

---

# Leaders and Followers

---

Implications of the strain  
on democratic institutions  
imposed by vigorous  
development politics in Africa

DAVID WELSH

STRONG LEADERSHIP is essential in the developing countries of Africa. These states will not be able to support the kind of political democracy one associates with the liberal societies of the West until there is a reasonable level of socio-economic development. The firmer the leadership the sooner will this level be reached. In these circumstances the position of leaders and followers in the political parties of Africa needs examination.

In everyday talk about the notion of democracy, a hangover from the classical approach clouds the issues and presents an over-simplified account. This hangover presents "the people" in the initiatory role in the governmental process. "The people" rationally consider issues and choose representatives to give legislative expression to the popular will.

Locke and Rousseau were little concerned with the problem of leadership. Underlying this approach was the belief that "the people" could generate sufficient initiative out of themselves for purposes of government. This classical approach largely overlooked the leader/follower dichotomy. This dichotomy tended to clash with notions of individual equality and the principle of rule by majority. How could theory ignore the problem of leadership for so long? Largely because of the negative role which it was felt government should play. Democratic theory was forged in times before government was deeply involved in regulating the lives of citizens, concerned with welfare legislation and actively engaged in manipulating the economy. A typical nineteenth century liberal view conceived the government in entirely negative terms. It should concern itself largely with the maintenance of law and order and leave the economy to run itself. The less government the better was a sound laissez-faire principle.

In conditions like this strong leadership was not considered necessary or desirable. The more diffuse leadership

which resulted from executive weakness was appropriate. De Tocqueville could say in *Democracy in America*, 1835, "The American institutions are democratic, not only in their principle but in all their consequences; and the people elects its representatives directly, and for the most part annually, in order to ensure their dependence. The people is therefore the real directing power. . . ."

Changes in conditions led to changes in the role of government. Government is now to be seen as a positive force, taking on many more functions and intimately involved in the economy. Even in the liberal democracies, the increased strength of the Executive *vis-à-vis* the legislatures has been the most notable feature of twentieth century changes in the structure of government. The more empirically-minded British and Americans have been able to adapt. In Europe the classical approach has lingered longer and various systems of proportional representation have served to inhibit (but not entirely prevent) the evolution of a strong executive.

Theorists have also taken note and, increasingly, attention has been paid to the distinction between leaders and followers. Mosca, Pareto, Weber and, more recently, Schumpeter, have done much to undermine the classical theory. On Schumpeter's theory "democracy does not mean and cannot mean that the people rule in any obvious sense of the terms 'people' and 'rule'. Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them." The method of political democracy was the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.

The modern approach to political democracy is more concerned with the struggle between organised parties representing, broadly, classes; with the efforts of pressure groups to influence parties; and with the efforts of both parties and pressure groups to manipulate public opinion. It recognises that the role of the electorate in the political process is essentially a negative one: it does not act so much as react. Politicians do not see themselves essentially as followers of public opinion. They are concerned with leading it and moulding it. Dr. Steytler of the Progressive Party was asked at a meeting whether he should not "follow public opinion". He replied: "If I followed public opinion I would be bent over double with my ear to the ground, and that is no posture for statesmanship!"

THE POLITICAL PARTY is the vehicle through which the competition for political power is fought. Ostrogorski and Michels were early twentieth century theorists who studied the organisation of parties and came to pessimistic conclusions about what they found: parties were essentially undemocratic associations, however democratic some might profess to be. Their approach was, however, vitiated by their apparent retention of classical notions of democracy. They realised that parties were essential to the functioning of mass democracies, but when they found that parties were undemocratically conducted associations it seemed to them almost as if they had proved that democracy was undemocratic.

Michels claimed in his *Political Papers* to have discerned

---

DAVID WELSH lectures in Comparative African Government and Law in the University of Cape Town.

"an iron law of oligarchy" at work in every organisation. "Organisation implies the tendency to oligarchy . . . every party becomes divided into a minority of directors and a majority of directed."

