

be, a university that is open to many streams of thought, self-avowed, competing. It can, and must be, both politicized and open. I join Professor C. B. MacPherson, in his presidential address to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, in believing that our slogan must be "From the liberal to the critical university."

In such a university men of the left will have a place along with others. If such left intellectuals remain *engagé*, not only intellectually but within living political movements, they can draw sustenance from and give vitality to these political movements.

They can then operate, within a liberal society, in a way effectively to affect the liberal center, to push it leftward, to force it to be conscious of the real social choices, to appeal to its conscience and to its self-interest. The American left, under such circumstances, could ally itself with the liberal center when it was profitable, and combat it when it was necessary.

I have not spoken of the problem of the "third world" movements. But, *mutatis mutandis*, the problem the left faces concerning them is similar in many ways to those concerning the liberal center. These movements are left in orientation because they are emanations of oppressed ethnic groups. But they contain many conservative elements because of their need for group unity. The left must learn to support these movements and unite with them when appropriate, but also dissociate itself from them when their conservative elements gain control. This is a delicate and difficult task, and one which requires both knowledge and empathy to do well. But it can in fact be done.

Above all, the radical intellectual must operate with the passionate calm of one for whom the revolution is not a battle of a day, a year, or a decade, but one of centuries. And yet he must do this without fatalistic optimism. The revolution is only inevitable because people make it so. The student revolt has in many ways restored the possibilities for the radical intellectual to rise to his task and find his appropriate place in the movement. The dilemma of activism versus thought, of full-time revolutionary activity versus co-option is false. The radical must operate in both arenas at once. He must break down some, but not all, of the barriers between them. He must participate in the movement, yet also reflect upon it. He must defend the university, but also criticize it. He must encourage spontaneity and protect it, yet also save himself and others from being drowned in it.

## 4—Africa in a Capitalist World

In 1972-73, I was president of the African Studies Association. I had already written *The Modern World-System*, but it had not yet appeared. I thought it important to use my presidential address to resume and restructure what I had been saying about contemporary Africa within the new perspective I had evolved. The two words, Africa and capitalism, had not been used in the same article too often in the 1950s and 1960s. I wished to insist that we had to view Africa as an intrinsic part of the capitalist world in which we were living.

African studies has gone through three well-known phases as a field of study. Up until 1950 or thereabouts, those studying Africa — they were not yet called Africanists — tended to concentrate almost exclusively on the capturing (or recapturing) of a description of Africa eternal. Launcelot the ethnographer in search of a holy grail of the past that was written in the present tense and was undefiled by contact and uncorrupted by civilization. What was once a myth is now a fairy tale and it would be silly to waste time telling each other the obvious truth that fairy tales are modes of the social control and the education of children.

We then moved collectively into a second phase in which we recognized that there was an African present, and consequently that there was an African past. Thus began the great division of the field of studies which has been so obvious to anyone attending meetings of such organizations as the African Studies Association. There were those who studied what was happening now. They usually called themselves political scientists or economists or sociologists, but some masqueraded under other denominations ranging from architectural planner to urban anthropologist to demographer. There arose a second group who studied what happened before. They usually called themselves historians or archaeologists but they, too, had their aliases: art historian, student of cosmologies, linguist. The two groups maintained a friendly cohabitation under the house of African studies but scarcely could they be said to have had an intimate relationship.

This separation of the present and the past was as artificial and as

mythical as the previous collapsing of past and present into one continuing eternity. It was no doubt a great advance in that it permitted some concrete empirical work rooted in concrete historical circumstances to proceed, but it was not satisfying. Those concerned with the present came to realize that much of their scholarship was really a sort of second-hand journalism. And those concerned with the past began to feel that their efforts to prove to non-Africanists that Africa too had splendid kings ultimately proved no more than that naive prejudice was naive. It provided, however, no true answer to the very large questions of Africa's position in the great "rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir"<sup>1</sup> of world cultures. If one wished to say that Africa's economic and technological weakness of today was somehow balanced in a world scale by Africa's glories of yesteryear, there would have to be some clearer, more detailed analysis of the process of evolution from the one to the other.

The logical consequence of this collective discomfort was almost self-evident. Those concerned with the present began looking backwards into the historical past, albeit gingerly. And those concerned with the past began to ask whether the conquest of Africa by Europe in the late nineteenth century marked as sharp an historical discontinuity as they had assumed. So we have J.F. Ade Ajayi addressing the International Congress of African Historians in 1965 on the theme, "The continuity of African institutions under colonialism."<sup>2</sup> Today it is scarcely credible that in 1965 the very title seemed somewhat daring—a measure of how far we have come in the past few years.

Ajayi said then:

[Historians] should consider the story of how individually or collectively Africans are trying to master the new forces that have descended on them, how and why a man gets himself baptised a Christian, sends his children to school, comes to terms with modern technology by buying a lorry and learning to drive it, and yet insists that the lorry is not just a mechanical device but has a force whose control properly belongs to the god of iron and whose emblems and charms are therefore displayed in the lorry. I find such a man more typical—and more cheering—than the frustrated, paralysed, helpless African portrayed in the theory of disruption.<sup>3</sup>

One historian who was doing what Ajayi called for was Terence Ranger, the organizer of the Congress in Dar es Salaam at which Ajayi spoke. Ranger published soon thereafter a two-part article in the *Journal*

*of African History* entitled "Connexions between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa."<sup>4</sup> Ranger asserted that so-called primary resistances, far from being reactionary or backward-looking, looked into the future in the same way as did later nationalist movements. He further argued that the two sets of movements were not merely similar but historically connected.

It was not long before these arguments were attacked by Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper as "ideological history," one that "has adopted the political philosophy of current African nationalism, and has used it to inform the study of African history." What is more, said Denoon and Kuper: "The African historian should be committed to writing the truth, rather than the politic half-truth."<sup>5</sup>

Strong rhetoric, but what is the truth? What is the truth now, and what will it be tomorrow? Who defines it today, and who tomorrow? Who indeed is truly dedicated to the truth, and whose interest does which truth serve? I raise of course the questions of the social bases of knowledge. But I do not wish to stop there. Rather I wish to move on from there to suggesting some conceptual bases for the knowledge of the social reality of Africa.

In 1971, Bernard Magubane published an article in *Current Anthropology* which was an attack on the indices used in studying social change in Africa. In particular, he singled out the work of A.L. Epstein and Clyde Mitchell about Northern Rhodesia as foci for his argument. As is the custom of this journal, the paper was submitted to a large number of scholars for comment, and the article was published simultaneously with the comments and a reply to the comments.<sup>6</sup>

The heart of Magubane's critique was that the categories used by Epstein and Mitchell in their analyses were "extremely superficial—and at best ethnocentric," and that they lacked "historical perspective."<sup>7</sup> Magubane's explanation of this was that Epstein and Mitchell reflected their social role:

As men who basically accepted the "civilizing mission" of imperialism their analyses rationalized and attempted to improve the imperial system. The result was a divided effort at social analysis and propaganda which produced a hodgepodge of eclectic and mechanistic formulations.<sup>8</sup>

The commentators were scarcely gentle with Magubane. Epstein accused Magubane of "dissipating his talents in knocking down the men

African institutions made the... their...  
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 African institutions made the... their...

of straw he himself has set up.”<sup>9</sup> Mitchell charged him with the “shoddiest kind of criticism . . . *argumentum ad hominem* . . .” He concluded:

The pity of it is that all he has to offer is destructive and ill-considered comments on the work of others who, for better or for worse, but *nonetheless in good faith*, have faced the challenge and discipline of research of this kind.<sup>10</sup> (Italics added)

