

# The Politics of Development

*Socialism, Co-operation and Agricultural Productivity*

JORGEN SCHLEIMANN

SOMETIMES A BOOK will strike the minds of its readers like the lightning, the tension it unleashes having been too great. Flames of debate may flare up, or in the flash, outlines of a problem may appear that lay before in the dark.

The book by the French professor René Dumont is that kind of a book, and many times during the *Dakar Colloquium on Politics of Development and Different African Ways to Socialism* references were made to its title, which has the sound of a slogan: "*L'Afrique Noire est mal partie*". ("Black Africa's got off on the wrong foot.")

Perhaps the most appropriate answer to René Dumont's provocative title -- and one likely to meet with the approval of the professor himself, had he been at the conference as scheduled -- was offered by the then Senegalese Premier Mamadou Dia, who said in reply to "Black Africa's got off on the wrong foot": "Permit me to establish in the first place that she's got on her feet, and that that is the essential thing. She's got on her feet, which means that she's upright, that she is the master of her own movements, that she walks alone without a tutor to hold her hand. Undoubtedly her first steps are hesitating. Undoubtedly she is hurting herself and will hurt herself some more on unforeseen obstacles. Undoubtedly she ought to make sometimes after two steps forward one step backward. But her march is free, and she is enriching herself even by the errors she commits, because they are her errors. And if the first start has not always nor everywhere been a good one, we know that it will be followed by a second one, then a third one, until the good start has been made."

And Mamadou Dia finished his closing speech at the Colloquium by affirming: "Gentlemen, in her own way and by her own step Africa has taken off and is no longer going to stop." Curious, as one comes to think of it now, those were the proud words of an African leader soon to stumble in his own political career.

JORGEN SCHLEIMANN is a Danish economist.

IT WAS ONLY LOGICAL that a book by René Dumont should attract unusual attention, since its author is one of the world's leading agronomists, and since African development is first and above all a question of agricultural development.

Dr. Seydou Badian Kouyaté, Mali Minister of Planning, made this abundantly clear in his opening words at the Dakar Colloquium: "We belong to a group of countries that have a certain number of features in common: an-alphabetism, under-nourishment, under-productivity, under-exploitation of natural potentialities, absence of internal accumulation, insufficiency of technical cadres. The total of these phenomena is translated by a derisive standard of living and by the weakness of means by which to face it. On the production level our countries are as yet essentially agricultural. Ninety per cent, or often even more of our populations derive their income from the land, and when we talk here of productivity, it is surely of the productivity of agricultural work. The other sectors are embryonic, non-existent or sectors sustained by non-indigenous people, the finality of action of which fits badly or not at all into the general pattern of our preoccupations."

And later he continued: "On the strictly economic level, development of these countries is first and above all, in the framework of urgencies, to permit the rural majority to adopt the rhythm of productivity required by the state of needs and the dimension of objectives, to integrate itself virtually in the current of the centuries, in other words the action of Renewal has as its first step the modernization of agriculture, the sector which nourishes the national revenue. It is to agriculture that the overwhelming majority of our population is linked, and it is on agriculture that the quasi-totality of our real economic activity rests. The accession of agriculture to a modern stage constitutes the first gesture of a real and valuable development."

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT first and then industrialisation as a complementary effort was the order of priorities established at this African conference, where nobody seemed to question the value of economic planning. Those who did not have it, wanted it as soon as possible.

But the priority of agricultural development could hardly be said to be in accordance with Marxist orthodoxy, as I was reminded of it by listening one week later to the leading Soviet expert on Africa, Professor Potekhin, who told his audience at the first International Congress of Africanists in Accra that "It is generally known that industrial labour is more productive than agricultural; this is true even when agricultural production is based on the use of machinery. Development of industry means that a part of the population turns from less productive labour in agriculture to more productive work in industry, which at once results in a rise of the national income. The path to eliminating poverty and to attaining abundance lies in the development of industry. There are no two ways about it."