The leaders in a party possess advantages which give them superior bargaining power over the rank-and-file members who may wish to exert pressure. The leaders are better educated, better informed than the members. They control all communications between the leadership and the followers. Their views rather than followers' views are likely to be given prominence in the party press. The leaders are full-time paid officials and consequently can devote much more time and energy to presenting their views than the ordinary rank-and-file member. As professional politicians they are much more skilled in the art of dialectics, in oratory and political writing and in organisation. As leaders they are much more in the limelight and acquire a prominence and a renown which gives them an insurmountable advantage over the ordinary members. These are largely occupational skills which are developed in the leader's role.

"The masses are incapable of taking part in the decision-making process and desire strong leadership." Michels firmly believed in what he described as the "incompetence of the masses". They feel a need for guidance and are incapable of acting without an initiative from above. They have an urge to venerate the leaders: "Their adoration for these temporal divinities is the more blind in proportion as their lives are rude."

The leadership becomes a "closed caste", highly suspicious and selective in allowing new members into the caste. The leaders are able to twist criticism of themselves into the appearance of "factionalism". They can make it appear as an attempt to undermine the unity of the party and, as indeed the British Labour Party has found in recent years, this plays right into the hands of their opponents. Criticism can therefore be represented as some kind of intra-party treason.

Michels' studies were confined to European Socialist parties but he agreed that his law of oligarchy held good

for all bureaucratic organisations.

Some writers have shown that Michels was overdeterministic in his conclusions. He ignored the factionalism inherent in any large party whose centrifugal force any leadership must counteract. Parties will tend to have left and right wings or to have factions based on regional considerations. The American parties, for example, do not pretend to be anything more than coalitions of groups, united at the national level only for the purpose of contesting presidential elections. How can the President hold his party together other than by a process of conciliation or arbitration between the various constituent groups? And does this not suggest a greater degree of interaction between leaders and followers than Michels cared to stress? Did Nehru dominate in Michelsian fashion the different groups which go to make up the Congress Party?

ALL AFRICAN NATIONALIST leaders are committed to the goals of economic development and the modernisation of their underdeveloped societies. All see the need for strong government, for centralised economic planning and extensive state initiative. None is prepared to adopt the laissez-faire approach and hope that "forces of the market" and the Protestant ethic will secure a suitable growth rate. Negative government is out of the question.

A broad distinction can be made between what Schlesinger has termed "hard" and "soft" leadership. "Hard" leaders like Nkrumah, Sékou Touré and Ben Bella, see themselves as surgeons, inflicting an operation on society, modernising by dragging society up by the scruff of its neck. No opposition from traditionalist-orientated leaders, like the chiefs, or from the older generation of less radical nationalist leaders (like Danquah in Ghana) will be countenanced. Little or no independent power will be allowed to new interest groups which arise if the process of development continues. Trade unions in Ghana, for example, are kept firmly under the wing of the C.P.P.

It is not correct to say that these mass-party leaders are necessarily entirely hostile to traditional society.

## A F R I C A N A

Send contributions to *Africana*, P.O. Box 2068, Cape Town. One Prize of R1 will be awarded for the best item each month, and two additional prizes of 50c each.

● He said one of the main reasons for Whites leaving Kenya was because of the integration at schools. It had even been rumoured that they would soon have African prefects at formerly White schools.

— *The Star* [J.M.]

● "The *Cape Times* has been asked to point out that the headline to a report published yesterday about Mr. J. C. Carstens, Vice-Principal of the School of Industries for Coloured children at Ottery who is to receive a University of Cape Town doctorate, might have given the impression that Mr. Carstens was a Coloured teacher, he is, in fact, a teacher of Coloured children." — *Cape Times* [H.L.]

● IT'S FUN TO BE BLACK ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN ON SOWETO TRAINS

— *Sunday Chronicle* [C.C.]

● "No legislation can legitimately be attacked on the sole ground that it interferes with human rights, for every law that ever was passed interfered with human rights to some extent.

"One does not hear measures of slum clearance and rehousing condemned on this ground so why should human rights be invoked in the attack on the Bantu Laws Amendment Act? — Hon. F. H. Broome, Judge-President of Natal, *Cape Argus*.