While Epstein and Mitchell denounced ad hominem arguments, various of the other commentators offered just such arguments in defense of Epstein and Mitchell. A.J.F. Köbben suggested that to understand Magubane’s attitude, “one would need the concerted efforts of the anthropologist, the historian, and the psychologist, and a lot of empathy, if not compassion.”<sup>11</sup> Satish Saberwal observed in milder tones that:

The chiding that Mitchell and Epstein get at Magubane’s hand is, in part, the penalty that pioneers often have to pay.<sup>12</sup>

Simon D. Messing reminded us of the German saying: “Undank ist der Welten Lohn.”<sup>13</sup> Van den Berghe accused Magubane of “ideologically inspired innuendo,” and called him “not even intellectually honest.”<sup>14</sup> Philip Mayer asserted merely:

[Magubane’s] own “existential” situation is . . . of some relevance, especially as such a single-minded onslaught on “colonial anthropology” seems almost anachronistic in 1970.<sup>15</sup>

In his reply, Magubane observed with sharpness:

The importance of my critique of “pluralist” writings like Van den Berghe’s and of works like that of Epstein, Mayer, Mitchell, etc. derives not from their intrinsic worth, but rather from the near universal acceptance of their conclusions among certain scholars. What we are faced with in the field of African studies is an accumulation of studies that are theoretically false and have congealed into a steadfast intellectual reality. It is revealing but at the same time sad that of those people who replied to my article, only the three “Third World” commentators understood clearly what I was talking about, whereas the rest could only partially agree or were completely impervious to what I was saying. This is a reflection of the fundamental issue of our time: those who stand for a particular order in the world are unwilling to accept challenges to that order. Persuading such people to see that their ideas must be abandoned is like asking those in power to give up their privileges.<sup>16</sup>

Lest we think that such a vitriolic exchange is exceptional, let us return for a moment to Denoon and Kuper’s broadside against Ranger and what they termed the “Dar es Salaam school” of historiography. These “nationalist historians,” said Denoon and Kuper, might well be regarded “as providing pie in the past rather than an understanding of present problems.”<sup>17</sup> In his reply, Ranger had a footnote that reads:

One day, perhaps, if interest should survive that long, a scholar will be able to investigate what connections there are between the fact that Denoon and Kuper are both young South African exiles recently working in Makerere and the methods and assumptions of their critique of Dar es Salaam historians. I would venture some speculations on this myself were it not for the fact that their own attempt to situate me in my environment serves as a ludicrous warning of the dangers of such an exercise.<sup>18</sup>

No speculation was therefore offered, but Ranger concluded his article with this sentence:

I am sure that [Denoon and Kuper] will find it easier to serve the goddess of disinterested history when they are not working under the pressure of the profound if obscure forces which impelled their trenchant but totally misleading attack on the historians of Dar es Salaam.<sup>19</sup>

In turn, Denoon and Kuper showed no shyness in their rejoinder:

Finally, Professor Ranger’s mention of our South African backgrounds and his reference to the “profound if obscure forces” which motivated our critique may have puzzled some readers. Is he suggesting a secret subsidy from the Communist Party or the CIA? Or darkly hinting at the emergence of a sinister Pretoria school of African historiography? Our own view is that far from making any such unworthy imputation, this was Professor Ranger’s way of saying he could not imagine any good reason for criticizing his school.<sup>20</sup>

The vehemence of feeling is not unfamiliar to those who have followed recent scholarly debates in African studies, although some may feel as did R.H. Tawney when he commented on H.R. Trevor-Roper’s criticism of his work: “An erring colleague is not an Amalekite to be smitten hip and thigh.”<sup>21</sup> What is to the point, however, is to see if there are underlying themes that would give coherence and unity to a large number of different debates on seemingly different topics. I shall therefore rapidly survey what it is I think Magubane and his critics are arguing about, the nub of the issue between Denoon and Kuper on one side and

Ranger on the other, and what is at issue in the somewhat more restrained debate that J.D. Fage and C.C. Wrigley recently engaged in about "slavery and the slave trade." For I think there is a common intellectual issue threaded through these and other debates, overlain of course by some strongly-felt moral, and political issues, and I believe that we can collectively make sense out of the debates only if we bring this underlying issue to the fore.

Note first of all that Magubane's article is about "indices used in the study of social change in colonial Africa." One of his opening suggestions was that "a total historical analysis of social change would, as a matter of course, take into account (various) stages in 'acculturation.'"<sup>22</sup> He proceeded to outline three. In each of which the response of Africans to the dominant forces in the colonial situation was different. He noted, in terms virtually identical to those of Ajayi:

In fact the history of the colonial situation, as opposed to its economics, its politics, its sociology, and its psychology, is in large measure a history of the variety of African responses to the new situation, a history of the ways Africans came to terms with a new set of forces, the ways they accommodated, resisted, or escaped.<sup>23</sup>

To the charge of neglect of these considerations, Magubane's critics shouted "foul." I take one response as typical. Clyde Mitchell said: "Epstein's whole book is about the way in which Africans were organizing to change the status quo from 1932 to 1953."<sup>24</sup>

It is worth listening to Magubane's counterattack in his reply at some length:

Therefore my point in this article was not that Epstein in his book *Politics in an Urban African Community* did not deal with trade unions, but that he gave the wrong kind of explanation as to the source of these movements. To understand African nationalism and give it a correct historical interpretation, one must understand its dual nature. White settlement is a colonialist force in its own right (territorial colonialism) whose ultimate interest is its preservation in the territory it has occupied. The conflict that arose between Africans and white settlers stemmed from the antagonistic confrontation between white colonizing community *qua* community and the African people *qua* people. When the Africans were introduced into mining and secondary industry, the problem was compounded by class factors. Therefore African nationalism combines the dynamics of national liberation and class struggle. The failure of elite integrationist politics and the beginning of the armed struggle testify to this dual

nature. What is the nature of the relation between the two aspects of African nationalism in southern Africa? The comments by Epstein, Mitchell, and Van den Berghe avoid this issue.<sup>25</sup>

Permit me to reformulate this debate into two very fundamental issues: those of time-scope and space-scope. We are not involved in a simplified debate about the relevance of history. Both sides acknowledged this. What they disagreed about was the "correct historical interpretation." They have not even disagreed about the fact that some kind of structural and behavioral change was occurring under colonial rule, although Magubane charged that the others "have tended to take [the colonial situation] for granted, or to assume that its general characteristics are known."<sup>26</sup> But Magubane insisted there are temporal stages within the colonial period—what might be paraphrased as the period of conquest, the period of "acquiescence" (Magubane's phrase), and the period of national liberation. He argued that by neglecting this periodization, Epstein, Mitchell *et. al.* were in fact talking exclusively about the middle period. This was of course their privilege, and was a relatively minor peccadillo. What is at issue is the assertion that by this absence of explicit periodization (perhaps in the very innards of their own intellectual processes) they could not interpret meaningfully the data which they collected in a technically impeccable manner.

Nor is this all. The second issue is that of space-scope. Magubane said that the conflict was that of a "white colonizing community *qua* community and the African people *qua* people." He talked of the dual nature of African nationalism: it is, he asserted, both "national liberation and class struggle." But Epstein too spoke of growing national consciousness. He too spoke of the union as uniting workers along class lines. Thus, was not Magubane unfair? To Epstein, he was setting up "straw men."

To make sense of this, we must draw out the implicit frameworks of the authors. For Epstein and Mitchell, the geographical frame of analysis was Northern Rhodesia. To the extent that they made use of stratification categories (tribe, class, etc.) these were for them categories of this territorial unit. For Magubane, although he did not say so explicitly, the use of these boundaries distorted the data and made no operational sense. How can a movement be simultaneously one of "national libera-

tion" and one of "class struggle," if the unit of analysis is not larger than the colonial territory — at the very minimum that of the imperial political framework, and more reasonably, as I shall soon argue, that of the world-economy.

