land; by the recruitment of African labour from a very wide area beyond the country's borders, wages were kept to a minimum which made possible enterprises which would not otherwise have paid; the European economy was insulated in every possible way from African competition, skilled employment being reserved for European artisans, paying markets for European farmers . . .”

To ensure this *status quo* and safeguard European privilege and profit, racial discrimination was introduced into every sphere of economic, social and political activity. To this very day this “institutional apparatus of racial discrimination . . . is maintained”, Leys rightly says, “*because it underwrites the economic and political predominance of the European population*”.² [Own italics.—J.W.]

It is very often claimed by the Federal Government, as well as by the Southern Rhodesian Government, that measures of racial discrimination are being progressively done away with in Central Africa. Such claims are even echoed by Fabian and Labour Party spokesmen, such as John Hatch. Indeed, the latter goes so far as to assert that: “There have in fact been more signs of liberal advance recently in Southern Rhodesia than in either of the other two territories.”³ Such arguments will only be

¹ Leys: *op. cit.*, pp. 290-1.

² *ibid.*, pp. 33-4.

³ *New Statesman*, October 31, 1959.

laughed at by the African people themselves, who feel daily the dreaded whip-lash of this barbarous discrimination. But for those in the West who might otherwise be deluded by these extravagant pretensions, it is necessary to demonstrate not only that no drastic cutting down of the edifice of racial discrimination has taken place, but that new embellishments are being constantly added.

Of key importance has been the banning in Southern Rhodesia of the four African Congresses—the Nyasaland African National Congress, the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress, the Northern Rhodesian African National Congress and the Northern Rhodesian Zambia Congress. This ban on the African people's own political expression is a most extreme form of racial discrimination, since it robs the Africans of the essential weapon with which to fight against the other forms of discrimination and oppression.

While not denying that racial discrimination is openly practised in the political field—indeed, how could he in face of his open defence of a system based on the conception of white supremacy?—Sir Roy Welensky has, on a number of occasions, referred to his new policy of “removing the pin-pricks” of discrimination, a policy, he hastens to add, which only applies to those who, in his view, have reached a sufficient standard of “responsibility” and “civilisation”. Thus, in Southern Rhodesia “Africans who have attained the standard of responsibility expected of ordinary citizens”¹ no longer have to carry passes. What those who boast about this innovation usually neglect to add is that this small stratum of Africans exempted from carrying a pass *still have to carry a document of identification*. Such sleight-of-hand tricks occur constantly in Central Africa. Thus, there has been a good deal of hullabaloo about colour-bar bans being lifted on hotels in Salisbury. In fact, nothing of the sort has taken place. Previously, there was a positive legal colour-bar in Salisbury. Now the Southern Rhodesian Government has introduced legislation under which a hotel, *if it wishes*, can apply for a multi-racial licence. There is nothing in the new legislation, however, which obliges any hotel to admit non-Europeans, so that the hotels are as free as hitherto to continue exercising a colour bar—as indeed they do. Even *The Times* has been moved to protest in connection with the

¹ *The Progress of Africans in Southern Rhodesia*, Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs, Salisbury, 1959.

new legislation that "the exclusion of Africans from hotels makes nonsense of claims to be putting partnership into practice".¹

Dunn tells the interesting and instructive story² of how the magazine *Drum* decided to test out the validity of Welensky's declaration (at a time when he was Minister of Transport) that Africans, provided they were well-behaved and of smart appearance, could take meals in station restaurants or on trains.

"'Mr. Drum', as the Magazine's special correspondent assigned to hazardous tasks is known, went first to his old school and got a testimonial upon his high level of educational attainment from the headmaster. He went to a tailor and had himself professionally certified as well-dressed. And from the pastor of his church he got a concise written tribute to his moral character. Thus armed against all the possible objections indicated by the Minister, 'Mr. Drum' went for a meal in a Salisbury station restaurant and, after encounters with a sequence of railway staff personalities of mounting seniority, was finally ordered out by the white manager himself."

How extreme the measures of racial discrimination sometimes become is indicated by the recent example of the African doctor in Salisbury who, through Ministerial intervention, was stopped from conducting post-mortem examinations because he might have to work on European bodies.³

The extent to which the lives of Africans are dominated by measures of racial discrimination which reach into practically every aspect of their activities was well described in a letter by two Africans, A. C. Maguranyanga and J. B. Chikanya (both of Harare Township, Salisbury), which was published in the *Manchester Guardian*.⁴ In answer to those who claim that "a big hole" has been knocked "into the wall of the colour bar in Southern Rhodesia", these two African writers assert: "The fact is that only a few scratches have been made in the paint of the wall, but not a single brick has been removed, and the plaster of the wall still remains intact."

They then proceed to enumerate the various laws which dis-

¹ *The Times*, September 2, 1959.

² Dunn: op. cit., p. 65.

³ *Manchester Guardian*, July 11, 1959.

⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, August 5, 1959.

criminate against Africans—the Land Apportionment Act which has robbed Africans of their best land and reduced them to a “state of landlessness and extreme poverty”; Acts making it an offence for “an African to argue with a government official”, an offence for Africans “to criticise or complain to the government”, criminal for an African headman to refuse to collect taxes for the government, illegal for an African male to have sexual relations with a European woman but legal for a European male to have relations with an African woman; the Detention Act “which makes it legal for the government to arrest and detain an African without explanation”; and the Unlawful Organisations Act “which makes it an offence for the Africans to boycott the business of a man they do not like”. Added to all this, there is the hated Native Passes Act.

Further to all these laws, however, the writers of this letter also list the further colour-bar practices to which Africans are daily subjected—arrested by the police on the slightest excuse, refused entry to certain parks, banned from swimming baths and cinemas (even from drive-in cinemas), compelled to submit to segregated education (except at university level, though even here there is a residential colour bar), and not permitted to be carried in a European ambulance no matter how ill the African patient may be. “An African can lie injured on the road for hours if an African ambulance is not available.” The colour bar in Southern Rhodesia, they assert, even extends to the mission stations, where there are separate residential areas for European and African priests and teachers. “African priests are not allowed to serve Holy Communion to Europeans.”

Little wonder that Dunn contests that there is little to choose between the Union of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia in the matter of racial discrimination and segregation. “. . . The basic doctrine of the two countries is the same.”¹

Nor is the pattern much different in Northern Rhodesia. The colour bar extends into every aspect of life there as it does in Southern Rhodesia. Even in Northern Rhodesia’s jails colour discrimination is practised. Describing the appalling conditions under which he was imprisoned in 1952 for his participation in the campaign against Federation, Dixon Konkola, former President of the Northern Rhodesian African T.U.C. and of the

¹ Dunn: *op. cit.*, p. 73.

African Railway Workers' Union, ended with these significant words:

“But what is worse than anything, what hurts most is that even in prison there is colour discrimination. The white prisoners are in one place, with good food, and they aren't treated roughly by the warders. When I found out that even in prison they treated us according to our colour, then I really understood injustice.”¹

In Northern Rhodesia, too, as in Southern Rhodesia, frequent gestures are made in the direction of modifying some particular colour-bar practice; but on examination such gestures are found to be an empty mockery. From time to time, says Dunn, the authorities make announcements giving the impression that “yet another door” has been thrown wide open to African advancement.

“But when this door is closely examined, it is often found to be set so high above the ground that none but the most persistently agile Africans can hope to pass through it.”²

For instance, great publicity was given to the official announcement to the effect that Africans would be able to earn 5s. 6d. an hour as skilled workers in engineering. Yet at that time no African was admitted to apprenticeship, nor could he join the European union which would have permitted him to work in these skilled jobs; and “the highest rate paid to an African”, says Dunn, “was, I believe, 1s. 9d. an hour”.

When the African people and their organisations in Northern Rhodesia launched a campaign against various manifestations of racial discrimination in shops, post offices and so on, the government was compelled to react in some form or other, and fell back on the usual standby of a Committee of Enquiry. The Committee had to admit the truth of the African people's contentions and its report certainly describes many of the colour-bar practices which are common to this territory. But the Associated Chamber of Commerce objected to the Committee's findings, arguing that

¹ “Colour Bar—Even in Prison”, by Dixon Konkola, *Tribune*, December 14, 1955.

² Dunn: *op. cit.*, p. 219.

"It is beyond the power of the European section of the community to remedy racial discrimination . . . The onus is on the African to persuade the European to accept him on equal terms." ¹

This argument, that you cannot compel Europeans to give up the practice of colour discrimination, is even echoed by the British Labour Party. "People cannot be forced," it says, "to choose their friends from other groups . . . If people want the present social conventions to continue, with different groups living in different areas, they cannot be prevented from segregating themselves voluntarily." ² Thus the Labour Party, in effect, condones the colour bar and surrenders to all the most hateful prejudices of the white settlers. It apparently supports the view that legal sanctions against racial discrimination should not be introduced, on the grounds that it doubts the effectiveness of such legal action. Dunn rightly points out that "those white leaders who assert that laws against the social colour bar would not work, seem to have no difficulty in framing measures of one sort or another to enforce it". ³ And in fact the list of legal measures in force in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland, or in the Union of South Africa, and to a considerable degree in other African territories, too, which specifically lay down measures of racial discrimination and encourage race-prejudice, is so considerable that merely to list them, let alone detail their content, would take pages and pages of text.

The African people justly cry out against every manifestation of this shameful policy of white supremacy, and welcome every gesture made or step taken by non-African people to lend support to Africa's struggle for respect for human dignity. At the same time they recognise that the social colour bar is not the root of their trouble, but only one of its branches. The root is the system of imperialist exploitation which has been described elsewhere. ⁴ The African people will naturally rejoice if the colour-bar branches are lopped off the tree of oppression; but their greatest joy will be reserved for the day when the tree is dug up by its imperialist roots. They would no doubt agree with Leys⁵ that when all the minor modifications to colour-bar practices

¹ Quoted by Dunn: p. 131.

² *Labour's Colonial Policy*, op. cit., p. 40.

³ Dunn: op. cit., p. 212.

⁴ See the present author's *Africa—The Roots of Revolt*, London, 1960.

⁵ Leys, Colin, and Pratt, Cranford: op. cit., p. 105.

made by the Federal Government are set in their full context “nothing emerges more clearly than the nominal character of such changes as have taken place in the fundamental things—land, segregation and jobs”. And to the “fundamental things” one must, of course, add political rights and representation as well as trade union rights.

To those who advocate the removal of colour-bar “pin-pricks” as the limit of concessions needed in order to quieten African protest, Guy Clutton-Brock has given a classic reply:

“But it is the deep wounds which remain to be healed; as the ‘pin-pricks’ are eased, the wounds gape the wider. Land, Locations and Franchise, the dignity of Man and the freedom to meet and speak, the increasing gulf between richer and poorer, between white and black; these are the things that matter, that make the wounds bleed.”¹

The African people know that behind the daily indignities associated with the colour bar stands the naked economic self-interest of the European rulers. In fact, in their more open moments, these rulers do not even pretend to hide this fact. Sir Roy Welensky, for instance, has stated:²

“. . . It must be recognised that *if the Western World wants to be sure of access to the minerals and other wealth of Africa*, the stabilising influence provided by the white man must be preserved.” [Own italics.—J.W.]

At a conference of the Royal Africa Society in London, Oliver Woods stated:³

“Other questions apart, there is that of self-interest—that *unless we are in Africa, we shall not get the raw materials for our industry or the markets in Africa for its finished products*. We cannot contract out of Africa, we must stay.” [Own italics.—J.W.]

It is because they appreciate the economic basis of the racial discrimination and oppression which they suffer that Africans

¹ Clutton-Brock, Guy: A contribution to *A New Deal for Central Africa*: op. cit., p. 169.

² *East Africa and Rhodesia*, February 5, 1959.

³ *ibid.*

do not limit themselves to struggling against the various manifestations of the colour bar, but raise far-reaching political and economic demands which cut at the very imperialist roots of the colonial system.

§ 3 COLLAPSE OF A DREAM

While it is possible that the imperialist effort to win allies among the emergent African capitalist class and intelligentsia may meet with some temporary success in this or that territory, it is illusory to think that it provides any lasting solution to the growing crisis facing the European rulers. Colonialism, the direct and open political rule of African territories by imperialist powers, is no longer possible, not even in those territories with considerable white settlement.

It should be noted here that there is a distinction to be made between, on the one hand, the efforts of the imperialists in territories of white settler rule to find a small sub-stratum of Africans who will allow open and direct European political power to be retained, and, on the other hand, the policy of neo-colonialism, through which the imperialists hope, even after relinquishing their direct rule of African territories, to maintain political influence and continue their economic exploitation. In the former case, as shown in this chapter, these hopes of the imperialists cannot succeed. Neo-colonialism, however, constitutes a far greater danger and is becoming the main threat to those twenty or more African territories which have already won their political independence from colonial rule.

For a time (in the Union of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, the Portuguese-occupied territories, or in Algeria) parts of the African continent might still be subjected to open white subjection; but in these territories, too, the writing is on the wall, and the present set-up can only be maintained by a most desperate effort on the part of the white rulers, with resultant strains and stresses which must eventually tear the whole colonial tegument asunder.

In territories such as Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Kenya, Tanganyika or Zanzibar, the policy of finding middle-class allies who will allow the continuation of the former colonial system is doomed to failure. Despite their talk of encouraging the emergence

of an African middle class, the very intention of the European rulers to maintain colonialism precludes such a development. In fact the continued hogging and monopolisation by Europeans of all the key points in the economy of these territories, coupled with the continuation of policies of racial segregation, of white urban areas, and African townships and Reserves, of pass-laws, Master and Servants' Acts, industrial colour bars and the like make nonsense of their pretence. Some few African individuals may be found who can be misled and corrupted by imperialism into playing the role of "partners" of the colonial system, but any real hopes of an African middle class—by which is meant a weak capitalist class and its accompanying intelligentsia—emerging under such conditions are doomed to failure.

"Africans have not the opportunity," points out Clutton-Brock,¹ "to become in any real sense partners at any level in European controlled undertakings. Thus, in the total economy they have the opportunity to be no more than 'hangers on' with an uncertain and restricted hold, and without the stimulus to development which full participation gives."

The same limitations have been underscored in the Union:

"The facilities for investment in real estate hardly exist for an African in South Africa," says Matthews.² "The aspiring African middle class cannot accumulate the capital necessary to develop an entrepreneur class. And it must be remembered that real estate is fundamental to the development of a middle class.

And a middle class must be distinguished from the comprador stooze class that the Nationalist Government is trying to bring into existence. Servile chiefs in the employ of the Government, civil servants, traders whose progress depends entirely on Government favours, patronage and hand-outs from the Bantu Corporation, these can hardly be said to constitute a middle class."

Only a mockery of a capitalist class can be produced by

¹ Clutton-Brock, Guy: *Dawn in Nyasaland*, op. cit., p. 91.

² Matthews, Joe: *Africa South*, Vol. 3, No. 4, "Revolution: Further Reflections", p. 14.

imperialism in those parts of Africa under settler-rule, a capitalist class with an attendant educated élite, too weak to wield decisive influence for any substantial length of time over the workers and peasants, except in so far as it places itself at the head of the people's demands for the ending of colonial oppression, exploitation and racial discrimination. Moreover, the very restrictions placed upon the nascent African capitalist class by imperialism cannot but lay the basis for further conflict between the former, as an unsatisfied class, and the imperialists, the class in possession of the country's wealth.

It is precisely normal African capitalist development and growth which is being distorted and throttled by imperialism and the colonial system.

An explanation why this whole policy of "partnership" and the "creation of an African middle class" must break down is provided by Sékou Touré, the president of independent Guinea.

"The claims of Africa," he says, "have to be comprehended on the basis of *liberty at a national level* and not under the form of *patronage at individual levels.*"¹ [Own italics.—J.W.]

For this reason, even in Portuguese-held Angola the policy of reliance on an African middle class is failing.

"Among those now said to be lying in Luanda gaol are Africans well known in the country, *assimilados* in whom the Portuguese have theoretically seen their best allies."²

The same failure can be noticed in the Congo, where the hopes which the Belgian authorities placed for so long in a tolerated *évolué* class acting as a barrier to the national independence movement are crumbling around their ears, reverberating throughout Africa and causing tremors in Brussels itself.

The Congo has always been held up as a paternalistic example which might well be imitated by other western colonial powers in Africa. For years in the Congo all political activity of any kind whatsoever was curbed; Africans were allowed to acquire certain

¹ Touré, Sékou: *Towards Full Re-Africanisation*, Speech at the Congress of the Democratic Party of Guinea, Conakry, September 14, 1959, *Présence Africain*, Paris, 1959, p. 8.

² Davidson, Basil: "The Time of the Leaflet", *New Statesman*, November 2 1959, p. 698.

skills, and the enticing promise was dangled before their eyes of progressing, by stages, to the status of an *évolué*, that is to say someone who would be accepted as “civilised” and “responsible”. On this basis it was hoped that the African people would become satisfied and that the Congo would be an idyllic oasis of peace and contentment amidst the storms sweeping over the rest of Africa.

“The creation of an African middle-class,” says Legum,¹ “was a central feature of Belgian policy: an élite of *évolués*, it was believed, would become the ally of the Belgians in maintaining stability and pursuing reforms in a slow and orderly fashion.”

In fact, however, Belgian imperialism and the white settlers in the Congo gave such little scope to the African people that there was only a limited basis for achieving an alliance with an upper stratum of educated or better-off Africans. True, the European settlers invited the African “middle class”, in 1953, to join the settlers’ unions. The *Fédération des Colons* even became the *Fédération des Colons et des Classes Moyennes du Congo*. But this pitiful move was not successful because, says Ruth Slade,² “the settlers were not in fact able to persuade the African middle class . . . that the two groups had enough joint interests to make a common front worth-while”.

It is indeed difficult to imagine why the settlers thought that their petty manoeuvre could succeed, for practically nothing was done to wipe out the hundred-and-one social, economic and political discriminations which held down the people of the Congo, including the petty-bourgeoisie.

“Thus after the war,” says Ruth Slade,³ “it was only with great caution that Africans began to be admitted to higher education and with even greater caution that a few were allowed to depart for Europe. This policy, like the remaining legislative discrimination between Africans and Europeans, the social colour bar, and the exclusion of Africans from higher

¹ Legum, Colin: “The Belgian Congo: Revolt of the *Élite*”, *Africa South*, Vol. 4, No. 1, October-December 1959, p. 105.

² Slade, Ruth: *The Belgian Congo—Some Recent Changes*, Institute of Race Relations, O.U.P., 1960, p. 37.

³ *ibid.*, p. 15.

administrative posts, caused bitterness . . . on the part of the *évolués*."

African medical assistants, with years of training and carrying out responsible work compared their annual salary of 37,500 francs with the 137,000 francs earned by white *agents sanitaires* who had gone through a mere six months of preparatory training in Antwerp. Even the African priests, says Ruth Slade,¹ were "treated as inferiors by the missionaries . . . placed in the hardest and least-rewarding posts . . . [and] kept in subordinate positions . . ."

The collapse of this *évolué* policy was already evident after the January 1959 demonstrations. In fact, Legum goes so far as to describe the January upsurge in the Belgian Congo as a "revolt of the élite". While Legum undoubtedly overstates the role of the intelligentsia within the national struggle and underestimates the decisive role of the workers and peasants, he is certainly correct in throwing light on the failure of the Belgian imperialists to gain any long-standing success with their *évolué* policy.

Clay,² too, has drawn attention to this breakdown of the Belgian policy of "partnership":

"Belgium's attempt to create a 'buffer group' of Africans whose well-filled bellies would be proof against political ambition has clearly failed. It is precisely this group of middle-class Africans which has yielded the leaders of the most impatient nationalist movements."

Belgium's failure to maintain its direct and open rule of the Congo with the aid of a pliant stratum of *évolués* is not lessened by its temporary success in winning over a handful of pitiful puppets, ambitious self-seekers and individuals influenced by tribalism, through whom Belgium and the United States are hoping to direct the reins of government and maintain their grip on the economy. The very desperation of this step and the chaos and instability which are its outcome are themselves proof of imperialism's inability to establish a stable and lasting "partnership" with an African middle class or bourgeoisie.

¹ Slade, Ruth: op. cit., p. 35.

² Clay, George: "Belgium Faces Confusion in Congo", *Observer*, November 8, 1959.

Thus, neither in Central Africa, Kenya, the Union of South Africa, the Congo or Portuguese African territories does it seem likely that the attempts by the imperialists to retain direct colonial rule on the basis of a deal with an emergent capitalist class of Africans will meet with more than temporary success.

“Africa for Africans”?

With the African people so obviously unwilling to co-operate with their European rulers, does it mean that there is no place for the Europeans in Africa? Does the demand that imperialism quit Africa mean that all Europeans will have to leave? Is this what the African people are demanding?

Certainly much play has been made of the cry “Africa for Africans” which has been denounced by those favouring the retention of white domination and privilege as “African chauvinism”. Africans, of course, are no less susceptible to chauvinist ideas than other peoples, and doubtless there are chauvinists amongst them. It should be noted, too, that as long as the African national movements are led by the African bourgeoisie or by a petty-bourgeoisie dominated by bourgeois ideas, there is always the danger of extreme nationalist ideas penetrating the movement for liberation.

At the same time it should be emphasised that the main national liberation movements of the African people, as well as the most responsible and far-sighted African leaders, constantly fight against any chauvinist tendencies and have explained again and again their attitude to this question.

“... The banned Zambia’s cry of ‘Africa for Africans’ was no more than the legitimate cry for *majority rule*,” explains Kenneth Kaunda.¹ “*We had, and still have, no desire to drive away Whites from here. Time and again we have said what we still say now, that those Europeans who are willing to work in peace and harmony under a democratically elected African government are more than welcome here.*” [Own italics.—J.W.]

In a significant message to the Indian Congress in the Transvaal, Sékou Touré has said:

¹ Kaunda, Kenneth: “Rider and Horse in Northern Rhodesia”, *Africa South*, Vol. 3, No. 4, July-September 1959, p. 56.

"Africa, the land of the oppressed, must not become, in the midst of its ardent will for liberation, a place of oppression."¹

In the Congo, the late Patrice Lumumba once emphasised:

"Our movement does not rebel against the white people. We have only one enemy—colonialism—and not the European people."

In reply to the racial oppression of the imperialists, and in warning, too, to his African brothers who might become influenced by chauvinist sentiment, Ruben Um Nyobe, that great leader of the Kamerunian people who was brutally murdered by French troops on September 13, 1958, voiced the true internationalism of the African liberation movement:

"[We] do not confuse the British people with British imperialism which holds people under its sway, nor the French people with the French colonialists who pillage and oppress the people of our country. We must warn our brothers against the dangers involved in a policy of anti-racial racialism. It would be possible, on the pretext of fighting for the liberation of the Black Man, to conduct a policy of hate against the White Man. Racial hatred is incompatible with any idea of progress."²

How noble and generous are the voices of Kenneth Kaunda, Sékou Touré, Patrice Lumumba, Ruben Um Nyobe beside the strident, panic-stricken, hate-filled shrieks of the Tory backwoodsmen, the Welenskys and Verwoerds, the French and Belgian *colons*!

In the Union of South Africa, where there are 3,000,000 Europeans and 10,000,000 Africans, apart from about 2,000,000 Indians and people of mixed racial origin, the principal national organisation, the African National Congress, heads a broad alliance which includes the South African Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Organisation, the South African Congress of Democrats (mainly European), and the South African

¹ Touré, Sékou: *op. cit.*, p. 107.

² Nyobe, Ruben Um: *The Immediate Unification of Kamerun*, 1951, p. 14.

Congress of Trade Unions (itself a multi-racial organisation, but composed mainly of African trade unionists). The policy of the A.N.C. is to strive for universal adult suffrage and the creation of a united, multi-racial democratic South Africa, "embracing all, regardless of colour or race, who pay undivided allegiance to South Africa and mother Africa". This aim of a multi-racial, democratic South Africa is shared by the other organisations in alliance with the A.N.C.