● A beauty contest with 17 girls, arranged by the Gardens branch of the Nationalist Party to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the party in the Cape . . .

The prize in the contest is a course at a charm school (plus gifts of clothing and cosmetics) and a boat trip to Robben Island, South Africa's long-term prison colony, seven miles offshore from Cape Town. — *Sunday Times* [F.P.]

Sékou Touré's writings are filled with a mystic veneration for the old ways and a hostility to the cultural imperialism associated with French colonial policy. But he is nonetheless adamant that traditional groups shall not wield political influence and hold up the process of mobilisation.

For the mass-party leaders, national unity is the sine qua non of modernisation. If traditional groups present an obstacle to the growth of national consciousness, they must be broken. It springs from a Rousseau-esque mistrust of "partial wills" as opposed to the "General Will". Threats or imputed threats to national unity will be treated as treason.

"Soft" leaders are normally associated with somewhat more conservative approaches to development and with attempts to achieve some kind of reconciliation with the traditional, status-based older groupings. They are reformers rather than revolutionaries; "Consociational" rather than "mobilizational", as Apter has termed them in *The Political Kingdom in Buganda*. "Elite" parties of this kind, as Hodgkin has noted in *African Political Parties*, "consist essentially of a nucleus of persons enjoying status and authority within the existing social order—an elite of chiefs, religious leaders or wealthy bourgeois—and depend largely upon established ties of obligation and loyalty between the "elite" and "the people". He also notes the ramifications of this distinction between "mass" and "elite" parties on concepts of membership, structure, discipline, methods of finance and ideology, etc.

I NOW PROPOSE to consider leadership in Guinea in some detail. Leadership can be considered from the angle of leadership of the government *vis-à-vis* the citizens of the state or in terms of leadership within the ruling mass party, the Parti Démocratique de Guinée. In practice, however, the party is accorded a status superior to the government itself. "The P.D.G. has not hesitated to say that more than ever will it retain its supremacy over all other institutions in the country," says Sékou Touré. He has denied that the P.D.G. can properly be called a party in the standard sense of the term. It is a "higher entity" behind the state, a vast movement seeking to unite all Africans "under the banner of anti-colonialism and progress . . . the party assumes a directing role in the life of the nation and exercises all the powers of the nation. Political, judiciary, administrative, economic and technical powers are in the hands of the P.D.G." European parties, according to him, are sectional in that they reflect the interests of the class in society from which they emanate. But, he agrees, this class structure of society is alien to Guinea. Guinea is a classless society and therefore needs only one party. Emphasis on class or religious stratifications imports a harmful divisive tendency. The P.D.G. can adequately represent the interests of all citizens.

Touré insists that the P.D.G. is democratic in nature. "All our people are mobilized in the ranks of the P.D.G.; that is to say that the common will derives not from the summit but from a base of the popular will. Authority rests not with government but with the people." You may call it a dictatorship but it is a democratic dictatorship ". . . if the dictatorship exerted by the government is the direct emanation of the whole of the people, dictator-

ship is of a popular kind and the state is a democratic state—democracy being the exercise, by the people, of National Sovereignty".

The structure of the P.D.G. as it is outlined by L. Gray Cowan in *African One-Party States* appears formally democratic. Right from the basic village and urban committees up to the ultimate decision-taking body, the Bureau Politique, the elective principle is enforced. Membership of the party is open to all citizens above the age of 21.

Within the party the principle of Democratic Centralisation, first expounded by Lenin, is enforced. As expounded by Touré it consists in:

- (1) All the leaders of the party are directly elected, democratically, by the party workers, who have complete freedom of conscience and expression within the party.
- (2) The concerns of the state of Guinea are the concerns of all the citizens of Guinea. The programme of the party is discussed democratically. As long as a decision has not been taken each one is free to say what he thinks or wishes. But when—after a long discussion in the Congress or Assembly—the decisions have been taken by a unanimous vote or by a majority, the workers and the leaders are required to apply them faithfully.
- (3) There is no sharing of the responsibility of the leaders—only of the responsibility for a decision.