Let us now turn to the debate about the so-called Dar es Salaam school of historiography. Here Denoon and Kuper were quite explicit about the issue of time-scope and space-scope. They made it the heart of the debate. Although in many ways I would assimilate<sup>27</sup> their position on the essential underlying issue with that of Epstein and Mitchell, they took the initiative in this debate, seeming to invert the sides by accusing Ranger (whose position I would assimilate to that of Magubane) of provinciality of time and scope.

Denoon and Kuper started their analysis of citing Ranger as depicting in 1965 the likely intellectual debate of the future in these terms: "The Africanist historian . . . will increasingly find his main adversaries not in the discredited colonial school but in the radical pessimists."<sup>28</sup> That is, men who employ what Ranger called "Fanonesque analysis." Denoon and Kuper said of this categorization by Ranger:

In this confrontation Professor Ranger takes the side of the Africanist by which is meant the historian whose concerns include the study of nationalism. In practice the frequent use of the term *Africanist* is likely to mislead, since the recommended focus for historians is not the whole continent but African activity within national boundaries and generally for a national purpose. The analysis repudiates not only a Fanonesque view, but also any view involving generalization on a scale larger than that of nation — whether a world view, an imperial view or a continental approach. The recommended approach, then, is African nationalist.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, the issue of space-scope is at the forefront of the critique.

Ranger, however, flatly denied the correctness of this perception of his position:

I do not believe . . . that a historian should concentrate on African activity within national boundaries. To extract such a view from my work cannot be achieved without a dexterity which comes close to manipulation.<sup>30</sup>

Rather, Ranger asserted his position to be quite different:

The historian "must insist that nationalism is a live subject" — not the *only* subject, not the most *important* subject, but a *live* subject. So far from being con-

systems of national boundaries

cerned to argue that *all* African historical studies should in some sense be nationalist I was concerned to urge that nationalism should still be studied.<sup>31</sup>

So is there then no argument? Is it all a misunderstanding? Not quite. It turns out on closer analysis that the debate over space-scope is a bit of a front for a more real debate about time-scope. Much of the debate centers around the contents of two books of essays about Tanzania, one edited by I.M. Kimambo and A.J. Temu and the other by A.D. Roberts.<sup>32</sup> Denoon and Kuper took these volumes as the quintessential products of the group they were attacking. Denoon and Kuper cited the Introduction to *A History of Tanzania* in which Professors Kimambo and Temu wrote:

There has been no attempt to deal with colonial administrative structures. This is because our main interest has been on the African himself.<sup>33</sup>

To which Denoon and Kuper responded:

Historians of political development within colonial dependencies, in any part of the world, would be rightly appalled at such a self-imposed limitation.<sup>34</sup>

Denoon and Kuper pointed out that Ranger had challenged previous writers for having regarded certain new African institutions — specifically African independent churches — as "an abnormality, almost a disease."<sup>35</sup> This was, they said, "a straw-man's thesis"<sup>36</sup> — shades of Epstein attacking Magubane. To pursue the parallelism of the two debates, Denoon and Kuper taxed their opponents with disparaging the ethnographers:

Finally, the members of the school show a certain shyness about using the works of the anthropologists who worked in Tanganyika during the colonial period. The social anthropologists were the main group of scholars active in colonial Africa; they worked in the vernaculars; and they published accounts of East African societies and social movements over many years. Not only are their ethnographies invaluable historical documents, but their interpretations would often be suggestive for the historian. The reason for this neglect appears to be the association of anthropology with colonialism.<sup>37</sup>

But how is all this a debate about time-scope? This surfaces clearly in the debate about pre-colonial East Africa. Denoon and Kuper asserted that the authors writing various local histories in the Roberts volume had failed to prove their generalizations, that in the editor's own chapter,

“there is a sense of straining to find . . . roots of nationalism.”<sup>38</sup> They cited J.E.G. Sutton’s chapter in the Kimambo-Temu volume in which he began with a banality that the Tanzanian nation “is the product of a long historical process stretching back hundreds, even thousands of years”<sup>39</sup> and snidely commented that Sutton “does not in practice attempt to Tanzanianize the australopithecines.”<sup>40</sup>

What was all of this leading to? Two statements: one of shock, and one of assertion. The one of shock reads:

Perhaps this [previous quote] may be regarded as a recognition that a full continuity of large-scale anti-colonial sentiment is not always to be found. At all events, [Lonsdale’s] Dar es Salaam colleagues — Gwassa, Iliffe and Temu — appear still to be convinced of the existence of a “missing link” between resistance and TANU nationalism in Tanzania, while Roberts would like to push back the roots of resistance on a national scale well into the nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup>

And the assertion:

Scholars who regard the outside world’s interventions in Africa as having achieved more than nationalism, and who consider that colonialism has been replaced very frequently by neo-colonialism, are not likely to be convinced by the implication that colonial policy was of scant significance even during the colonial years.<sup>42</sup>

But was this the implication these writers wanted to have drawn? Ranger said it missed the point:

What most of the contributions to a *A History of Tanzania* do stress is African initiative. African choice and African adaptation . . . But there are two things which it is very important to make plain. This first is that to stress African agency is by no means to stress African heroism or efficiency; the second is that a common concern with what Africans did and how they affected their history can lead to a most un-common and varied set of conclusions. The inquiry into African agency is not the resting point which defines a school, but the beginning point out of which all sorts of major differences will arise.<sup>43</sup>

What distinguishes in the end Denoon and Kuper’s analysis from the ones they criticize is the emphasis placed on the analysis of the colonial era. Denoon and Kuper argued that because of a “nationalist” political perspective, Ranger *et al* ignored some concrete and specific features of colonial administration in favor of mythological “connexions.” Ranger argued rather that to understand African behavior in that period re-

quired situating it in a longer time-scale of historical development, the exact bounds of which Ranger did not pursue in this debate.

To demonstrate that this debate is not merely one about how to interpret the colonial period, let us turn to the argument about slavery and the slave trade. John Fage entitled his article “Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History.”<sup>44</sup> The title itself suggests the space-scope. As for the time-scope his summary depicted it as covering “especially . . . the period from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.” We shall see however that this was not in fact his time-scope, since his analysis involved going further back in time.

Fage started by rejecting both the thesis that slavery was a flourishing institution in West Africa prior to European intrusion and the thesis that it was purely exogenously imposed. And basing himself largely on Philip Curtin,<sup>45</sup> he also rejected the idea that slave-trading in West Africa had “a disastrous effect on its population.”<sup>46</sup> Rather, he put forward a different interpretation which he summarized as follows:

[E]conomic and commercial slavery and slave-trading were not natural features of West African society, but . . . developed, along with the growth of states, as a form of labour mobilization to meet the needs of a growing system of foreign trade in which, initially, the demand for slaves as trade goods were relatively insignificant. What might be termed a “slave economy” was generally established in the Western and Central Sudan by about the fourteenth century at least, and had certainly spread to the coasts around the Senegal and in Lower Guinea by the fifteenth century. The European demand for slaves in the Americas, which reached its peak from about 1650 to about 1850, accentuated and expanded the internal growth of both slavery and the slave trade. But this was essentially only one respect of a very wide process of economic and political development and social change in West Africa.<sup>47</sup>

To argue this position, Fage had to start by undermining the attack on Fage’s previous statement by Walter Rodney, whose evidence Fage acknowledged to be crucially relevant.<sup>48</sup> Fage discounted Rodney’s finding of the absence of a slave work-force in West Africa prior to the arrival of European slave-traders as true perhaps for the Upper Guinea Coast but not for either the Lower Guinea Coast or the interior. Fage’s essential explanation was that the area that Rodney studied was atypical, essentially because it “was an economically little-developed and backward region.”<sup>49</sup>