It will be noted that there is a distinct difference between the multi-racialism advocated by the mass organisations in the Union, and the "multi-racialism" of Blundell and Co. In the latter case, it is a guise for the retention of white privilege, economic, social and political. In the former case it is based on universal suffrage or one man one vote (which the Blundells will not accept), and embraces the conception of African leadership—which again is naturally unacceptable to the advocates of "partnership" and "multi-racialism" in the Federation and in Kenya. Moreover, the A.N.C. and its allies, as made clear in the Freedom Charter, do not stop short at *political* democracy and franchise demands; they strive, too, to bring about drastic *economic* changes in the Union so that the ownership and use of the wealth and resources of the country may be brought into conformity with that of a multi-racial, democratic state under African leadership.

Many well-meaning liberals and even some Labour spokesmen often appeal for "real partnership", for co-operation between black and white in Africa. But while making this appeal they fail to take into account the basic colonialist structure of the African territories. What partnership can there be between the immensely rich British, South African and American companies on the Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia and the African miners receiving only £2 a week? What partnership can there be between white settlers in Southern Rhodesia or Kenya who have stolen the best land, and the Africans who have been herded into poverty-stricken Reserves?

"Millionaires and professors," writes Clutton-Brock,¹ "big business men and Commonwealth politicians visit Salisbury from overseas and tour the Federation in a week. They see Kariba Dam, the Copper Belt, the Group Hospital at Limbe

¹ Clutton-Brock, Guy: *Dawn in Nyasaland*, op. cit., pp. 100-1.

and the Pearl Assurance building in Salisbury. In the Balance Sheet they note the extent of capital investment from overseas. Their photos appear in the press taking cocktails at the 'sundowner' given in their honour . . .

Some miles away from their luxury hotel, along unlit potholed dusty roads in serried ranks of little dwellings, or five in a room in a hostel, live the 'partners'. They have surrendered their traditional ways to make possible the 'economic development' and the 'rewards to the investors'. The 'overall picture' of their lives is one of 'extreme poverty' and the majority of their children live in 'acute poverty'."

This is the basic contrast of the conditions of the "partners". First let the European settlers and the foreign monopolies in Africa restore the land and the mines which they stole from the African people and from which they, the Europeans, have, over the years, derived fabulous profits. Let the Europeans give the African people control over their own products and trade, so that they can determine the prices at which they will sell the things they produce, and have an influence, too, over the prices of the goods they import. Above all, let them give the African people complete political freedom so that, as the majority force, they can determine the composition and policy of the governments of the various territories.

If, with that done, Europeans wish to remain in Africa, deprived of their stolen property and shorn of their political and social privileges; if they are prepared to accept the democratic verdict of the majority and live as equals, counting for no less but certainly for no more than the African; and if they are willing to serve the new democratic governments and the people these governments represent, and to place their labour and specialised skills at the disposal of the people, then it is certain that, as Kenneth Kaunda has said, they will be "more than welcome".

Europeans in Africa have written too many shameful pages in the past for them to think they have the right to expect or demand guarantees from the African people. It is up to the Europeans, by the action they take now, and by their rejection of the economic, social and political domination they have exercised for so long, to earn the right to stay in Africa if they so wish; for it is certain that the Africans do not "owe them a living".

§ 4 "IN AGAIN BY THE BACK WINDOW"

With colonialism in Africa in retreat, the first important step is being taken for the complete liberation of the African peoples. But it is as well to appreciate that it is only the first step. *Colonialism is the direct and overall subordination—political, economic, military and cultural—of one country to another, on the basis of state power being in the hands of the dominating foreign power.* For decades most of Africa has been politically administered by Western European powers—by Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium and Portugal. The defeat of German imperialism in the first world war marked the ending of direct German colonial rule in any part of Africa. The two decades following the second world war will see the elimination of practically all European colonial rule throughout the continent and the establishment of state power and governmental rule in the hands of the indigenous people. But colonial rule is only *one* of the forms through which imperialism carries through its exploitation of underdeveloped countries; and *it is possible for colonial administrations to be replaced while imperialism maintains its economic dominance and even its political influence.* Politically speaking, the colonial form of rule is the best form for the big Western monopolies to exploit their "economic territory" as Lenin termed those areas of the world divided up by the big monopolies.

"Colonial possession," wrote Lenin,¹ "alone gives complete guarantee of success to the monopolies against all the risks of the struggle with competitors . . . The necessity of exporting capital also gives an impetus to the conquest of colonies, for in the colonial market it is easier to eliminate competition, to make sure of orders, to strengthen the necessary 'connections', etc., by monopolist methods (and sometimes it is the only possible way)."

To ensure uninterrupted exploitation of their possessions in Africa, the imperialist powers clamped down their various systems of arbitrary rule which, though they differed in method, were similar in their main purpose—to allow the monopolies

¹ Lenin, V. I.: *Imperialism—The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1948 edition, pp. 100-3.

complete control over land, labour, resources and the market. It is the colonial form of foreign despotic rule which is now being challenged—although it is basically imperialist exploitation which has given rise to the continent-wide revolt for freedom.

Faced with the undying determination of the African peoples to rule themselves, to establish their own sovereign states, with their own African governments, their own national flags and anthems, their own cultural forms of expression, their own parliamentary and state forms and national armed forces, and their own African-owned economy, imperialism is everywhere being compelled to make political concessions. But in doing this, it hopes and endeavours to maintain its *political* influence by methods other than those of direct colonial rule; and, more important still, it is continuing, and even striving to extend, its *economic* grip over those countries which are winning their political independence.

Lenin pointed out that "finance capital is such a great, it may be said, such a decisive force in all economic and international relations, that it is capable of subordinating to itself, and actually does subordinate to itself, even states enjoying complete political independence".¹

Since Lenin wrote those words a third of mankind has embraced socialism, and the socialist sector of the world is rapidly overtaking the capitalist sector in industrial strength. This cannot but have an important bearing on the situation of countries winning political independence, and make it easier for them to escape subordination by more powerful imperialist states. Nevertheless, these latter states have not abandoned their aim of controlling other peoples and their economies.

This subordination, of course, is never absolute, nor permanent, and in fact a state such as Liberia, which has been very much subordinated to imperialism in the past, is beginning to assert its national sovereignty and to act a little more independently, although its economy remains largely dominated by United States capital which still weighs heavily on its policies.

While attempting to reach a new accommodation with the rising African capitalist class, imperialism has not entirely abandoned its former feudal allies, and indeed, in Ghana and Nigeria, for example, or in the Congo, Kenya, and the Cameroons, it tries to utilise feudal chiefs or tribal divisions to disrupt and

¹ Lenin: *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

weaken the national movement and to exert pressure on the new governments.

At the same time it places great reliance on its colonial officials who, even after political independence has been won, remain behind as "advisers" and civil servants in the new independent states. Such officials, who are soon joined by numerous technical advisers of all kinds (there are said to be twice as many Europeans in Ghana today as there were *before* independence), influence all aspects of government policy. They are to be found in the armed forces, the police and the judiciary, in newspapers, radio and education, and in the economic departments of the new governments. Much of their influence is aimed at inducing the new states into the Western bloc, anti-communism being one of the forms employed for this purpose. Military alliances or forms of military assistance, including the training of African officers at Sandhurst or St. Cyr, also play their part.

Imperialist War Plans

Militarily, Africa is regarded as a key area by the imperialist powers. A former French chief of general staff, Georges Revers, has stated:

"Africa is the logical base for the defence of Europe in a rocket war. Only the Sahara is far enough away from the Russian rockets to be useful as a strategic complement of Europe. Modern weapons make Eurafrika a necessity."¹

Similarly, a former brigadier-general in the Nazi army, A. L. Ratdiffe, has written:

"The American airfields in Morocco, Libya and on the coast of the Persian Gulf are to serve as jumping-off and invasion bases for the strategical air forces in their operations against South Russia in the event of a general war . . ."²

This inveterate militarist goes on to explain that it is not only against the Soviet Union, nor merely "in the event of a general war" that Western military bases in Africa are to be utilised.

¹ Speech at the 7th Congress of the European Centre of Documentation and Information at the Escorial near Madrid. Reported in *Rheinischer Merkur*, Cologne, July 18, 1958.

² *Wehrkunde*, Munich, No. 6, 1957. (This is the official journal of the War Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany.)

They are also intended as bases of imperialist intervention against the African people's national independence movements.

“... Military bases provide the military foundations for political intervention in times of peace; they nearly always function as centres of prestige, power and cultural importance of their owners, thus enabling the exertion of pressure and the establishment and enforcement of interests in the surrounding regions—even without the direct use of military force.”

A French military journal, arguing that Africa is “absolutely essential in the strategy of European war”, emphasises that “NATO has certain interests in the maintenance of the African continent under the control of the free world . . . It exercises a decisive function as a base for air operations, as a rocket-launching site, a base for naval operations, an arsenal, etc.”¹

After that it is not surprising to find that NATO has at least seventeen air bases in Africa—six in Morocco, four in Libya, two in Kenya, two in Tanganyika, one in Ethiopia, one in Uganda and one in Liberia—as well as eight naval bases (two in Morocco, and one each in Algeria, Tunisia, Kenya, Tanganyika, the Congo, and the Union of South Africa). In addition to these official NATO bases, the Western powers have numerous other bases and military establishments in Africa.

According to press reports,² the British Government has arranged for H-bomb bases to be established in East Africa; and NATO is to set up a military base at Melfort, some twenty miles from Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, which will accommodate jet-fighters and bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons.³ Dakar, capital of Senegal, has been turned into an important military base by the United States, according to a statement of Tidiane Baidy Ly, Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee of West Africa.

In other African states of the French Community France is doing her best to retain her troops and bases, even imposing special agreements for that purpose on the states that have recently gained political independence. In the Congo, with the connivance of other NATO powers, Belgium is striving to cling

¹ *Revue Militaire Générale*, November 1959.

² *Daily Express*, October 24, 1960.

³ *Die Vaderland* (Johannesburg), August 6, 1960.

to her two main military bases in Katanga. In Angola and Mozambique, the Portuguese authorities have reinforced their military and air establishments.

The British Government, too, has taken steps to maintain its military position in Africa. In this respect, there is little sign of "the wind of change". The recent agreement with Sierra Leone, for example, under which political independence was granted this year, ties the country specifically to a military agreement, providing for the maintenance of a British military base. In the case of Nigeria, military co-operation and the provision of mutual staging facilities for the two countries were made conditions for independence. (No one seriously expects Nigeria to press for the use of such staging facilities in Britain under this "mutual" agreement!) The role of British officers in the Ghana army, as revealed in the crisis in the Congo, shows the dangers which are attendant on any African state maintaining even the most limited links with Western militarism.

The imperialist powers, in order to strengthen their grip on Africa and co-ordinate their efforts in this continent, have mooted the idea of a South Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or SATO, as an African counterpart to NATO, SEATO and CENTO. This would link the colonial possessions of Britain, France, Belgium and Portugal, and establish an imperialist military bloc from the Mediterranean to the Cape. One of the most fervent supporters of this plan is the Verwoerd Government of the Union of South Africa.

The African people, however, are not tamely accepting these blatant attempts to use African soil, resources and manpower to bolster up imperialist power and support its war preparations. On the contrary, opposition to involvement in imperialist war and to foreign military bases is mounting rapidly. Such opposition has already forced France to some withdrawals in Tunisia and Morocco, and has compelled the United States to evacuate part of its air force from its key base at Wheelus Field in Libya. In Zanzibar, the people's opposition to the setting up of United States rocket bases under the "Mercury" and "Courier" programmes has been so great that the Americans have been compelled to abandon the "Courier" station and will probably be compelled to abandon the "Mercury", too. The President of Mali, Modibo Keita, has officially demanded that France withdraw its troops and military bases from Mali; in Nigeria

there have been spirited demonstrations in the capital, Lagos, against the Defence Pact; while in Sierra Leone mounting opposition to the military agreement with Britain has found reflection in the capital, Freetown, in electoral victories for the All People's Congress, which has made this opposition a major point in its policy. In Kenya the withdrawal of the British base is a major demand of the Kenya Africa National Union. The Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) has, more than once, declared its opposition to imperialist military bases in any part of east or central Africa. The declared policy of the All-African People's Conference is also one of opposition to foreign bases.

Among other manifestations of Africa's determination not to be involved in imperialism's war plans is the continent-wide demonstrations against France's nuclear-bomb tests in the Sahara.

Keeping Africa "With the West"

But not all is the loud noise of military brass. Imperialism is too old a hand to limit its activities to the most obvious ones. Along with the rocket bases and the troops march the representatives of Western "culture". Through their agency, attempts are made to woo the African national movements and the independent states, to influence their outlook, in short, to "Westernise" them. The British Commonwealth connection, or the French Community—apart from their financial and economic aspects—are played up and utilised to influence both governments and people. French governments, in particular, have always made great use of cultural forms of domination and have sought to create on the part of educated Africans a "loyalty to France" through exploiting their natural admiration for the achievements of French culture.

Considerable efforts are made, too, to persuade the new governments and the African people as a whole that they cannot build up their new states and economies without Western aid, Western know-how, and Western finance; and it must be admitted that this psychological propaganda is not without its effect. Both British and French imperialism, in fact, have scored some initial successes in this respect; and American and West German imperialism are following fast in their tracks.

Something of the process whereby Britain and France, each

in its own manner, try to maintain their hold on countries to which they have had to concede political independence, has been described by *Le Monde's* African Correspondent. Each of the two powers, he writes, "attempts, in its own interests, to regroup the African units around itself. Great Britain, faithful to its fifteen year old policy of 'leaving in order to stay', tries to establish African Federations; while France, which has always rejected indirect rule and still possesses a vague nostalgia for assimilation, dreams of a federal republic 'from the Rhine to the Congo' . . ." ¹

Decraene, evidently a little apprehensive of "perfidious Albion", even goes so far as to allege that the British Government, "recognising the intensity and potential of Pan-Africanism" has "joined—and so strengthened the current". He possibly over-simplifies matters in explaining British and French policy towards West Africa—but on one point he is absolutely correct, and that is his insistence that both imperialisms are busily seeking, in the new circumstances of Africa in the 1960's, fresh ways to safeguard their economic interests in West Africa and to retain as much of their political influence as they can, short of direct rule, which is no longer possible.

This new technique of imperialism—of making political concessions and abandoning the open colonial forms of imperialist rule while finding new methods to influence government policy and continuing economic exploitation—has been described by Ernest Ouandie, Vice-President of the Union of the People of the Cameroons (U.P.C.), as a process of "going out by the front door, and creeping in again by the back window".

This certainly seems an apt description of the situation in the Cameroun Republic which, since independence was granted, has seen the arrival of additional contingents of French troops. That French troops and military bases are maintained here is not surprising since, according to Legum,² "the Government to whom the French are transferring power comprises the conservative elements, many of whom vigorously opposed independence in the past". Legum, in referring to "the French . . . *having secured a government* with which they believe they can maintain good relations" [own italics—J.W.], clearly reveals

¹ Decraene, Philippe: "West African Unity", *Africa South*, Vol. 4, No. 2, January-March 1960, p. 98.

² Legum, Colin: *Observer*, December 13, 1959.

that French influence has not been overthrown in the Cameroun Republic—it has merely crept in again by the back window.

To some extent, one could say the same of Somalia, the Italian trusteeship which gained its political independence in July 1960. It is said that the Italians themselves “decided . . . to pick the most likely man to dominate the country [Somalia], and give him their backing. They chose Abdullahi Issa, leader of the Somali Youth League and present Premier of “Somalia.”¹ Anthony Mann adds that the Italians have “arranged with Abdullahi for a number of laws that will give a certain protection to remaining Italian interests in Somalia”. The same point has been stressed by Ali Abdullah, a leader of the Somali people from French Somaliland, who has emphasised that Italy is trying to maintain its political influence in Somalia, as well as retain its economic interests. Most of the factories, he has stated, are owned by Italians, and so is a major part of the agricultural land, including fertile land along the Giuba and other rivers. The Sinclair Company and other United States oil companies are at present actively prospecting for oil in Somalia. Thus, despite its attainment of political independence, Somalia will remain subject to powerful imperialist influences.²

Ghana has been independent for four years, and 97 per cent of its key civil service posts are now held by Ghanaians. Yet many British and other foreign advisers and experts still hold important posts in the country's political and economic institutions. Thus the Ghana Army Chief of Defence Staff is Major-General H. T. Alexander, and the Naval Chief of Staff of the Ghana Navy is Commander A. G. Forman, R.N.rtd. A number of other British officers have also been seconded to the Ghana army.

British officials are also active in the Ghana police force, whose Assistant Commissioner is Mr. Joseph McCabe. Even the women's branch of the Ghana police force is superintended by a British woman, Miss I. M. Parker. An Englishman, Professor L. C. B. Gower, is responsible for preparing revisions to company law in Ghana, one of his tasks being to make it suitable not only for Ghana's needs but also to encourage foreign investment; and another United Kingdom citizen, Mr. Bruce MacTavish,

¹Mann, Anthony: “Trouble Brewing in the Horn of Africa”, *Daily Telegraph*, December 28, 1959.

² Somalia has since been merged with former British Somaliland to form the Somali Republic.

formerly of the Companies Department of the United Kingdom Board of Trade, has been seconded to Ghana to help establish administrative machinery for supervising the activities of private companies. The Deputy Governor of the Bank of Ghana is Mr. D. F. Stone, and the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance is Mr. H. Millar Craig. The head of the economic division of the Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture is an Australian, Dr. T. H. Strong. Mr. James Millar, a former employee of the British Foreign Office, and later a member of the B.B.C., is now Director of Radio Ghana. Mr. Peter Canham, a former District Commissioner in Ashanti, and later Secretary to the Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, is now Headmaster of the important Oduapemman School. Miss Eve Evans is Director of Library Services, Mr. G. I. Smith is Provost of the University College of Ghana, and Mr. F. E. B. Clark is Director of Posts and Telecommunications.

And so one could continue. There is hardly a single field of important political, social, cultural or economic activity in Ghana in which some non-African, and usually British, personnel is not to be found.

The same sort of picture is to be seen in many other newly established African states. Even as late as August 1960, virtually on the eve of Nigeria's independence, it was reported¹ that out of 658 senior posts in Nigeria's Federal Public Service only 95 were held by Nigerians as against 425 by overseas officers, mainly European. Clearly, Nigerianisation of the state apparatus in Nigeria remains a major task for the people of that country.

No one would question the right of a state to employ the technical services of qualified personnel from another state, nor is there, in principle, anything against such a practice. But many Africans point out that the majority of these European experts and advisers, irrespective of their merits or wishes or sincerity, are former employees, in one sphere or another, of imperialist governments and as such will, to put it at its very lowest, have a natural, built-in tendency to hold the same views and pursue the same policies as those of their previous employer.

Ghana's experience shows that to weed out the last imperialist traces from the State machine requires the utmost vigilance and persistent struggle.

¹ *The Times*, August 6, 1960.

Supplementing the "Traditional Diplomatic Way"

Active as may be the governments of Britain, France and other older colonial powers in Africa, they are more than matched by the efforts of the United States which is clearly determined to take over the mantle of the older imperialisms and to rule Africa for herself. Through military bases, economic penetration, political pressure and the large-scale use of propaganda, the United States is energetically pushing itself into every single African territory, whether independent or not. Everywhere one finds increasing numbers of Americans conducting lengthy studies, acting as technicians and advisers, participating in visiting delegations to Africa, opening up businesses and establishing contacts. The United States is particularly active in the field of propaganda, setting up luxurious information centres, pouring out streams of publications, giving free film shows, providing duplicating machines, film-projectors and loudspeaker vans, and granting well-paid scholarships to selected Africans whom it intends to convert to the "American way of life" and thus transform into willing allies of the State Department.

Taking advantage of the fact that it is not a direct colonial ruler of any African territory, United States imperialism tries to make great play of being "anti-colonial", hoping in this way to be able to push aside the old-established colonial powers, especially Britain and France, and to secure a strong influence in the former possessions of these powers. There are few Africans, however, who believe that the motives of Wall Street and Washington are disinterested and altruistic. In fact, they are aware that American newspapers and politicians themselves daily and openly expose the base economic and political motives which arouse the United States' interest in Africa.

A key role in America's penetration into Africa is played by the American trade unions. It will be recalled that early in 1957, following his short tour of Africa, Richard Nixon, former U.S. Vice-President, made a report to President Eisenhower in which he stressed the important part which American trade unions could play in Africa to further U.S. State Department policy by influencing African trade unions. Key political and economic figures in the United States recognise the prominent position occupied by the African trade unions in the struggle for national independence, and appreciate, moreover, that

American companies' ability to make big profits from their investments in Africa, especially in mining, depends to a considerable degree on their continuing to pay starvation wages. Militant African trade unions, led by men who are both staunch anti-imperialists as well as zealous defenders of the class interests of their members, are an obvious obstacle to America's neo-colonialist aims. Therefore the winning of trade union leaders to the side of America has become a cardinal point in United States policy.

Thus Mr. Joseph C. Satterthwaite, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, has observed:¹

“Much has been said about the dominant role of labour in African independence movements and the basic importance of mature and responsible labour unions in the development of stable regimes. It becomes apparent that training for labour leadership should have a high priority in programmes for African development. A number of trade union leaders and government officials concerned with labour affairs have been brought to the United States . . . by the Department of State to study practices here . . .”

A special study on “Labour’s Role in Newly Developing Countries” in the journal *Foreign Affairs* carries this idea still farther.²

“The day has long since gone,” it states, “when relations with other countries can be effectively carried on solely in the traditional ‘diplomatic’ way. The power of Africa and Asia is often not in the hands of government officials, but rather in the hands of relatively obscure native leaders who first appear on the national scene as leaders of a workers’ organisation.”

This study then proceeds to enumerate the ways in which American unions can supplement “the traditional ‘diplomatic’ way” of influencing other governments, mentioning in particular the bringing of hundreds of trade unionists every year for three, six or nine months’ periods, to study in the United States; the

¹ Statement at a Trade Union Press Conference, March 20, 1959. Quoted in the *Department of State Bulletin*, April 13, 1959.

² *Foreign Affairs*, July 1959, p. 66.

sending abroad of "top American union leaders" (ordinary rank-and-file members apparently cannot be relied upon to understand or carry out State Department policy); the use of America's forty-eight labour attachés throughout the world, and the seconding of trade union leaders to serve the U.S. government directly as labour attachés; and the use of "other service officers who are engaged in reporting the activities of workers' organisations and establishing useful contacts with them".

There is little need to enter here into any detail concerning how this policy is put into practice. Suffice it to mention the 1959 Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions at Brussels, where a sharp conflict took place between the representatives of the British Trades Union Congress and those of the American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations, notably Mr. Meany, precisely over the question of the policy to be pursued towards African trade unions. Although the argument took the superficial form of a dispute as to what should be the role of trade unions in Africa, basically it was a conflict between the U.S. State Department and the British Colonial Office, fought out through the proxy of the two national trade union centres. Right-wing leaders of the British Trades Union Congress who, for years, together with the post-war apparatus of trade union and labour advisers, have performed on behalf of the Colonial Office precisely the same functions as are being carried out today by the American union leaders on behalf of the U.S. State Department, are naturally reluctant to allow the American unions to intrude into what the T.U.C. regards as a British sphere of influence.

By such methods as these United States imperialism hopes to replace the older colony-owning powers and, behind its spurious flag of "anti-colonialism", actually become the dominant imperialist influence in Africa.

Western Germany Tries Her Hand

Another contender for the mantle of the present colony-owning powers is the West German Federal Republic, whose big monopolies have never reconciled themselves to the loss of "their economic territory" in Africa which was taken from them after their defeat in the first world war. Part of their effort in the second world war was to regain this lost empire; but those plans, too, came to nought. Now, however, with Britain, France,

Belgium and Italy all being compelled to make political concessions in Africa, the rulers of Western Germany are hoping, by the modern methods of "neo-colonialism", to regain their foothold.