Thus, discipline will not be undermined.

The Bureau Politique of the P.D.G. has complete liberty in the execution of assigned responsibilities and in the "evaluation of the forms of action appropriate for the objective conditions of their execution". It is the locus of supreme authority in the state. It is elected by the triennial Party Congress. It consists of 17 members, all of whom are either Ministers of Government or other senior officials, such as head of the armed forces. The evidence suggests that debate is free and unrestrained within the Bureau but that "the opinions of a small inner group directly surrounding Sékou Touré carry the most weight, particularly on the more important questions".

How far can this be said to constitute collective rule? The evidence suggests that though Touré might be a kind of *primus inter pares*, the Bureau does have a certain collegiate character. Hodgkin suggests that personal rule was found predominantly among the older generation of mass party leaders. "The newer leaders have on the whole reacted against the 'cult of personality', and have criticized the great patriarchs of the past—and the present—on the ground that a collective form of leadership is more mature, rational, and effective. . . ."

Certainly, one gains the impression that Touré is no more powerful *vis-à-vis* other members of the Bureau than a British Prime Minister is *vis-à-vis* his Cabinet.

WHAT GENERAL FACTORS predispose towards a strengthening of the leader's hand? What forces will tend to legitimatise the regime and what counteracting forces will tend to break down its authority?

In many cases, such as Guinea and Ghana, the leader is

founder of the party and the hero who banished the imperialists and secured independence for his country. He was able to unite many of the citizens behind him in the struggle to get rid of alien rule. For many he comes to be a symbol of their aspirations, achieved and expected. Their millennial hopes are focused on his quasi-charismatic personality. The prestige of the leader engendered in the struggle for freedom is enormous and constitutes a considerable obstacle to any other politician wishing to wrest the power of leadership from him. Freedom is a heady brew and, in the exultation, rivals can safely be denounced (and destroyed) as being traitors to the cause of national unity or imperialist agents. If the leader has sufficient authority (as distinct from power) over a number of citizens, then he can derive from that source sufficient power over those who refuse to recognise his legitimacy.

I have stressed the importance of party in the process of mobilisation of society. If membership of the party is the key to success and the possibilities of patronage by the party are immense, then, obviously, the power of the party leader is further consolidated.

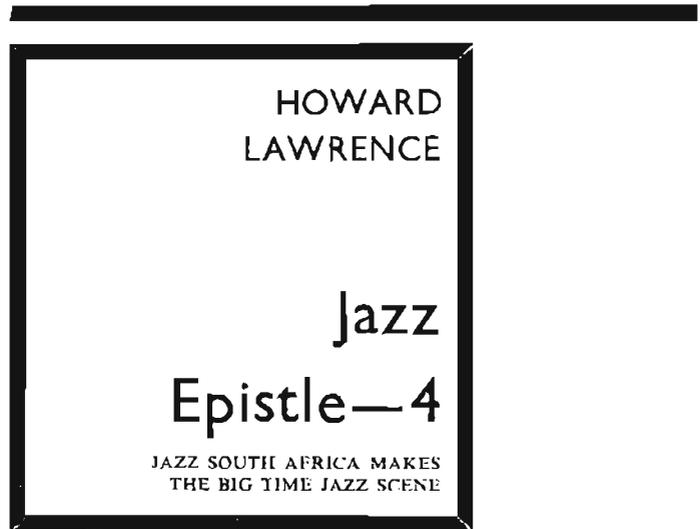
How far is the notion of "democratic centralisation" likely to inhibit the entrenchment of an oligarchy in the party? In those states where only one party is permitted, is it a genuine substitute for the right to form opposition parties? In the U.S.A. the two major parties have been able to tolerate "factionalism". New political movements that arose have tended to be enveloped in one or the other of the parties. No pretence at any kind of ideological homogeneity of the party is made. Cross-party is much more common in Congress than in the House of Commons. In Britain it might well be argued that the tightness of intra-party discipline is to some extent determined by the size of the leading party's majority. In an African state where the ruling party is so firmly entrenched that the possibility of potentially dangerous opposition arising is slight, a similar relaxation of discipline may be permitted. But this is a purely theoretical consideration. It seems more likely that the revolutionary leaders will keep a tight rein on the distribution of power and prevent the formation of other centres of power either in the party or in other social institutions. In other words, any kind of pluralistic distribution of power in the social structure is not likely to be permitted. This kind of *gleichsaltung* is one of the hallmarks of authoritarian rule.