For the other areas, Fage contended the picture was very different:

In general, we can be confident that what the Portuguese sought to do in Lower Guinea from about 1480 was to profit by imposing themselves (as later they would do in East Africa and Asia) on already existing patterns of trade, and that they from there organized kingdoms in which the idea of foreign trade, carried on under royal control and in accordance with state policy by established merchant classes or guilds, was already well established. Such a system involved the use of slaves — and an appreciation of their economic value — in a number of ways: as cultivators of crops for market on the estates of kings or nobles; as miners, or as artisans in craft workshops, as carriers on the trade routes; and even as traders themselves; as soldiers, retainers, servants, officials even, in the employ of kings or principal men in the kingdom.<sup>50</sup>

Did nothing then change for Fage in West Africa when the Europeans came in the fifteenth century? It's not entirely clear. Fage said that:

[The] slave trade . . . in West Africa . . . was part of a sustained process of economic and social development. Probably because, by and large, in West Africa land was always more abundant than labour, the institution of slavery played an essential role in its development; without it there were really few effective means of mobilizing labour for the economic and political needs of the state . . .

On the whole it is probably true to say the operation of the slave trade may have tended to integrate, strengthen and develop unitary, territorial political authority, but to weaken or destroy more segmentary societies. Whether this was good or evil may be a nice point: historically it may be seen as purposive and perhaps as more or less inevitable.<sup>51</sup>

The picture thus that we have from Fage is that there existed some long historical process which began at some unspecified point prior to the fifteenth century in which the European intrusion was merely one of a series of factors which contributed to this "inevitable" and "purposive" evolution. When the Europeans finally conquered West Africa, this was merely one more step in this process:

The steps taken by Europeans against the slave trade and slavery therefore hastened the day when, in their own economic interest they thought it necessary first to conquer the West African kingdoms, and then to continue the process, initiated by African kings and entrepreneurs, of conquering the segmentary societies and absorbing them into unitary political structures.<sup>52</sup>

We see then clearly that for Fage a meaningful unit of analysis is West Africa from prior to the fifteenth century to the present in which the prin-

cipal dynamic of social organization and transformation is "state-building."

How different had been Rodney's article. First notice the title: "African slavery and other forms of social oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the context of the Atlantic slave-trade." The context (that is, the space-scope) was not "West Africa" but the "Atlantic slave-trade," which was in fact shorthand for the European world-economy. Rodney saw this period as one in which "African society became geared to serve the capitalist system,"<sup>53</sup> — that is, the world capitalist system. He said:

Historically, the initiative came from Europe. It was the European commercial system which expanded to embrace the various levels of African barter economy, and to assign to them specific roles in global production. This meant the accumulation of capital from trading in Africa, and above all the purchase of slaves and their employment in the New World.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, the period 1600–1800 is far from being a middle period in a continuing West African historical pattern as Fage envisaged it; for Rodney it was "the first stage of the colonial domination of Africa by Europeans,"<sup>55</sup> a "protocolonial" period<sup>56</sup> — hence part of a world-historical pattern.

C.C. Wrigley entered into this debate, saying very correctly:

[Fage's radical reassessment of the Atlantic slave-trade] brings near to the surface certain theoretical assumptions which I believe to be embedded in a large part of recent African historiography . . .<sup>57</sup>

And the assumption that Wrigley was most concerned about bringing to the fore is that slavery and the slave-trade are a necessary condition of the "political development" of West Africa, an inevitable aspect of state-formation.<sup>58</sup> As Wrigley noted, this stands Rodney on his head:

Hitherto, a historian who was at pains to establish that Africans were enslaving one another before the first caravels dropped anchor off their coasts would have been immediately identifiable as a "colonialist"; he would be manifestly seeking to denigrate the African people and to saddle them with part of the blame for the ensuing calamity of the Atlantic trade. Fage, however, is unmistakably congratulating West Africans on having achieved the institution of slavery without European help.<sup>59</sup>

This, continued Wrigley, was "historicism," taking "classificatory types, formulated in the first place for their heuristic value" and translat-

Salaam at which Ajayi made his appeal to study the continuities of African institutions under colonialism, Ivan Hrbek gave an unfortunately neglected paper entitled "Towards a periodisation of African history."<sup>63</sup>

Hrbek attacked the relevance of conventional Europo-centric periodizations of Africa, including those of Marxist dogmatists like Endre Sik.<sup>64</sup> He suggested various landmarks or watersheds, working backwards. The most recent was that of the 1960s — the achievement of independence by many states. The second however was not 1884–1885 but rather the moment of "integration of African societies into the sphere of world economy and later world politics."<sup>65</sup> He dated this, with some reservations, as the first decade of the twentieth century. Farther back, he hesitated to give a continent-wide date. Although he would have liked to distinguish what he called "contact zones" and "isolated zones" at that point in time, he pointed out that during the period 1805–1820 there were a large number of major happenings in both zones. He listed the jihad of Osman dan Fodio; the rise of the Zulu under Chaka; the eclipse of Bunyoro and the rise of Buganda; the foundation of modern Egypt under Muhammed Ali; the unification of the Imerina on Madagascar under Radama I; the rise of Omani hegemony on the East African coast under Sayyid Said. According to Hrbek what makes these six instances parallel is that they all "pointed in one direction: the growth of a unified and highly centralized state with an absolute monarch unrestricted in his power by any freely elected council."<sup>66</sup> This was also the moment of the abolition of the slave trade, and although Hrbek dismissed any connection, I am not so sure that he was correct in doing so.

Going further back, Hrbek indicated some skepticism about the conventional belief that the fifteenth or sixteenth century marked a turning point.

[S]ometimes exaggerated assertions as to the far-reaching consequences of the slave trade are pronounced. In fact the coming of the Europeans and the start of the slave-trade were a direct influence only in coastal regions and their immediate hinterlands . . . In the "isolated" zones African societies continued their independent development without any extracontinental influence. . . .<sup>67</sup>

Finally, Hrbek argued a still earlier turning point — somewhere between the first and fifth centuries A.D.

ing them into "developmental stages, conceived as having real existence and arranged in a hierarchy which is both chronological and qualitative."<sup>60</sup> Such historicism is ethnocentric and condemns Africans "to limp painfully in the footsteps of Europe."<sup>61</sup> Note here an interesting paradox. It is suggested that the consequence of using West African space-scope, as did Fage, can lead to conclusions that are Europo-centric. It is equally implied that using a European space-scope (taking Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries to include at least parts of West Africa), as did Rodney, can lead to conclusions that place in appropriate perspective what Ranger calls "African agency."

How then do we proceed? In his most recent book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Rodney devoted Chapter Two to "how Africa developed before the coming of the Europeans up to the fifteenth century." He gave an explanation that is in the tradition of a recent French literature about the "African mode of production." I myself do not find this part of Rodney's exposition very satisfying. Nor as a matter of fact do I get the impression that Rodney himself does. For he concluded the chapter with a reflection which I endorse entirely:

One of the paradoxes in studying this early period of African history is that it cannot be fully comprehended without first deepening our knowledge of the world at large, and yet the true picture of the complexities of the development of man and society can only be drawn after intensive study of the long-neglected African continent.<sup>62</sup>

This then is how I think we must proceed. To understand Africa, we must reconceptualize world history. And for the scholarly world to effectuate such a conceptualization, we as Africanists must do our share by doing our work within such a perspective. I am not calling for intellectual supermen. I am merely asking that we wear a new pair of glasses, and that we wear these new glasses in the very process of grinding them. This a hard task, but not a new one, since this is the only way in which man has ever invented the new truths that caught up his new realities and yet simultaneously criticized these new realities in the light of human potentialities.