Professor Potekhin may think so but even radical African socialists seem to think differently. They did so in Dakar, and in Accra I had the opportunity of asking

leading CPP member, Dr. Kofi Baako, Minister of Defence and Speaker of the Ghanaian Parliament, for his view of the matter. Dr. Kofi Baako referred me to a lecture of his, in which I read: "There is a great temptation to conclude that the relative prosperity of the economically advanced countries is due to their high rate of industrialisation, and to proceed to push industrialisation at a fearful

pace, at the expense of agricultural development. In African countries which are mainly agricultural, therefore, agriculture should receive emphasis in all development programmes. And there are good reasons for this view, too. First, without an efficient agriculture the manpower that would be required by industry on an increasing scale could not be made available, since the traditional method

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THE CURRENT ISSUE of *Historia* contains a sharp article by Dr. Anna Böesken of the Cape Archives on the thesis for which Miss Merle Babrow was awarded an M.A. in the University of Cape Town in 1962. Miss Babrow's thesis, which exposes the historian Theal's large-scale partisanship, trod heavily and deliberately on the toe of South Africa's most treasured national myth—the history of South Africa as told in ten tedious volumes by the race-obsessed Theal. Professor J. S. Marais is also attacked by Dr. Böesken for his documented castigation of Theal in his brilliant monograph *Maynier and the First Boer Republic*. Miss Babrow's reply is awaited. Meanwhile her thesis has not gone unnoticed: students in the Education Faculty in the University of Cape Town are being advised to read it and to avoid the school histories based on Theal. We may expect further enraged kick-backs from upholders of the national myth.

MYTH-MAKING HAS GONE much further among the historians of our allies the Portuguese. Professor C. R. Boxer of London University, who lectured at Witwatersrand University in 1960, has trodden on that particular toe with his *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire 1415-1825* (Oxford University Press, R2.05). He is likely to be out of favour with the Portuguese Government as long as the Salazar dictatorship lasts. His book has provoked reactions of hysterical rage at Lisbon and frenzied per-

sonal attacks on Boxer himself in the leading Portuguese newspapers.

A correspondent from London writes: "The latest pamphlet by Anti-Apartheid *The Collaborators*, which indicts British business for its apartheid links should be distributed round the world by the South African Information Service. It is quite awful. It is written by dedicated communists who write as though to be a successful business man was as shameful as to be a successful sex pervert. It will repel thousands who read it. It is full of contemptible malapropisms that will bring a curl to the lips of all but the indoctrinated. And Anthony Sampson in *The Observer* called it "excellent". Someone should ask him if he really read it. We are really cursed by our friends. The more I think of it the more I believe that the communists are the greatest single threat to our cause. They have a way of disgusting even those who generally approve of some of their objectives.

"Look at the way they have ruined CND. If ever there were a legitimate cause for direct action it is, in my view, the atom bomb. The ordinary man cannot stop others from building doomsday weapons and aiming them at his own home. He should be allowed to march on Washington and Moscow, to sit down in the streets and to wave banners. CND grew in Britain on this obvious truth. Then the communists climbed in and in no time CND was being "used" for general social protest. Why? Because the communists are against all the things against which they demonstrated. Just as the South African communists tried to "use" African nationalism for their own purposes.

"The result? CND has collapsed. At Oxford in one term its numbers are down from 1,000 to 200. There was no Aldermaston march for the first year for seven years. When I see the grip the communists have on the anti-apartheid lobby here I fear that it may collapse the

way CND has collapsed." Of course, he is probably misusing the term communists, which is to say that there are communists and non-communists involved in what he describes. Other views will be welcome, and will be printed with suitable anonymity.

IT IS OFTEN THE LITTLE, seemingly inconsequential phrases in the newspapers that ought to know better that make me want to throw the whole issue on the carpet and dance on it with rage. South Africa's not rich in newspapers that ought to know better, but I would have classed the new *Sunday Chronicle*, Johannesburg, as such. In its opening issue, a Sapa report from Umtata discusses the opening of the new Transkeian Legislative Assembly on 5th May: "This will be the first time the Transkei's 1,500,000 people have seen the 'White man's politics' in action." Apart from the fact that only a tiny fraction will see it in action, this will not be the first time what Sapa calls the "White man's politics" has been seen in action by Transkeians. Africans were on a common roll with whites from 1853 to 1936. Tembuland was a constituency of the Union Parliament until Hertzog and Smuts disfranchised qualified Africans as voters 28 years ago, and a broadly similar political system has operated as the "council system" since the 1890's.