It is not without interest, in this connection, that the Federal Chancellor, Dr. Konrad Adenauer, was a strong advocate of German empire-building even before the second world war. Thus, in 1927, he declared:

"The German Reich must by all means strive for the acquisition of colonies . . . the ultimate aim of obtaining colonies of our own should never be lost sight of."¹

To acquire such colonies openly is no longer possible. Hence, the setting up of a number of "Institutes" and "Associations" through which it is hoped to influence events in Africa and facilitate the penetration of West German capital. The former Nazi Minister of Finance, the banker Hjalmar Schacht, outlined this tactic some time ago when he argued that to "re-establish the German colonial empire in a new form" economic activity would have to be buttressed by "cultural and political institutions".²

Such institutions include "Institutes of Culture", ostensibly centres for training local specialists, in various countries of Africa and Asia; the Colonial School at Witzenhausen (first formed in 1898 to serve German imperialist aims of expansion, and later taken over by Hitler), re-established in 1957 as the German Institute of Tropical and Sub-Tropical Agriculture; the Institute of Foreign Relations; the Goethe Institute for the Promotion of German Language Abroad; and the Association for German Culture Abroad. More openly chauvinist organisations which aim to re-establish German imperialist interests in Africa are the Association of East Africans (whose membership is German), and the Association of Former Members of the German "Afrika Korps".

By the use of such "cultural" and political organisations the rulers of Western Germany are hoping to soften up the newly independent African territories and thus open the way to investments and profits.

¹ *Europäische Gespräche, Hamburger Monatshefte für Auswärtige Politik*, No. 12, December 1927, p. 611.

² *La Tribune des Nations*. Quoted from *Aussenhandel*, No. 7, 1955, Berlin.

The drive of United States and West German monopolies to secure a grip on the rich resources of Africa, together with the attempt by the older imperialist powers to retain and even extend their present economic control, is a threat to the African peoples and demonstrates once again that the winning of political concessions, even of political independence, is but the first step towards complete liberation. The imperialist enemy does not lightly give up. Though forced on the retreat, he is desperately seeking to deprive the African people of the full fruits of their struggle for independence and to bring about a new division of African territory and African resources.

Though in conflict with one another in the struggle for the largest share of Africa's wealth, the imperialist powers are united in their resolve to prevent the people of Africa securing genuine and complete liberation from imperialist exploitation. Thus it is that, alongside their manoeuvring for positions, the Western powers act in unison time and again when colonial matters are discussed in the United Nations. Thus it is, too, that despite their differences, the imperialist powers are ranged side by side in the anti-colonial NATO, SEATO and CENTO military pacts. And thus it is that increasingly there is taking place in Africa an interlocking of big Western monopolies, with the added participation of state capital from these powers.

This new phenomenon of what may be termed "collective colonialism", often carried on behind the mask of United Nations agencies, is a new and serious menace to the African people. At the same time it is a reflection of the crisis of colonialism and of the inability of any colonial power to continue, by its own resources alone and in its own direct name, to hold on to its colonial possessions. The logical outcome of this new "Unholy Alliance" of the Western powers will be the further strengthening of the unity of the African people and their drawing closer to their real allies in Asia, Latin America and the socialist world.

The Lessons of the Congo

No events in Africa's modern history have been more significant than those which have shaken the Congo since the middle of 1960. Here has been a supreme testing ground of the battle for Africa's liberation. Congo is the continent's lynch-pin, Africa's great mineral heart and politico-strategic gateway. Uranium, cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, zinc, manganese, cadmium,

columbium and tantalum lie buried in its soil in measureless quantities. To the north-east of this huge, rich territory lies Sudan and the route to Egypt; to the north and the north-west, the weak young states of the French Community; to the south-west, the smouldering furnace of Angola; east, the unresolved problems of Uganda and Tanganyika, and beyond Kenya, on the edge of a new crisis; southwards, the way is open to the rich Copper Belt of Northern Rhodesia and down, through Southern Rhodesia, to the final bastion of white domination, the Union of South Africa.

One has only to look at the map to see how the Congo is, indeed, the very heart of Africa. Genuine independence for the Congo would mean more than the loss of the immense mineral wealth owned by Belgian, American, British, French and West German monopolies; more than the West's deprivation of vital strategic raw materials—uranium and cobalt. Politically it would open the way to the liberation from colonialism of all the remaining territories of Africa which are yet to win their independence. It is, in fact, precisely in those territories lying east and south of the Congo that some of Africa's greatest battles are yet to come.

It is understandable, therefore, that it has been the Congo which has witnessed the first major push and trial of the new imperialist method of neo-colonialism. It was the intention of the United States, Belgium and other interested Western powers that the Congo was to be granted formal independence while imperialist advisers remained the real "power behind the throne" and thus ensured that the exploitation of the Congo's riches and manpower by Western monopolies continued undisturbed.

On the very day of the declaration of the Congo's independence, that well-known supporter of colonialism, Robert C. Ruark, wrote:

"The greatest hope of the moneyed interests was that independence would bring such chaos that a new kind of economic colonialism might be imposed, with the white man continuing to run things, but under a black figurehead, whose material wants might easily be appeased in wine, women and flashy cars, plus a Swiss bank account."¹

¹ *New York World Telegram and Sun*, June 30, 1960.

And when this game failed, when the explosion took place, when it became clear that the patriot, Patrice Lumumba and his colleagues were not prepared to sell their souls for "wine, women and flashy cars, plus a Swiss bank account", and when the Congolese people themselves showed that they would resist this attempt of the imperialists to continue to suppress and exploit the Congo behind the back of a formal independence, then the neo-colonialist onslaught became still more insistent. Pour in the Belgian paratroops. Flood the country with well-financed agents, their pockets stuffed with millions of dollars, ready to buy whom they could—puppet generals, ambitious politicians, petty dictators, tribal chiefs, even whole armies of soldiers. Tear the country to pieces—Katanga here, a pawn of Union Minière; Kasai there, a pawn of Forminière. Kasai, the diamond centre, with its new mockery of a name, the "Mining State", blatantly based on its diamond wealth and on no ethnical, historical or political justification. But Katanga was to be the key, rich Katanga, which contributes sixty per cent of the Congo's revenue. This was to be torn away from the legal central government and, if necessary and possible, linked with Northern Rhodesia's Copper Belt to make one huge mineral complex—all with the blessing of Sir Roy Welensky.

To do all this openly was not easy for the imperialists. Hence their readiness to hide behind the blue flag of the United Nations—and even to use the U.N. apparatus as the main weapon for their deadly operation.

And when all this proved too little, the patriotic leaders were murdered. Lumumba was bought by Tshombe from Kasavubu and Mobutu for a mere £40,000. Others were sold to Kalonji. French fascists trained in war combat against Algerian women and children, German Nazi foreign legionaries, veterans of the war in Viet Nam, Belgian and South African mercenaries, British soldiers-of-fortune—all rushed to place themselves at the disposal of the hangman. A flood of Belgian and American arms poured in. French jet military aircraft were flown in by a United States transport company. An unholy alliance of the Western powers, with the aid of fascist riff-raff from Europe, of the most extreme racialists and enemies of Africa, was thrown against defiant Congo—and all despite the clear instructions of the United Nations Security Council resolution of July 14, 1960.

History will find it hard to understand how the United Nations

—called in, according to its July 1960 resolution, to assist the central government of the Congo, headed by Lumumba, to secure the withdrawal of Belgian forces and to protect the Congo's sovereignty and integrity—paved the way to the overthrow of that government, the dissolution of the parliament which had elected it, the murder of its prime minister by a Belgian officer (one of those whom the U.N. was to have expelled from the Congo), and the tearing apart of the living body of the Congo Republic. The United Nations Security Council resolution of July 14, 1960, was absolutely clear:

“Considering the request for military assistance addressed to the Secretary-General by the President and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo:

1. CALLS UPON the Government of Belgium to withdraw their troops from the territory of the Republic of the Congo;
2. DECIDES to authorise the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, to provide the Government with such military assistance, as may be necessary, until, through the efforts of the Congolese Government with the technical assistance of the United Nations, the national security forces may be able, in the opinion of the Government, to meet fully their tasks;
3. REQUESTS the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council as appropriate.”

Nothing could be more explicit. And yet the idea has been spread far and wide, including amongst opponents of colonialism, that the United Nations was called in “to restore law and order”. These words never appeared in the July 1960 resolution, which did not deal with internal Congolese matters but with the aggression by the Belgians and the assistance to be given to the Congolese Government to overcome this attack. “To restore law and order” has always been the slogan used by reaction to suppress the people. It was in the name of “restoring law and order” that Thiers slaughtered the Communards. It was to “restore law and order” that Leibknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and countless others were murdered by Hitler's forerunners. It was “to restore law and order” that Field-Marshal Mannerheim, the butcher of the north, killed, as *The Times* admitted, tens of

thousands of Finnish workers. Chiang Kai-shek, Franco, Mussolini, Hitler, every dictator in history has always hidden his mass repressions behind the slogan of "law and order". And the Congo has been no exception. The fact that the July 14, 1960, resolution was never published in the Western press shows that the imperialists never had any intention of carrying it out. In fact, they did just the opposite. Instead of assisting the legal central government which had called it in, the United Nations secured the downfall of that government and the hoisting into office in Katanga, Kasai and Léopoldville of the Belgian-backed, American-financed puppets, Tshombe, Kalonji, Kasavubu and Mobutu. When it was a question of stopping Mobutu closing down parliament or saving the lives of Lumumba and his colleagues, the U.N. claimed that it had no authority to intervene. Yet it did not hesitate to use blatant intervention when it was a question of preventing the Congolese premier using his own radio to broadcast to his people. It acted promptly to deny the Lumumba government access to its airfields—but allowed those same airfields to be used by the Belgians and Tshombe to drag the beaten, bloodied body of Lumumba from Léopoldville to Katanga and death.

But there is no space or intention here to narrate all the sordid detail of the betrayal of the Congo. The big question for Africa and the world is *why* did this happen? Why was it possible for this terrible series of events to take place?

First and foremost, the responsibility rests with the Western powers. Not Belgium alone (which is an all-too-easy Aunt Sally for those hesitant to point their finger at the ultimate criminal), but above all the United States which, through its dollars, military equipment and dominating political and diplomatic positions in the Western world, has been able to call the tune. No one really believes that little Belgium could have defied the might and economic power of the United States, Britain, France, Western Germany and the other NATO powers. Only an American-backed Western alliance could have produced the present disaster in the Congo. Even President Kennedy's brother, the new American Attorney-General, has referred to Kasavubu as "a tool of the American Central Agency".

And along with America, with its huge financial stakes in Katanga, was French imperialism, plotting from its hideout across the river at Brazzaville, hoping to pull off a deal through

its puppet Abbé Youlou, ready to send in French military aircraft, to loan French officers boasting: "You can call me a fascist." The German Federal Republic was eager, too, rushing to make its airfields available, looking for a toe-hold in the Congo. And what of Britain? The big British monopoly Tanganyika Concessions, with its shares in Union Minière, was not indifferent as to which way the "wind of change" blew. Not only has "Tanks" shares in Union Minière. The Belgians have shares in "Tanks". And the Americans have shares in both. British interests in Rhodesia are interested too. And the British shareholders in the Benguela railway, with its links from Katanga to Angola, and to the Copper Belt and down to Wankie coal mines. These, too, had their eyes on the situation. Recruitment offices for Tshombe were set up in numerous European capitals. Recruitment agents went to work, too, in Salisbury, Johannesburg, and, until forced out by public protest, in Nairobi.

In other words, the combined forces of the imperialist powers were thrown against the Congo.

This, then, is the first and prime reason for the disaster in the Congo. But secondly, there was the role of the United Nations. There are many people and states, including some in Africa, who regard the U.N. as an impartial, neutral, above-conflict adjudicator, as a referee, the voice and conscience of the world, a protector of the weak and oppressed, a dispenser of justice. This idealist conception of the U.N. is divorced from reality, from the actual world in which we live. The United Nations, as a body, represents the imperialist states, other smaller capitalist countries, the newly independent states of Asia and Africa, the countries of Latin America, and the people of the socialist camp (but still excluding China). In its deliberations the United Nations is by no means united. It represents a real world, and mirrors the conflicts of that world. Each vital policy decision therefore becomes a battle of contending interests, between those who stand for peace and genuine independence for nations, and those who prepare for war and regard underdeveloped areas of the world as sources of profit and as strategic bases.

But even when, after discussion and concession, some agreement is reached on paper, there still remains the question of carrying out the decision. And this is where the second major problem really lies. For even when the U.N. Security Council adopts such a correct and progressive resolution as the resolution of July 14,

1960, the machinery for implementing it, though it is often referred to as "an international civil servant", is not controlled by the United Nations but by only one side of this body. The machinery of the U.N., the U.N. "state apparatus" as it were, is mainly in the hands of the Western powers, and their supporters. Just consider these facts. Of 28 deputies to the Secretary-General, 17 are from the United States or its allies, 10 from neutral or former colonial countries, 2 from the socialist countries. Out of 34 directors, 28 are from the first-named group, 5 from the second, and 1 from the third. Since 1955, some 2,000 technical experts from the United States and its allies have been sent to various countries by the U.N.; none have been sent from Africa, and only 40 from the socialist countries. And for the U.N. Congo operation, 45 military staff officers from the United States and its allies, none from the socialist countries; 546 representatives in police and liaison units in the Congo from the Western powers, 24 from Africa, and none from the socialist countries; 220 non-military staff from the Western powers, none from the socialist countries. So much for the oft-vaunted impartiality of the U.N. apparatus.

The U.N. Secretariat and its bodies are so overloaded with Western representatives, particularly susceptible to pressure from the United States as the most influential power, that it is inevitable that this U.N. "state apparatus" should be neither equipped in personnel nor politically disposed to carry through any just resolutions of the United Nations, but would constantly seek to stall on them, or to ignore them completely and do the opposite to what the resolutions demand.

Thus it was that the U.N. apparatus was in the hands of the enemies of the Congolese people—and this made possible the setting at nought of the resolution of July 14, 1960.

But is that all? Can one say that it was the fault of the imperialists and the U.N. apparatus, and leave it at that?

Not at all. For the question still remains, how was it possible for the imperialists to inflict such terrible damage on the Congolese people after the declaration of independence on June 30? How was it possible for the imperialists to hide behind the U.N. apparatus in the Congo in order to carry out its nefarious schemes, to overthrow the legal government, install puppets, suppress parliament, and tear away Katanga and Kasai? Remember, the legal Congolese Government was a coalition of

parties backed by the majority of the Congolese people. It was supported by the entire socialist camp of a thousand million people. It had the sympathy and backing of peoples and governments in Africa and Asia.

Why, then, did the Congo suffer such severe set-backs?

First, the Congolese people were not united. A divided people is always at the mercy of a strong, predatory power—and an experienced, cunning and ruthless enemy such as imperialism is well able to make use of every fissure, to expand every little rent in the fabric of national upsurge, to probe ever deeper, to widen the divisions, intimidate here, bribe there, play on individual ambitions, make use of backward-looking tribal affiliations, introduce a reign of terror when necessary and physically remove the most consistent leaders and patriots. The united front of the imperialists (for, notwithstanding their own differences, they were united against the genuine independence for the Congo) should have been met by the united front of the entire Congolese people. In contrast to other African countries, the Congolese political parties were comparatively new. No time had been available in which to build up a powerful, united national front—and in 1960 the Congolese people went to the polls to vote for one of a score of parties. Some degree of unity was achieved through the formation, under Lumumba, of the legal government, which was a coalition of several parties. But it all took place very quickly, before the unity could be cemented by a real national front below.

There is no doubt, too, that the absence of long-standing, experienced trade unions, embracing workers irrespective of tribal affiliation and united on a class basis, weakened the national front. Here, too, in contrast to a number of other African territories, the workers had had little time to build trade unions. Thus there was no experienced, solid working-class organisation to help provide a firm basis for the national front. And the peasants, of course, were not at all organised. Under these conditions, with a shaky state apparatus still largely in Belgian hands, it was extremely difficult to mobilise the mass resistance of the whole people to imperialist intervention, to resort to the *levée en masse*, to rely on the armed workers and peasants as a force which would remain loyal and united behind the central government, and vigilant against every move of deception and treachery. Time, once again, was not in favour of the Congolese

people. They had hardly run up the new national flag before the imperialist typhoon was upon them.

Added to the disunity of the Congolese people and parties, there was the disunity of the African states themselves. Disunity not merely between the "Casablanca" states and the "Brazzaville" states—but a partial lack of cohesion, of resolution even, partly explained by the varying degrees of reliance placed by the different African governments on the U.N. operation in the Congo. This arose because some African states and leaders have maintained a blind faith in the U.N.—not in the real, existing U.N. of Hammarskjöld, the U.N. controlled by NATO and by the United States, but an entirely imagined U.N., an impartial referee who would safeguard the Congo's independence, drive out the imperialists and uphold the Congo's sovereignty and liberty. Thus it was that as each successive deterioration in the situation took place, these African states threatened to take drastic measures, to withdraw their troops from the U.N. command, to place them at the disposal of the legal government headed by Lumumba, to set up their own African command to rescue the Congolese people from disaster. But no unified, resolute steps along these lines were ever taken.

Why was this so? Why was it that the Congo was strangled not only by imperialist finance, imperialist representatives and imperialist puppets but also by honest African troops from independent African states? The failure of the African states to save the Congo from disaster and to save Lumumba and his colleagues stems, ironically enough, largely from their desire to "keep the cold war out of Africa". This just desire of the African people to retain their continent as a zone of peace and not be drawn into imperialist war plans and military entanglements has been interpreted by some African national leaders as a necessity to keep the Soviet Union out of Africa. But the U.N., as it stands at present, controlled by the Western powers, is itself an instrument of the cold war, even of hot war. The African states were reluctant to rely on assistance from socialist countries, they hesitated to act resolutely themselves to aid the Congo, they were justifiably suspicious of the intentions of Western imperialism—so where could they turn? Only—they thought—to the U.N.

Through having no hesitation, in their moment of peril, to turn towards the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, Guinea, Cuba and the United Arab Republic, safeguarded their

independence and still live; but Congo, poor, bleeding, torn Congo, tragic martyr of imperialist greed, lies temporarily under the heel of the oppressor. Is there not a lesson here for the African states?

Certainly the African people have learnt much from the experience of the Congo. They now understand. When, after the news of Lumumba's appalling end, they rose in their anger in a score of capitals, it was not alone the Belgian Embassies which were the target of their wrath. U.N. offices and American Embassies and Information Centres were likewise attacked.

Experience sometimes has to be bought at a terrible price. The disaster in the Congo is not solely a catastrophe. The people of the Congo—and indeed of all Africa—can yet turn this set-back into triumph, provided that they learn the lesson of the Congo well. There can be no real or lasting peace and freedom for the African people until the last remnant of imperialism, the last imperialist puppet, the last imperialist economic root, the last imperialist soldier has been driven out of the African continent. And to carry through that job Africa must recognise fully and clearly who are her real enemies and who are her real friends.

§ 5 THE NEW SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA

Although European powers first came to Africa some five hundred years ago, their conquest of the whole continent and its division, as booty, was only fulfilled at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The years following the Berlin Conference decisions of 1885 saw the major European powers taking over Africa wholesale, slicing it up amongst themselves as if it were a huge cake. Africa, in fact, was divided on such an artificial basis that over large tracts of territory the frontier lines drawn on the map run straight horizontally or vertically, undeterred by any considerations of geography, language or the historical traditions and allegiances of the people who inhabit these lands.

This first "scramble for Africa", taking place on the eve of the imperialist epoch, was by no means the last attempt by the European powers to divide the African continent. Each imperialist power cast covetous eyes on the colonial possessions of the other, and when these powers clashed in the first world war the

destiny of Africa was one of the stakes in the gamble. The defeat of Germany in 1918 led to her being shorn of her African colonies—in the Cameroons, in Togoland, in East Africa and in South West Africa. But Germany's loss was not to be the African people's gain. The Cameroons was divided between Britain and France, as was Togo; German East Africa became Ruanda-Urundi and Tanganyika, the former going to Belgium and the latter to Britain; and South West Africa went to the Union. None of these territories was openly annexed by the victorious powers; in form, they became League of Nations "Mandates" (later to be United Nations "Trust Territories"). In reality, however, their labour and resources fell prey to their new imperial masters.

This second redivision of Africa among the major powers was no more stable than the first. In 1935 Fascist Italy seized Ethiopia (Abyssinia), and pressing hard on its heels Nazi Germany began to demand the return of Germany's former colonial possessions. This re-possession was an important target of Nazi Germany during the second world war and major battles were fought in the north and the Horn of Africa. The defeat of Germany in 1945 temporarily put paid to her African ambitions; and Italy, too, as a defeated power had to abandon Ethiopia and her other possessions in Africa, Somalia alone being left to her as a "Trust" territory until 1960.

With colonialism on the run, the form in which Africa was formerly divided up amongst the big powers is no longer possible. The African people are unscrambling the map, hauling down the foreign flags, hoisting up their own and even beginning to look across the artificial frontiers imposed on them for three-quarters of a century and to study new forms of co-operation that will take into account the reality of the ethnic and historical forms of association of the peoples as well as their newer economic and administrative relations. Difficult and complex is the legacy of divided peoples left behind by imperialism. It is no simple task to reunite the Ewe people divided by the former imperialist domination of French and British Togoland. The Cameroonian people have been torn asunder by colonialism, the Bacongo people torn in three by French, Belgian and Portuguese imperialists, the Somali people parcelled out in five territories (now four, with the merger of former British and Italian Somaliland into one Somali Republic). It is one of the hopes of imperialism that it will be able to turn this situation to its advantage, to play off

one African state against another, to cause divisions in the national movements and bring about secessions from the independent African states, or alternatively, stifle national and democratic aspirations within the fold of all-embracing federations. But African unity and the rapid growth of the African national liberation movements are, in the final reckoning, the determining factors; and if there is to be any remaking of the political map of Africa, it is the African people themselves who will do that, once they have completely broken imperialist power in Africa and have taken their destinies into their own hands.

But the Western powers, even if they are robbed of their former direct political domination of African territories, certainly do not intend to abandon their economic control. On the contrary, they are engaged in the biggest economic drive into Africa since the continent was first opened up by imperialism. It is this new economic drive which constitutes the essence of the new "scramble for Africa".

This new extension of imperialist economic power in Africa is not limited to the old-established imperialisms in Africa. The new economic division conforms to the relations of strength of the imperialist powers themselves. While British, French, Belgian, Portuguese, Italian, and Spanish imperialism still possesses economic power in its own colonies or in those former colonies which have now won independence, increasingly United States and German imperialism is entering the arena, pushing actively in all directions.

Because the new "scramble for Africa" is taking place under conditions of the decline of colonialism, and with a change in the relative strength of the various imperialist powers as well as with a diminution in the manoeuvrability of them all, there is a transformation taking place away from the former situation of single-power colonial monopolies, with whole territories under the dominant control of one imperialist power, towards a pattern of what one might call multi-imperialist domination, such as existed in China before the second world war (though the process has by no means gone so far as it did in the latter case).¹

¹ I well remember Shanghai in the 1930's, a city whose special British, French and other power concessions symbolised the joint domination of China by these foreign states, even though China had at that time its own nominally independent government. Gunboats from Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan were all anchored in the river in those years—to protect the imperialist interests of these powers in China and prevent national liberation.

This changed situation is regarded by the United States as being favourable to its own penetration into Africa.

“... Foreign participation in Africa’s development,” writes A. T. Steele,¹ “will be more varied and competitive than it has been up to now. The erstwhile colonial powers will no longer have things their own way in the territories they once dominated . . .

Until recently Americans interested in investing or doing business in the territories of West Africa have found doors only half-open or just barely ajar. The colonial powers, for the most part, resented ‘outside’ intrusion, except in very limited fields . . .

The picture has changed greatly in the last few years. The erstwhile colonial powers themselves seem eager to get the Americans in—up to a point. For the former it’s a kind of insurance: get the Americans in and you’ll have a strong potential ally in case the new young governments get rough and rash with foreign interests in the future.”

“Up to a point” is correct; for though the imperialist powers may have a common interest in seeing that the new African states are prevented from gaining complete control over their own resources and economy, at the same time, within that mutual kind of insurance, each imperialist power is working actively to secure the most favourable position for itself. Thus there is no prospect of any smooth, super-imperialist agreement as to how the new “scramble for Africa” should operate, but on the contrary a perspective of sharp antagonism such as always overtakes robbers when the question of the share-out of the loot is taking place.

Any plans for a super-imperialist carve-up of Africa would also have to reckon with the awakened African people who, in the midst of shaking off the political shackles which have held them down, are not likely to overlook the economic fetters still remaining, let alone allow new ones to be placed on them. The African people have learnt much from experience these last sixty years—both their own experience, and that of other peoples who have fought for their national liberation; and they will undoubtedly

¹ Steele, A. T.: “African Republics Need White Man’s Help”, *Heral Tribune*, July 10, 1959.

display considerable vigilance towards those who wish to take advantage of their temporary economic difficulties in order to place new fetters on them.

It is not without significance, in this respect, that the first historic Conference of Independent African States, which met in Accra in April 1958, proclaimed in the final Declaration of the conference that the independent African states pledge themselves "to take measures . . . to encourage the investment of foreign capital and skills *provided they do not compromise the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states*". [Own italics. —J.W.]

The second All-African People's Conference, held in Tunis, January-February 1960, was far sharper and more pointed. Its resolution on economic development "recommends that all independent African states should intensify their efforts to *wrest their respective countries from economic independence on the imperialist countries*", and warns against "*the tendency of colonialist countries to substitute economic for political domination and thus rob the newly won independence of the African states of its true content*". It further recommended that the independent African states refuse to enter into any undertaking with foreign powers which may either directly or indirectly prejudice the movement for the liberation and unity of Africa. To make Africa's economy independent, it emphasised, it was essential to develop co-operatives, harness the essential resources of the different territories in the interests of the people, ensure social justice and raise living standards, promote industrialisation, carry through land reform and modernise agriculture.

Thus those who are planning to ensnare the new African states and their people in fresh economic traps have been warned in advance.

Neo-colonialist ambitions will also come up against another hard fact. The new African states have powerful allies in the great camp of Bandung, and in the socialist countries which are able to give them considerable economic assistance.

All these factors guarantee that the new "scramble for Africa" will have a much shorter life than the previous one. In this epoch it is the African people, not the imperialists, who will inherit the wealth of Africa.

Nevertheless, the new drive by the big Western powers into Africa is so considerable that its threat to Africa should by no means be ignored.

British Investments—Still Going Strong

British imperialism is one of the oldest in Africa, but it shows no signs of giving up the ghost. On the contrary, throughout the continent its trading, construction and investing activities are continuing and expanding, notwithstanding the formation of independent African states.

The Shell Company and British Petroleum (East Africa), for instance, have undertaken to construct a major oil refinery in the Changamwe industrial area of Mombasa, based for the moment on the import of crude oil mainly from the Persian Gulf area.¹ Capital expenditure is estimated at £15,000,000 to £20,000,000, and output is planned to be in the region of 2,000,000 tons.

Shell and Mobil have sunk some £60,000,000 in Nigeria, where it is anticipated that by the end of 1960 it will be possible to export 40,000 barrels of crude oil a day.² Other reports state that by 1965 production might be as high as 90,000 barrels a day, or over 4,000,000 tons a year. This is still small compared with the world's major oil-producing countries—but if, within ten years or so, output could reach 10,000,000 tons, oil could become Nigeria's most valuable export.³

Many African states are also proving to be a fruitful source of profit for big British building and construction firms. For instance, Gilbert-Ash Ltd. have been awarded a £2,000,000 contract to construct a twenty-storey government office building in Enugu, capital of Eastern Nigeria;⁴ and Taylor Woodrow (Nigeria) Ltd. have obtained a £5,250,000 contract for constructing a road bridge over the River Niger.⁵

The giant United Africa Company, too, is very active. In West Africa it has been expanding its activities in many directions and is reported to have invested over £9,000,000 in Ghana and Nigeria alone in the three years 1955–8. The total value of merchandise sold, produce handled, and services supplied by the U.A.C. in Commonwealth and French Africa was £295,000,000 in 1957 and £283,000,000 in 1958. The U.A.C. Group, apart from its main merchandise business, has set up a number of specialised units—a motor supply and service section

¹ *The Times*, September 12, 1959.

² *The Times*, December 14, 1959.

³ *West Africa*, November 14, 1959, p. 959.

⁴ *The Times*, August 7, 1959.

⁵ *The Times*, August 17, 1959.

with separate divisions in Ghana and Nigeria, cold store businesses in Ghana and Nigeria, vehicle assembly plants in Ghana and Nigeria, interests in breweries and mineral water factories in West Africa, the Palm Shipping Line, timber production in Ghana and Nigeria, and so on.¹ The U.A.C. also has a ten per cent interest in the new £4,000,000 cement works to be set up at Ewekoro, about forty miles north of Lagos; major partner in this enterprise is Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd.² A significant development is U.A.C.'s new extension into East Africa, where it has taken over the business of Grayson and Co. which has branches at Nairobi, Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam, and Kampala.³ Profits of U.A.C.'s operations during 1958 were roughly estimated at £7,500,000.⁴ Total profits of U.A.C.'s parent company, Unilever, were £60,000,000 in 1959, an increase of £13,000,000 over 1958.

British banking interests, too, have greatly extended their activities in Africa in the past decade. In 1945 the two British banks operating in West Africa had 42 branches; today they have 188 branches.⁵ A similar expansion has taken place with the big insurance companies.

In Swaziland, Courtaulds have a half-interest in a £10,000,000 project for a new sulphate pulp mill.⁶ The Turner and Newall group is currently exploiting the Havelock asbestos mine, "one of the largest asbestos mines in the world".⁷

In Tanganyika, the exploitation of minerals has been considerably stepped up, the 1958 output valuing more than £6,000,000—the highest ever. Nearly £4,400,000 of this was due to the diamond output, mainly from the Williamson Mine at Mwadui.⁸

With such substantial interests involved in Africa, British investors are exercising considerable influence to ensure that there is no cessation of the resulting flow of profits.

"The private investor," *The Times* Colonial Correspondent has stated,⁹ "is frightened of self-governing African countries. It is

¹ *West Africa*, April 18, 1959, p. 369.

² *West Africa*, June 6, 1959.

³ *East Africa and Rhodesia*, December 31, 1959, p. 441.

⁴ *West Africa*, April 18, 1959, p. 369.

⁵ *West Africa*, January 2, 1960, p. 21.

⁶ *New Commonwealth*, November, 1959.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *Public Relations Department, Tanganyika*, June 22, 1959.

⁹ *The Times*, September 16, 1959.

practically impossible to raise a loan on the London market today for anywhere north of the Central African Federation . . . Newly independent countries naturally are over-anxious to assert their independence, financial as well as political."

This, of course, is not strictly true. The investors are not so much frightened at the moment; rather they are concerned that the pattern of record profits based on slave wages should not be disturbed. Any holding off by British investors from the newly independent African states is, in reality, a form of pressure. The investors are, in fact, saying: We will only invest on our terms.

"No private investor . . . would consider 5 per cent as a reasonable return in African conditions . . ." says a correspondent to *West Africa*.¹

By such intimidation, British big business is compelling African national leaders to make pledges of "no nationalisation" and to offer other inducements to prospective investors. Nigeria's leaders, we are informed, "have constantly reassured investors about favourable political conditions in which their investments can flourish".²

In Tanganyika, Julius Nyerere has said that it will be necessary to "go out to seek more capital and to make it easier for capital to come in".³

In his speech to the 1959 annual general meeting of Western Selection and Development (parent company of Bremang Gold Dredging and Amalgamated Banket Areas, two of Ghana's main gold-mining companies), the chairman, Mr. C. J. Burns, gave some indication as to how successful the company had been in obtaining favourable conditions for its profit-making activities in Ghana.

These activities of the big monopolies in the new African states—states whose peoples have been so harshly exploited these past sixty years—are bound to arouse increasing concern as the African people set about their great task of building up their economies and wiping out poverty, illiteracy and disease.

British imperialism, while stepping up its investments and trading operations in its own possessions in Africa and in those of its colonies which have won political independence, is also active in other African territories. The chairman of the big

¹ *West Africa*, January 2, 1960, p. 3.

² *The Times*, January 11, 1960.

³ *The Times*, August 7, 1959.

trading company, Mitchell Cotts, for instance, stated at his group's general meeting:¹

"We have been giving a great deal of very careful consideration to our future role in Libya . . . Libya is likely to become an important oil producing country in the years to come. We are strongly established there and we handle an excellent range of machinery and equipment needed by the Oil Companies. We have got engineering workshops and servicing facilities in Tripoli and I think there is going to be a great deal of business to be done in the future."

Liberia, too, is attracting British attention. Mr. John Profumo, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said on his return from a visit to that country that "he was impressed by the opportunities of improving British trade with Liberia. The opening of the iron-ore area near the northern frontier, the construction of a new railway, and work on port facilities indicated that there was ample scope for British initiative".²

While British financial interests are turning their gaze to African territories hitherto outside their sphere of influence, other imperialist powers are making headway in those territories previously regarded as within the British domain. British exports to Nigeria, for instance, are steadily losing ground to Japan, Western Germany and the United States:

	<i>Imports £ million</i>				
	<i>1953</i>	<i>1954</i>	<i>1955</i>	<i>1956</i>	<i>1957</i>
United Kingdom ..	57·4	51·7	63·5	68·3	66·1
Germany, Western	8·8	10·7	10·5	13·0	12·6
Japan	5·6	9·4	16·7	20·2	17·6
United States ..	4·3	5·4	5·5	5·4	8·1
Total ..	108·3	114·1	136·1	152·8	152·5

Thus Britain's share has dropped from nearly 53 per cent to 44 per cent, while the share of Western Germany, United States and Japan has risen from about 16 per cent to 25 per cent.

¹ Drayton, H. C.: Chairman of Mitchell Cotts Group Limited: Speech at Fortieth Ordinary General Meeting, London, January 8, 1960. Quoted in *East Africa and Rhodesia*, January 14, 1960, p. 488.

² *West Africa*, January 16, 1960, p. 79.

France Grabs Oil, Iron Ore and Bauxite

France, too, is pouring millions into Africa. It is said that as much as £500,000,000 has been put into the Sahara alone.¹ This is primarily for the exploitation of its rich oil resources, about which the most striking claims have been made. Calder says that the "estimated reserve of the field is 500 million tons", with a further field on the borders of Libya with "a reserve of 100 million tons". According to his information, by 1963 "the two fields would be producing all the oil requirements of metropolitan France". By 1962, he states, output will be 14,000,000 tons a year. Another estimate puts the total 1961 projected output at 25,000,000 tons, reaching "50,000,000 tons by 1965".² One idea being mooted amongst the Common Market countries is that Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg should give the French Sahara oil "preferential treatment at the expense of British and American-controlled oil".³

Another French pipe-dream, according to Calder, is to carry huge supplies of natural gas from Hassi R'Mel, 400 miles south of Algiers, by pipeline to the coast and thence "across the Mediterranean to Carthage, up through Spain, into France, into Italy, into West Germany and even across to Britain". If it proves too difficult, then perhaps a super power station will be built at Algiers, and the natural gas will be converted into electricity to be shipped over the same route.

In the same way, electric power generated in Edéa, in the Cameroun Republic, is to be delivered to Péciney, in France, at below cost price. France has pumped £110,000,000 into the Cameroun in the past ten years, mainly for the gigantic hydro-electrical and metallurgical complex at Edéa, which, with 45,000 tons of aluminium produced a year, is the eighth largest aluminium-producing country in the world.⁴ The Cameroun Republic has a wide range of agricultural products—cocoa, coffee, bananas, palm kernels, rubber, tobacco, rice, ground nuts, cotton, and millet—and its rich timber resources have made this a major industry. The country's mineral wealth "is believed to

¹ Calder, Ritchie: "Miracle in the Sahara", *New Statesman*, December 26, 1959, p. 903.

² Ellis, Frederick: *Daily Express*, January 5, 1960.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Legum, Colin: *Observer*, December 13, 1959

be considerable".¹ Despite the formal granting of independence to Cameroun "there has been no flight of capital and private investment appears to continue slowly and steadily".²

Considerable sums are being sunk, too, in the Gabon Republic, which, with an output of some 700,000 tons a year, is now the franc area's third largest producer of oil.³ Gabon, in fact, has become the largest oil-producing country south of the Sahara. Oil has been discovered, too, in the Congo Republic (former French). The exploitation of the oil in both Gabon and Congo is being conducted by the French Equatorial African Petroleum Company, which is negotiating with Shell and Mobil for their participation in new exploitation on a fifty-fifty share of profits basis. Gabon's iron ore is also being exploited. The Iron Ore Company of Mekambo, recently formed at Libreville, includes among its shareholders the Banque de Paris, the Suez Canal Company, Fiat, and Dutch, Belgian, German and other French interests, besides the American Bethlehem Steel Company which holds fifty per cent of the shares in the new company (200,000,000 C.F.A. francs). The Mekambo deposits "are considered to be among the richest in the world".⁴ United States Steel is reported to be backing the exploitation of Gabon's rich manganese deposits at Moanda, where annual production is envisaged at 500,000 tons of ore.⁵ To power this development, two hydroelectric schemes, on the Couilou and Souanda rivers, are to be built which, together with their attendant road development, will cost some £135 million. Uranium, too, is being exploited in the Gabon Republic, the Franceville Uranium Mining Company having been given exclusive rights for twenty-five years. The company is expected to spend over £3,500,000 on a uranium enrichment plant at Franceville in Gabon.

Vast new resources of iron ore are now being extracted in the "Black Sahara" of Mauretania.

"Iron ore, with over 65 per cent content, can be quarried. It just has to be blasted, tipped down chutes, gobbled in eight-ton gulps by mechanical shovels, tipped into hundred-ton trucks and carried 400 miles across the dunes, down a thousand-foot escarpment to a new port which is to be built at Port

¹ *West Africa*, December 26, 1959, p. 1142.

² *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

³ *Manchester Guardian*, July 4, 1959.

⁵ *ibid.*

Etienne on the Mauretanian coast. The existence of 110 million tons of accessible ore has been proved, but this is a very modest estimate indeed, for the whole range may yield ores of varying quantities.”¹

To exploit this iron ore a big new French corporation has been formed, with fifty per cent French capital, twenty per cent British, and the rest German and Italian. The World Bank has also chipped in—with a grant of £21,000,000.

It will by now have struck the reader that, as far as French or former French territories in Africa are concerned, there is a tendency for the former pattern of purely French companies to be replaced by one of international consortiums and trusts. Alongside French capitalists, those from the United States, Western Germany, Italy, Britain, and other countries, are to be found. Thus the international company of F.R.I.A., which extracts bauxites and produces aluminium in Guinea, incorporates the French Péchiney company, the American Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation, the British Aluminium Company Ltd., and Aluminium Industrie Aktiengesellschaft (Switzerland). “American interests . . . provide more than half the capital in F.R.I.A.”² F.R.I.A. is based on the enormous deposits of bauxite in the Fouta Djalon, “which are believed to contain well over a billion tons”.³ Operations, which began in 1960, are expected to result in an annual output of over 400,000 tons, thus making Guinea the world’s third largest producer of aluminium. If the scheme goes through to construct a dam on the Konkouré river at Sonapité, the cheap electricity generated will make Guinea aluminium the cheapest in the world. This is not the end of Guinea’s bauxite, for large deposits have also been found at Boké. In November 1956, Aluminium Ltd. of Canada announced that they were planning to invest \$100,000,000 at Boké. This, states Morrisby, was “the largest investment of foreign capital made to that date in West Africa”.⁴ Boké is expected to have an annual capacity of 220,000 tons once the alumina plant starts operations. In the Los Islands, too, a few miles from Conakry, the Société des Bauxites du Midi, with the aid of its parent company,

¹ Calder, Ritchie: *op. cit.*, p. 904.

² Morrisby, Edwin S.: “Guinea Counts the Cost”, *Manchester Guardian*, January 7, 1959.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

Aluminium Laboratories of Canada, is still exploiting the surface bauxite located there, the entire output going to Canada for processing. In 1958, 457,000 tons were shipped in this fashion. These deposits are expected to be exhausted by 1970—yet another example of the rapacity with which the imperialist powers rob Africa of its wealth.

Guinea also has valuable iron ore, and the Compagnie Minière de Conakry exported more than 2,000,000 tons in 1956, well over half of it going to Britain. There is a scheme afoot to use Konkouré cement to convert iron to steel electrolytically.

Although Guinea is now an independent republic and is taking steps to end colonialisation in all its forms and to control the imperialist interests which still batten on its riches, difficult struggles lie ahead before the new republic can ensure that all the wealth which lies in her soil is used for her own enrichment and not to line the pockets of investors in Paris, New York, London, and Montreal.

West Germany Dreams again of Imperial Power

West Germany is making a specially big bid for economic influence in Africa. It has been estimated that West German capital investments in Africa now stand at 144,900,000 marks (about £12,000,000).¹ About half of this (74,900,000 marks) was invested in the period February 1952 to September 1959.² The total West German investment in Africa is, as yet, relatively small, but the energetic steps being taken both by the Federal government as well as by West German businessmen to develop trading and other relations with African territories indicate that they have much more ambitious perspectives in mind. West German exports to Africa in 1959 totalled over 2,100,000,000 marks (about £175,000,000)—seven times the 1950 figure.

In October 1959, the Bonn government held a special conference at Addis Ababa of German diplomatists to discuss plans for West Germany's effort in Africa. Much emphasis is being placed on trade and technical advice, but education and propaganda is not being neglected. Although Western Germany naturally has an eye on former German possessions in Africa—Cameroons, Togoland, Ruanda-Urundi, and Tanganyika, as

¹ *Neues Deutschland*, December 29, 1959.

² Figures given by the Economic Ministry of the Federal Republic of Germany, January 16, 1960.

well as South West Africa—she is also active in all the independent African territories. An agreement has been signed between West Germany and Liberia for technical and economic co-operation between the two countries.¹ This will include replanning the capital and preparations for a hydro-electric scheme on the St. Paul river. West Germany will also help to develop the Liberian Information Services.² This follows an earlier agreement signed in 1959 between Liberia and a German steel consortium for a seventy-year iron ore concession in Central Province, some eighty miles from Monrovia.³ The group will also expand the port of Monrovia. The consortium in question is represented in Liberia by the Exploration Mining and Study Company, Düsseldorf, which is a joint subsidiary of the Thyssen steelworks, Phönix-rheinrohr, Dortmund-Horde and Rheinische-Stahlwerke.

West Germany is further trying to gain a foothold in Guinea. Following the visit of Sékou Touré to Bonn in November 1959, an agreement between the two countries was reached for technical, economic and cultural co-operation.⁴

Ghana, too, has extended her economic relations with Western Germany. Following a two weeks' visit by a seven-man German economic mission, two agreements were signed between the two countries, covering trade and West German technical assistance to Ghana.⁵ This follows an earlier announcement⁶ that West Germany was prepared to grant Federal guarantees to a value of 200,000,000 marks (about £16,000,000) for investment towards Ghana's development. The statement, issued after the visit of Ghana's Minister of Finance, Mr. K. A. Gbedemah, to Bonn, said that amongst the questions to be discussed when the German delegation went to Accra to negotiate the details of this agreement was the "protection of investments". In 1958 West German imports from Ghana totalled over £19,000,000; exports to Ghana from West Germany reached £51,000,000.⁷

West Germany is also active in Ethiopia. Early in November 1959, the Federal Government signed an agreement with Ethiopia under which engineers will go there to advise on a number of

¹ *The Times*, November 18, 1959.

² *West Africa*, January 2, 1960, p. 21.

³ *West Africa*, January 17, 1959, p. 67.

⁴ *The Times*, November 18, 1959.

⁵ *West Africa*, January 16, 1960, p. 78.

⁶ *The Times*, August 17, 1959.

⁷ *Ghana Times*, September 8, 1959.

projects.¹ The trade arrangements with Ethiopia indicate the extent to which the Bonn Government is prepared to make concessions in order to gain a foothold in Africa. No trading credits will be given to Ethiopia, but West Germany guarantees payment to exporters for goods exported from West Germany to Ethiopia up to a total of 80,000,000 marks (about £6,700,000); if the Ethiopians are unable to pay, the West German Government will reimburse the exporters. West German business interests are also busily engaged now in building up contacts with Tanganyika and Kenya.

Big West German monopolies have already pushed their way into many of the major mineral projects in Africa. Ten important German concerns, including Krupp and Thyssen, have a ten per cent share in the international consortium, MIFERMA, which is exploiting Mauretania's iron ore. Similarly, a West German steel syndicate has ten per cent of the stock capital in the Société des Mines de Fer de Mekambo, which is exploiting the iron ore at Mekambo, in Gabon. German interests are also involved in the Bureau des Recherches Minières, which is active in Algerian iron ore, while the Hoesch concern is interested in the Compagnie Minière de Conakry, which is mining iron ore in Guinea. The West German firm of Haniel and the Ferrostaal AG Essen are participating in establishing an industrial centre near Colomb Bechar in Algeria. Oil, too, has attracted West German monopolies, and the Mannesmann AG, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Erdöl AG, Alfa Cellulose and others are all participating in the exploitation of Saharan oil. In Libya, Gelsenkirchner Berwerks AG is partnering the American Socony Mobil Oil Company in a large oil concession.

The African Fruit Company, Hamburg, and Nordmann, Rassmann and Co. are active in Liberia, the latter firm being specially interested in rubber plantations and processing.

It has been reported² that the Deutsche Bank has become business partner in an undertaking controlling almost a hundred companies in South Africa, South West Africa, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Swaziland and East Africa. The Deutsche Bank is, in fact, one of the most energetic agencies for the penetration of West German capital into Africa, and on behalf of German monopoly interests it holds twenty per cent

¹ *The Times*, November, 17 1959.

² *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, September 12, 1958.

of the stock capital of the big West European consortium, Consafrique, which has been established to exploit African natural resources.

German trade with Africa is still relatively small—six and a half per cent of the country's imports and five per cent of her exports—but trade along the lines of the Ethiopian agreement can easily open the way to a considerable expansion.

It is significant that West German cars are rapidly ousting British cars from Commonwealth West Africa. In Ghana, for example, West Germany now has a bigger share of the car market than British competitors, "while in Nigeria even the long standing Ford lead in sales is showing signs of giving way to Volkswagen and Opel".¹

West Germany has also become an important buyer of iron ore from Sierra Leone;² while in Angola, most of whose iron ore exports go to Western Germany, an agreement has recently been concluded with Krupp for the exploitation of Angola's iron mines.

West Germany's drive into Africa is being assisted by the European Common Market, in which she holds a key position, and through which she will be able to invest several times her present total of investments in Africa as well as making further inroads into trade. It is significant that the Director-General of the Common Market Treaty Organisation is a West German citizen, Dr. Allardt.

The older imperialisms are not entirely opposed to these new incursions of capital which they anticipate coming from Western Germany, for they hope that thereby they will gain West German political and military support to defend their own economic stake in Africa. This is particularly true of French ruling circles. An article which appeared early in 1959 in *L'Usine Nouvelle*, the organ of big French industrial interests, declared:

"The infiltration of Standard Oil into the Sahara as well as the German capital which is expected to flow in shortly, not to mention financial and technical aid, are advantageous to us, mainly because they contribute to the consolidation and presence of the French in the Sahara and, hence, in Algeria, for they oblige our partners to help defend our positions."

¹ *The Times*, November 17, 1959.

² *West Africa*, January 9, 1960.

Similarly, speaking for British imperialist interests, *The Times* argues that the present activity of West Germany in Africa “does not look at all like a recrudescence of the dreams of imperial power that led Germany into Africa at the beginning of the century. France and Britain are frequently consulted, and it is claimed that they have greeted the German effort with relief”.¹ Despite these protestations of “relief”, neither French nor British interests can be entirely happy about this West German invasion into their “spheres of interest”.

It is worth noting that the new Governor of the Bank of Ghana, Mr. Kessels, comes from the German Bundesbank; and that the Cameroun Republic independence day celebrations on January 1, 1960, were made the occasion for a most impressive descent on Yaoundé from Bonn. Apart from stealing “a march on both Anglo-Saxon powers [United States and Britain] . . . by producing from the ranks of her delegation a fully fledged ambassador”,² West Germany sent a considerable number of economic experts as well as a “Press and radio contingent outnumbering even that of the French”.³ It is believed that capital from West Germany may soon be made available to the Republic of Cameroun, in particular for extending the Douala-Yaoundé railway northwards, which would enable the opening up of the region south-west of N’Gaoundéré, where bauxite deposits have recently been found.

Like the United States, West Germany is attempting to penetrate the colonies, or former colonies, of Britain, France and other imperialist powers and obtain a strong economic position without appearing openly as a colonial power.

The Federal Republic of Germany may not possess colonies in Africa, but by her new economic drive into the Sahara and southwards she is staking out an imperialist claim which one day she might wish to safeguard by political intervention and even military action.

The Western powers are invading every part of Africa. Each power seeks to penetrate its rivals’ colonies or spheres of influence, either on its own or in association with another power. Not only are the major imperialist African-owning powers involved, but every industrialised capitalist country without exception is

¹ *The Times*, November 17, 1959.

² *The Times*, January 7, 1959.

³ *ibid.*

descending on the rich body of Africa, like so many locusts anxious for a feed. South African business interests have their eyes on Angola where the prospects for them have been described as "tremendous".¹ The French aluminium company, P  chiney, is also reaching out for Angola, where it hopes to establish an aluminium smelter in conjunction with a Spanish aluminium company.² The Dutch Rubber and Coffee Companies of Amsterdam are setting up a Liberia-Dutch Company for Agriculture, which will expand the production of Liberian coffee, palm oil, sugar cane and rubber.³ Dutch interests are also active in Ghana, where the Dutch Philips company is setting up a branch, and the Dutch diamond firm of D. D. Drukker has negotiated an agreement to expand Ghanaian diamond production.⁴ Holland is also an important buyer of Sierra Leone iron ore.⁵

Another active power is Japan, which is fast becoming an important factor in African trade. Japan is making particular headway in the export of cheap textiles, notably to West Africa. An indication of the importance of this trade is the decision to set up a Shipping Conference to regulate shipping services between West Africa and Japan.⁶ Italy, too, is not restricting its activities to Somalia, but is striving to extend its influence far wider. A large trade mission visited Ghana, Nigeria and French West Africa in 1958,⁷ and trading connections have since been built up.

And so it continues. Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, Portugal, Belgium, Luxemburg—there is scarcely a single capitalist country which has not set its eyes on Africa and its riches.

Dollar over Africa

But it is, above all, United States imperialism which represents the greatest new danger to the peoples of Africa. We have already noted how active the United States is politically, in building up its connections with the new African states, winning influence in the national and trade union movements, and trying to influence the new governments. Militarily, too, as has been observed, the

¹ *Windhoek Advertiser*, August 17, 1959.

² *West Africa*, January 17, 1959, p. 67.

⁴ *West Africa*, November 15, 1958, p. 1097.

⁵ *West Africa*, January 16, 1960, p. 79.

⁶ *West Africa*, November 15, 1958, p. 1097.

⁷ *West Africa*, December 20, 1958, p. 1217.

³ *ibid.*

United States has established its footholds, and also controls NATO bases in Africa.

Parallel with these efforts, United States imperialism is making a heavy drive to secure a commanding economic position in the African continent. United States business circles, as well as the government itself, have been active in this connection, increasing investments and extending their trade.

A large share of America's economic interests in Africa lie in the Union. In fact, the *Wall Street Journal* has called South Africa "a bee-hive of United States industry". Some 175 American companies are at present operating subsidiaries in the Union, and it is reported that these companies have poured more money into South Africa than has been invested by United States interests in all the rest of Africa combined.¹ United States investments in the Union jumped from \$86,000,000 in 1943 to \$600,000,000 in 1959.² By March 1960 they were estimated at £250,000,000.³

The *Wall Street Journal* points out:⁴

"One of the attractions that South Africa holds for American companies is the receptiveness of the nation's Government to foreign investors, in contrast to the attitudes of some of Africa's newly independent states which sometimes give the impression of regarding outside capital as just another tool of colonialism . . . The lure of South Africa is broader than cheap labour. This country is rich in raw materials, is already the most heavily industrialised country in Africa, and is in an excellent position to tap the largely unexploited sales and marketing possibilities of this huge continent."

But United States monopolies do not limit their efforts to the Union. They have big investments in Northern and Southern Rhodesia, in Angola and Mozambique, and in the former Belgian Congo, and are participating in the exploitation of mineral resources in Gabon and Guinea, as well as in their old base in Liberia, with whom the United States Government concluded a special agreement in July 1959, providing for United

¹ *South African Progress*: Bulletin issued by Director of Information, South Africa House, London, January 1960.

² Goshal, Kumar: *National Guardian* (New York), April 18, 1960.

³ *Financial Times*, March 31, 1960.

⁴ Quoted in *South African Progress*: op. cit.

States "military assistance" for Liberia in the event of "aggression". U.S. investments in Liberia soared from \$17,000,000 in 1943 to \$380,000,000 in 1958.

Major American firms are busy in South West Africa. The Newmont Mining Corporation and the American Metal Company have taken over the lead, zinc and copper-mining complex at Tsumeb; Bethlehem Steel are reported to have found huge iron ore deposits in the Kaokoveld; while U.S. Steel Corporation has a contract to buy manganese ore mined in South West Africa by the South African Minerals Corporation. In addition, the Texas Eastern Transmission Corporation is expected to start drilling soon for oil in the neighbourhood of Tsondabvlei; and the U.S. Rio Tinto Corporation is reported to have shown interest in copper deposits near Okahandja.

Thirteen American oil companies have been granted licences to exploit oil in the "Spanish Sahara";¹ five American companies are prospecting for oil in Somalia; and in the Sudan Republic, which has granted surveying rights to an Italian company and to Shell, a licence has also been granted to an American company to search for oil along the Sudanese sea coast.²

Standard Oil of New Jersey have obtained a prospecting licence to look for oil over a huge area in the French Community republics of Soudan³ and Niger;⁴ and a number of American oil firms are prospecting in Spanish Sahara.

United States oil monopolies are also very active in Libya, where some 80,000,000 dollars have been sunk by ten American and five European companies in 1959 alone. The American Oasis Oil Company has planned to double its 1959 budget in Libya during 1960. Texaco Inc., Standard Oil, Texas Oil, Socony and Gulf Oil Corp. are all already active in Libya.

A recent U.S. five-man trade mission has visited Ghana to study the possibilities of increasing trade and investment by American private investors;⁵ and a powerful six-man U.S. trade mission toured the Central African Federation in the spring of 1960.

¹ *Maghreb Arabe Presse*, January 12, 1960.

² *Middle East News Agency*, September 13, 1959.

³ Now the Mali Republic.

⁴ *West Africa*, December 5, 1959, p. 1063.

⁵ *West Africa*, January 2, 1960, p. 21.

When an American trade mission visited Nigeria in 1959, its leader, Mr. Herbert J. Cummings, stated that ninety-five United States firms were ready to do business in Nigeria, and some were anxious to invest capital in new industries. He added that a book published by the United States Department of Commerce, entitled "Investment Opportunities in Nigeria" had been a fast seller.¹

A striking example as to how the United States is replacing the older imperialist powers in Africa is provided by the rich territory of the Ivory Coast. Assi Camille Adam, Chairman of the National Liberation Committee of the Ivory Coast, has stated² that United States interests have obtained a strong position in all the major branches of the national economy of the Ivory Coast—cocoa, coffee, mineral, timber, oil and soap. Further, he claims that already United States investments constitute thirty to fifty per cent of the total investment in many enterprises in the Ivory Coast, that the Ivory Coast's oil industry is virtually monopolised by United States capital, and that half the investment involved in the construction of the Ivory Coast's only dam comes from the United States. With some reason he comments: "The United States is taking over France's place in the Ivory Coast."

Equally striking has been the big push of Wall Street into the Congo (formerly Belgian). United States investors had secured a foothold in the Congo even before the second world war, but in the last two decades they have pushed their way in deeper and deeper, their present investments in the Congo being estimated at over £220,000,000. These investments are concentrated in minerals—especially uranium, cobalt and diamonds, the former two centred in Katanga Province and the diamonds in Kasai. Over ninety per cent of the Congo's uranium and all the cobalt has been exported to the United States. Apart from their use as a source of profit, these valuable mineral ores are also regarded by United States imperialism as key to its military aims in the form of nuclear weapons. Both the Morgan and the Rockefeller trusts are concerned in the exploitation of Congo's mineral resources, operating through numerous cover-up agencies apart from more open investments, such as the Rockefeller shares in Union Minière. On the very eve of the Congo's declaration of independence, June 30, 1960, it was reported from Brussels that the Rockefeller trust had signed an agreement for a 65,000,000

¹ *West Africa*, May 23, 1959.

² In a speech, June 30, 1960.

Belgian francs participation in the Commercial and Industrial Company of the Congo, a sister company of the powerful Société Générale, which dominates the economic life of the Congo.¹

There is not a single territory in Africa which American interests have neglected. Following a tour of East Africa in 1958, Mr. Eugene Black, the United States President of the International Bank, said that the Bank's main interest in the next ten to fifteen years would be directed towards Africa.²

Already United States investments in Africa are soaring rapidly.

Book Value of United States Direct Investments in Africa
(In millions of dollars)

1950	1952	1955	1959
313	458	793	2,000

(Source: *The International Flow of Private Capital, 1956-1958*: United Nations, New York, 1959, p. 25. The 1959 figure is based on current American press reports.)

The striking thing about United States investments in Africa is the pace of their expansion in recent years. They represent a twentyfold increase over the pre-war position; moreover, in *rate* of capital investment in Africa, the United States has outstripped Britain, France and Belgium. More than two hundred American companies are now operating in Africa, mainly in mineral resources but also in a variety of other directions. These activities are not directed towards building up African economy but, on the contrary, to holding it back and enabling the plundering of Africa's resources. The Francis Bolton Mission, which reported to the United States Senate on American policy towards Africa, openly admitted that amongst major aims of the United States in Africa was access to raw materials and the ensuring of American strategic needs.

In addition to its direct investments, United States interests are also penetrating Africa through the medium of various technical and economic "aid" schemes, to which further consideration is given in a later section.

¹ For further information on imperialist exploitation of the Congo, and especially by Belgian interests, see the present author's *Africa--The Roots of Revolt*, pp. 230-2.

² *Daily Telegraph*, April 7, 1958.

United States imperialism clearly plans to step into the shoes of the old colonial powers. But this is well understood both by these powers themselves, as well as by the African people.

French imperialist interests are very acutely aware of the threat which America's drive into Africa represents to them. The Washington correspondent of one Moroccan paper¹ has stated that a sharp conflict is developing between American and French interests in Africa. The United States has refused, states this correspondent, to recognise North and West Africa as exclusive French spheres of interest, while de Gaulle has demanded that the United States keep out of West Africa, especially the newly independent countries.

British imperialist anxieties found expression in a recent article in the *Economist*, which, after listing all the forms of activity carried out in Africa by the research institutions of the various big United States monopolies (Carnegie, Ford, Rockefeller, Twentieth Century and Phelps Stokes), stated that although the view existed that "British and American attitudes to Africa are not as dissimilar as they may look", this does not mean that "there are not still people who are bent on hurrying the end of British rule [in Africa] without regard to cost".²

The African people are becoming increasingly aware of the sharp differences that exist between the different imperialist powers in Africa, and especially of the conflict between the older imperialisms and the United States. Such differences can certainly be turned to advantage in the struggle of the African people to destroy all vestiges of colonialism in Africa; but the most far-sighted African national leaders, while not advocating complete isolation from trade and other economic relations with the Western powers, are at pains to stress the need for perpetual vigilance as well as insistence on the absolute exercise of national sovereignty in all their dealings with the imperialist countries.

This, in fact, was a marked feature of the Second All-African People's Conference in 1960, where United States imperialism, in particular, was subjected to very sharp criticism and condemnation. Many delegates asserted that United States imperialism was now the most deadly enemy for the African cause of

¹ *Arrai Al Amm*, January 6, 1960.

² *The Economist*, "American Interest in Africa is Blowing Up", September 12, 1959.

national independence. This, they explained, was because the United States, while giving all-out support to British and French imperialism in suppressing the African people, tries to deceive the independent states by pretending to assist them. American support to France in the war against Algeria was cited as a clear demonstration as to where the United States rulers really stand in relation to the African peoples' struggle for independence. The United States rulers were also held as "mainly responsible" for the present situation in the Cameroun Republic by the late Dr. Felix Moumie, President of the Union of the People of the Cameroons, who declared that behind their talk of "anti-communism" the Americans were assisting French imperialism to carry on its war against the national movement, while pushing ahead with their own plans for economic gain.

The stand of the delegates on the role of the United States in Africa was summed up in the Conference message to the U.S. President and Congress, which declared *inter alia*, "The Conference notes once again that the support accorded by the United States to France in its colonial policy has brought serious damage to the African people."

While the experience of Algeria and Cameroun has been a major factor in turning Africa against United States imperialism, there is no doubt that it is the lessons of the Congo, above all, which have opened the eyes of the African people as to the real role of the United States. This is well borne out by statements made by African national leaders and organisations or published in the African press in recent months. So outspoken have been these statements that Ernest Ouandie, Vice-President of the Union of the Peoples of the Cameroons, has declared:

"In the continent of Africa, you can hear more and more people talking about the U.S. imperialists and more and more papers reporting under the headlines—U.S. imperialism—the vicious enemy of the peoples of the world! The events in the Congo last year should teach them."¹

The Kenya Africa National Union has sharply criticised the United Nations for its actions in the Congo, branding it as a "blatant imperialist tool", charging the United States with being "the overlord of the United Nations", and warning that

¹ Statement in Geneva, January 7, 1961.

“U.S. manoeuvres to destroy Lumumba through Mobutu’s gang will eventually inflame violent reaction among the African people”.¹ Similarly, the Moroccan paper *Al Faja* has characterised American policy as one of pursuing world domination, and has condemned its policy of “the fostering of vassals to oppose the liberation movement, such as in Algeria and the Congo”.² In Ghana, C.P.P. publications³ have sharply attacked both the United Nations and the United States in connection with the Congo; and on January 10, 1961, the eleventh anniversary of the “Positive Action” campaign launched by Nkrumah and the C.P.P., a monster procession in Accra carried banners inscribed: “Shame on American Intrigues in the Congo!”, “Dag Hammarskjöld Must Resign!”

Colonel El Shazly, Commander of the United Arab Republic battalion withdrawn from the Congo, declared in Cairo (February 3, 1961), that “foreign elements, especially the United States of America, are feeding national strife in the Congo”. And the Tanganyika Federation of Labour, an affiliate of the I.C.F.T.U., went so far as to demand, in a letter to the Tanganyika Government under Julius Nyerere, that in view of the lessons of the Congo, where imperialist countries had undermined the legally constituted government in order to safeguard their investments, the Tanganyika Government should not permit foreign investments in the country.⁴

There can be no doubt that this mounting feeling of resentment against the United States on the part of the African people influenced considerably the outcome of the Casablanca Conference of the Heads of the African States at the beginning of 1961, when the representatives of the states present proclaimed their “determination to liberate African territories still under foreign domination by giving them aid and assistance to liquidate colonialism and neo-colonialism in all their forms, to discourage the maintenance of foreign troops and the establishment of bases which endanger the liberation of Africa and to strive equally to rid the African continent of political and economic interventions and pressures”. The Casablanca Conference therefore decided to establish a Joint African High Command “with a view to

¹ Statement of its Secretariat, Nairobi, released December 30, 1960.

² Editorial, January 23, 1961.

³ *Ghana Evening News*, January 4, 1961; *Ghanaian Times*, January 23, 1961.

⁴ Report from Dar-es-Salaam, December 8, 1960.

ensuring the common defence of Africa in case of aggression against any part of this continent, and with a view to safeguarding the independence of African States".

Thus it is clear that imperialist attempts to re-divide Africa will meet with growing and determined resistance from the African people.

†

CHAPTER FOUR

FACING THE NEW DAY

§ 1 WHEN ARE WE GOING TO HAVE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE?

THE African people do not regard the winning of political independence, important as it may be, as being the end of their struggle. State and political power is fought for not as an end in itself, but as an essential preliminary step towards developing the national economy and so making it possible to wipe out poverty, ill-health and illiteracy, and to provide a new life for the people.

As Abdul Rahman Mohamed, the General Secretary of the Zanzibar Nationalist Party, has stated:

“We want independence both politically and economically. We want to improve the living conditions of our people.”¹

Essential to the building up of the economy of the new African states is the creation of a national industry. Coupled with this is the need for a new trading policy which will release the market of the African territories from domination by big foreign trusts.² In taking steps to solve these two problems, and in tackling also the other major economic problem of land reform, the new governments are increasingly brought up against the fact that despite the achievement of political independence, the economy of their countries still remains largely in foreign hands, especially the mineral resources, valuable land, key agricultural products, big trading networks, transport, harbours and shipping, banking and insurance, cement and building, electric power and processing factories.

¹ In an interview with *Hsinhua News Agency*, January 5, 1960.

² One of the first steps taken by the independent Republic of Guinea was to establish state control over all external trade.

One Nigerian paper¹ has pointedly asked:

“Political independence will come next year,² but when do we have economic independence?”

In endeavouring to build their national industries, the new African states come up against two problems. First, because of decades of imperialist rule, modern industry scarcely exists. Kojo Botsio, explaining why Ghana is placing emphasis on building national industries, has explained:

“The British left us a country which had as good as none. Ghana exports cocoa-beans, timber, palm-oil, bauxite, etc., but has to import cocoa products, paper, soap, aluminium ware—in a word, the goods manufactured from our raw materials.”³

Secondly, the building of a national industry is essential to weakening the economic domination of the foreign monopolies. The continued possession by the imperialists of the commanding heights of the economy in all African territories is not merely an obstacle to national growth. It is directly used for this purpose by the imperialist powers and thus constitutes a very real threat to economic development and hence to national sovereignty itself. It is in this that one of the most dangerous forms of neo-colonialism exists. This fact is recognised by Africa's most far-sighted leaders. Thus, Abdoulaye Diallo, Secretary-General of the All-African People's Conference, has warned:

“The imperialists have found themselves powerless to halt the course of history and change the determination of the African people to become independent . . . They are ready to grant nominal independence, while maintaining their economic domination at the same time.”⁴

One way in which the newly independent African countries

¹ *West African Pilot*, April 27, 1959.

² The reference to “next year” concerns the declaration of Nigeria's independence, which came into effect in October 1960.

³ Botsio, Kojo: “On Ghana's Progress”, *New Times*, No. 24, June 1960, p. 17.

⁴ Diallo, Abdoulaye: Speech at Second All-African People's Conference, Tunis, January 31, 1960.

can promote their economic growth and independence is by building up a state sector of the economy, which, because it is controlled by the government, can be planned and developed in accordance with the fundamental requirements of the national economy and the people's needs.

The need for developing such a state sector has been emphasised by many African national and working-class leaders. Sao Amadou Lamine, for instance, in describing the dismal plight of the people of Senegal and the demands they are making, has stressed:¹

“The change that the working class is demanding does not lie exclusively in having African Members of Parliament and an African Local Government, as the bourgeoisie in power would like to have us believe. The working class is demanding a fundamental change, involving getting rid of the colonialist exploiters. By such a change the working class understands the complete disappearance of the system of exploitation and oppression which lies behind all our difficulties. This change must, therefore, of necessity be embodied in a change in the present production relations, *the development of the State sector and of a national industry which will manufacture our agricultural products and minerals within the country itself. It will involve the establishment not only of a consumer goods industry but also of an industry making the means of production.*” [Own italics.—J.W.]

The building of a state sector of the economy is partly done through the government initiating and financing new branches of industry and setting up new plants. Ghana, for example, has taken steps to create its own merchant fleet, at first in conjunction with Israel, but now independently. Civil aviation and other enterprises are also being established by the Ghana Government, as is also being done in Guinea and other independent African states. In all these cases, however, the state sector of the economy is still relatively weak and, generally speaking, has not yet been able to change the fundamental colonial and agrarian character of the economy, under which production remains largely geared

¹ Lamine, Sao Amadou: Secretary of the Regional Federation for Dakar and District of the General Union of Negro African Workers (G.U.N.A.W.). “To Achieve Prosperity Colonialism Must Go”, *World Trade Union Movement*, January 1960, p. 29.

to exports to the industrialised countries in the West, rather than to the needs of the domestic African market.

In some African states consideration is now being given to creating a base for heavy industry, especially an iron and steel base. Such a step, particularly if under state ownership, is essential if real industrialisation is to get under way. For that reason considerable opposition may be expected from the imperialist powers who regard industrialisation of underdeveloped countries as a threat to their own monopoly position.

To discourage African states from expanding their economies and building up their own national industries, the imperialists argue that these countries are too poor and that therefore they must either abandon their ambitious plans or look for outside financial aid. These arguments have been dealt with by Asuquo Ita¹ of Nigeria, who takes strong exception to the proposition that Nigeria is poor in capital and has to rely entirely on foreign capital:

“First, it is not true that Nigeria can find abroad all the capital it needs for developing even at a crippling rate of interest and profit.

Secondly, for economic and political reasons, it is not desirable for Nigeria to strain itself in an effort to lean heavily on foreign capital for development. And thirdly, it is not true that Nigeria is capital-poor, that it cannot from domestic savings sustain the rate of capital investment which its programmes require.”

Asuquo Ita cites the example of the £2,000,000 loan issued by the Nigerian Central Bank: the loan was quickly over-subscribed by £750,000. He adds: “We have to take a firm decision to rely as much as possible on ourselves in this question of capital for development.”

Asuquo Ita's emphasis on Nigeria standing on its own feet finds a welcome echo in an article by Doudou Gueye, editor of the monthly journal *Mali*. Pointing out how prolonged colonialist rule in Mali had resulted in a distorted economy, Doudou Gueye stresses that an underdeveloped country cannot attain full development by relying on external aid instead of on itself.²

¹ *West African Pilot*, June 19, 1959.

² An article in the weekly *L'Essor* (organ of the African Federation Party) published in Bamako, West African Sudan, January 1960.

Imperialism's Achilles Heel

As soon as the African people and their leaders examine their prospects for industrial development and start to consider what internal resources are available, they come up against the reality of the foreign monopolies on their soil. Thus, in addition to creating a state sector of their economy and building up their national industry—and, in fact, precisely in order to do this most rapidly—the African people find that they have to make encroachments on the foreign enterprises. This question of the foreign monopolies is of special importance due to the extent and character of these concerns. As long as these firms retain the major share of the economy in their hands, the new African states will find it extremely difficult to plan their economic development in accordance with their own desires and interests; they are denied the appropriate use of their own valuable natural resources, of their minerals, industrial crops and food supplies for their own economic needs and, in addition, are robbed of the profits which the foreign owners of these resources are able to derive from their possessions.

Increasingly, therefore, the question is being raised in Africa as to what should be done with the foreign undertakings. In explaining, for example, how the necessary capital for development could be accumulated by the Nigerian Federal Government, Asuquo Ita has suggested¹ a ten-year plan under which foreign firms operating in Nigeria should plough back into industry a certain share of their profits, or lend the government finance for development. Further, he suggests, the United Africa Company and the foreign banks in Nigeria should be nationalised.

The least threat on the part of the independent African states to nationalise the foreign enterprises on their soil arouses an immediate reaction from the Western powers.

It is significant that the West German financial magnate Hermann Abs, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the *Deutsche Bank*, when proposing to the Cologne Conference of Bank Directors from Common Market countries that they set up a "private bank information centre",² said that the task of this organisation would be to study and report to the banks concerned "moves violating the principle of property" in underdeveloped countries, and the socialisation and nationalisation of enterprises

¹ Ita, Asuquo: *West African Pilot*, June 19, 1959.

² January 16, 1960.

in these countries. He understandably expressed "regret" over the "endless interference" with the properties of private capital abroad.

Similar attempts to scare off independent African governments from taking justified measures against foreign monopolies have been made by the Council of Europe. A special report on "The Development of Africa" presented to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe argues that investors must be convinced that their investments "will not be endangered by authoritarian action" and goes on to suggest the preparation of an Investment Statute to protect investors' rights.¹

By various forms of economic intimidation, together with psychological pressure, the imperialists attempt to persuade the national bourgeoisie not to nationalise foreign undertakings, threatening to discontinue economic aid, and weakening the confidence and resolve of the national bourgeoisie by propaganda—often backed by threats or displays of force—about the need for foreign "know-how" and technicians. These activities of the imperialists are not entirely without effect. Some national leaders in Nigeria and Ghana, for example, have been persuaded to make pledges not to nationalise foreign enterprises, and have done their best to encourage increased foreign investment in their countries.

Thus in 1958, the five governments of Eastern, Western and Northern Nigeria, and of the South Cameroons and the Federation of Nigeria saw fit to reissue a joint statement first published in 1956 to reaffirm previously given assurances to overseas investors. Amongst other things the statement declared: "The Governments have no plans for nationalising industry beyond the extent to which public utilities are already nationalised, nor do they foresee any such proposals."²

Similarly, Chief Toye Coker, Commissioner for Western Nigeria, in introducing at a London luncheon a new booklet on Western Nigeria—"designed to whet the appetites of overseas investors"³—declared that his government "firmly guaranteed the security of foreign capital against any form of expropriation, sequestration or confiscation".⁴

¹ Council of Europe, Consultative Assembly: Ninth Ordinary Session Documents, Vol. III, No. 701, Strasbourg, 1957 (H.M.S.O.).

² *Federal Nigeria*, August 1958.

³ *West Africa*, October 24, 1959, p. 895.

⁴ *ibid.*

At the same time, since a move against such properties is essential if complete economic independence is to be won, the newly established governments in Africa find it necessary to take certain measures in the direction of bringing foreign concerns more closely under their control. Thus the Ghana Government has stated its intention to take over the Cable and Wireless Company's interests on the expiry of the 1962 licence, is purchasing the forty per cent shares held by the Israeli Zim Navigation Company in the Black Star Shipping Line, is taking over the remaining BOAC shares (some forty per cent) in the Ghana Airways, and proposes buying out five of the seven British gold-mining companies in Ghana. Nigeria is to nationalise the Nigerian Shipping Lines and the Nigerian airways.

Similarly, Guinea has found itself obliged, step by step, to bring the foreign enterprises on its soil more under its control. In August 1960, a number of French banks in Guinea—the National Bank of Commerce and Industry, the Bank of Credit of Lyons, the Bank of West Africa and the General Company—were ordered by the government of Guinea to cease operations. At the end of January 1961, two French companies—Compagnie Africain d'Eau and the Société d'Énergie Électrique de Guinea—were nationalised on the grounds that they had become "imperialist tools to undermine the Development Plan of the Guinean Republic". Diamond mining was also nationalised; and all foreign trade has been under government control from the earliest days of the young republic.

The Republic of Mali, too, has found it necessary to weaken the stranglehold of foreign monopolies on its economy. The Mali Government has already set up an import and export company which will have exclusive rights to market the products collected by the other companies and rural co-operative organisations. Previously, all Mali's imports and exports were handled by French companies.

Immediate nationalisation (whether with or without compensation) is not always the first step to be taken. Much depends on the sector of the economy in question, the size of the undertaking, its role in the total economy, the feeling and the relation of forces in the country, the international situation and so on. Thus, for example, as far as the big foreign oil companies are concerned, the present tendency is for countries whose oil resources are owned by foreign companies to insist on a bigger

share of the revenue as a first concession.¹ Something of this kind has been done by the Liberian Government in relation to the iron ore which is being extracted there. In Ghana, it has been proposed to allow foreign capital an initial share in Ghanaian enterprises, "but afterwards we expect to take much of such mixed enterprise wholly under our own control. *Our ultimate aim is nationalisation of the key branches of production, to be placed in the nation's service*".² [Own italics.—J.W.]

Other measures which have been advocated at different times in order to strengthen the national sector of the economy and weaken the economic influence of big foreign undertakings are limitations on profits and restrictions on the export of capital. All such measures are put forward in order to circumscribe the sphere of action of the foreign enterprises and compel them to operate in a way less harmful to the national economy.

Whatever the specific step taken, experience shows that measures which weaken the economic hold of the foreign monopolies inevitably lead to a strengthening of the national economy and hence of national sovereignty. There is, of course, no slogan or procedure valid for every country and under all circumstances. The only position which the people of underdeveloped countries regard as valid is that the strongholds of the foreign imperialist economy must be attacked. In taking such measures the national movement is carrying forward the fight against imperialism into the economic sphere, tackling the imperialist oppressor in the domain of industry, land, mining, banking, transport and trade, and, when necessary, taking the most drastic measures to wrest economic control from his hands. In acting thus, the national movement is helping to ensure that political independence will be followed by economic independence.

It is significant that the imperialists, whilst prepared to make political concessions to the national movement under duress and in cases where the national movement is not under working-class leadership, react most strongly when there is a move to nationalise their major properties, even if this be done by the national bourgeoisie. This, above all, is its Achilles heel. Thus in Latin

¹ Up to present, the underdeveloped oil-bearing countries have only received a share of the revenue from sales of crude oil; the more profitable stage of oil-refining has been kept as a preserve of the foreign monopolies.

² Botsio, Kojo: op. cit.

America, the expropriation of the oil companies in Mexico in the 1930's, the taking over of United Fruit plantations in Guatemala in the 1950's, and the recent steps against United Fruit and other United States companies in Cuba, all provoked the strongest outbursts from the U.S., leading, in the case of Guatemala, to the overthrow of the Arbenz government by American-backed mercenaries, and to an attempted invasion of the Cuban Republic. Similarly, the moves to nationalise the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Iran, the Suez Canal Company in Egypt, and the big Dutch properties in Indonesia, led to the *coup d'état* against the Mossadeq Government, the military aggression by the Western powers at Suez, and the foreign-backed uprising in Sumatra. One can imagine what would be the reaction if an independent African government in the Congo were to propose nationalising the Katanga mines, or an African government in Northern Rhodesia decided to take over the Copper Belt. And it would be the same, of course, with the South African gold mines.

It is precisely because a move against these enterprises is such a big and important undertaking that the national bourgeoisie is sometimes reluctant, or shows some timidity, in taking such action. In contrast, the working class displays a firmer and more profound understanding of the fundamental needs of the nation. Thus, for example, while the national bourgeoisie in Nigeria is prepared to give assurances to foreign capital regarding the nationalisation of their properties in Nigeria, the Nigerian working-class and trade union movement shows no hesitation in campaigning for the outright nationalisation of such undertakings, as they did, for example, in relation to the tin mines during the big strike at Jos in November 1955.

Similarly, the Nigerian Postal and Telecommunications Workers' Union has called on the Federal Government to take over the Nigerian operations of the Cable and Wireless Company (as has been done in Ghana), but instead the government has renewed the present contract, which expires in 1961, for a further fifteen years.¹

In Ghana there have been many demands raised by the working class and trade unions, especially during the big strikes in the gold mines in 1956, for the government to take action against the British mining companies. Eventually, at the beginning of 1961, the Ghana Government took steps to buy out five

¹ *West Africa*, June 13, 1959, p. 571.

of the main gold-mining companies in British hands—Amalgamated Banket, Ariston, Bremang Gold Dredging, Ghana Main Reef, and Bibiani.

Ghana's Economic Plans

Ghana, as the oldest of the new African states south of the Sahara, has had four years' experience in trying to overcome the effects of the colonial system. Some advances have been made, notably in the field of education,¹ but in the economic sphere the dead hand of imperialism continues to make itself felt.

The imperialists still dominate Ghana's foreign trade, eighty-five per cent of it being in their hands. They are dominant, too in many other branches of the economy.

Ghana still has to import meat, fish and flour, mainly from the United States and Canada. Ghana's gold, diamond, manganese and bauxite production is controlled by such British monopoly groups as Aluminium Company Ltd., African Manganese Co. Ltd., Amalgamated Banket Areas, Ariston, etc. Ghana is one of the largest producers of diamonds in the world, but only one of the nine licensed dealers entitled to buy directly from diggers is a Ghanaian company; the remainder are American, British, Belgian and Dutch. (The Ghana Government has made some attempt to gain more control by insisting that all foreign diamond companies sell their Ghana-produced diamonds at the Accra market instead of on the world markets.) Ghana cocoa farmers have repeatedly pressed for the withdrawal of licences from all foreign firms to act as buying agents for cocoa and other farm produce.

An article by Kwesi,² analysing Ghana's economic problems, has stated: "We are still paying a heavy price for British domination." Stressing foreign domination of Ghana's trade, he has pointed out that foreign corporations are still controlling Ghana's mining, insurance, shipping and warehousing, and even building. From this he draws the conclusion that before there can be any serious economic advance, this foreign domination over the key sectors of Ghana's economy has to be restricted in favour of Ghanaian producers, the co-operatives and an expanding state sector of the economy.

¹ 650,000 children in primary and middle schools, compared with 205,000 in 1950; and over 11,000 in secondary schools compared with 3,000 in 1951.

² Kwesi: *Evening News* (C.P.P. paper, Accra), October 23, 1959.

Imperialist influence is not restricted to open business activities. It also has its representatives, as we have previously seen, in key economic positions in the new Ghana state itself. One result of this continuing imperialist influence is the difficulty with which Ghana is being able to turn her economy—based on the production of raw materials (mainly cocoa) for export to the industrialised capitalist countries—in the direction of a completely independent economy, based on an industrialised sector together with a diversified agriculture no longer dependent on the imperialist-controlled export market, but directed towards the internal market and taking advantage, too, of the possibilities opened up by the existence of a large and ever-growing socialist market.

Lest it be thought an exaggeration to point to the British and British-trained advisers as one of the factors influencing the present economic policy of Ghana, it is instructive to quote from a recent British publication,¹ issued by a firm of advertising agents and directed towards British manufacturers, in which it is openly claimed that it has been the advice and influence of British (and other European) advisers that is responsible for suggesting the increased growing of cocoa and the large-scale growing of a second cash crop, rubber, as substitutes for basic industrialisation:

“The idea of such an *agricultural development scheme*—i.e. a combined drive for increased productivity in the cocoa industry and the development of a second bulk crop (possibly rubber)—is being ‘pushed’ hard by the handful of Dr. Nkrumah’s top economic advisers—nearly all of them *European* experts . . . not very surprisingly, the government planners and advisers often find themselves opposed to higher political and executive levels.

All forms of industrialisation, Westernisation, urbanisation . . . remain ‘the Fetish of the politicians’.

There is therefore a constant tug-of-war between the politicians’ pressure for quick, visible, demonstrable *signs* of achievement and the European (or European-trained) advisers’ plea for logical and gradual planning. It was our impression, for what it’s worth, that finally the advisers will have their way.” [Italics in original.—J.W.]

¹ *Africa—A Continent in Turmoil*, London, 1959, pp. 21–2.

Finally, of course, the Ghanaian people "will have their way" but to do that they will need to cut the hundred-and-one cords (many of them hidden) which still bind Ghana's economy to the interests of Western traders and investors.

The people of Ghana themselves have made many serious charges against the activities of foreign monopolies and their representatives in Ghana, even alleging deliberate sabotage of the country's economic development. The Manufacturing and Industrial Workers' Union, for instance, has charged the British manager of the Industrial Development Corporation with keeping Ghanaian matches off the market, in collaboration with the U.A.C.¹ Commenting on this, and the subsequent dismissal of the manager (officially on other grounds than that referred to by the Union), the Accra *Evening News* recalled that attempts had been made to undermine Ghana's new tile and brick-making factory by importing cement into Ghana. It also stated that foreign monopolies had played a sinister game by landing machines without spare parts, and then paying scoundrels to remove vital parts of the machines.²

The Ghana people and government have also met with difficulties from the imperialists on the question of the big Volta dam scheme. The Volta River Project can be of great help to Ghana's economic development, both in industry and in agriculture. It is a complete regional development scheme, including hydro-electric power, bauxite mining, aluminium production, port facilities, road, rail and lake transport, fisheries, and irrigation. The project would involve the building of a dam 350 ft. high, a 300-mile-long 2,500 sq. mile reservoir, a hydro-electric power station producing 750,000 kW, an aluminium reduction and smelting plant with an ultimate capacity of 210,000 tons of aluminium a year, and a new deep-water port and town. If fulfilled this scheme could help Ghana to escape her dependence on cocoa and the vagaries of the world market, and open up the way to a considerable expansion of the economy.

The history of this scheme is instructive. Originally published in 1951, when Ghana was still a British colony, the Gold Coast, the Volta River Project was, in principle, accepted by the colonial government. A major preoccupation of British imperialism at that time was dollar-earning; and a key form in which these dollars

¹ *Evening News* (Accra), July 20, 1959.

² *ibid.*

were being earned was by the sale to the United States, for stock-piling purposes, of mineral resources. Tin, gold, copper, manganese, bauxite, aluminium, uranium and many other valuable minerals poured from the mines of Africa across the Atlantic. But the project to develop the Volta River region dragged on. It was not until 1956 that the government's commission on the scheme was published—and by then Ghana was on the eve of political independence. British imperialism now had doubts about the whole plan; in fact, "enthusiasm for the project had evaporated".¹ The reasons for this change in attitude were simply those of economic self-interest on the part of imperialism.

When Ghana gained her political independence in March 1957, the Volta River Project took on a new importance. It now became a major item in Ghana's plans for economic development and the strengthening of her independence. Certain elements of the scheme, the Volta bridge (completed in 1956) and the Port of Tema (already under construction), were begun during the transition period before Ghana had gained her full independence, but when African ministers already had considerable powers.

With full political independence won, Ghana has made considerable efforts to get the complete project under way. For some three years, despite considerable discussions, it seemed that Ghana was having no more success in raising the funds in the West than Egypt had in her attempts to raise money for the Aswan High Dam. The total cost of the Volta scheme has been put at £200,000,000 to £300,000,000. By the middle of 1960, after the Ghana Government had allocated £1,000,000 to the Kaiser Aluminium and Chemical Corporation of California for preliminary work on designing the project and constructing roads and housing near the site, it was announced that the dam would be built at Akosombo. The dam and power plant will cost nearly £60,000,000. The World Bank will loan £14,300,000, the United States Government £10,700,000, and the United Kingdom £5,000,000—a total of £30,000,000. Ghana is to raise the other £30,000,000 from her own resources. All three loans are subject to the condition that the Ghana Government makes a satisfactory agreement with the companies who will construct the smelter at Tema which is to be the main consumer of the Akosombo power. The companies concerned with the Tema smelter, brought

¹ *The Times Supplement on Ghana*, November 9, 1959.

together by Kaisers, have formed an international consortium, the Volta Aluminium Company.

For the international monopolies, the major preoccupation—and the reason that some funds have been advanced—is with the prospects of cheap power and hence of the possibilities of producing cheap aluminium. It is hoped to produce 210,000 tons a year as soon as possible. But so far, from the side of the big Western monopolies, there appears to be no undue haste to put up the money for the entire £300,000,000 project. No doubt they are not over-enthusiastic about a scheme which, in the hands of a government devoted to Ghana's complete economic independence, might not prove beneficial to their longer-term interests. It is not without significance that shortly before the decision of the World Bank and the United States to help finance the building of the dam at Akosombo, a Ghanaian Parliamentary delegation visited the Soviet Union. It was reported at the time that Ghanaian representatives had stated that "if no investment is forthcoming from the West by the end of this year" [i.e. 1960—J.W.], for helping the Volta scheme, then Ghana would "look to the East".¹ Possibly this knowledge played its part in the Western decision to advance some £30,000,000, towards the Akosombo dam and power plant. In any event, the Soviet Union has agreed to assist the Volta scheme.¹

An examination of the steps taken by Ghana, and of her plans for further economic development, helps to illustrate both the obstacles to making progress and the major tasks still to be tackled before Ghana has won through to economic independence.

Ghana's eight-year "First and Consolidated Plan" was begun in 1951, before Ghana won political independence. This plan had all the earmarks of imperialist planning, with the accent on communications and an almost total neglect of industry.

Nearly a third of the funds in the First Plan went on communications and less than five per cent on industry and trade. Clearly there was no emphasis here on any basic change in Ghana's colonial economy.

The Second Development Plan, 1959–64, apart from doubling the allocations for development over a much shorter period, shows a certain difference in the pattern of development planned. Industry and trade now constitutes 10.4 per cent of total planned

¹ Nora Beloff: *Observer*, May 22, 1960.

² See below, p. 286, for further details.

development as against the previous 4·7, and the amount thus allocated is £25,300,000 as against the previous £5,500,000. More important still, a further £100,000,000 is set aside for hydro-electric development arising from the Volta Project.

For agriculture, the Plan lays down six main targets: to increase the yield of cocoa; to establish rubber and bananas as a major industry; to lay the foundations of a cattle industry; to raise the yield of cereals in the North of Ghana; to bring the Volta flood plains under irrigation; to promote the use of fertilisers. This agricultural programme, if fulfilled, would widen the basis of Ghana's economy, and place it on a much sounder level. In particular, the envisaged expansion of food production will enable Ghana to cut down on her costly food imports which doubled between 1951 and 1957, and in the latter year amounted to eighteen per cent of the value of all imports.

The experience of Ghana since her liberation shows how difficult is the task of following up political independence with economic independence. In many ways, the creation of a really independent economy presents a far more complex problem than that of gaining political power and establishing an independent government. The apparent contradictions between the utterances of many African national leaders, or the divergence between their words and their deeds in the realm of creating an independent economy are to be explained partly by their own class position, outlook and aspirations which tend to weaken any consistent principled stand against imperialism, and partly by the pressure of the capitalist world of which they feel themselves a part. One can see from the countries in Latin America the extent to which prolonged economic dependence on a powerful imperialist power can result in the loss once again of genuine political independence, with the consequent necessity of reconquering it after much misery, pain and bloodshed.

The changed international situation, the strength of the socialist camp, the awakening of the former subject peoples throughout the world, their solidarity with one another and their growing recognition, as expressed in the resolutions of the Third All-African People's Conference in 1961, of imperialism's plans to maintain and extend its economic grip even if compelled to loosen its political hold, incline one to believe that the African people will not allow themselves to be pushed off the road they are taking towards the completion of their liberation.

Is Western Investment Necessary?

One of the arguments often advanced by western economists, politicians and commentators is that the new African states need Western capital and know-how, and that, in fact, they cannot manage without it.

"The newly emerging nations of Africa," argues the *Herald Tribune* special correspondent, "have the choice of accepting the white man's financial help and know-how or dooming themselves to economic stagnation . . . They lack the capital, the experience and the skills to go ahead rapidly on their own."¹

No one can deny that Africa lacks capital, but what is so often overlooked or deliberately omitted is in what form and on what terms is the capital to be provided, and to what use will it be put. Inducements to Western monopolies (accompanied by low taxation rates, pledges of no nationalisation and facilities for withdrawing record profits) to *invest* in Africa mean, in effect, putting Africa once more into pawn to the imperialist powers. Such investments will tend to flow into those enterprises, especially minerals, which are most profitable to the monopolies themselves, and will be of little assistance, if any, in building up a balanced economy, with a modern industry and a prosperous, diversified agriculture. Moreover, investments are only one form in which a new state can attract or obtain capital. Loans, too, can be obtained from external sources—and if not from the West, then it is possible that socialist countries will be prepared to advance the necessary credits. The advantage of loans over investments (provided that there are no strings attached to the loans) is that they do not involve the handing over of any resources or enterprise to the actual ownership of an external agent. Furthermore, if made direct to the government, such loans facilitate the state planning of the economy.

Capital can also be accumulated within a given country—and internal loans, too, can be floated. Yet the idea persists, amongst some Africans, too, that Western investments are the only road to industrial development.

If one wants to talk about the aid which the imperialist powers can give Africa then one can simply suggest that they return all the millions of pounds which they have taken from this continent

¹ Steele, A. T.: "African Republics Need White Man's Help", *Herald Tribune*, July 10, 1959.

over the past six decades. This, of course, is not likely to happen; but what the African people are increasingly demanding is that the imperialist countries stop exploiting them, that they hand back the land, mines and other natural resources which they at present hold, that they stop putting obstacles in the way of industrialisation, that they give up their domination of African trade, banking and commerce—in a word, that they get off Africa's back.

If that were done, then the question—'Where can we obtain the capital we need for development?' would not be so difficult to answer. It has been estimated that American investments in Africa yield an annual profit of over thirty per cent. In other words, the United States investors receive back their capital in about three years, and after that everything is profit. Similarly, many British, French and other firms make fabulous profits in Africa—sometimes topping one hundred per cent. Clearly, investment from the West means that more is taken out than is put in. It is not that capital cannot be accumulated within Africa. Such accumulation is taking place all the time. But the capital so accumulated is largely pumped out of Africa to the West, because foreign investment has placed the key enterprises in the hands of Western monopolies. In other words, investment results in robbery.¹ And yet some people still call such investment "aid", and claim that it is essential to building up the economy of Africa.

It is sometimes argued that investments need not have this effect, that they could be made available to newly-developing countries without any conditions, directed into those industries or new projects that the government of the recipient country decides, and diverting the major part of the profits into the further expansion of such industries instead of into the pockets of overseas investors. The only answer to this argument is that in no under-developed country has such a phenomenon yet been observed.

Reliance on foreign investments as the key to industrial development is therefore no solution. The fact that an under-developed country can make rapid progress in every field without reliance on foreign investments is provided by the experience of the Soviet Union. The five Soviet republics of Central Asia—

¹ For more details, see the present author's *Africa—The Roots of Revolt*, Chapter 8, "Africa—Rich or Poor?"

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Turkmenia and Tajikistan—formerly amongst the most backward and underdeveloped regions, increased their output of large-scale industry more than sixty times over between 1913 and 1960. Kazakhstan, for instance, now produces as many manufactured goods per head as Italy and as much electric power per head as Japan. In Central Asia as a whole the annual generation of electricity is nine times the generation of power in the whole of Russia before the Revolution and equals 800 kWh per head per year, compared with 95 kWh in neighbouring Turkey, 36 in Iran and 11 in Pakistan.

Before the Revolution the Azerbaijan Republic, like so many African countries today, had to import almost everything, from matches to the simplest of machines. Today, it exports more than 120 industrial items and equipment to countries in Europe, Asia and Africa. Azerbaijan now produces, per head of the population, more electric power than Italy or France, more steel than Japan or Italy, and more cement than Japan. Azerbaijan industry turns out today mobile power generators, oil industry machinery, television sets, electrical goods, synthetic rubber and many other items.

Or take little Armenia. Formerly a backward agrarian region, with even its agriculture in a state of decay, Armenia today is a thriving industrial state, generating forty per cent more electricity in a single day than it did in the whole of 1913. With its 1958 volume of industrial output fifty-five times greater than in 1913, Armenia has one of the Soviet Union's largest electrical machinery plants and one of its most important chemical factories. The output of light industry in 1958 was forty-three times greater than in 1913, and of the food industry twenty times greater.

Similar figures of economic growth could be given for every Soviet republic. But it is not only a matter of production. The people themselves have directly benefited from this progress, materially and culturally. In the whole of Armenia in 1913 there were only 73 doctors and 212 hospital beds. Now there are over 4,000 doctors and 10,000 other medical workers, and a total of 257 hospitals.

Or take education. Formerly there was not a single college in the entire territory of Armenia. Today it has eleven higher educational institutions, and three times as many college students per 10,000 inhabitants as France, eight times as many as Turkey and thirty times as many as Iran. The republic now has

sixty-nine research institutions with more than 3,000 scientific workers.

Turn to Uzbekistan. Before the Revolution there were only 128 doctors—and those were concentrated in a few centres. Smallpox, typhus, malaria and other diseases carried off thousands every year. Today these diseases no longer exist. And the republic has almost 10,000 doctors, or one for every 850 persons.

The experience of the formerly backward and underdeveloped regions of the Soviet Union shows only too well that without foreign investments politically independent people can make the most rapid progress in every sphere of human endeavour.

This is borne out by China's experience, too. China won her liberation in 1949 in the course of a national revolution led by the Chinese working class. This revolution consisted in the victory of the national front of workers, peasants, intellectuals and national capitalists over the forces of imperialism, bureaucratic and compradore capitalism and feudalism. Working-class leadership was able to ensure that political victory was followed by economic victory. No one in China asks, as they do in Nigeria, "When are we going to have *economic* independence?", for the simple reason that China's political and military victory of 1949 was speedily followed up by a series of economic measures which not only broke the back of feudalism in China, but also destroyed utterly the economic grip of the imperialist undertakings which had hitherto held China in thrall. With these steps taken, it then became possible to unleash the people's tremendous creative power which had previously been buried beneath a mountain of poverty and oppression, and to make phenomenal economic progress in all fields.

CHINA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH, 1949-1959

	<i>Coal</i>	<i>Electric</i>	<i>Steel</i>	<i>Grain</i>
	(million tons)	(million kWh)	(million tons)	(million tons)
1949 (Year of Liberation)	32	4,310	0.1	108
1958 (Year of "Great Leap")	270	27,500	8.0*	250
1959	348	41,500	13.35*	270

*Not including locally produced steel for local needs.

China, formerly one of the most economically backward and poverty-stricken areas in the world, is rapidly becoming one of the most advanced countries, and has set herself the task of overtaking Britain in the production of major items within about ten years. China is now the third largest coal producer in the world (formerly ninth), the eleventh steel producer (twenty-sixth), and eleventh for electrical power (twenty-fifth). She now produces her own large power generators, blast furnaces and open-hearth furnaces, aircraft, motor vehicles and tractors, ocean-going vessels and textile machinery, and a whole range of machine-tools. In fact, many of these products are now available for export. Her annual rate of industrial expansion for the six years ended 1958 was 24.9 per cent, compared with 1.2 per cent for the United States, 3.3 per cent for Britain, 7.5 per cent for France, 8.9 per cent for West Germany and 12.8 per cent for Japan. In 1949 industry constituted 30 per cent of China's total production; by 1958 it was 63.6 per cent.

A year before China's liberation, the U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall, in a statement which he read to the Congress Committees on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations, February 1948, asserted that "China does not itself possess the raw material and industrial resources" which would enable her to become a first-class power within the foreseeable future. This prophecy, so similar to those currently made regarding the possibilities of economic progress in Africa, has been demolished by life itself, by the realities of China's stupendous progress in the past ten years.

On the eve of China's liberation, Mao Tse-tung declared confidently at the opening ceremony of the Preparatory Committee of the People's Consultative Conference in Peking, June 1949:

"The Chinese people will see that, once its destiny is in the hands of the people, China will, like the rising sun in the east, flood the earth with its brilliant rays, swiftly wash away the dirt left behind by the reactionary government, heal the war wounds and build up a new, strong, and prosperous people's democratic republic of China which will be true to its name."

There is no doubt that once the people of Africa take their

destiny truly into their own hands and liquidate all vestiges of colonialism, including the imperialist economic stranglehold on their economy, they, too, will be able to “wash away the dirt left behind” by imperialism and build a “new, strong and prosperous” society.

The reasons for China’s striking successes have been explained by her Prime Minister in these words:

“If the Chinese people had not overthrown imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism which weighed upon them like three great mountains, they would, as a matter of course, only find themselves for ever plunged in poverty and backwardness. And if, after toppling these mountains, they had not taken the road of socialism at once, had not carried out thoroughly the socialist revolution, or had not embarked on planned socialist construction, but, after achieving national independence, had taken the road to capitalism like some other countries, they could not possibly have made such progress in the past ten years, not to mention the big leap forward that has taken place since last year.”¹

One has only to think of India, which won her political independence two years earlier than China, but which has still to conquer her own “great mountains”, including feudalism and imperialist economic influence, to appreciate the force of Chou En-lai’s statement. In the years 1950–9 the average increase in the industrial output in China was twenty-nine per cent, as against only five per cent in India.

An important reason for China’s economic successes has been the co-operation between herself and the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. is helping China construct 291 important enterprises and is providing equipment for many existing Chinese factories. In the past ten years more than 11,000 Soviet experts have gone to China to give technical assistance in building and starting up enterprises constructed with Soviet aid, and in the same period some 8,000 Chinese experts and industrial workers have had industrial experience at Soviet factories. Many other forms of Soviet assistance have been given and expansive trade is carried on between the two countries, to their mutual benefit.

Thus China, formerly one of the most backward countries in

¹ Chou En-lai: “A Great Decade”, article in *Renmin Ribao*, October 6, 1959.

the world, is rapidly becoming an advanced country. This has been done not by relying on Western aid, but on the contrary, by relying on her own resources and the creative energy and genius of her own people, together with the support of the other socialist countries. By pursuing such a policy, China is now able herself to assist the newly emerging African nations, as is demonstrated in the Agreement on Economic and Technical Co-operation signed with Guinea, in September 1960. Under this agreement China will grant Guinea a non-interest-bearing loan of £9,000,000, to be repaid over the ten years 1970 to 1979, and to be used by China to supply technicians, experts and skilled workers, complete sets of equipment, machinery, materials, and techniques, and assistance in the training of technicians and skilled workers of the Republic of Guinea.

Experience proves "that the Chinese people not only can live without begging from the imperialists, but can live much better than in the past".¹

Agricultural Reform

Alongside their efforts to build up industry, the newly independent African states are considering how best to develop their agriculture. They emphasise that a first priority must be to give land to the land-hungry—and that means, in the first place, to restore to the African people the best lands which, in most territories, have been taken away for use by the European settlers.²

But this is regarded as only an initial step. African peasants will need credits, and help with seed, irrigation and fertilisers, as well as machines.

Furthermore, the question of the marketing of agricultural products demands a fundamental change from the present position, not only in the control of the market—away from European control to that of the African people—but also a change in the character of the market. The market, in effect, will become one linked to domestic consumption—personal and industrial—instead of being subordinated to the interests of the overseas industries of the imperialist powers.

¹ Li Hsien-nien: "China's Great Financial Achievements during the Past Ten Years", *Peking Review*, November 24, 1959, p. 8.

² For more details and a fuller treatment of the land question in Africa, see the present author's *Africa—The Roots of Revolt*, Chapter 1.

Agriculture will also become more diversified; and in particular steps will be taken to encourage a greater production of essential foodstuffs for local consumption, both to raise the people's standard of living and also to help the national economy as a whole by ending the necessity to import elementary foodstuffs, a form of trade which is wasteful of foreign currency that could otherwise be used to purchase much-needed machinery. It is along such lines that changes are already being made in some African territories, as, for instance, Ghana and Guinea.

In transforming African agriculture, much emphasis is being placed on the role of co-operatives—both in the sphere of production and in marketing. The types of co-operative farming that develop in Africa will no doubt have their own distinctive characteristics and methods, influenced in part by the traditional forms of communal holding and working of land. At the same time, as the resolutions passed by the first three All-African People's Conferences and by those of the Independent African States indicate, the African people do not intend to allow traditions or customs to act as a cover for feudal forces and feudal types of oppression and exploitation which still exist in parts of Africa. These, too, will be swept aside along with the colonial system which retained and nourished them as a barrier against the movement for national liberation. And with their passing new possibilities will arise to extend democracy in the countryside and to release the initiative of the awakened people.

§ 2 SOCIALIST AID

The imperialist powers regard the question of the economically underdeveloped areas of the world solely in terms of the "cold war", of keeping these countries "with the West", by which they mean maintaining them as fields for imperialist exploitation and as political and military bases. Even their apparent readiness, in some cases, to come to terms with the developing national movements and, if forced, make political concessions is motivated by these same designs. To keep Africa on the side of "the West" means to retain Africa in the imperialist camp; and as long as Africa remains within the imperialist orbit it is impossible even for politically independent African states to eliminate the relics of colonialism within the national economy.

Western "Aid"

One of the principal forms through which the imperialist powers are striving to retain their hold on the economically underdeveloped countries is through the provision of "aid".

Western "aid" or "advice", whether it comes in the form of technicians, loans, investments or trade, is directed towards a continuation of the robbery which is a hallmark of colonialism, and is accompanied by economic and political strings, as well as by manoeuvres to ensnare the recipient countries in military alliances. When an imperialist monopoly invests money or builds an enterprise in a foreign country, that enterprise usually belongs to the monopoly, or conditions are imposed to grant the monopoly a share in management and in profits. In particular, imperialist "aid" is concerned to slow up, or even prevent, real industrialisation taking place in economically underdeveloped countries for it realises that industrialisation strengthens independence and restricts the ability of imperialism to control a country's economic policy.

In other words Western "aid"—and I do not speak here of the hundred-and-one minor snags connected with such aid (the high cost of technicians, the tendency of such experts to string out their jobs merely for their own personal financial advantage, the mistakes such technicians often make at the expense of the underdeveloped countries, and so on)—is based primarily on the interests of the imperialist countries, not on that of the countries needing economic assistance.

Warning African nations against the dangers of accepting dollar aid, Ladipo Fasade¹ has written that "such countries should remember the Aswan dam trouble of 1956. Both America and Britain withdrew their aid to Egypt simply because Nasser would not yield to their terms". Counselling extreme caution, he adds: "If a European colonial power promises to help Africa one can be sure that it is a fake promise or that such a country has some other interest."

A recent study,² prepared in the United States for important

¹ *Daily Service* (Lagos), August 20, 1959.

² Berliner, Joseph S.: *Soviet Economic Aid: The New Aid and Trade Policy in Underdeveloped Countries*, New York, 1958. (Published for the Council on Foreign Relations whose Chairman is John J. McCloy, Vice-President David Rockefeller, and whose directors include many other familiar American business names.)

business interests, is compelled to admit that Western economic aid to underdeveloped countries is by no means disinterested, but on the contrary motivated by considerations of economic and military self-interest. The West, we are told, "has an economic stake" in underdeveloped countries. "Many industrial raw materials that are vital to the welfare of the West, such as tin, rubber, oil, and now uranium ore, are imported from these countries. They are also the source of important foodstuffs such as coffee, tea, tropical fruits, cocoa."¹

Regarding "aid" in the form of military activities, Berliner admits that "a large proportion of United States government economic aid takes the form of 'defence support' to countries that receive United States military assistance".²

If one really wishes to assess the value and purpose of United States "aid", one need merely note the direction of American aid funds and the proportion of these funds which is spent on purely military matters. In the twelve years 1945 to the end of 1957 the United States allocated as foreign "aid" of all kinds a total of \$59,500,000,000. Of this total, no less than \$20,700,000,000 was officially for military purposes. Of the remaining \$38,800,000,000 allocated for economic purposes sixty-four per cent (\$24,900,000,000) went to Western Europe—scarcely the most underdeveloped region of the world; clearly other considerations—profitability, "anti-communism", military "positions of strength"—were uppermost in the minds of the dispensers of American "aid". As for the underdeveloped countries, they received much less; and even amongst them priority was given to direct American clients such as Chiang Kai-shek (\$1,400,000,000), or the governments in South Korea, South Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Very little was left for Africa. The Bolton Report shows that for the period 1945-55, Africa received only 0.15 per cent of the "aid" funds from the United States. American loans give the same picture. In the 1945-55 period, of total U.S. loans of about \$16,000,000,000, Africa received \$342,000,000, or a little over two per cent; and even of this nearly half went to the Union of South Africa, the most industrially developed region of Africa.

If the whole purpose of American "aid" was to give genuine assistance to *underdeveloped* countries, then clearly it is these countries that would be given priority as regards "aid" funds,

¹ Berliner: *op. cit.*, p. 3.

² *ibid.*, p. 66.

and not, as at present, the NATO bloc. Experience shows, ironically enough, that Africa is fortunate in not being one of the regions of the world which receives the bulk of the United States "aid".

It is precisely those underdeveloped territories that have received most American "aid"—such as South Korea, South Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Turkey—which reveal the deepest crises in their economy—inflation, mass unemployment, stagnation or deterioration in national industries, food shortages, dumping of foreign goods, unfavourable balance of payments; and, as essential political accompaniments of this "aid", brutal dictatorships or tendencies in that direction.

The experience of American "aid" is now so widespread that the "Ugly American" now feels constrained to push his influence in new forms, using various international agencies, including those of the United Nations, for this purpose. One enthusiastic advocate¹ of these neo-colonialist methods favours "assistance" to Africa by Western powers "on a bilateral basis or on a special consortium basis" within the framework of a special "flexible multilateral organisation . . ." which would group the Western powers with the African territories, both dependent and independent.

Rivkin makes no secret of the political aim behind this new form of tying Africa to the West. In fact, with a naïveté which would be almost disarming if one ignored the hard facts of imperialist intentions and appetites, he blandly explains that this proposal of a new multilateral form of providing "aid" should "make it easier for independent African states to accept free world assistance without exposing themselves to the charge . . . of seeming to exchange one colonial overlord (i.e. the former metropole) for another (i.e. the United States)".

What Kind of Aid is Needed?

When talking about "aid", the imperialist powers lump together loans (at high interest rates), investments, military equipment, dumping of surplus—and often shoddy or mouldy—goods, under one general heading, and contrast this "amount" of aid with the amount provided by the U.S.S.R. and by other

¹ Rivkin, Arnold: "The Politics of African Development External Aid". Speech to the Economic Society of Ghana, November 5, 1959, reproduced in the Society's monthly journal, *The Economic Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 11, November 1959, pp. 18-19.

socialist countries. The amount of aid, in fact, which is already being provided by the socialist countries is already considerable; and what is more, it is growing rapidly and would grow even more if the Soviet Union's proposals for complete world disarmament were put into effect.

But even more important, at this stage, than "how much" is "what kind". Aid is really only of value to the underdeveloped countries if it helps them to overcome their underdevelopment and to become fully developed countries, economically speaking.

What is "underdevelopment"? What is its cause? What are its effects?

It is by answering these questions that we shall best be in a position to see who is really helping the underdeveloped countries. If we look at these countries the first thing that strikes one is that all of them, whether they are under the direct political rule of the Western imperialist powers, or whether they have won, to one degree or another, political independence, have an economy which is basically colonial.¹

They are compelled by imperialist economic might to serve as raw material appendages for Western industry and Western food consumption. Their valuable mineral wealth—oil, gold, diamonds, copper, iron ore, manganese, cobalt, tin, silver, bauxite, uranium, and so on—as well as their food and industrial crops are shipped to the West, for consumption by Western industry and trade. Underdeveloped countries have little, or no, industry of their own. At most, only the preliminary processing of raw materials is done on the spot while the final industrial use of the material is reserved for the metropolitan countries. Thus these countries are prevented from producing for themselves the manufactured goods which they require, but must buy them from other sources, usually the imperialist countries. As a result, the underdeveloped countries are forced to give up their natural riches to the imperialists at the lowest possible price, but have to pay correspondingly higher prices for the goods the imperialist powers dump on them. Imperialist ownership of trade, shipping, banking and insurance all helps to preserve this economic relationship.

¹ China, of course, is not included in this category, since she has already left the ranks of underdeveloped countries—thanks to her socialist system—and is rapidly heading to a position among the more economically developed countries in the world. In fact, China herself is already aiding underdeveloped countries.

Between 1957 and 1959, the exports of the underdeveloped countries rose thirteen per cent in volume, yet their purchasing power has been kept down by the fall in prices of the goods they receive. Between 1951 and 1959, the terms of trade of such countries (i.e. export prices divided by import prices) deteriorated by thirteen per cent. Thus the gap between the industrially developed countries in the West and the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America continually widens.

In short, the underdeveloped countries are deliberately held back by imperialism, so as not to be able to compete, and are thus maintained as a source of "super-profits" for the Western powers.

Under these conditions, the accumulation of capital by the peoples of the underdeveloped countries proceeds slowly and on a relatively small scale. Local agriculture stagnates or deteriorates, unable to provide funds for machines, seeds, fertilisers, pest-killing chemicals, or for large-scale irrigation, afforestation, land-clearance or drainage of swamps. On the land, in building, transport, forestry, even frequently in the mines, the most common machine is the human body—hands, feet, shoulders, back, and sometimes head being pressed into service to carry goods or to mould raw materials with the simplest of tools. Extreme poverty, disease, illiteracy, squalid slums are the natural accompaniments of such an economic base.

Such is the outcome of colonial rule—and even in those countries where political independence has been established, the heritage of colonial rule remains the major obstacle to economic advance; and while imperialist monopolies still hold the commanding heights of economic power, there is little chance of breaking through the barriers of "underdevelopment" unless an energetic challenge is made to these monopolies and their economic power taken away—either in one fell swoop, or by stages, depending on the internal and external circumstances.

The Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries have shown that the quickest and most successful way out of underdevelopment is to leap over into socialism. This has not yet been possible for many underdeveloped states, for a variety of reasons, and they therefore have great difficulty in getting on their feet. Thus aid to underdeveloped countries is a very real need.

Aid, if it is to be effective, must help to destroy the old colonial

pattern of economy. *And the key to doing this is to industrialise.* The Soviet Union, which, through its own experience, has proved the correctness of this contention, is willing to assist other countries making progress in the same manner. The Western powers, in contrast, look with disfavour on the newly independent states trying to build up their economies.

“Many Western economists,” pointed out Khrushchov in his speech to the workers at the Bhilai iron and steel works in India, a project built with Soviet aid, “maintain that such countries as India would do better to renounce industrial development and in the future concentrate on the production of agricultural goods and certain types of minerals, selling them cheaply abroad and importing manufactured goods and equipment at exorbitant prices.

We have always been against such ‘theories’ and consider that all countries can and should have their own highly developed national industry—the cornerstone of national independence . . .

It is only industrialisation that enables countries economically underdeveloped as a result of domination by the colonialists to overcome their backwardness and attain prosperity.”¹

Not all industrial development is industrialisation. The difference is important, because the industrial changes which are undoubtedly taking place in many underdeveloped areas of the world through the technical and financial intervention of the imperialist powers are, in fact, designed to strengthen the grip of imperialism and step up the economic robbery and exploitation of the country receiving the “aid”.

Thus, for example, throughout Africa the imperialists are sinking millions of pounds into developing transport and communications. But this is not to assist Africa. On the contrary, it is intended to make it easier to transport the wealth of Africa to the metropolitan centres of manufacture in Europe and the United States. Heavy Western investments are being made to increase the output of minerals in Africa. This, too, is not to “aid” Africa, but to rob Africa and aid the imperialists. In many parts of Africa

¹ Khrushchov, N. S.: *The Soviet Union—Faithful Friend of the Peoples Fighting for Independence*, Speeches during his Asian Tour, February-March 1960. Soviet Booklet, No. 68, pp. 19-20.

the railways run straight from mountains containing valuable mineral ores down to the sea-ports, so that millions of tons of wealth can be shipped away.

Imperialist economists call this robbery "aid" or "industrial development", and even "industrialisation". But industrialisation means the construction of machines which can produce the means of production; that is to say, machines which can make machines and machine-tools, so that a country can manufacture its own main requirements. Such a modern engineering industry must have its base in an iron and steel industry, electric power and chemicals. It is precisely this kind of industrial development which the socialist countries are willing to assist.¹

The imperialist powers and the socialist powers differ fundamentally on this question. In short, imperialism wants to prevent the underdeveloped countries from becoming industrialised, while the socialist countries favour industrialisation. This means that imperialism wants the underdeveloped countries to remain underdeveloped, while the socialist countries want to assist them to overcome their economic backwardness, and so strengthen their national independence and raise their people's standards of living.

"Soviet Aid is Different"

The differing attitudes of the Soviet Union and the United States as regards the industrialisation of underdeveloped countries is well illustrated by the following example:

"When the government of Pakistan was bitterly split on the question of whether the nation could afford a new steel mill, United States foreign aid officials supported those who argued against undertaking the project at that time. The Russians stepped into the controversy with a grand offer to build and finance a steel mill for the Pakistani People."²

This difference of opinion and policy between the Soviet Union and the United States regarding a new steel mill for Pakistan is no isolated example, but expresses a fundamental divergence between the two countries on the whole question of industrialisation. In

¹ It is of significance that, through Soviet assistance, countries such as Indonesia, Ceylon, and others are now to have an iron and steel industry.

² Berliner: *op. cit.*, p. 19.

fact, Berliner states¹ that while the Soviet Union “consistently supports” the industrialisation of underdeveloped countries, “the place of industrialisation in economic development” has become a “major issue on which Western economists often find themselves in conflict with the representatives of underdeveloped countries”.

Equally, if not more striking than the example of Pakistan, is the story of the Aswan High Dam. Egypt originally asked the West for aid to build the dam, but the offers had so many political strings attached that Egypt could not accept. And it was not merely the strings; the Western powers, in fact, were not at all keen to lend funds to assist such an important industrial scheme.² When, to assist its economic development, Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal Company, the Western powers launched their attack against Suez. Subsequently, it was the Soviet Union which made an agreement to assist the building of the Aswan High Dam, granting a credit for this purpose of 400,000,000 roubles (over £35,000,000).³

After the first stage of the dam had commenced, the Cairo newspapers reported a shower of tenders from banks and companies in the United States, Britain, Western Germany, Italy and Japan, all offering to finance the second stage. To their surprise and bitter annoyance it was made known in January 1960 that the Soviet Union had accepted the United Arab Republic's invitation to build the second stage of the dam. There were good reasons for the U.A.R.'s attitude. Not only does the Soviet Union provide aid without strings but, as *The Times* correspondent admitted (January 19, 1960), the Soviet technicians introduced considerable modifications to the original Western plans which meant considerable savings to the U.A.R. In fact, the Soviet proposals enabled the costs for the first stage of the dam to be cut fifteen per cent and the period for its completion to be cut by one

¹ Berliner: op. cit., p. 155.

² An interesting sidelight on the reasons for the West's reluctance to put up the funds for the Aswan Dam is provided by Desmond Stewart. In his book, *Young Egypt* (London, 1958), Stewart explains: “Agriculturally such a dam would make possible a great increase in Egypt's most valuable crop: cotton. This was recognised as a menace by the southern cotton-growers in America. These at once constituted themselves into a lobby working against American participation in the financing of the High Dam” (p. 141).

³ This is only part of the aid granted by the Soviet Union to the United Arab Republic. For the Egyptian region alone some 1,100,000,000 roubles credits have been granted, apart from credits granted in October 1957 to the Syrian region. (References here, in text and footnote, are to *old* roubles.)

year. For the second stage of the dam, the Soviet Union will grant the United Arab Republic a loan of over £80,000,000.

The Soviet Union has also built Egypt its first cotton mill. This new mill is staffed by Egyptian engineers, technicians and workers who have been trained in the U.S.S.R. Hitherto all Egyptian cotton, for which she is world famous, has had to be exported to the mills of other countries. Now Egypt will spin her own cotton.

The industrial development of Egypt, now taking place with the aid of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, is bringing about the realisation of the dreams of Egypt's most advanced thinkers and national figures of the last century. Well over a hundred years ago Muhammad Ali had plans to build Egyptian industry. If these plans could have been carried out, says Issawi,¹ "Egypt might have emerged into the twentieth century as a small-scale Japan". In the 1870's the demand for industrialisation arose afresh. Husain al-Masaafi, in his work *The Eight Words*, argued:

" . . . Why should we not import the industries themselves, instead of the manufactured articles? . . . The country once had a flourishing wool industry; but the landowners no longer care to keep sheep. They make quicker profits by selling crops . . . It is imperative that we lessen our dependence on foreign materials by promoting what we can produce in our country and by developing the crafts that exist among us."

But British occupation and the iron rule of Lord Cromer soon put an end to such hopes. Cromer was an open opponent of the industrialisation of Egypt and, in the manner of our twentieth-century colonialists, argued that Egypt was unsuitable and her people too backward to embark on industrialisation. There were, of course, cold, hard reasons for his attitude. "Lancashire," Desmond Stewart reminds us, "wanted Egypt as a cotton-farm. . . . Lancashire wanted to export woven cotton cloths to Egypt, not to see the cotton machined in Egypt."²

And so, to suit the interests of British manufacturers, Egypt was maintained as a "cotton-farm" and no cotton was machined in Egypt.

¹ Issawi, Charles: *Egypt at Mid-Century*, London.

² Stewart, Desmond: *Young Egypt*, London, 1958, p. 101.

Now, thanks to socialist aid, Egypt will spin her own cotton. Moreover, again with Soviet aid, she is to have her own atomic reactor. In the light of Egypt's long struggle to build her own modern industries, her warm appreciation of the disinterested aid given her by the Soviet Union is perfectly understandable. Speaking at the opening of the mill, President Nasser contrasted the refusal of the Western powers to fulfil their original promise to help build the Aswan Dam with the Soviet Union's fulfilling of its economic agreement "honestly and conscientiously". He added:

"We did not hear from the Soviet Union any threats of an economic boycott or any words of ridicule because it is rendering us economic assistance."

India, too, has learnt the great value of Soviet assistance. The huge iron and steel plant, which the U.S.S.R. has built at Bhilai, carries no political or military strings, nor will the Soviet Union derive profits from it at the expense of the Indian people. The plant belongs to India, who will derive all the profits from its operations. (The same is true, of course, of all plants and undertakings built by the Soviet Union for underdeveloped countries.)

"In the heart of the Madhya Pradesh region of Central India" writes Berliner,¹ "a great steel mill is rising from the earth. Indian engineers are sharing offices with Soviet engineers who have come to assist in the construction. The machinery and equipment will be brought from the Soviet Union, financed by a generous Soviet credit to the Indian government. *When construction is completed, the Soviet engineers will go home and the plant will belong to the Indian nation, to be run by Indians for the benefit of the Indian national economy.*" [Own italics.—J.W.]

More than 60,000 Indians and nearly 500 Soviet specialists have worked together to build the Bhilai works. It is already turning out pig iron (some 300,000 tons in the first year), steel and rolled metal, and is producing coke, electricity, sulphuric acid, resin and fertiliser for agriculture. During 1960 it started to manufacture rails, girders, channel bars and high-grade metal. This huge complex, so important for Indian industry and agricul-

¹ Berliner: *op. cit.*, p. 3.

ture, is now being run by some 500 Indian workers and engineers who were specially trained at Soviet enterprises.

Soviet aid takes many forms—trade and navigation agreements; the construction of whole plants; the granting of long-term, low-interest credits (2 to 2½ per cent as against the 4 to 7 per cent usually charged by imperialist powers¹); trade and payment agreements by which the underdeveloped countries pay in their own currencies and the Soviet Union purchases from the country in question the goods which it wishes to export; and large-scale technical help, including training technicians,² carrying out surveys, designing projects, and providing scientific advice and equipment.

Talking to Mexican businessmen, Mr. A. I. Mikoyan has said:

“Besides loans and credits, we give underdeveloped countries, free of charge, technical designs and specifications of machines and other equipment and goods produced in the Soviet Union. They are only expected to repay printing charges. It is on these terms, for instance, that we will be building pharmaceutical plants in India. You know, of course, that the Western monopolists frequently charge as much as 5 per cent of the price of the goods produced over a period of several years for their patents rights. We give underdeveloped countries our patents and designs free of charge, but we charged the United States for our turbo-drill patent, because when we acquire similar patents in the capitalist countries we have to pay for them.”¹

There are certain other aspects of Soviet aid (and that of other socialist countries) which are important to note. We have already mentioned how socialist aid towards industrialisation helps newly independent states to get on their feet and strengthen their

¹ For example, the \$35,000,000 loan granted by the International Bank to the Gabon Republic to aid the exploitation of Gabon's manganese deposits (itself a dubious form of “aid”), is for 15 years at an interest of 6 per cent. (See *West Africa*, September 5, 1959, p. 687.)

² The Soviet Union has now established the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University which will provide university education and technical training for students from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Tuition is free, and all enrolled students will be given scholarship grants, free health services and hostel accommodation, as well as return fare to and from Moscow.

³ Speech to 200 representatives of Mexican industry, finance and trade, November 26, 1959. Reported in *New Times*, December 1959, p. 35.

national economy, and hence safeguard their independence. Socialist trade has the same effect. When Ceylon was faced with difficulties over her rubber exports and was in need of rice, China responded by providing rice in exchange for rubber, thus helping Ceylon to avoid having to rely on the imperialist powers at a time when they could have exploited Ceylon's difficulties.

In the same way, the Soviet Union bought fish from Iceland during the latter's recent difficulties with Britain and other Western powers. When Cuba was faced with the United States' threats to cut down her purchases of Cuban sugar, it was the Soviet Union which offered to make substantial purchases of Cuban sugar, and so assisted the Cuban economy at a time of national danger. Again, when American and British pressure caused an oil crisis in Cuba, it was Soviet oil supplies which helped Cuba.

When Guinea declared its independence, the French imperialists took a number of unprecedented steps to bring her to her knees. They removed everything they could from the country in an attempt to dislocate her administration and economy. They even took criminal records from police stations and health records from hospitals. The socialist countries, when approached, responded to every request to assist the young republic, the Soviet Union with a £12,500,000 credit, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and other socialist countries with aid in many other forms.

Another important feature of socialist aid is that it is based on complete respect for national sovereignty. This is admitted by Berliner, who adds that "the Soviet leaders ostentatiously refrain from substituting their own judgment for that of the recipients"¹—an attitude which is in marked contrast to that of the United States which, when granting "aid", usually insists that the recipient country first take certain economic and financial measures (the freezing of wages, raising of prices, devaluation of currency, cuts in social services and so on) which, the United States argues, help to "stabilise" the economy of the recipient country.

Berliner strikingly emphasises the difference between Soviet economic assistance and Western "aid" in these words:

"In determining how the money is to be spent, the Soviet

¹ Berliner: *op. cit.*, p. 15.

negotiators . . . do not require a detailed 'economic justification' of a project as a condition of granting a loan . . . This position is in deliberate contrast to that taken by Western agencies dispensing economic aid."¹

Consequently, admits Berliner, the Western attitude "kindles resentment and discord", whereas "the Soviet approach receives a much warmer reception".

Resentment at the attempts on the part of the United States to use "aid" schemes in order to interfere in the internal affairs of countries has been sharply expressed by Tunisia's President, Habib Bourguiba. Referring to the opposition of a U.S. "aid" delegation to some of Tunisia's projects as being unworkable, President Bourguiba declared: "But this is a question which is no business of the Americans. Tunisia has its own criteria, which may differ from those of the Americans."²

Similar resentment has been expressed by the Libyan paper *Fezzan*, which has said:

"We receive from America a sum of money that we are not allowed to spend as we see fit. The money is channelled to us through uneconomical agencies that keep highly paid foreign employees and fleets of cars."

No wonder the U.S. *Time* magazine admits that "Libyans resent supervision of aid projects by U.S. teams".

If no similar resentment is felt towards Soviet aid, this is undoubtedly because of the fundamentally different character of this assistance and the different way in which it is made available.

Soviet aid to underdeveloped countries is becoming an important factor in their progress. In 1946 Soviet trade with countries in Asia and Africa totalled 281,000,000 roubles; by 1957 it had reached 2,272,000,000 roubles—an eightfold increase.

Soviet exports of machinery and equipment are particularly important. For the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America they rose steeply from 20,000,000 roubles in 1955 to 346,000,000 roubles in 1957.³ In 1958, over ninety-five per cent of total Soviet

¹ Berliner: op. cit., p. 153.

² A national broadcast speech in Tunis, December 10, 1959.

³ Rymalov, V.: "Soviet Assistance to Underdeveloped Countries", *International Affairs*, No. 9, September 1959, p. 31.

exports of machinery and equipment to the capitalist world (more than 670,000,000 roubles) went to the underdeveloped countries. Under agreements already in force, the U.S.S.R. is helping, or will help, in the construction of some 200 industrial enterprises, power stations, irrigation installations and other projects in Asia and Africa. In 1960 alone, the Soviet Union has taken part in constructing ninety-five such enterprises.

The significance of these figures needs little stressing. Former colonial and dependent countries, which hitherto have been compelled to depend for machinery and equipment on the imperialist powers (who are by no means enthusiastic about helping such countries to build up their own, independent and powerful industries), can now turn to alternative sources of supply.

The West, in other words, has lost its monopoly of capital equipment in the world market, just as it has in the fields of credit, trade and the training of technicians.

The effect of the character and weight of the aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries has been to modify imperialist aid policies towards underdeveloped countries, even compelling them, as Khrushchov has said, "to make certain concessions in dealing with these countries".

This is admitted by Berliner, who writes that Soviet aid "strengthens the bargaining power of the recipient countries in their negotiations with the older sources of aid".¹ Significantly, after the Soviet Union had given credits to Afghanistan at two per cent, the United States granted a loan at three per cent—previously, in 1954, it had charged four-and-a-half per cent. Similarly, the construction by the Soviet Union of the important Bhilai iron and steel works in India has compelled Britain to abandon its traditional policy and help India build an iron and steel plant in Bengal.

But Soviet economic aid does not only help the development and economic bargaining power of the underdeveloped countries. It also serves to strengthen their political independence and sovereignty.

Berliner has to confess that:

"The availability of Soviet aid increases the independence of the neutral countries and strengthens their bargaining power with the West."²

¹ Berliner: *op. cit.*, p. 138.

² *ibid.*, p. 18.

And he cites the example of Egypt:

“ . . . The possibility of getting Soviet economic aid undoubtedly encouraged Egypt to take as strong a stand as it did.”¹

Evidently it is with good reason that the Ethiopian paper *Zaman*, commenting on American policy towards underdeveloped countries, declared:

“We see that where the Americans have sown weeds, Russia and other communist countries have cultivated roses instead.”²

This is increasingly becoming the verdict of all African countries.

Apart from the United Arab Republic, economic relations between African states and the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries, are only just beginning since the independent African states are mostly of recent birth. Sudan and Ethiopia trade with the Soviet Union, and Ethiopia has received help for its medical services. Tunisia, too, is showing interest in closer economic relations with the U.S.S.R. In a conversation with Soviet delegates to Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, the President, stressed the importance of commercial and cultural relations between the two countries, saying: “We shall take every opportunity to learn and borrow from you what suits us. We think your way of giving children labour instruction is interesting and we shall do the same. We want to learn from you how to reclaim virgin lands.” On January 16, 1960, the Soviet Union and Tunisia signed a trade and payments agreement, providing for each party to grant the other most-favoured nation treatment in all matters concerning trade.

Ghana, too, is developing its relations with socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, with whom she signed agreements on trade and on economic and technical co-operation in August 1960. Under the trade agreement the Soviet Union will supply Ghana with machinery and equipment, rolled steel and non-ferrous metal sections, petroleum products, construction materials and other goods. Ghana, on her side, will export to the Soviet Union cocoa beans, coffee, copra, rubber, citrus and tropical fruits and other traditional Ghanaian exports. Under the economic

¹ Berliner: op. cit., p. 19.

² *Zaman* (Asmara), July 5, 1960.

and technical agreement, the Soviet Union will co-operate in geological prospecting to reveal Ghana's mineral resources, in building industrial plants, manufacturing construction materials, power dams, plants for the processing of agricultural products, fisheries, organising model state farms, and constructing other enterprises, in addition to training skilled Ghanaian personnel. All these steps will assist Ghana to make big strides in the direction of the genuine building up of her economy, and especially to lay a basis for industry. In fact, people in Ghana expect that the building of an iron and steel plant, a petrol refinery and textile factories will be among the outcomes of this co-operation. To make this economic and technical co-operation between the two countries possible, the Soviet Union is granting Ghana a long-term credit of some £14,500,000, on the usual easy terms granted to other underdeveloped countries.

President Nkrumah has told the Ghana Parliament that his government is satisfied that "there are no strings" attached to this Soviet offer.¹

At the end of 1960 more complete details were agreed on between the two countries regarding the list of industrial plants and other construction projects which the Soviet £14,500,000 credit will help to establish. Of particular significance is the inclusion of a 200,000 kW hydro-electric plant to be built at Bui, on the Black Volta. This plant will not only have twice the existing capacity of all Ghana's existing power stations, but compares very favourably with the original estimate of 120,000 kW. In connection with this announcement, it has been admitted² that "nobody now doubts Soviet technical ability to complete their end of the agreement, and if the speed at which they have examined Ghana's complex hydro-electric plans and selected a project they think they can manage, causes surprise in London or Washington, we can only point to the procrastination of the Western aluminium companies and governments".

The new Republic of Guinea has particularly close economic relations not only with the Soviet Union, but with other socialist countries too. During his visit to London at the end of 1959, Sékou Touré, the President of Guinea, said at a press conference:

"We refuse to accept the popular idea of African countries

¹ *The Times*, September 3, 1960.

² *West Africa*, January 14, 1961, p. 29.

coming like little naked beggars before the big rich capitalists . . . Soviet loans are different, they are offered in a spirit of co-operation and mutual trust.”

Referring to the long-term 140,000,000 roubles loan (about £12,500,000 to be repaid at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent interest within 12 years) granted by the U.S.S.R. to Guinea, he said that “no political strings were attached to this loan; it was offered on terms compatible with proper respect for our country . . . The Soviet Union respects our dignity and we are grateful for it.” In addition to these credits, the Soviet Union has signed an agreement with Guinea on economic and technical co-operation. The loan itself will cover the cost of economic and technical assistance for building industrial establishments, developing agriculture and laying roads. Guinea is also developing substantial economic relations with other socialist countries, notably with the German Democratic Republic and with China, which has granted Guinea a long-term loan *without interest*.

How Guinea's new trading relations are helping to put the Republic's economy on a sounder basis is described in an article in the *Ghanaian Monthly*.¹ Pointing out that Guinea suffered in 1958 through an imbalance in trade—imports cost £17,800,000, while exports earned only £8,700,000—the article states that the main cause for this was the high cost which Guinea had to pay for the French goods and the artificial over-valuation of the French African franc. To reduce heavy import costs, Guinea has not only taken steps to increase her domestic production of certain essentials, and to cut down on inessential and luxury imports, but further, states the *Ghanaian Monthly*, is benefiting from the new trade agreements with socialist countries. Thus the agreement to import sugar from the German Democratic Republic reduced the price of sugar in Conakry by no less than seventy-five per cent.

The German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary have growing economic relations with a number of African countries, and China, too, is developing such relations.

There is no doubt that these economic relations between Africa and the socialist countries will grow, both because the African peoples will increasingly want to develop such links in the interests of their own economic progress, and because the socialist

¹ May 4, 1959.

countries will be able to place increasing quantities of goods at the disposal of African countries and to import ever-greater quantities of the goods these countries wish to export. Within the next decade total socialist production, already a third of total world production, will constitute half of the world's production. If substantial measures are taken for world disarmament, then the Soviet Union—and other socialist countries—will be able to place still greater resources at the disposal of the underdeveloped countries.

Massive and growing socialist aid, a factor which was not present in the epoch before the second world war, is most favourable for the rapid economic advance of the new African States and thus for safeguarding their independence.

§ 3 CONCLUSION

Who is to Lead?

In all the huge and manifold tasks confronting the new African States, a special duty and responsibility falls to the African working class, that new, growing and indomitable force which is increasingly becoming a spearhead of the national movements. In statements, articles and resolutions African working-class and trade union leaders are showing their ability to look ahead, to see beyond the immediate stage of ending foreign rule and of gaining political independence, and to envisage the steps which must be taken if the African people are to inherit the full fruits of their endeavours and sacrifices.

As Sao Amadou Lamine has pointed out,¹ the African people are not content merely to have African M.P.s and an African government. They do not regard the spectacle of African ministers and African businessmen driving in large cars as being the climax of their national resurgence. That which they fought for and sacrificed for was to end their exploitation, oppression, and poverty.

But how to do this? This is the question now occupying the minds of many African national and working-class leaders; and even from the short life of the new African states one can see that there are differing points of view on this matter. Some people in the new African governments, that is to say, sections of the

¹ Lamine, Sao Amadou: op. cit., *World Trade Union Movement*, January 1960.

national bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, would prefer that things be left to them, to their sole guidance. They believe that the African working class and trade unions should become the quiescent tail of the national bourgeoisie, do simply what they are told, work harder, tighten their belts and make no demands. On the other hand, there are some workers who think that the morrow of political independence is the signal for an immediate direct clash between the workers and the new rulers, drawn largely from the ranks of the up-and-coming African bourgeoisie.

African working-class leaders, therefore, have a complex task to avoid both of these false paths. They have to defend and advance their own class interests—both present and future—and yet do this in a manner which does not upset the national unity of all patriotic classes so vital to eliminate the vestiges of colonialism and complete the task of national liberation.

Sékou Touré has indicated how such contradictions should be handled within the national liberation movement.¹ Stressing that the “trade unions help towards the development of the anti-colonial movement”, he adds that “it is the victorious issue of the movement for independence that will open the way to the real solution of the economic and social problems”. For this reason, the working class and trade unions need “to effect a careful analysis of the conjuncture in order to avoid that internal contradictions should take the place of the principal contradiction between African interests and the colonial régime, the disappearance of which alone will mean the death of colonialism”.

In other words, the main struggle in Africa, even for the politically independent states, is against imperialism and colonialism, and everything must be directed to this end. But to maintain the unity of the people for this purpose after the winning of political independence is no easy task. The national bourgeoisie, with all their weaknesses, have been drawn into the struggle for national independence by their own class interests. They may be sincere patriots, striving genuinely on behalf of their people; but a major factor which has brought them into the anti-colonial camp is the disastrous effect of colonialism on themselves, as a bourgeoisie.² Naturally, it is their own class interests which are

¹ Touré, Sékou: Speech to the General Congress of the Union of Black African Workers (U.G.T.A.N.), at Conakry, January 15-18, 1959. (Quoted in *Ghanaian Worker*, April 25, 1959.)

² See the present author's *Africa—The Roots of Revolt*, pp. 255-60.

usually uppermost in their minds, even if not always consciously. It is these same class interests which largely dominate the thinking of the national bourgeoisie after the winning of political independence, and thus give rise to a striving on their part to retain their domination of the national movement in order to ensure that the workers and peasants are kept under control, and so make possible the realisation of profits in the domestic market which are, for the national bourgeoisie, a major aim.

The African working class accepts as an ally the national bourgeoisie since, despite their long-term, fundamental divergence of interests, both classes have a common interest in destroying colonialism and ending imperialist exploitation. Such a class alliance is not the same as class collaboration. Class alliance is, in fact, a very highly developed, complex and testing form of the class struggle. Under class collaboration, the working class submits to the domination of the national bourgeoisie, and accepts its leadership, outlook and policy in despite of its own class interests. The national bourgeoisie favours such a relationship with the working class and strives to bring it about.

In taking part in a class alliance with the national bourgeoisie, however, the working class plays an independent role, putting forward its own policy on all questions affecting the national struggle and the workers' own interests, and working to win majority support for this policy. Such a form of relationship with the working class is not to the liking of the national bourgeoisie, and therefore they take special measures whenever they feel that their undisputed leadership is endangered. The action of Nasser in suppressing and throwing into prison all those patriots who wish to ensure that the benefits arising from political independence are not reserved solely for the national bourgeoisie of the United Arab Republic is, in essentials, not unique in Africa even if it is more severe than the policy pursued in many other territories. Frequently one finds the national bourgeoisie, or sections of it, trying to use the bugle-call of nationalism to divert the workers from their own class interests or, if that fails, violating trade union and political rights in the name of nationalism. Thus, in the Ivory Coast, the Congo Republic (former French), and the Sudan Republic the trade unions suffer from persecution, their leaders arrested or exiled, and, as in the case of the Sudan, the organisations completely suppressed. In certain other territories the national bourgeoisie strives to subordinate the working

class by bringing the trade unions under the control of the government and the ruling party.

It is therefore clear that to establish an alliance with the national bourgeoisie is no easy task for the working class. The national bourgeoisie welcomes the support of the working class; they are prepared to let the workers fight and die for the national cause as long as the latter do not enhance their own class identity and outlook but are willing to follow tamely in the wake of the national bourgeoisie and accept their leadership in all matters.

The alliance and struggle between the working class and the national bourgeoisie, this complex unity of opposites, is a root question in the struggle for political independence, and even more so in the phase following on the attainment of that goal.

What is really at stake is, in the last resort, who is to lead the national struggle, the national bourgeoisie or the working class? The interests of the most thorough-going anti-imperialist struggle, the necessity for a rapid and clear-cut reconstruction of the colonial economy, without hesitation or backsliding, demands that the working class increasingly takes the leadership of the national movement into its own firm hands. This is the guarantee that national sovereignty will be upheld, imperialist influences completely eradicated, foreign bases and military agreements ended, industrialisation and fundamental land reform carried out, and the most complete democratic rights introduced. In this way, by carrying through to complete fulfilment the tasks of the national democratic revolution, the way will be opened up to the further radical reconstruction of African society. In the present epoch there is every possibility for independent African territories, after uprooting colonialism, to avoid the path of normal capitalist development and to take instead a non-capitalist road to progress and prosperity.

The Judgment of History

In its well-known special supplement "The African Revolution", the *Economist* ended with a dramatic plea to "Western society" to act while it still held "the levers of policy" in its hands. "The profoundest matter at stake in Africa," it declared, "*is the quality and capacity of Western society itself.*" The danger was that the "judgment of history" would be that the West ploughed up Africa "for gold and minerals, transformed it for wealth and

trade, destroyed the old tribal order, and drove away the old cruel gods, but in the end, put nothing stable in their place”.

History has already passed its judgment. The African people have already condemned what Western imperialism has done to Africa, not alone in words but in deeds, by their very revolt for freedom. Never before has imperialism had such a preponderance of armaments over oppressed peoples as it has today over the people of Africa. The West has all the most modern means of warfare, including nuclear weapons and germ warfare; the African people have but their tools and their simple hunting weapons. And yet Africa is winning the apparently unequal contest.

Only the most serious crisis of the colonial system, its social and political disintegration, could explain this phenomenon. The establishment of a powerful socialist system embracing a thousand million people has weakened imperialism beyond repair. The achievement of political independence throughout nearly all Asia and by other former colonies has inspired the continent of Africa, which is winning increasing support from working people in the metropolitan countries. But decisive, above all else, has been the courageous and determined struggle of the lion-hearted African people.

The biggest battles are yet to come. Algeria, Angola, Congo, Cameroun—these continue their bitter struggle. Mozambique, Kenya, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, the Union of South Africa—here major explosions will shortly be heard. The tide of independence is sweeping rapidly southwards and eastwards and must eventually reach the Cape.

And with that, a new stage will open for Africa—a stage already begun in the north and west—the stage of the building of a new, glorious Africa for which so many have struggled and sacrificed.

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