One key aspect to the process of reconceptualization is to bring to the fore our implicit theories. And this means specifying time-scope and space-scope and justifying our choices. At the same conference in Dar es



. . . when iron working was already known in large parts of Africa and when the introduction of new food-plants [from South-East Asia] enabled the Bantu and also the West African ethnic groups to occupy the forested areas . . .<sup>68</sup>

I outline Hrbek's dates not to defend them but to indicate how different they are from more conventional dating, as suggested not only by many standard texts but by such a critic of these texts as Rodney: that is, pre-1500, 1500-1885, 1885-1960.

A second analyst who came up with dates with some similarities to those of Hrbek is Samir Amin who suggested the following: a *pre-mercantilist period* going back into history and going up to 1600; a *mercantilist period* going from 1600-1800; *completed integration into the capitalist system* (the nineteenth century to the present).<sup>69</sup>

But, you will say, is it so important whether we date a shift at 1500 or 1600, at 1885 or the first decade of the twentieth century? Do we have any tools of historical measurement that are so fine? And what practical consequence can such a seemingly esoteric debate have? The answer is of course that our measures are gross and we should not pretend otherwise. But the debate is not esoteric because behind it lies the issue not of the years, but of the conceptual apparatus we have used to come up with one set of dates or another. And this is not merely important: it is all-determining.

To make sense of African history, we must have a theory of human society. If we go back to the year 1000 or thereabouts, our knowledge of what was going on in Africa is far more sparse than any of us would like. We know there were great migrations. We know that in various places there were state-apparatuses. We know that in some places there was long-distance trade. But we do not know too much—in part because we have not really looked for the answers—about the geographical bounds of the various divisions of labor in Africa. No doubt there were many mini-systems, largely or entirely self-sufficient. But how many worlds were there—that is, arenas in which there were systematic sustained exchanges of essential goods? And even more difficult, how many of these took the form of a world-empire—that is, a single division of labor with a single overall political structure; and how many took the form of a world-economy—that is, a single division of labor with multiple political systems? We know that historically the first world-economy to overcome

the basic instability of this systemic form and therefore survive over a long period of time is the capitalist world-economy which originated as European world economy in the sixteenth century. But we also know that the course of human history has seen the passing existence of many world-economies, some of which disintegrated and others of which became transformed into world-empires.

Take for example Mali. At its height was it a world-empire or part of a larger world-economy that included parts of the Maghreb as well as areas in the forest zone to the south, within which the state of Mali was only one of many political systems? I suspect the latter is true for at least part of the time, but the hard research remains to be done. Instead of writing epicycles around an evolutionary theory of a "feudal" stage of social development by talking first of an "Asiatic mode of production" and then of an "African mode of production," don't we have to undertake a fundamental reassessment of all the varieties of redistributive modes of production, all of which seem to require some kind of political channel of redistribution and all of which seem to inhibit progress in technological productivity because of the absence of a market towards which production is oriented?

What we learn about Mali may enable us to explain intelligently for the first time Carolingian Europe. I am not calling for a systematic comparison. We are not yet at the stage. For we do not even yet have a systematic categorization of the parameters of each, using terms that are at least translatable one to the other. For almost all our work has started from political definitions of space-scope which has prevented us from systematically analyzing social systems—divisions of labor (that is, economic entities)—which may or may not have a single political framework.

If now we turn to a slightly later point in time (something did change in the sixteenth century—not in Africa, but in the world). In the sixteenth century there emerged a European world-economy centered on a combination of Atlantic and Baltic trade which included geographically within its division of labor an area including northwestern Europe, the Christian Mediterranean, northeastern Europe (but not Russia) and Hispanic America. The mode of production was capitalist. Though the genesis of this structure can be dated about 1450, it is only with the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis in 1559 that the possibility that this world-

economy would go the way of all previous ones — transformation into a world-empire or disintegration — was definitely eliminated. And thus it was at this point that the capitalist mode of production (which can exist only within that structure known as a world-economy) could be said to have become the mode of production of this system, therefore determining the social relations of all sectors of this world-economy.

Why such a capitalist world-economy should have arisen in Europe and not elsewhere (say, China) is an interesting question. Why it should have arisen at this point of historical time is too. I have tried to speak to these questions elsewhere and it is not to the point of this discussion to dwell on them. We must look rather to the consequences.<sup>70</sup>

A capitalist world-economy is based on a division of labor between its core, its semiperiphery, and its periphery in such a way that there is unequal exchange between the sectors but dependence of all the sectors, both economically and politically, on the continuance of this unequal exchange. One of the many consequences of this system is found in its structure, the peripheral states being weakened and the core states strengthened by the ongoing process of exchange. A second of the consequences is that each sector develops different modes of labor control, consonant with the principle that highest relative wages are paid in the core sectors and lowest relative wages in the periphery. This is why at this moment in time there emerged in eastern Europe the so-called (and misnamed) "second serfdom" and the *encomienda* system in Hispanic America. Both are forms of coerced cash-crop labor on estates producing for a capitalist world-market.<sup>71</sup>

In addition, in the Americas plantation slavery was developed. Plantation slavery is a form of capitalist wage-labor (labor offered for sale as a commodity on a market) in which the state intervenes to guarantee a low current wage (the cost of subsistence). However there is an additional cost; that of the purchase of the slave. If the slave is "produced" within the world-economy, his real cost is not merely the sales price but the opportunity cost (of failing to use his labor under other wage conditions at presumably a higher level of productivity). As Marc Bloch suggested a long time ago, under these conditions slaves are too expensive<sup>72</sup> — that is, they do not produce enough surplus to compensate for their real cost.

The only way to render plantation slavery economically feasible in a capitalist system is to eliminate the opportunity cost, which means that

the slaves must be recruited outside the world-economy. In that case, the opportunity cost is borne by some other system and is a matter of indifference to the purchasers. This would change of course if one totally exhausted the supplier and there were no replacement on similar terms. But historically this had not yet occurred at the moment the slave-trade ended.

Trade with an external arena of a world-economy is fundamentally different from trade within the world-economy between the core and peripheral sectors. We can see this if we compare trade in the sixteenth century between western Europe and Poland on the one hand and between western Europe and Russia on the other, or during the same period of time trade between Spain and Hispanic America on the one hand and Portugal and the Indian Ocean area on the other.<sup>73</sup>

There are three visible differences. First, trade within the world-economy is trade in essentials, without which the world-economy could not continue to survive. It involves a significant transfer of surplus, given that a world-economy is based on a capitalist mode of production. It is trade that responds to the world-market of the world-economy. Trade of two world-systems, each external to the other, involves what was called in the sixteenth century the "rich trades." In more precise terms, we can say such trade involves the exchange of products that both sellers define as of very low value but that both buyers define as of high value. This is not capitalist exchange, and is in fact dispensable exchange. There is profit to be made by long-distance traders but this is precisely the kind of profit made by such traders over thousands of years of such trade — a profit based on high price discrepancies due to rarity of the product at the place of consumption and oversupply of the product at the place of production.

Second, trade within a capitalist world-economy weakens the structure of a peripheral country involved in it. The steady decline of the power of the Polish king from about 1500 to 1800 is a clear case in point. Trade in external arenas does not weaken and probably strengthens the state-structures of the trading partners. One can point to the increase of the strength of sultans in Malaysia at this same period.

Third, trade within a capitalist world-economy weakens the role of the indigenous commercial bourgeoisie in the periphery. Trade with an external arena strengthens the role of the indigenous bourgeoisie.