A far greater transgression, however, is the Sapa man's seeming unawareness of the rich and sturdy hybrid culture of the majority of South Africa's African community to whom politics is no more the "White man's" than is the wheel, the alphabet or the horse. The thought of brandy and gin still being "the White man's liquor" was crazy enough, when the newspapers played that phrase to death during last year's Liquor Act. The phrase the "White man's politics" is more lamentable for its reminder of the blind ignorance of the ways of darker-skinned South Africa even on the part of journalists who supply the middle-brow *Sunday Chronicle* with copy.

of agriculture usually involves an under-employment of large herds of persons. With a more efficient agriculture goes an increase also in the raw materials which are required for feeding the new industries to be established. And again, a prosperous agricultural industry ensures that the purchasing power of a large number of persons in the African countries which are largely agricultural would be increased, thereby ensuring the Government more taxable revenue for development purposes and, at the same time, expanding the purchasing power of the community with the result that the finished products of the new industries are given an enlarged market. With agriculture thus developed, the stage would be set for a big industrial expansion . . . ."

This African viewpoint may not make sense to a Soviet socialist. It certainly does to a Danish one, since I believe that Denmark based its development on agricultural productivity and did quite well.

THE LEGITIMACY OF A SPECIFIC African claim to independence in matters of defining Socialism and in tackling problems of economic growth was recognised by the French economist, Professor Francois Perroux, at the Dakar Colloquium. Francois Perroux warned against all kinds of doctrinal mystification and praised the African leaders for their pragmatic approach. He advocated, what he called *l'économie généralisée*, and reminded his audience that "Neither Western Capitalism nor Russian Sovietism have been conceived and put to work for Africa."

The African leaders seemed well aware of this, and Abdelmajed Chaker, Tunisian Secretary of State for Agriculture and Director of the Political Bureau of the Neo-Destour party, stated his country's position in similar terms: "By opting for the co-operative system Tunisia wanted to transcend the conflict between partisans of a State economy and partisans of a liberal economy."

In fact, co-operation emerged from the Dakar Colloquium as the key-word in African agricultural development, as experiments in the field of agricultural co-operative work were the main themes of some of the most interesting contributions at the conference.

Senegal's scheme of *animation rurale*, the training and work of teams of young people as pioneers, advisers and inspirers of rural co-operative centres; Tunisia's introduction of *unités de production*, producers' co-operatives on the basis of lands formerly belonging to French *colons* in the North, and the implantation of some 300 *co-operatives de polyculture*, mixed farming co-ops in the Centre and the South; and Mali's elaborate system based on village co-operatives of production, sales and purchase, grouped in larger federations corresponding to administrative districts — all of these experiments on a national scale constitute examples of a genuine African approach to solving the continent's major development problem, that of increasing agricultural output and productivity.

NATURALLY THE REMODELLING of the African society often necessitates government measures of a radical nature, and for the future of African democracy it is of crucial import-

ance to know, whether the process of transformation of society, particularly the rapid modernisation of agriculture, can be carried out by popular consent. The Soviet government's brutal repression of the Russian peasants in the thirties is in this respect an awful warning. But even if it had not been for this Soviet deterrent I think Africa would always stand a good chance of avoiding the disastrous split between leadership and people, since Africa's fight for national independence was also and at the same time a fight for better social conditions. African emancipation means political *and* economic liberation, and since the two things went hand in hand during the struggle against the colonial régimes, the African peoples may in all likelihood accept a post-colonial programme of social change as a genuine national issue, as a legitimate continuation of the struggle against colonialism and its successor, neo-colonialism, thus offering the best prospects of preserving national unity. (This close relationship between the outer and the inner fight may also account, together with the strong feeling of national unity, for the fact that African socialists seem far less worried over the dependence on the State of African co-operative and trade union movements than their European and American colleagues. This specific aspect of the modern African society, was unfortunately too little discussed in Dakar.)

I WAS CONFIRMED in these personal beliefs by many of the speakers at the Dakar Colloquium, in particular by Dr. Kouyaté who pointed out that "modernisation of agriculture is not only a technical or technological problem. It is above all a human psychological problem, because it is a matter of a real renewal of the rural world. And how do we see that world with which we are confronted? Apart from some islands or zones where the plantation economy is predominant, our peasantry lives — and this has been said over and over again — in a subsistence economy, an economy of self-consumption in which man produces above all for his nourishment, in which he is trying to be in some sort of balance of misery with the little he produces; a life in slow motion which corresponds badly with the exigencies of the modern world, in the margin of which it seems to take place.