IMPLICIT IN THE ABOVE analysis is my belief that the developing states will not be able to support the kind of political democracy one associates with the liberal societies of the West. Despite the fact that African nationalism is essentially a Jacobin revolt against alien rule and that its leaders are men imbued with democratic ideals, I believe that the social tensions between leaders and followers which vigorous development policies will generate will prove too much of a strain for democratic institutions. Millennial hopes in the breasts of followers are bound to be dissipated as the hard realities of development are reckoned with. The authority of the leadership which was nurtured by the presence of the alien rulers will tend to diminish as the *raison d'être* of nationalism withdraws. "Neo-colonialism", "White rule in Southern Africa", are useful whipping boys to keep the

nationalist fervour alive but they are not adequate substitutes for the actual presence of the alien oppressor.

You have, then, an overall picture of predominantly rural societies controlled by a tiny elite of nationalists who, paradoxically, are trying to build nations out of the imperfectly shattered remnants of the old societies. In his work *Political Man*, S. M. Lipset has argued that political democracy must be based on a certain level of socio-economic development if it is to endure. The higher this level, the more educated, the more industrialised the society, the firmer the base for democratic institutions. The Russians, though they spilt much blood, have laid such a base and the pressures for greater freedom in all fields have resulted in a slow relaxation of controls—"the thaw". They have a long way to go before they can be described as politically democratic but the indications are that the trend must go in that direction.

The rate of investment is the determinant of the rate of



MODERN JAZZ has been around in South Africa for a good many years, having found a small but dedicated following through United States discs released by South African record companies at about the same time that Charlie Parker and his contemporaries of that era were revolutionising jazz with their Bop sound.

One of the men who helped most to set the modern sound on the road to its current high pitch in the Republic, via a "live" scene, was the world-famous Johannesburg altoist, Kippie Moeketsi.

It was largely due to his dedication and musical sincerity that modern jazz was able to crawl confidently out from its shaky beginnings in township backyards and shanty jam sessions into the public eye, where it weaned a small coterie of musicians on the artistic possibilities of the "new sound" (of that time).

Naturally there were rewards for their sincerity—starvation, frustration and rejection by the classical and "pop" snobs who snubbed jazz as "neurotic", "juvenile" and "obscene" music. Still, they held fast and it was with this sincerity dictating his music that Kippie, on one of his road tours, met Dollar Brand.

economic growth. The unconsumed part of the national product is the amount invested. The greater the extent it is possible to minimise consumption the more is left over for investment. If, as the more radical leaders desire, development is to be swift, high investment rates will be necessary and consumption will not be allowed to rise rapidly. From the population's point of view, a screw will be put on them: produce more but keep the consumption level constant. To the nationalist leader this is elementary economics; but to the followers (and some 80 per cent of Guinea's population are rated as "peasants") it represents a new kind of oppression. Modernisation, if it is as thorough-going as the radicals want it, also represents to the peasant an upheaval and destruction of his traditional mode of living. And if peasants are the most conservative of all political animals, one can be sure that it will be bitterly resisted. Good government is not necessarily popular government.

Rousseau-esque notions of a General Will supporting the nationalist leaders at the height of the struggle for independence may then have had some relevance. However much Sékou Touré may claim that his authority is grounded in "the people's wishes", it is clear that the General Will is becoming more a normative concept. No longer do the leaders represent the actual will of the followers but rather what they ought to will. In Rousseau's terms, they are to be "forced to be free". Marx put the matter in a nutshell: "Theory is going to be realised in a people only to the extent that it is the realisation of its needs. . . . Will the theoretical needs be immediately practical needs? It is not sufficient that the idea strive for realisation; reality itself must strive toward the idea."

Centralised government and strong leadership are necessary in African states. Without this it is likely that Africa will see a repetition of the pattern of successive revolutions characteristic of South America. ●

LAST MONTH THAT MEETING between these two men who destined to become the high priests of jazz in South Africa was rewarded by international recognition of Dollar Brand's new disc entitled "Duke Ellington presents the Dollar Brand Trio". The record, cut in Paris by the Duke for Frank Sinatra's "Reprise" label, was reviewed by *Downbeat*, the world's leading jazz journal in a recent issue. The reviewing panel, which includes such top names as Leonard Feather, Don de Michael and a host of other world-famous critics, stated: "Dollar Brand is a 28-year-old South African pianist who has impressed a good many American musicians in Europe. It is clear now, with this release, what everybody has been shouting about. Brand is one of the strongest—as Duke Ellington and Thelonius Monk are strong—musicians to come along in some time. His playing is an amalgam of Monk, Duke and himself. He has that wide time conception of the other two; he has perhaps more technical command of his instrument, though, like his elders (Monk and Duke—H.L.), he maintains an appealing aura of the primitive in his playing. He is a deliberate player, sometimes moving with Monkish dignity—that slow, ponderous movement of which Monk is the acknowledged master. Further, he constructs his improvisation with the same care and respect for thematic material as do Monk and Ellington.

"Brand's piano often takes on a deeply dark hue that conjures a feeling of restless melancholy. In fact, his playing rarely seems at rest—here only on parts of the ballads 'Kippic' and 'Ubu Suku' (both composed by Brand.—H.L.) He does dapple his generally sombre tones, improvisations and composition with patches of light that are sometimes startling in their unexpectedness. Often there is a bi-tonal quality to his jaggedly contoured work, the right hand playing figures set at half a step down from what one should expect, judging by the left-hand chords. This is in keeping, however, with the clashing dissonance that is part of all his playing and composing on this record. . . ."

The record was awarded 4½ stars out of 5—a distinction that even the world's top acknowledged jazz musicians are seldom awarded.

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME that Dollar Brand's music has received international recognition. In November, 1963, *Downbeat* ran a cover story on him and his group—sidemen Johnny Gertze (bassist), drummer Mackay Ntshoko and vocalist Beattie Benjamin (all from Cape Town).

In 1961 Willis Conover, director of the Voice of America's "Music U.S.A.", played a tape of Dollar Brand's "Jazz Epistle, Verse I" album cut in South Africa. Conover and world-famous musician, composer and arranger Quincey Jones conducted an enthusiastic dialogue on the music. (All the compositions on the "Epistle" disc were originals written by members of the group, Dollar, Kippic, Moeketsi, Hugh Masekela and Jonas Gwangwa.—H.L.)

Late in 1961 Dollar Brand decided that he was ready to assault the European Jazz Circuit and, after a series of concerts in the major centres of the Republic, he flew to Switzerland with vocalist Beattie Benjamin and set up his headquarters in Zurich. Bassist Gertze and Drummer Ntshoko followed them a few months later to form the Dollar Brand Trio with Beattie Benjamin. Concert tours, night-club engagements, festivals, TV appearances followed until they became front-page news. *Politiken*, one of Denmark's leading morning newspapers, ran a front-page lead story on Brand and the *Downbeat* cover story followed after they were spotted by Duke Ellington and recorded by "Reprise" in Paris.

WHEN DOLLAR BRAND HITS the States in the next few months Jazz South Africa will have made the big time jazz scene, finally. The starvation, frustration and rejection of its growing years will become a thing of the past.

And what with Chris McGregor's "Blue Notes" ready to fly to Paris for the Antibes Festival on the French Riviera, Jazz South Africa, in Chris McGregor's words, "will have some fantastic surprises for the jazz world".

*The New African* wishes them all good luck. We only hope that the Dollar Brand Trio and the Blue Notes will not forget the men back home who all helped to make this heartening fact a reality. ●