Seems like circumstantial evidence

(Slavery a capitalist wage-labor)

Thus far, as you will see, I have assiduously avoided discussing where European trade with West Africa in what Amin called the *mercantilist* period (1600–1800) fits into this picture. The reason is that the answer is not as clear-cut as we would like it. It is evident that this trade between Europe and West Africa meets the description of trade in the external arena on the last two grounds. It strengthens various state-structures in West Africa, and it strengthened the role of the indigenous commercial bourgeoisie. But can it be said to have been luxury trade, and even more can it be said to have been trade that did not involve a substantial transfer of surplus?

One piece of evidence that it could be so described is deductive in nature. Were it not so, were West Africa part of the periphery of the European world-economy, then the cost of slaves in the Western Hemisphere would have had to bear the opportunity cost of their physical loss to West Africa, and that, presumably, would have made them too expensive in the economics of the total economy to be used. And used they were, extensively, as we know. The loss of course to West Africa was very real.<sup>74</sup>

But this could be taken to be circular reasoning. Let me therefore speak directly to the two descriptive features: was the slave-trade of items each seller valued low? And was there no significant transfer of surplus?

The answer is, I believe, that the situation evolved. Victorino Magalhães Godinho gave some detailed accounts of the nature of the trade between Portuguese and Africans at a whole series of points along the West African coast down to Angola in the sixteenth century. It seems clear that the main items traded at that time for slaves were brass and copper bracelets ('manillas'), various size trays, barrels of conches, kerchiefs, skullcaps, and some uncut cloth.<sup>75</sup> I do not believe it would be inaccurate to say that this was an exchange of items each seller valued low for what they each valued high. Nor do I think it inaccurate to say that at this point a cessation for any reason would not have upset the respective economies fundamentally, and consequently would have had few implications for the social organization of the respective social systems despite the fact that for Europeans the trade was most profitable,<sup>76</sup> as long distance trade usually is.

This seems to be less the case as we go forward in time. But how much less? Christopher Fyfe's textbook account seems ambivalent. On

the one hand he noted that as of the seventeenth century, firearms became a major import. And firearms might be said to be an essential product. Indeed, he said that by the end of the eighteenth century, "there were factories in England [in Birmingham] turning out special arms for the African trade . . ."<sup>77</sup> And thus he implied that such trade was a regular part of the European division of labor. On the other hand, he called the remaining imports (other than firearms) "luxuries rather than necessities; they merely supplemented local manufactures with imports of superior quality."<sup>78</sup> Still, he observed further: "As manufactured goods were imported increasingly, local industry needed to suffer"<sup>79</sup> — a feature we would associate with a process of peripheralization. We thus have an ambiguous set of characteristics describing this trade. Fyfe's own summary points to the argument of evolution over time:

So, though foreign imports tended to be luxury goods, and the country still remained self-supporting in essentials, as the demands for imports grew steadily, the area was increasingly tied to the economies of countries overseas.<sup>80</sup>

I believe some of this ambiguity dissipates if one goes carefully through Rodney's detailed analysis of "The Nature of Afro-European Commerce."<sup>81</sup> Rodney divided European exports with West Africa into five categories: metal, cloth, alcoholic beverages, weapons, and "a miscellany of baubles, bangles, and beads."<sup>82</sup>

Of the last category, he said: "For both Europeans and Africans, the numerous items of trumpery were placed at the bottom of the scale of values."<sup>83</sup> This would indicate that the trade was not then trade in items disparately valued. He cited *Purchas his Pilgrimes* as saying that such items could buy nothing but food-stuff. There are two things to say about this analysis. First, it is contradicted by the evidence of Godinho which I cited just above. Second, even insofar as trumpery were traded for foodstuffs only, Europeans thought they were getting a wild bargain. Rodney himself cited John Ogilby's statement in his 1670 work that the Africans "do not set a high rate upon the best of their commodities."<sup>84</sup> — in which case the Europeans were buying items they valued high but the seller valued low.

On firearms, the one item that might be deemed "essential" trade, Rodney cautioned against giving them too much significance. First of all,

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he noted that it was a phenomenon that particularly grew in importance in "the later part of the eighteenth century."<sup>85</sup> Second, he suggested that the import of firearms had marginal social consequences:

It would be attractive to set this category of goods apart as the main stimulus to slaving, on the grounds that guns were used to capture slaves to buy more guns to capture more slaves. If they added a new dimension to military techniques, then they would also have been decisive in relations among the Africans themselves, but in reality their importance was narrowly circumscribed in the period under discussion. European firearms made an impact at a very late date, the first period of Hispano-Portuguese slave trading, for example, had little or nothing to do with the import of firearms. Furthermore, while it is true that coastal residents had by the end of the eighteenth century re-armed themselves with European weapons, the same did not apply to the inhabitants of the interior: and nevertheless it was the Mande-Fula combination in the hinterland which extended domination over coastal tribes, demonstrating clearly that European firearms did not automatically influence the African balance of power.<sup>86</sup>

Rodney was similarly skeptical about the importance of alcoholic beverages. He then reminded us that ordinarily Europeans were required to offer assortments of items for sale, and that European traders often practiced "rooming" — that is, replacement of more expensive items by cheaper ones.

"Rooming" was possible "because the Africans themselves were neither knowledgeable about the price of each European product nor concerned about that factor,"<sup>87</sup> which is another way of saying that the price of the exchange was not determined by the world-market. Rodney used as part of his explanation of how this could be so Polanyi's argument that while the Europeans were working within the framework of a capitalist conception of the economic process, the Africans were operating on a system of "gainless barter." Rodney observed:

In Polanyi's opinion . . . it was the European system which adjusted to the African. Evidence taken from Upper Guinea helps to substantiate as well as to modify this interpretation.<sup>88</sup>

The modifications Rodney seemed to suggest were that adjustment was in fact "mutual;" that "historically, the initiative came from Europe;" and that over time "African society became geared to serve the capitalist system."<sup>89</sup>

Where are we then? I would summarize the situation as follows. From

150 to circa 1750, West Africa was in the external arena of the European world-economy and not part of its periphery; that up to 1750 the bulk of the trade could be considered as "rich trades;" and thus that up to that point the two social systems were separate.

However, 1750–1760 or thereabouts marked a major turning point in the European world-economy. It marked the end of the century-long depression which had so exacerbated the mercantilist conflicts between the Netherlands, England, and France. It marked the inception of England's "industrial revolution" which would have contradictory impacts on West Africa.

In the first place, the industrial revolution expanded enormously the demand for sugar and cotton production in the Western Hemisphere, which in turn expanded the demand for slaves. This accelerated demand had to be paid for at a higher price, including the sale of firearms. This in turn led to an atmosphere propitious to the creation of large state-structures — in West Africa, and elsewhere in Africa and the world external to the European world-economy. Thus we see the great spurt that Hrbek observed in Africa in state-building from 1805–1820.

Meanwhile in Europe, England finally definitely eliminated France as a rival for economic hegemony in the Napoleonic Wars — the culmination of two centuries of relative French decline. This then opened the European world-economy as of 1815 to global expansion, for the new scale of European production required a world-wide market of purchase and sale. It was at this point in time that Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Oceania began to be systemically incorporated into the new single global capitalist system, in almost all cases as part of the periphery.

Once West Africa was part of the periphery and not the external arena, however, slavery was too costly. For slave-trading meant paying an ever higher purchase cost plus now a real diminution in the system's economic productivity (by removal of manpower from a region). Of all countries, Britain had the most to gain from a proper functioning of the capitalist world-economy, so it took the lead in abolishing the slave-trade and substituting "legitimate trade" — that is, encouraging the production by Africans of cash-crops (for example, palm oil) for the world market.