"Here, as in the entire problem of under-development, it is necessary that the internal need for progress be born, that leap towards a higher life, in short that will to get moving. The problem is thus from the outset a psychological one. The modern material will be used little or not at all, if the sense and signification of its employment are not accepted." (Mamadou Dia pointed to a similar psychological mechanism when explaining why political independence was an indispensable preamble to real development in Africa. "Development," he said, "can be defined as the passage of a human community from a technically and culturally inferior phase to a technically and culturally superior phase, this superiority being appreciated in the light of values recognised as such by the community itself. This is why the economic and social progress, which the colonial regime wants to inscribe among its assets, is always at best of an ambiguous character.")

To the Mali Minister of Planning the organisational answer to these problems was that of the one-party system. Dr. Kouyaté said: "We thus consider as an absolute preamble to development the liquidation of colonial and feudal structures so that man, all men, freed from interdicts, from fears, from sterilising protectors perceive Independence as a reality heralding the hour of total Responsibility. Among the means at our disposal for this enterprise of creation, education and demystification the political organisation is the most safe and the most efficient. In fact the political organisation has been the melting-pot in which the peasant and the townsman have found each other again. It has drawn the farmer out of his isolation, cured the latter of his contempt for the bush and realised in practise that national unity, of which it drew its strength. Thus the gulf existing between town and land has been filled and the various strata of the population have been united in one current oriented towards political objectives."

THE AFRICAN ONE-PARTY SYSTEM, so eloquently advocated by Presidents Sékou Touré of Guinea and Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, certainly represents a challenge to the Westerner, in particular to a democratic Socialist. A challenge to his democratic conscience? Or to his comprehensions?

Of course popular consent is not in itself a sufficient indicator of democracy. The world has seen dictatorships of an initial popular following. But what about criticism? Can it make itself heard inside the African one-party system? What about revisions, modifications of ends and means? Can they be carried through in the context of the one-party system, if need be?

Judging from the Guinean experience — and isn't Guinea the African one-party state that has inspired most anxiety, rightly or wrongly, in Western circles? — judging from that Guinean example I would say that the answer to the above questions may well be positive, that it must be admitted that criteria for African democracy and representative government may in some cases be found in a multi-party system, whereas in other cases they should be sought within the framework of the one and only political party.

We are not confronted with a categorical either-or kind of choice, but will have to take into consideration local historical, psychological and practical conditions weighing in favour of one or the other of the two systems. Dr. Kouyaté spoke in Dakar for the one-party system. President Senghor used the term "the dominant party" — and in fact a single opposition member takes his seat beside the overwhelming majority of UPS deputies in the Senegalese National Assembly, when the affairs of the nation are under debate — and Jacques Rahemananjara, Malagasy Minister of State in charge of economic planning, maintained in a contribution seasoned with humour that the concept of the one-party state was incompatible with the mentality of the Malagasy people, a declaration which immediately made the two British Labour MPs, the late John Strachey and James Callaghan, feel an affinity between the insular peoples of Madagascar and Great Britain,

a theme which the conference did not, however, further develop.

FROM VARIETY BACK TO IDENTITY. Whether multi-party or one-party, all African states are faced with the same principal problem of economic development which was thus summarised by the French economist, Professor André Philip: "... their essential effort is not so much a matter of distributing better as of producing more." To which Gabriel d'Arboussier — former Senegalese Minister of Justice and now Ambassador to France — replied with his usual vivacity: "We don't expect this increase in production to come from either the market mechanisms or the delivering revolution of history. Maybe because Africans more than anybody else have been dependent, do they have a more alive conscience of the necessity to take their destiny in their own hands. They think that it is up to them to organise the destiny of Africa and to create a type of new man responding to that vocation."

SEVERAL SPEAKERS SPOKE in favour of a better inter-African co-operation in the economic field, thus Father Lebrét — the French economist who is also the father of the Senegalese Plan — reminded his audience that an enlargement of the economic space through the association of African states is an indispensable condition to African development. Such an enlargement would also permit their common affirmation vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

Mohamed El Moktar Marouf, Mauritanian Minister of Planning, evoked the example of his country which had

## COMMENT

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THERE IS NOT ONE ideology or philosophy which has been called so many names as has African Nationalism. It has been, and still is called racialism, chauvinism and dictatorship, but nevertheless it is a dynamic philosophy aiming at race-consciousness and Black Solidarity.

Its significance is that it brings to the indigenous people, who have been lethargic throughout history, a new dynamism, the first understanding of their right to human dignity, to greater equality of opportunity, to a share in the administration of their own destiny.

Nationalism is the democratic state's ideology for integration. Even democracy needed the nationalist ideology as an instrument for the point when it had to impose unity through terror.

An on-looker or a person who is not prepared to

like Ethiopia hardly been under colonial domination and was therefore ignoring its benefits and misdeeds alike. In fact the infrastructure and basic equipment of Mauritania can only debouch into industrialisation by the creation of an African Common Market capable of absorbing the raw materials produced in Mauritania.

The Tunisian delegate, Abdelmajed Chaker, also stressed the immediate advantages of a better inter-African co-ordination in the economic field, by saying: "The harmonising of our politics of development permits in a first phase to temper by successive adaptations the competitive aspects of our economies and to make complementary economies out of them."

But even an increased inter-African co-operation will not suffice to meet the demands of the actual situation. This was clearly recognised by the Senegalese president in his opening speech at the conference. Senghor said: "The agricultural and industrial expansion demands, in becoming, a *commercial expansion*, that is the organisation on a new level of the exchange, to be very precise, a stable balance between products manufactured in Europe and tropical raw materials. I think personally that only an international conference on world trade will be able to bring us a satisfactory solution on this cardinal point."

OTHER ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL co-operation were brought into the debate. The Ethiopian delegate Asséfa Demisse, Deputy Minister of Finance, broached the question of foreign investments. He underlined that such investments would always be in the nature of a partner-

ship. Foreign investors would be entitled to a reasonable profit but all foreign investments would on the other hand have to fit into and serve the purpose of the national plan of the African country.

Several participants including Professor Carlo Schmid, Social-Democratic Vice-President of the West German Parliament, and Peter Weiss of the USA, raised the problems of technical assistance to Africa. Although there was full agreement on the desirability of such assistance, it is noteworthy that the African participants rejected every notion of "reparations" in this connection. Gabriel d'Arboussier was particularly severe in his criticism of any such attitude. "Expressions of romanticism," he called it. Equality, not morality is what Africa is looking for, and Dr. S. C. Biobaku, pro-vice-chancellor of the Nigerian University of Ife, Ibadan branch, had a most fortunate phrasing of the need for international co-operation, speaking of "our world in which prosperity, like peace, has become indivisible".

Africa is in the centre of world attention these days, and expectations as well as misgivings about her future are running high. The British veteran Socialist, Fenner Brockway, went to one extreme in Dakar exclaiming with enthusiasm: "I believe that Africa is going to provide the dynamism which will lead to world socialism!"

Even if less successful, Africa may still do well, and indeed participation in the *Dakar Colloquium on Politics of Development and Different African Ways to Socialism* strengthened the conviction of this particular writer that Africa is not doing too badly in politics already, compared with the rest of the world and in terms of socialism. ●

and fairer justice but of being amenable only to their traditional law, not of having a better administration but of having their own administration. They prefer their crude and expeditious justice, pronounced in accordance with their customs to the refined jurisprudence of the magistrates even if the latter had been trained in Bologna.

AFRICAN NATIONALISM must be recognised thus: In its internal action, African Nationalism is a terrorist ideology which imposes conformity of thought and feeling on the people whose loyalty it demands and wages a relentless war against any particular group, which escapes from or resists integration. It demands African people to think, feel and react nationally.

Nothing is more characteristic of this ideology than such an expression as un-national or un-African, which lays down that the absence of the national hump is monstrous or criminal. Ultimately, any particularism, individualism or cosmopolitanism, any non-national, pre-national or supra-national loyalty must be extirpated.

I am obliged to quote these few-words to show that African Nationalism is not and shall not be racialism.

*Preserve me, heart, from all hatred  
do not turn me into a man of hate  
whom I shall hate  
For in order to emerge into this unique nation  
You know my world-wide love,  
Know it is not hatred against other races*

## Black Solidarity is not Racialism

understand can without scrutiny call African Nationalism xenophobia, which is totally wrong after one has scrutinised the essence of this ideology. There is not one project in it which incites the Africans to hate foreigners but it gives them the consciousness which makes it possible for their nationalism to create a nation. However constituted, a group of people becomes a nation by glorifying their nationalism. It is a national feeling which forms a nation, in other words not any observable quality but an adherence which is ultimately rational in nature.

According to the African Nationalist's concept, the nation is a transcendent personality which is essentially distinct from the rest of humanity but internally coherent, endowed with its own soul, conscience and will, with its own mission. It is not a question of obtaining a higher