But once incorporated into the periphery, the African state-structures became a threat to the easy flow of unequal exchange. As long as England

As slave econ dev. w/ growing demand for slaves, Africa's fate developed. Exchange of goods between

But isn't part of being

Yes to Hrbek

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had world hegemony, it seemed less costly to keep them in check and/or deal with them than to conquer them. However, Britain's hegemony came to be threatened in the world capitalist system—a phenomenon we can date as beginning approximately in 1873, the moment when the constraints of world-wide effective demand created a system-wide depression which in many ways lasted into the beginning of the twentieth century. Among other consequences, this threat to hegemony took the neo-mercantilist form of "preemptive" colonization<sup>90</sup>—to wit, the scramble for Africa, which had the additional advantage of eliminating all strong state-structures in the African periphery.

We are arguing, then, that as of 1750 began a process of steady incorporation of Africa into the capitalist world-economy whose first stage was that of informal empire and whose second stage was that of colonial rule. We must now turn to stage three—decolonization, which can be seen as the completion of this historic process.

As long as the demands made on Africa by the other parts of the world-economy were limited—Africa as producer or Africa as consumer—a colonial system was adequate to the political overseeing of these demands. A small investment in bureaucratic superstructure (including armies) was sufficient to ensure that the most lucrative mines were mined, and that enough cash-crop production was arranged to bear the administrative overhead of colonialism. It was not entire fiction (though it was stated in pious self-exculpating terminology) that colonies were not necessarily profitable exercises, and that a major problem was to make sure that they were "self-financing" and not a drain on the metropolitan treasury.

That is to say, they may not have been profitable—or at least very profitable—from the perspective of the metropolitan country as an entity. Colonies of course could be very profitable to individual entrepreneurs or firms, including and even especially to the white settlers. But to make them really profitable, money had to be invested that would have the effect of greatly expanding the rate of productivity and the size of the salaried work-force (the latter being crucial in their capacity as consumers).

For increased investment to result in higher productivity and sufficient distribution to create a minimal local market, indirect rule was the most efficient mode. For only Africans could easily get Africans truly to

increase their productivity, and for that these new managers would have to be rewarded. Furthermore, the rewards themselves had the effect of creating the new local markets. And thus by the simple principle that a larger quantity at lower rates of profit can equal greater overall profit, the economic expansion of the post-Second World War period in Africa has magnified the economic transfer of surplus from the African periphery to the center far beyond anything that occurred in colonial rule.

To be sure, the fact that first the United States, then West Germany, and latterly the Soviet Union wanted access to these peripheral areas was a consideration that speeded up decolonization—but I now believe this factor was less important than I and many others previously thought. Even without that pressure, decolonization made sense, for the independent governments of Africa are far more efficacious "indirect rulers" than the *obas* and *mwamis* of the colonial era.

And the process towards industrialization in Africa, far from counteracting this trend, has been part of the same picture. I agree entirely with Samir Amin's summary of this situation:

With industrialization it is the internal market which begins to provide the primary impetus for growth, even though this market is a distorted one. However in this . . . phase the export trade retains its earlier structure (export of primary goods). It is on the import side that a structural modification is noticeable. Imported industrial goods and food products replace manufactured consumption goods (the appearance of food imports in countries which are still primarily agricultural reflects the distortion in the allocation of resources). . . . From this moment on, the aggravation of the contradictions inherent in [this phase is] characterized by a new, but still unequal, international division of labor in which the periphery becomes the exporter of "classical" industrial products (thereby leaving to the center the benefits of specialization within the more modern industries), and the importer of food surpluses from advanced-capitalist agriculture. The establishment of runaway industries in the Far East is indicative of this new tendency of the system. It is by no means impossible that Africa will rapidly begin taking part in this new international division of labor.<sup>91</sup>

With this in mind, one can be somewhat pessimistic about the ability of a so-called radical African regime to buck the system, as I have seen in one recent paper.<sup>92</sup> One can be stern about the validity of any of these regimes calling itself a socialist regime, as I have been in another.<sup>93</sup> I

would not want anyone to conclude therefore that I think that Africans or the rest of us are helpless before a juggernaut of economic givens.

For by processes that have often been elucidated, economic givens make possible certain political thrusts. And seen as political thrusts, many efforts can be justified even if they fall far short of their ostensible objectives. For example, Amin concluded his analysis by an unusual defense of *ujamaa*. He did not say it would transform either Tanzania or the African continent. He argued rather that there was a *de facto* convergence of interests in contemporary Africa between the "marginalized masses, the urban proletariat, and impoverished and half-proletarianized poor peasantry." The key political problem for those who seek change is to maintain this alliance. He deduced consequently:

[Any] development of production based on profit [that is, individual profit — I.W.] (particularly agrarian capitalism) which puts this alliance into question will prove negative in the long run, even if in the short run it facilitates the rapid growth of production.<sup>94</sup>

Any further discussion of the linkage not only between a policy of *ujamaa* but between the future role of the national liberation movements in southern Africa and the modes of world political confrontation within the framework of the capitalist world-economy would be long to develop, and I shall not do it here.

Let me return instead to the fundamental thrust of our argument. Africa is today part of a single world-system, the capitalist world-system, and its present structures and processes cannot be understood unless they are situated within the social framework that is governing them. Furthermore, this capitalist world-system has not emerged full bloom out of nowhere but rather has been the framework of African life — albeit in a perhaps thinner way than today — for about two centuries. Prior to that, African world-systems were non-capitalist systems. They related as external arenas to specific other world-systems, including in one case the European capitalist world-economy.

To understand this earlier period is in many ways far more difficult than to understand the present, or we shall have to sharpen our understanding of social systems to do it. We shall have to rework our knowledge of world historical data (as well as expand it) in order to analyze coherently how pre-capitalist economies functioned, which will — I

believe — open many doors for us. Africans have proudly asserted in recent years that they have as much to offer as anyone in the *rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir* of world cultures. Equally, we as Africanists — and Africans first among the Africanists — must be ready to participate in the *rendez-vous de donner et de recevoir* of collective knowledge about a social world whose coherence and cohesion is ever more evident as the praxis of world transformation forces us to see it, to face up to it, and to make our moral choices within it.

## NOTES

1. I believe the phrase is that of Léopold-Sédar Senghor, but I cannot locate it. In any case, the sentiment is elaborated in the essay by Chelkh Hamidou Kane. "Comme si nous nous étions donné rendez-vous." *Esprit*, n.2. 29. No. 229 (Oct 1961): 375-387.
2. J. F. Ajayi. "The Continuity of African Institutions under Colonialism," in T. O. Ranger, ed. *Emerging Themes of African History* (Nairobi East African Publishing House, 1968), pp. 189-200.
3. Ajayi, "Continuity," p. 200.
4. T. O. Ranger. "Connexions between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa," *Journal of African History*, IX. 3:437-453; IX. 4:631-641.
5. Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper. "Nationalist Historians in Search of a Nation. The New Historiography in Dar es Salaam." *African Affairs*, 69, 277 (Oct 1970):348 (hereafter cited as "Nationalist Historians").
6. Bernard Magubane. "A Critical Look at Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa." *Current Anthropology*, XII, 4-5 (Oct-Dec 1971): 419-431. It is followed by "Comments" (pp. 431-439) and a "Reply" (pp. 439-445).
7. Magubane, "A Critical Look," pp. 430-442.
8. Magubane, "A Critical Look," p. 430.
9. Epstein, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 432.
10. "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 436.
11. Köbben, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 433.
12. Saberwal, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 438.
13. Messing, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 438.
14. Van den Bergh, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 438.
15. Mayer, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 438.
16. Magubane, "Reply," p. 439.
17. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 347.
18. Terence Ranger, "The 'New Historiography' in Dar es Salaam: An Answer," *African Affairs*, 70, 278, Jan. 1971, p. 55 (hereafter cited as "An Answer").
19. Ranger, "An Answer," p. 61.
20. Donald Denoon and Adam Kuper, "The New Historiography in Dar es Salaam: A Rejoinder." *African Affairs*, 70, 280, July 1971, p. 288 (hereafter cited as "A Responder").
21. R. H. Tawney, "Postscript to the Rise of the Gentry," in E. N. Carnus-Wilson, ed., *Essays in Economic History*, Volume I (London: Edw. Arnold, 1954), p. 214.
22. Magubane, "A Critical Look," p. 419.

23. Magubane, "A Critical Look," p. 420.
24. Mitchell, "Comments on Magubane, A Critical Look," p. 436.
25. Magubane, "Reply," p. 441.
26. Magubane, "A Critical Look," p. 419.
27. When I say I "assimilate" one man's position to another, I do not mean that either endorses the arguments of the other in their respective articles but simply that in treating three debates successively, I see the same underlying issue recurring and wish to identify sides A and B in each.
28. Terence Ranger, "Introduction" to Ranger, ed., *Emerging Themes of African History*, p. xxi and cited in Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 331.
29. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 331.
30. Ranger, "An Answer," p. 51.
31. Ranger, "An Answer," p. 52.
32. I. N. Kimambo and A. J. Temu, eds., *A History of Tanzania* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969); A. D. Roberts ed., *Tanzania Before 1900* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968).
33. Cited in Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 335.
34. Cited in Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 335.
35. T. Ranger, *The African Churches of Tanzania*, Historical Association of Tanzania Paper No. 5 (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, n.d.), p. 4. Cited in Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 336.
36. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 336.
37. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 337. Ranger responded by talking of "Denoon and Kuper's fantasies about our lack of interest in mission sources and our contempt for anthropology." "An Answer," p. 54.
38. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 341.
39. J. E. G. Sutton, "The Peopling of Tanzania," in Kimambo and Temu, p. 1, cited in Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 342.
40. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 342.
41. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 346.
42. Denoon and Kuper, "Nationalist Historians," p. 347.
43. Ranger, "An Answer," p. 59.
44. J. D. Fage, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in West African History," *Journal of African History*, X, 3 (1969): 393-404 (hereafter cited as "Slavery").
45. Philip D. Curtin, *The Dimensions of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), cited in Fage, "Slavery," p. 398.
46. Fage, "Slavery," p. 403.
47. Fage, "Slavery," p. 404.
48. "In default of evidence of the relation between the existence of an external demand for slaves and of slavery and an internal trade in slaves for the West African Sudan, we must turn to the Guinea area, where commonly the first truly external traders were the European searaders, who first arrived on the coasts in the fifteenth century. The evidence for Upper Guinea, from the Gambia to modern Liberia, has been analysed by Dr. Walter Rodney," Fage, "Slavery," p. 395. Fage's footnote reference is to Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *Journal of African History*, VII, 3 (1966): 431-443. Since Fage's article appeared, Rodney's monograph has come out. Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).
49. Fage, "Slavery," p. 397.
50. Fage, "Slavery," p. 398.
51. Fage, "Slavery," pp. 400, 402.
52. Fage, "Slavery," p. 403.
53. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 199.
54. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 199.
55. Walter Rodney, *West Africa and the Atlantic Slave-Trade*, Historical Association of Tanzania Paper No. 2 (Nairobi: African Publishing House, 1967), p. 21.
56. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 118.
57. C. C. Wrigley, "Historicism in Africa: Slavery and State Formation," *African Affairs*, 70, 279 (April 1971): 113 (hereafter cited as "Historicism").
58. Wrigley, "Historicism," p. 117.
59. Wrigley, "Historicism," p. 116.
60. Wrigley, "Historicism," p. 121.
61. Wrigley, "Historicism," p. 124.
62. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1972), p. 80.
63. Ivan Hrbek, "Towards a Periodisation of African History," in Ranger, ed., *Emerging Themes of African History*, pp. 37-52 (hereafter cited as "Periodisation").
64. See Hrbek, "Periodisation," pp. 38-42.
65. Hrbek, "Periodisation," p. 45.
66. Hrbek, "Periodisation," p. 48.
67. Hrbek, "Periodisation," p. 49.
68. Hrbek, "Periodisation," p. 51.
69. See Samir Amin, "Sous-développement et dépendance en Afrique noire contemporaine." *Partisans*, No. 64, (mars-avril 1972): 3-34.
70. All the statements in this paragraph are dealt with in great detail in my *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).
71. I elaborate this argument in "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System. Concepts for Comparative Analysis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (XVI, 4, 1974 (ch. 5 this volume)).
72. "Experience has proved it: of all forms of breeding, that of human cattle is one of the hardest. If slavery is to pay when applied to large-scale enterprises, there must be plenty of cheap human flesh on the market. You can only get it by war or slave-raiding. So a society can hardly base much of its economy on domesticated human beings unless it has at hand feebler societies to defeat or raid." Marc Bloch, "The Rise of Dependent Cultivation and Seigneurial Institutions," in *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, I.M.M. Postan, ed., *The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1966), p. 247.
73. See my *The Modern World-System*, ch. VI.
74. See Rodney: "It is obvious that because of the Atlantic slave-trade people could not lead their ordinary lives. The majority of the population of West Africa lived by farming, and agriculture must have suffered during that period. In the first place, the loss of so many people represented a loss of labour in the fields. In the second place, those who were left behind had little reason to plant crops which they might never be around to reap. At the end of the eighteenth century, one of the arguments used by Europeans who wanted to abolish the Atlantic slave-trade was that abolition would allow the Africans to work and produce other commodities which Europeans could buy. They pointed out that as long as the Atlantic slave-trade continued people found it extremely difficult to carry on worthwhile activities." *West Africa and the Atlantic Slave-Trade*, p. 16.

75. Vitorino Magalhães Godinho, *Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial*, Volume 2 (Lisboa: Ed. Arcadia, 1965), esp. pp. 528, 532.
76. The Venetian Cadamasto was told in 1455 that voyages to Guinea yielded a return of between six and ten times the outlay . . . Elsewhere [in West Africa] the Portuguese gathered less dazzling but still substantial riches. A.F.C. Ryder, "Portuguese and Dutch in West Africa before 1800," in J.F. Ade Ajayi and Ian Espie, eds., *A Thousand Years of West African History* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1965), pp. 220, 222.
77. Christopher Fyfe, "West African Trade, A. D. 1000-1800," in Ajayi and Espie, eds., *A Thousand Years of West African Trade*, p. 248 (hereafter cited as "West African Trade").
78. Fyfe, "West African Trade," p. 249.
79. Fyfe, "West African Trade," p. 249.
80. Fyfe, "West African Trade," p. 252.
81. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, ch. VII.
82. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 172.
83. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 172.
84. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 172.
85. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 176.
86. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 177.
87. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, pp. 188-189.
88. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 192.
89. Rodney, *History of the Upper Guinea Coast*, p. 199.
90. See my "The Colonial Era in Africa: Changes in the Social Structure," in L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, eds., *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960*, Vol. II. *The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1914-1960* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1970), pp. 399-421.
91. Amin Samir, "Traditional Phases in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Monthly Review*, 25, 5 (Oct. 1973) pp. 54-55 (hereafter cited as "Transitional Phases").
92. See "The Range of Choice: Constraints on the Policies of Governments of Contemporary African Independent States" in Michael F. Lotchie, Ed., *The State of the Nations* (University of California Press, 1971), pp. 19-33.
93. See "Dependence in an Interdependent World: The Limited Possibilities of Transformation Within the Capitalist World-Economy," *African Studies Review*, 17, 1 (Apr. 1974), 1-26.
94. Amin, "Transitional Phases," p. 56.

# WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE