The methodology of contemporary African history

Report and papers of the
meeting of experts organized
by Unesco at Ouagadougou,
Upper Volta, from 17 to 22 May 1979

Unesco

The general history of Africa: studies and documents 8

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1. *The peopling of ancient Egypt and the deciphering of Meroitic script*
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Preface

In 1964 the General Conference of Unesco, as part of the Organization's effort to further the mutual understanding of peoples and nations, authorized the Director-General to take the necessary measures for the preparation and publication of a *General History of Africa.*

Scientific colloquia and symposia on related themes were organized as part of the preparatory work. The papers prepared for discussion and the exchanges of views on a wide variety of subjects at these meetings have provided valuable historical material, which Unesco decided to make known as widely as possible by publishing it in a series entitled 'The General History of Africa: Studies and Documents'.

The present book, the eighth in this series, contains the papers presented and a report on the discussions that followed at a symposium held in Ouagadougou, from 17 to 22 May 1979, on the methodology of contemporary African history.

The authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this book, and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of Unesco and do not commit the Organization.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Unesco concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Contents

Introduction

Unesco has undertaken the task of preparing a *General History of Africa.* The first volumes published have already begun to change long-established methodological approaches to the study of the history of the African continent. By its very nature, scale and scientific character, the *General History of Africa* project will undoubtedly further the African peoples' quest to define and assert their cultural identity. Indeed, it will portray the African view of the world from within and demonstrate the unique character of the values and civilizations of the peoples of the continent as a whole.

The project was launched in 1965. The first five years were devoted to making a critical survey of the documentary sources, culminating in the publication of the series entitled 'Guide to the Sources of the History of Africa', which includes the following volumes:

1. *Federal Republic of Germany* (1970).
2. *Spain* (1971).
3. *France I: Sources Conserved in the Archives* (1971).
4. *France II: Sources Conserved in the Libraries* (1976).
5. *Italy I* (1973).
6. *Italy II* (1974).
7. *The Holy See* (not yet published).
8. *Scandinavia: Sources in Denmark, Norway and Sweden* (1971).
9. *The Netherlands* (1978).
10. *The United States of America* (1977).
11. *Great Britain and Ireland* (1971).

The first eight volumes have been published by the Inter Documentation Company AG of Zug (Switzerland); Volume 9 was published by KG Saur Verlag KG Tostfach, of Munich, and Volume 10 by the African Studies Association of Waltham, Massachusetts.

The work is being supervised by an International Scientific Committee comprising thirty-nine members, who represent all the major geocultural areas. The Committee decided to divide the *General History of Africa* into eight volumes, each of which consists of thirty chapters, covering African history from prehistoric times to the present day. It may be viewed, among other

things, as a statement of problems concerning the present state of knowledge and the major trends in research. In addition, it highlights divergencies of doctrine and opinion where these exist. Each volume deals with a particular period and examines the evolution of ideas and civilizations, societies and institutions during that time.

While aiming at the highest possible scientific level, the history does not seek to be exhaustive, but rather a work of synthesis which avoids dogmatism. It applies to African history the methods and techniques of a broad spectrum of disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, archaeology, oral traditions, history of religions, arts, musicology, sociology, law and the natural sciences.

Two volumes—Volume I (*Methodology and African Prehistory*) and Volume II (*Ancient Civilizations of Africa*)—were published in 1980 (French) and 1981 (English). The Arabic version is now being prepared for publication. The other volumes will be issued as follows:

Volume III: *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century* (1984).
Volume IV: *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century* (1983).
Volume V: *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (1985).
Volume VI: *The Nineteenth Century until the 1880s* (1984).
Volume VII: *Africa under Colonial Domination* (1983).
Volume VIII: *Africa from 1935* (1985).

Although the volumes are numbered in historical sequence, the order of their publication depends upon completion by the authors involved.

The entire history is being issued first in English, French and Arabic. Translations into Italian, Spanish and Portuguese of volumes already published are under way, and other translations into European or Asian languages are planned, since one of the primary objectives of the *General History of Africa* project is to inform the broadest possible public about the cultures and civilizations of the peoples of Africa. This goal, in turn, is part of Unesco's mandate to encourage and develop communication among the peoples of the world through a better understanding of one another's cultures.

Abridged versions of the *General History of Africa* are now being prepared and will be published in Kiswahili and Hausa, and also in other African languages. An edition in the form of cartoon strips based on the abridged versions is also planned, as well as audio cassette versions in African languages.

Scientific colloquia and symposia have been organized in order to make available to the authors as much documentary material as possible and to take stock of the most recent research on the subjects to be covered in each volume.

The papers prepared for discussion and the exchanges of views that have taken place on a wide variety of subjects have provided valuable historical evidence which Unesco would like to disseminate as widely as possible by publication in English, French and other languages in the series 'The General History of Africa: Studies and Documents'.

The following volumes in this series have already been published:

1. *The Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Deciphering of Meroitic Script.*
2. *The African Slave Trade from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century.*
3. *Historical Relations across the Indian Ocean.*
4. *The Historiography of Southern Africa.*
5. *The Decolonization of Africa: Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa.*

Two further volumes, *African Ethnonyms and Toponyms* and *Historical Socio-cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World from 1935 to the Present*, will appear shortly.

The present volume, the eighth in this series, contains the papers presented at a meeting on 'The Methodology of Contemporary African History', along with a report on the discussions that followed. The meeting, which was held from 17 to 22 May 1979 in Ouagadougou (Upper Volta), was organized by Unesco in connection with the preparation of Volume VIII of the *General History of Africa* (Africa since 1935).

These papers examine problems confronting researchers and historians involved in writing about the history of contemporary Africa: for example, the selection of materials; comparative methodology; the impact of current political orientations in relation to ideology or border disputes; definition of particular terms or concepts; interpretation and subjectivism resulting from domestic political sensitivity on such subjects as tribal or ethnic conflicts; mass communication in relation to development during earlier periods.

Part I

Dilemmas of African historiography and the philosophy of the Unesco *General History of Africa*

Ali A. Mazrui[1]

In 1964 the General Conference of Unesco, the supreme policy-making body of the Organization, authorized the Director-General to take steps towards the preparation and publication of a *General History of Africa*. But it was not until the meetings of major historians in Paris in 1969 and in Addis Ababa in 1970 that the project began to take the form of an eight-volume history of the continent from its earliest times.

The work was to be put under the academic and scientific supervision of an International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa. The Statutes adopted by the Executive Board of Unesco in 1971 stipulated that the International Committee responsible for the project was to consist of thirty-nine members, two-thirds of whom were to be African and one-third non-African.

I was later invited to be Editor for Volume VIII of the project which covers the period from Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 to approximately the present day. The project as a whole highlights some of the central issues involved in the writing of African history. I shall therefore use the project as a peg on which to hang some of those central questions of African historiography.

I. Definition

The Unesco project aspires to be the definitive twentieth-century survey of the entire span of Africa's past, going back to Pharaonic Egypt and beyond. By its very scale, not only in terms of the eight volumes (each with up to thirty chapters), but also in terms of the large number of scholars from different parts of the world involved in it, the project constitutes a refutation of the proposition that Africa is a continent without a history. A notorious statement on the question of whether Africa has a history was made in 1963 by no less a person than the Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford, Hugh Trevor-Roper. The Professor was opening a series of television lectures commissioned by the University of Sussex on 'The Rise of Christian Europe'. Trevor-Roper began by dismissing the history of Africa as meaningless:

Perhaps, in the future, there will be some African history . . . But at present there is none; there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness . . . and darkness is not a subject of history.

Trevor-Roper's interpretation was part of a long-standing European school of thought, going back to Hegel and beyond. The latest phase of Africa's rebuttal of this view was perhaps initiated by the first president of the first black African country to win independence from European rule, President Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah took Ghana to independence in 1957, and continued in power until he was overthrown in February 1966. Part of his greatness for Africa lay in his capacity to identify significant sensibilities underlying the major aspirations of African peoples in the twentieth century. Nkrumah understood that a people denied history was a people deprived of dignity. In his opening address to the First International Congress of African Studies in Accra in December 1962, Kwame Nkrumah captured the essence of his proposition in the following lament.

The central myth in the mythology surrounding Africa is of the denial that we are a historical people. It is said that, whereas other continents have shaped history and determined its course, Africa has stood still, held down by inertia. Africa, it is said, entered history only as a result of European contact. Its history, therefore, is widely felt to be an extension of European history. Hegel's authority was lent to this historical hypothesis concerning Africa. And apologists of colonialism and imperialism lost little time in seizing upon it and writing widely about it to their hearts' content.[2]

One problem with the English word 'history' is that it tends to be used in three different senses. Sometimes the word 'history' means the actual events of the past. Sometimes we are referring to the type of evidence that may be available to tell us about those events. This second meaning, based on the nature of the evidence, is what we are usually utilizing when we distinguish 'history' from 'pre-history'. The third meaning of 'history' is the actual account scientifically worked out by historians.

When Hegel and Trevor-Roper asserted that Africa had no history, did they mean that the continent had no past events? Clearly that would be an absurd proposition. Any society, or any culture, must have a historical background in the sense of past events which lead to its present dimensions.

Trevor-Roper did not mean that nothing occurred in Africa before the Europeans came, but he may have meant that nothing occurred which was worth the attention of a historian. According to him, we cannot afford 'to amuse ourselves with the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe'.

Trevor-Roper was denying Africa a history by referring to the things which he thought went on in Africa. He was using the *content* of Africa's past as a criterion by which it could be determined whether or not Africa had a history.

That kind of approach is basically either subjective or ethnocentric. In Trevor-Roper's case it is also evidence of cultural arrogance.

The second sense of 'history' mentioned above concerns the nature of the evidence available about the society's past. Is that evidence comprehensive enough, and verifiable enough, to give us a historical account of past events? Under this definition of history the majority of African societies were supposed to be 'unhistorical' partly because they were pre-literate. Historical evidence was documentation and a document was excessively equated with the written word.

In the face of such a conception of history, three lines of defensive action are open to Africa. One is to accept the paramountcy of documents in the written sense and then proceed to demonstrate that Africa does have documentary testimony for much of its pre-colonial history. The second line of defence is to establish the validity of oral evidence for historical work. The third line of defence is to try to cast doubts on the validity of written evidence in an attempt to demonstrate that countries which have massive written documentation for their history are no nearer certainty about their past than those lacking such evidence.

The first line of action—that of trying to prove that Africa is well endowed with written documentary evidence about its pre-colonial past—has been more important for West Africans and North Africans than for Africans to the East and to the South. The former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Professor K. Onwuka Dike (who is now a professor of history at Harvard University), had the following to say at the 1962 International Congress of Africanists:

> On the side of written documentary material alone we are only just beginning to appreciate the size of the problem. Only now is it being realized, for example, that colonial government, missionary and commercial records in European languages are not the only written sources of the history of the continent outside the North African coastlands. We have hardly yet begun to take into account the fact that many of the people of Sub-Saharan Africa have for several centuries been using Arabic as an official and literary language for many different types of written intercourse. We have really only just learnt also that the Swahili and Hausa languages (to name only two) have been written down extensively in the Arabic script and may therefore, for all we know at present, have produced a further unsuspected source of written material. Again how many of us realize how far private African citizens such as the Efik Chief, Antra Duke, were using European languages for writing in their private intercourse as far back as the eighteenth century? The private papers of African families are a potential source of historical material which to date has hardly been investigated at all . . .[3]

The second line of defensive action concerns the validity of oral tradition as historical evidence. This movement received an important scholarly boost from a Belgian historian, Jan Vansina, in his influential work *Oral Tradition, a Study*

in Historical Methodology. Vansina, who later became a member of the Unesco project on the history of Africa, analyses oral tradition; his book demonstrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of using oral evidence in historical research. He also works out a typology of oral evidence and continues to grapple with different methods of assessing different forms of testimony.

Vansina discusses other potential sources for the historian—the disciplines of archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology, social and cultural anthropology, as well as written documents generally where these exist. In Vansina's own words:

> What the historian can do is to arrive at some approximation to the ultimate historical truth. He does this by using calculations of probability, by interpreting the facts and by evaluating them in an attempt to recreate for himself the circumstances which existed at certain given moments of the past. And here the historian using oral traditions finds himself on exactly the same level as historians using any other kind of historical source material. No doubt he will arrive at a lower degree of probability than would otherwise be attained, but that does not rule out the fact that what he is doing is valid, and that it is history.[4]

The third line of Africa's historical defence goes beyond demonstrating Africa's possession of written documents or demonstrating the validity of oral evidence. This third line sees a danger in the mystique which the written word has acquired and proceeds in the effort to undermine that mystique. Professor Bethwell A. Ogot, the Director of the Leakey Institute in Nairobi and the current President of the Unesco project on the history of Africa, belongs more to the school which seeks to assert the validity of oral tradition than to that which seeks to discredit written material. However, in the enthusiasm and heat of debate, Professor Ogot has at times leaned over in the latter direction, casting serious doubt on written European accounts of Africa. The understanding of Africa and its past has been greatly bedevilled by reports written by European travellers through the continent. It is not at all certain that the oral tradition of living inhabitants in Africa today is not a far better indication of the reality of Africa's past than the vivid and romantic accounts of some of the European explorers. Ogot refers to the Spekes and Burtons of African historiography with all their colourful descriptions of the 'avarice', 'savagery', 'selfishness' and 'proficiency for telling lies' that they claimed to have discovered among Africans. Ogot draws the inference:

> It should be clear from the passages I have cited that written evidence *per se* is no more reliable than oral evidence, especially when it emanates from such biased observers . . . The problem of conflicting accounts of the same historical event is thus not a special feature of oral evidence, as some historians and anthropologists have contended. It applies to all historical evidence.[5]

Perhaps the proposition that Africa had no history rested neither on the assertion that Africa had no past events worthy of recording, nor on the assertion that the evidence available was not relevant for history, but rather on a third assertion that until recently much of Sub-Saharan Africa did not have trained historians. The argument here is that there is a form of analysis, conducted by professional students of the past, governed by specific rules of deduction and verification, without which there can be no history in this scientific sense. Oral tradition in Africa is a form of reporting. It is often better than a newspaper account of a particular event, but it belongs to the same category. If history were merely reporting, oral tradition sanctified by time and journalism inspired by speed would both be history. But if the study of history requires particular rules of assembling data, deducing meaning, and verifying conclusions, then oral tradition as a form of evidence sanctified by long continuity and journalism as a form of reporting inspired by the speed of topicality are both material for a historian rather than history itself.

This last quarter of the twentieth century has produced more black African historians in this special scientific sense than there have been in the last 500 years added together. Contrary to Trevor-Roper's suggestion, Africa does have a past worth recording and analysing, and it has the necessary evidence for that record and analysis. Until recently, however, that past has not been adequately subjected to analysis by historians, partly because so few of the trained ones were Africans. Just as there can be no science without scientists, no poetry without poets, there can be no history without historians. In this narrow sense it might be true that for a large number of African societies their history is just being born. This is not to say that what is worth recording about them is only occurring now, but it is to say that what was worth studying in their entire past is only just being studied now.

II. Epistemology

But if a nation's historicity depends upon whether there are historians to study it, must those historians be drawn from the nation itself? Does the reality of Africa's history depend upon the skills of African historians?

The Unesco project on the *General History of Africa* is certainly predicated on the principle of the primacy of the view from within. By the Statutes of the project, as we indicated, two-thirds of the members of the supervising International Scientific Committee have to be Africans. The main editor of each volume also has to be an African, though associate editors could be drawn from other parts of the world. The majority of the authors in each volume have to be Africans as well, so the names of distinguished historians working on

Africa but coming from other parts of the world are noticeably few in each of the volumes as so far conceived.

The debates concerning the 'view from within' formerly influenced social anthropology rather than history, but the assumptions of social anthropology were usually in the reverse order. Many social anthropologists felt that a view of each society from within that society carried not only the dangers of excessive ethnocentrism but also the dangers of oversight. A member of a particular culture may fail to appreciate the importance of certain mores or institutions simply because the member takes them too much for granted.

I remember discussing this particular issue with the late distinguished British social anthropologist of the University of Manchester, Professor Max Gluckman, who died a few years ago in Israel. Max Gluckman and I were both attending a meeting in Nigeria. We drifted into a discussion of whether African societies had been excessively studied by outsiders until then. Gluckman suggested to me that a culture shock was a necessary qualification for an effective social anthropologist. To encounter a strange way of life, and to be called upon to understand it and discern its rules and impulses, is a necessary aspect of anthropological insight. Gluckman seemed to infer from this that Africa was fortunate to have had a number of outsiders to study its societies, for these outsiders had undergone the culture shock that is requisite for true scientific understanding but that is at the same time compatible with human empathy. An Ibo studying Ibo society might so easily overlook or undervalue the salience of certain social facts about his own society.

My response to Max Gluckman was that a Western-trained Ibo going back to study his own society had already undergone a culture shock. The very initiation into Western academic culture, and the power of comparative observation linked to his familiarity with both the West and his own society, provide the requisite exposure to discover salience and appreciate significance in Ibo society.

The question which now arises is whether a similar debate is relevant for a historian. Does a historian also need a culture shock in order to appreciate the relevance of certain aspects of the past? Or is the very fact that a historian is writing about a period other than his own enough of a comparative factor? While the social anthropologist may need some degree of social distance from the structure and culture he is studying, does a historian already benefit by temporal distance from the period he is investigating?

On balance, the Unesco project assumes that there should be a preponderance of Africans studying Africa, but it also seems to accept the necessity of the moderating influence of non-African scholars. After all, the supervisory International Committee has of necessity to be one-third non-African. These non-African members of the Committee include historians from countries such as the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union,

the United States, Singapore and the United Kingdom. All the non-Africans are of course Africanists—that is to say, they are scholars who are devoting a large part of their academic work to the study of Africa. They represent 'the view from without' to supplement and moderate 'the view from within' as symbolized by two-thirds of the Scientific Committee. The actual historians chosen to write the chapters also are only preponderantly rather than exclusively African. Meetings of the International Scientific Committee have to be held within Africa, but the meetings of the Executive Sub-Committee, the Bureau, need not take place within the African continent and are quite often scheduled at Unesco Headquarters in Paris. In other words, underlying the entire Unesco project is a balancing act between the primacy of the internal perspective and the need for external moderation.

Social anthropologists, at least those of the British tradition, evolved an important methodology of participant observation. The scholar thus took part in the activities of the society he or she was studying, intermingling substantially with members of the society, and drawing insights from sharing experiences with that society. But the scholars in this case could be uniquely outsiders, intermingling only for the purposes of observing. What is being suggested by the new epistemologists of Africa's history is that it is not enough to participate in order to observe. A scholar studying a particular society should have substantially experienced the illuminating power of participant observation. An Ibo scholar who studies the Ibo has also shared Ibo life independently of his scholarship. On the other hand, a German scholar who studies the Ibo lives with the Ibo purely for scholarship. In this sense, then, participant observation, as practised by the German scholar, has to be sharply distinguished from existential observation as undertaken by a member of that society.

III. Methodology

The links between epistemology, the sociology of knowledge, and the methodology of research are sometimes quite close. A certain epistemological orientation is necessary in order to accept certain methodological approaches.

We have indicated that one of the great methodological milestones in African historiography has been the growing recognition and sophistication in the utilization of oral evidence. The legends and proverbs, the ballads of ancient heroes and the accounts of tribal ancestry, have recently become part of the relevant data utilized in reconstructing Africa's past. The term 'document' has been stripped of literary inevitability. A ballad recited purely from memory could thus become a document.

Related methodological problems in African history include how to use linguistic evidence. Sometimes the evidence is necessary in order to assess the

history of migration from one part of the continent to another. A major debate has concerned the migration of the Bantu. These are races and tribes scattered through a large portion of Sub-Saharan Africa. Where did these groups sharing Bantu languages originate? What routes did they take? A sophisticated analysis of words becomes an important tool in discerning historical movement.

Archaeology in Africa faces challenges from societies that did not adequately use bricks and mortar. The poets of Africa and of the African Diaspora have sometimes revelled in this fact. As Aimé Césaire, the black poet of Martinique who invented the word 'negritude', has stated:

> My negritude is no tower and no cathedral,
> It delves into the deep red flesh of the soil.
> . . .
> Hurrah for those who never invented anything,
> Who never discovered anything.
> Hurrah for joy, hurrah for love,
> Hurrah for the pain of incarnate tears.

Aimé Césaire romanticized the non-monumental aspects of African civilization. South of the Sahara, as compared with areas to the north, there are not very many structures to be discovered and analysed by archaeologists.

As it happens, because so little has been done, and because African archaeology south of the Sahara is still relatively underdeveloped, there remains a great deal of material for archaeological discovery. But, in the final analysis, archaeologists have to recognize the poet's exaltation:

> My negritude is no tower and no cathedral;
> It delves into the deep red flesh of the soil.

African historians have to find new ways to take full advantage of what archaeology has to offer, while recognizing that archaeology in African societies can tell us less about how ancient Africans lived than archaeology in Greece can tell us about the mortar and marble infrastructure of parts of Greek civilization.

IV. Content

Ultimately, history is not merely a problem of definition, epistemology or methodology. It is also concerned with discovering what the years of the past really contained in terms of events and persons. Here an African historian has to decide on which aspects of Africa's past deserve special attention. For example, should a despised continent emphasize its great civilisations? Should there be special attention paid to the civilizations of Songhay, Mali, Ghana, and

ancient Zimbabwe? On the other hand, should the despised continent attempt to enhance our understanding of its own despised classes? Should there be a focus on the study of African kings and empires, or should we undertake the tougher task of exploring the lives of the African peasantry in historical perspective?

Who makes history in any case? Is it the great figures like Chaka, the Zulu, or Akhenaton the Egyptian? Or is history to be explored among the nameless masses? And does not their namelessness pose problems for historicity?

A third problem with historical content concerns the issue of correcting prior distortion. Given that previous foreign historians had exaggerated the role of non-Africans in Africa's history (Semites, Hamites, Cushites and Europeans), should African historians themselves deliberately play down the role of foreigners? Because foreign historians had previously emphasized the shortcomings of African social and political life in the past, should modern historians—as a corrective measure—understate those shortcomings? Similarly, since foreign historians previously overlooked or undervalued African achievements of the past, should modern African historians—as a device of compensation—give special attention to African achievements? Should a project dealing with the whole historical span of Africa's existence emphasize shared experiences among Africans in different parts of the continent? Should 'unity across space' be accepted as a principle of Unesco's project?

Alternatively, should there be stress on the continuities of African history, challenging the assumption that European colonialism terminated millennia of African life? Should colonialism be regarded only as an episode in a grand panorama of African experience? Should there be stress on unity across time? These are only a few of the many underlying issues affecting not only the Unesco project but the entire challenge of African historiography.

Contemporary Africa is not always easy to understand because it is so tumultuous. The Africa of yesterday was difficult to understand because of inadequate skills of analysis. The events were there, the evidence was there, but there was a lack of African historians.

Now Africa is producing its own modern historians, equipped with the skills of assembling potentially relevant data, deducing historical meaning from it, and verifying the validity of these efforts. Africa's history has waited for an African historiography. This is now at hand, embodied in the perceptions and techniques of African historians.

Conclusion

Christopher Dawson once said:

> Happy is the people that is without a history, and thrice happy is the people without a sociology, for as long as we possess a living culture we are unconscious of it, and it is only when we are in danger of losing it or when it is already dead that we begin to realize and to study it scientifically.[6]

There is an echo here of the Hegelian concept of the owl of Minerva, spreading its wings at dusk. We begin to understand our societies only when the characteristics we have comprehended are about to come to an end. Both Hegel and Dawson exaggerate the issue, but the message has some relevance for African historians today. African students of the past, like Dike and Ogot, and the younger generation of African scholars, probably constitute Africa's owl of Minerva, emerging from the dusk of Africa's past.

Christopher Dawson emphasizes that it is only when we are about to lose a culture that we discover what it is in an intellectual sense. Large parts of Africa have indeed been in the process of losing large parts of their own culture. Although hyperbolic in his formulation, Hugh Trevor-Roper was correct at least in the assertion that a substantial part of the history of the world in the last five centuries has in fact been 'European history'. This has arisen partly out of Europe's leadership in the industrial revolution, Europe's triumph in exploring different parts of the world, and Europe's more ambiguous achievements in colonizing and ruling other people. The impact of this aspect of world history includes a substantial Europeanization of Africa in the last hundred years. Especially Europeanized are precisely those Africans that sit on the International Scientific Committee for the Unesco *General History of Africa.* Many of those who will be writing the chapters for this history are also in some respects Europeanized, either through direct training and education in Western institutions or through the transmission of techniques of historiography from European traditions of scholarship. African historians are caught up in an epistemological dialectic. The 'view from within' requires that they be Africans, engaged in existentialist participation. But the skills of modern historiography are strongly conditioned by the intellectual and academic tradition of the Western world. The initial languages in which Unesco's *General History of Africa* will be published will in fact be English and French, though subsequent translations into Arabic and select indigenous African languages are also envisaged. Trevor-Roper is wrong in seeing virtually the entire history of the world in the last 500 years as Eurocentric. If he had limited himself to saying that the academic and scientific culture of the world in the last 300 years has sprung out of Western civilization, he would have been closer to the

truth. African historians are products of this Eurocentric intellectual tradition.

But the dialectic for an African historian includes also a rediscovery of his own society and his own past precisely out of the cultural shock of partial assimilation into an alien civilization. Christopher Dawson may have been wrong in the assertion that happy is the people that is without a history, but he is persuasive in the claim that only in a true crisis of identity do we stand a chance of recognizing ourselves. Partly because of the impact of Europe, Africa is currently in such a crisis of identity. It may well hover over the brink of self-discovery. And what is the self after all if not primarily the product of its own past?

Notes

1. The views expressed in this paper are those of the Editor of Volume VIII of the Unesco *General History of Africa* and are not necessarily those of Unesco or of the International Scientific Committee. The issues raised in the paper were discussed in a modified version in a radio broadcast by the author on the BBC in August 1978. The radio version has since been published under the title of 'In Search of Africa's Past', *The Listener*, London, 17 August 1978.
2. Kwame Nkrumah, 'Address delivered to mark the opening of the First International Congress of Africanists' in Lalage Bown and Michael Crowder (eds.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists*, p. 8, London, Longman, 1954. For the quotation from Trevor-Roper, see *The Rise of Christian Europe*, p. 871, Leitner, London, 1963. For one response to these remarks, see J. D. Fage, *On the Nature of African History*, Birmingham, Birmingham University Press, 1965.
3. K. Onwuka Dike, 'The Study of African History', *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists*, op. cit., pp. 58–60.
4. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, p. 186, translated by H. M. Wright, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965. See also pp. 141–82.
5. Bethwell A. Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo*, Vol. 1: *Migration and Settlement*, p. 16, Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1967.
6. Quoted in Herbert J. Muller, *The Uses of the Past*, p. 27, New York, Oxford University Press, 1957.

Subjectivism and the study of current history: political, psychological and methodological problems

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Volume VIII of the Unesco *General History of Africa* is bound to face problems that are in many ways qualitatively different from those confronted in the other seven volumes. The most important reason for this difference between the latest volume and the earlier ones is that the last volume deals with our whole lifetime, and concerns issues which in many instances are contemporary. This short paper seeks to highlight some of the problems which are likely to affect the enterprise of investigating current history.

It should be noted that the study of current history has advantages, and not merely disadvantages, as compared with research into earlier epochs. We shall touch upon those advantages in a separate section.

The problem of subjectivism

Current issues are sometimes those in which people are still emotionally involved. They may have taken positions on behalf of this or that party in a dispute, or in favour of a controversial interpretation of a particular event, or in defence of a political leader or political ideology. Such partisan positions could interfere with a scholar's capacity to be objective on a given issue.

This was revealed once again to the Editor of Volume VIII at the special symposium held in Warsaw in October 1978 on the subject of 'Decolonization in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa'. There were some scholars there who had a long association with Ethiopia and others with a similarly long involvement in Somalia. Their sympathies in the dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia were predictable, mainly because of the special emotional relationship that existed between them and the countries at odds. A substantial proportion of the time devoted to analysing the situation in the Horn of Africa was taken up in serious altercations and exchanges between the parties in question. All the scholars concerned were indeed solid academics in their own right, but in the specific issue of the dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia their special emotional attachments strongly conditioned their academic opinions on the subject.

There is an old English adage which says: 'Distance lends enchantment to the view'. Enchantment is a kind of romance. The adage seems to suggest that the further away something is the less objective is one's perception of it, for it becomes more attractive. But in historiography it is sometimes nearness rather than distance that lends enchantment to the view. One's emotional favourites—be they private individuals, or public heroes, or countries—are still a little too close. It is this nearness that continues to cast a spell of enchantment detrimental to historical objectivity.

There are of course also negative forms of distortion—nearness lending grotesqueness to the view! Both attraction and repulsion are major hazards in the study of current history. How are these difficulties to be resolved?

Clearly, policy questions are bound to arise in the chapter on the Horn of Africa. Could the material on the Horn be written by a Somali and still be handled with objectivity from Ethiopia's point of view? If the assignment were given to an Ethiopian, would not a reverse bias be similarly likely? In view of this, should the assignment be given to an outsider? Theoretically, the outside scholar could be an African who was neither Ethiopian nor Somali. And yet we know that most of the outsiders who have studied the Horn are likely to be non-Africans rather than citizens of other African countries.

To discriminate against Ethiopians and Somalis in the writing of the history of their own part of the world may at times be intellectually persuasive, but would be morally indefensible. What then is the solution? Should matters pertaining to internal Somali history be entrusted to a Somali scholar, matters pertaining to internal Ethiopian history be entrusted to an Ethiopian scholar, while the area of dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia is entrusted to an outsider? If this division is still in some sense unacceptable, what alternative division of labour is required, given the perennial difficulty of subjectivism on issues of immediate emotional import?

The problem of subjectivism is not peculiar to current history, by any means. Historians can be very partisan when looking at episodes far from their own times.

It is common knowledge that the same war between two nations can often look different depending upon the nationality of the historian. Different versions of the Battle of Waterloo have been known to occur on the two sides of the English Channel.

What this means is that subjectivism can be either personal or collective. The two forms of subjectivism could at times be at play in the same scholar or observer. The scholar's tastes may be influenced by personal elements, sub-conscious preferences, or private prejudices. Collective subjectivism, on the other hand, emanates from a scholar's membership of a particular society or a particular cultural group. A Somali who finds it hard to be objective about Ethiopia is probably revealing a form of collective subjectivism. But a Somali

who finds it hard to be objective about any military rulers, whether in the Horn of Africa or elsewhere, is probably betraying subjective tastes and refinements of a personal kind, a private aversion to rulers in uniform.

Then there is the whole problem of counter-subjectivity. This is analogous to Leopold Senghor's concept of 'anti-racist racism', referring to situations where black consciousness is aroused in answer to white racism.

In the case of counter-subjectivity, what is happening is a subjective historical response by one side to combat distortion perpetrated by another society. Thus the form of European collective subjectivism which assumed that Africa's history was one long spell of either collective slumber or perpetual barbarism has at times provoked counter-subjectivism from Africans: asserting African glories of the past, emphasizing what was positive in Africa's history and understating or even ignoring what might at times have gone wrong in Africa's past.

This form of counter-subjectivism has its benefits when it investigates areas of Africa's history that were previously neglected, or when it succeeds in restoring a basic balance in interpretation over time. After all, debates between two legal adversaries in a court of law may be one way of finally arriving at the truth. Similarly, a debate between two extreme positions on Africa's history could in time lead to a genuine approximation of validity.

But counter-subjectivism has its dangers as well. In an important sense much of the content of the Unesco *General History of Africa*, even with respect to previous volumes, is still current history, in the sense that many parts of the project are being written by African historians almost for the first time. Much of the field was previously monopolized by non-Africans. The efforts of the new generation of African historical analysts, equipped with modern tools of investigation and informed by modern techniques of science, are partly directed at correcting the distortions perpetrated by earlier generations of non-African historians, or directed at filling the gaps which were left by those earlier scholars.

Partly because of these considerations, the Unesco *General History of Africa* itself is occasionally in danger of becoming an exercise in counter-subjectivism—an experiment, sponsored by an international organization whose members are governments, partly with a view to combat the previous abuse of African societies as primitive and a-historical.

The Unesco *General History of Africa* has to be constantly on the alert against the temptation to play the role of Counsel for the Defence of Africa in the face of a European Prosecutor, against the setting of an Eternal Court of Historical Justice.

Solutions have to be found to subjectivism in all its forms—personal, collective, and counter-subjective—as Africans struggle to comprehend both their past and their unfolding present.

The problem of domestic political sensitivity

But apart from the subjectivism of the scholar or historian, there is the general political climate within which a particular historical study is undertaken. That climate has both domestic or national implications within the country concerned, and broader international implications, which we shall later explore.

One major factor in the background is, quite simply, the fact that Africa has become a highly politicized continent. Questions that in other parts of the world might be regarded as virtually non-political acquire political implications in much of Africa. Perhaps this is the nature of the historical times in which we live, and the deep awareness of colossal political problems in virtually all the states of the continent.

The ambitions of most African countries are large, encompassing the desires to forge numerous disparate communities into cohesive nations within a lifetime and to transform borderline poverty into a foundation for affluence in a generation. The new territorial entities created by European colonialism have been maintained by the independent governments of Africa with ferocious possessiveness. The only thing that African countries do not want to decolonize is the colonial boundary between one state and another.

Although the ambitions of newly independent African countries are great, their institutions and their capacity for realizing these ambitions are weak. One of the persistent political problems in African countries is therefore the fluidity of institutions. Political parties rise and fall, constitutions are passed and abandoned, political structures are set up and wither away. It is in the nature of a new political system to experiment with new approaches to resolving conflict. But the fact that African political systems are often in their infancy gives them the quality of transience.

This amounts to a degree of instability in African countries. The leaders are often forced to take precautions against challenges to authority and the dangers of fragile institutions. It is partly because of this general atmosphere that many issues which elsewhere could conceivably be non-political become politicized in African circumstances. The age of Hastings Banda has been at times a politically sensitive subject because it could potentially affect the popular image of his heroic march to South Africa as a young person. Similarly, a sensitive subject in Uganda during Idi Amin's rule pertained to the date at which he joined the King's African Rifles; this could have a bearing on whether or not he served in Burma in the Second World War. A Malawian historian working on the earlier years of Hastings Banda might have to bear in mind the political implications of Banda's year of birth. The Ugandan historian working while Amin was still in power had to be concerned about what he wrote with regard to Amin's recruitment into the King's African Rifles.

These two illustrations concerning dates are part of wider issues which

touch upon the political sensitivity of writing about reigning presidents. Since some African presidents have lasted a long time in power (some are already completing twenty years in office) it is not realistic to delete their particular years from Volume VIII of the Unesco *General History of Africa*. Africans who currently specialize in the histories of countries like Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi or Guinea may have to handle material which touches upon the biography of the reigning president. Some of that material may be sensitive.

There is also the broad problem of ethnicity and the degree to which it could affect the work of an historian in virtually any African country. When Uganda was invited by the *Encyclopaedia Africana* secretariat to compile biographies of important Ugandans, one of the problems which arose was ethnic balance. For better or for worse, a disproportionate number of the most nationally significant Ugandans in the last hundred years had come from one or two centrally situated ethnic groups. Moreover, the best records available concerning leading Ugandans in modern history were concentrated in a few communities. A national biography which gave numerical preponderance to, say, the Baganda and the Banyoro was therefore bound to arouse the suspicion and envy of others. An ethnic balance was called for. Whether such a balance was historically defensible, as distinct from being politically desirable, is a question which touches upon the tensions of contemporary history.

It is possible to argue that much of the history of the African people was until recently a kind of 'ethnohistory'. The unit of historical identity was the ethnic group rather than the present territorial state. Many of the heroes were basically ethnic heroes rather than national ones. Yet an historian working for Volume VIII of the Unesco *General History of Africa* could be tempted to 'nationalize' those heroes. Was Dedan Kimathi, the Mau Mau fighter, a Kikuyu hero or a Kenyan one? Sometimes the answer depends upon the ethnic background of the Kenyan historian writing about Kimathi. In this case, political sensitivity interacts with collective subjectivism.

In Uganda similar issues have to be confronted. Was Sir Apolo Kagwa a Buganda hero or was he a Ugandan collaborator? Should Buganda heroes in any case be 'nationalized'? In the political climate of Uganda, would not such an approach perpetuate the old British tendency to equate the interests of Buganda with the interests of Uganda?

On the other side of the scale, how many Baganda historians can be detached in assessing the national significance of former President A. Milton Obote, the man who treated them virtually as a conquered people for five years, and who was responsible for the exile of the *Kabaka* and for the abolition of the kabakaship?

As for evaluating Idi Amin, the wounds are still too fresh among many Ugandan scholars. Objectivity is bound to be affected by the impact of Idi Amin

on the fortunes of a particular Ugandan family, the ethnic factor in the political alignment which supported Idi Amin while he was in power, and the religious cleavage between Muslims and Christians in Uganda.

In addition to the political sensitivity of material dealing with reigning presidents or with sectarian cleavages, there is the issue of who collaborated with the colonial regime as against those who worked for independence. In a country like Kenya this issue is bedevilled by memories of the Mau Mau war, and who was loyal towards the British versus who was a nationalist. An historian working primarily on the last fifteen years of colonial rule could be handling material that is politically very sensitive.

Another area of awkwardness concerns politically controversial episodes where feelings could run high. Who killed Josiah Mwangi Kariuki in Kenya in 1975? To what degree did people in high places conspire in the murder of Kenya's minister Tom Mboya in July 1969? A Kenyan historian who attempted to investigate these issues systematically and with any degree of thoroughness would be taking major political risks, perhaps even physical ones.

This captures two related dilemmas which an historian might have to face. One is the historian's own personal vulnerability when handling certain subjects. Will research into a particular subject expose the historian to the possibility of political harassment, political detention, or even political elimination?

There may be occasions when an historian who transcends his own collective subjectivism is in danger of being regarded as a traitor to his own group. An Ethiopian historian who writes sympathetically about Somali claims to the Ogaden could potentially be accused of treason in his own society. An Acholi who ventures to see any positive factor in Idi Amin's rule, in spite of Amin's genocidal treatment of the Acholi, would risk personal ostracism from his own Acholi group.

In addition to the problem of vulnerability of the author or researcher, there is also the dilemma of whether certain findings could adversely affect other people. Who informed on whom during the years of Amin's rule could be a subject capable of destroying the reputations of some people. The events are still immediate. An historian may decide that the truth must be known whatever the consequences; but the historian should at least be aware that certain revelations of truth could ruin other people or disrupt their families. Because events are so recent, many of those who participated in them are still around. Writing current history does not merely mean keeping a record of events; it can sometimes be a form of participation in those events. Publishing one's findings could be a form of political behaviour.

These are some of the central areas of domestic political sensitivity that an historian has to take into account. The range is, as we have indicated, quite wide. Some of the problems we have discussed in relation to writing current history of Africa are to be encountered in writing the current history of any

part of the world. Because Africa is passing through a period of particularly high political sensitivity, these difficulties at times loom even larger than they do in other societies. Writing about presidents who are still in power, and have been for two decades, poses some questions. Handling ethnic and sectarian cleavages in African societies poses other questions. Dealing with explosive episodes like assassinations and civil wars that are still close in time entails additional constraints. And behind this are the continuing dilemmas for an African historian about personal vulnerability in handling certain problems and about responsibility towards others in assessing the effects of one's findings.

The problem of international diplomatic sensitivity

It is not merely domestic politics which imposes constraints on historical studies; it is also the wider international environment and its scale of values.

One international issue which is bound to affect Volume VIII of the Unesco *General History of Africa* concerns the strategy of boycotting the Republic of South Africa. In trying to recruit the best authors for the relevant sections on Southern Africa, those responsible for the Unesco *General History of Africa* have to be conscious of the strategy of avoiding direct dealings with South African university institutions and indeed even with scholars who are of South African citizenship and are resident in South Africa. Similar diplomatic constraints had been applied to scholars resident in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) pending the lifting of the United Nations sanctions against that country. In other words, international diplomatic strategies have had to exclude from consideration as potential contributors a large number of some of the best informed scholars on southern Africa.

The second limitation on historical research in southern Africa concerns the action of other countries in their field of research within southern Africa. Is it possible for the Unesco *General History of Africa* to facilitate research in the Republic of South Africa, or in a country like the former Rhodesia, by scholars from outside? Again, the general strategy of the United Nations sanctions against Rhodesia seemed to imply a policy of discouraging research within that country. After all, research within Rhodesia of necessity required spending money in that country; and this in turn could have violated the sanctions of the world body. Similarly, spending research money in the Republic of South Africa would seem to violate the overall strategy supported by the Organization of African Unity against financial and economic dealings with South African institutions.

The third limitation on historical research in southern Africa would presumably affect the subject matter itself. The history of the white man's presence in southern Africa is so politically charged that a scholar writing for

the Unesco *General History of Africa* is unlikely to have a free hand in the specific area of interpretation and evaluation. There are some interpretations and evaluations that are likely to be politically so objectionable to the members of the International Scientific Committee of the Unesco *General History of Africa* that they would be thrown out of court as soon as they were presented. The Zairian scholar, Mutombo-Mpanya, has reminded us of Hans-Gaer Gadaimier's assertion that in our research 'it is not so much our judgment as it is our prejudices that constitute our being'. The prejudices themselves are not necessarily unjustified or erroneous—'the logical systems used are themselves characteristic of some ideological orientation and assumptions'.[1]

In the case of research in southern Africa, issues of collective subjectivism interact with issues of political sensitivity and those of diplomatic sensibilities.

Another area of study of comparable implications is the area of research into Israel's relations with both Arab Africa and Africa south of the Sahara. An African historian, commissioned by Unesco for the *General History of Africa*, may wish to visit Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as part of his field research for his section of the relevant chapter. However, the question of collaborating with Israeli institutions is so emotionally charged to many members of Unesco and even to a number of scholars on the International Scientific Committee of the Unesco *General History of Africa*, that field-work in Israel for a chapter commissioned by Unesco would cause serious diplomatic problems.

Another area of controversy within Africa concerns the role of Cuba in some African conflicts. Some members of the International Scientific Committee of the Unesco history project would interpret the role of Cuba as being part of the forces of liberation in the continent. There may be others, however, who identify Cuban involvement as evidence of the continuing dependency of Africa upon external societies. Cuba might also be interpreted as an instrument to facilitate Soviet penetration of Africa. All these three positions are controversial and a chapter for Volume VIII which adopts any one of the positions would challenge the scholarly objectivity of at least some of the members of the International Scientific Committee of the Unesco project.

We have discussed international constraints on, firstly, choice of scholarly contributors (excluding, for example, South Africans who are resident in South Africa); secondly, constraints as to where the field-work can be conducted (excluding for certain purposes research in, say, former Rhodesia or Israel); and thirdly, constraints on the interpretation of the data and subject matter (excluding nterpretations which might support, for example, the case for 'separate development' in South Africa).

A fourth international constraint lies in the sponsorship of the Unesco *General History of Africa*, a project sponsored by one of the agencies of the United Nations, namely Unesco. All international organizations are subject to a variety of diplomatic pressures and taboos. While the International Scientific

Committee of the Unesco *General History of Africa* enjoys considerable scholarly autonomy, there are certain subtle limits in the broad general context of Unesco. Member governments may protest if certain minimum standards of diplomatic propriety are not observed by the International Scientific Committee. The sponsorship of the project by an international organization is therefore very much a part of the total system of diplomatic checks and balances operating in a project of this kind.

The fifth area of international restraint (after choice of scholars, limitations on field research, constraints of subject matter, and the inhibitions of the sponsoring agency) is the additional area of vocabulary. The terms by which certain historical propositions are formulated necessitate diplomacy. For example, the term 'tribe' is widely used in individual African countries. Newspapers from Nigeria to Kenya, from Zaire to Senegal, include references to such a concept. Certainly the vocabulary of ordinary people in African societies all over the continent has firmly and continuously accommodated the concepts of 'tribe', 'tribalism' and related ideas. In short, the vocabulary of domestic analysis in African societies places no effective ban on the use of the concept of 'tribe' in ordinary discourse.

Yet, at the level of international communication involving Africans, the use of the word 'tribe' becomes politically sensitive. The Unesco *General History of Africa* has actually prohibited its use in any of its eight volumes.

It is possible to argue that the banning of such a term is itself a case of Eurocentrism. Some Africans seek to prove their equality with Europe by insisting that any achievements claimed by Europe can also be claimed by Africans. This is the 'me too' syndrome. Included here are those cultural nationalists who seek to insist that Africans had kings comparable to European ones; that African empires were comparable to those of Europe; that African written literature flourished before the arrival of the Europeans. The 'me too' syndrome is an important aspect of certain schools of African cultural nationalism.

What can be easily overlooked is the 'me neither' syndrome. Under this heading, whatever was lacking in Europe in modern times must have been lacking in Africa as well. If Europeans had managed to abolish their tribes, so had Africans. If Europeans had ceased to be polytheistic, so had Africans. If Europeans were no longer animist, neither were Africans. Whatever Europeans had ceased to manifest in their being was regarded to have also ceased in the African experience. Hence the opposition to terms like 'tribe' and 'animist'—simply because among Europeans these terms were not respectable. It is possible to argue that Africans who seek to change their own vocabulary in order to make it respectable to Europeans are caught in the dialectic of inverse dependency. It should be mentioned that such Africans include the author of this paper (torn between a desire to proclaim his independence of European

prejudices and a desire to appear respectable by European standards). Shunning terms like 'tribe' and 'animist' is part of this dialectic of inverse dependency.

What is significant from the point of view of this paper is the fact that the dialectic at this stage is part of the vocabulary of international discourse, rather than an aspect of domestic communication in individual African countries. Certainly the term 'tribe' is fully integrated into the vocabulary of the majority of African societies. It has become taboo at the level of international communication. The historian writing about African realities has therefore to respond to these international constraints, as well as to the realities of domestic relations.

The problem of rapid historical change

The difficulties of dealing with current history in Africa are not limited to subjectivism and the politics of scholarly investigation. They are also affected by the immediacy of historical change.

There is initially the problem of whether a particular chapter sounds 'dated' by the time it is published. Should this quality of being 'dated' matter in a work of historical scholarship?

In fact, it does indeed matter. In the case of the study of history of earlier epochs, a chapter may sound dated because it has not taken into account the latest discoveries of data on a particular subject, or because it is insensitive to recent developments in methodological experimentation. In the case of current history the risk of sounding 'dated' is greater. The very tense of the verbs used in a particular chapter could become compromised between the time the chapter is written and the time it is published. The author's own M.A. thesis for Columbia University concerned, in part, the debate about the newly independent Congo (Leopoldville) as an issue discussed at the United Nations in New York. The thesis was begun when Patrice Lumumba was still alive; however, by the time it was about to be submitted, Patrice Lumumba had been killed. In the course of the thesis every time the author said 'Lumumba is' or 'Lumumba has', the author felt compelled to change it to 'Lumumba was' and 'Lumumba had'. Current history is sometimes caught between the past and the present. The tenses can begin in the present, and then must be changed to the past before the chapter is published.

More fundamental than the tenses involved in the analysis is the issue of whether we can positively identify *trends* in the context of immediate history. The identification of trends requires an accumulation of both data and perspectives across time. For example, are relations between Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania revealing greater cultural integration as the Swahili language spreads in those three countries and the common man begins to communicate more effectively with his peers across the border? Or is the

recent history of these three countries evidence of political and economic disintegration as the political leaders pursue counter-policies and face newer and more devastating obstacles in their efforts to achieve an economic community? The basic contradiction between greater cultural integration, on the one hand, and difficult economic and political problems among the three countries on the other, illustrates a problem for those who seek to identify whether or not East Africa as a whole is undergoing deeper unification, in spite of divisions appearing from one newspaper headline to the next. Current history, by the very nature of the beast, bedevils the effort to identify the real trends, the genuine tendencies in a particular historical movement.

The third major area concerning rapid historical change is the more fundamental issue of determining *significance*. What is historically important or salient is often something that can only be effectively determined in the full maturation of historical assessment. Discriminating between the episodic and the fundamental, between the incident and the turning point, between a near happening and a real event, is a process of infinite subtlety as well as information. The immediacy of current history makes it difficult to sharpen the skills of discrimination. How seriously did we take the internal settlement in Rhodesia? How long-lasting in its repercussions is it likely to be? Was it a mere happening or a fundamental event? Was it an epiphenomenon or a setting for a profound historic tragedy? The constant quest for salience and the search for significance are handicapped by the nearness of the experience.

In addition to problems of tenses in stating propositions, problems of identifying trends across historical time, and problems of measuring significance, there is a further problem of a changing political climate. What was easily researchable yesterday under a particular political regime may become less researchable under the new regime which came into being following a military coup. The general climate within which historical research is conducted under modern conditions is itself subject to the fluctuations of historical change from regime to regime, sometimes from pronouncement to pronouncement.

This means that historical change in current history obscures presentation (because of the ambivalence of tenses), reduces our capacity to distinguish between an episode and a tendency, distorts our measurements of significance and importance as we assess history, and creates a fluctuating climate of research as regimes change and research taboos are modified.

Problems of access to sources

We now come to the broad area of historical sources and their accessibility. A number of factors are once again at play. One is the simple fact that the tradition of writing is still relatively new in many African societies. People

discuss things in conversation more often than in written memoranda or letters. The volume of communication by written correspondence in any African country today is only a fraction of the written correspondence of a European country of comparable size at the beginning of the century. Thus, by definition, Africa has a more limited pool of written documentation. For the rest of the century techniques of analysing oral evidence will remain critical for the study of African history to compensate for gaps in written documentation.

The second major difficulty, partly connected with the newness of the literate culture in modern African society, is the relatively weak sense of archival preservation among African peoples. Leading families in African societies seldom keep important papers affecting them, apart from marriage certificates and the newly invented certificates of birth for children. Historians seeking to gather evidence from the private papers of an important family are often disappointed by the paucity of material available.

This weak sense of archival preservation in Africa affects national policies and the degree to which governments bother to support their own national archives. There is often a sense of indifference. In addition, there is in any case weak organization and a lack of systematic search and collection of vital documentation for conservation.

This can sometimes pose moral problems for those Africans who do have a substantial collection of papers that are of historical relevance. Should they deposit those papers in their own national archives, with a high risk of loss or destruction over the years, or should they hand over those precious documents to some major library in western Europe or America—a library equipped for archival work, organized for efficient preservation, and systematic enough to ensure that the documents are carefully catalogued and made accessible to bona fide scholars? On the one hand, it seems disloyal to transfer part of the archival resources of the nation to a foreign institution abroad. On the other hand, it seems equally disloyal to risk the loss of those documents in a local archive—and thus deny future generations the knowledge contained in those documents. Presumably each African in possession of historical documents would need to resolve the dilemma in his or her own way. Techniques of microfilming and photocopying have certainly eased part of the dilemma in the second half of the twentieth century.

Another problem of accessibility to historical sources relates to the atmosphere of political censorship in African countries which discourages documentation of opposition to governments and sometimes even of mere criticism of their policies. Dissident groups either have to go underground or have to be very circumspect in what they say or write. This results in a massive imbalance in documentation in favour of official versions of events. Newspapers and radio broadcasts are full of the government's perspective on a particular happening. The imbalance in favour of 'officialese' denies the historical

researcher an adequate range of documentation that can be cross-checked.

Another factor affecting documents is the whole problem of sudden and violent changes of government. Of course some military coups are much less destructive than others. But because each coup tends to denounce the previous regime as illegitimate, many people in possession of documents about the previous regime may decide that it is more prudent to destroy them. The regime itself could at times be directly destructive of the files of its predecessors, or at the very least indifferent to whether those files are preserved or not. Thus the general political atmosphere of Africa has repercussions for the writing of contemporary history.

There are advantages, as well as disadvantages, to the recording of contemporary history. Among the major advantages is the body of oral evidence which might be available. Many of the major actors in contemporary African history are still alive, and some of them are deeply committed to matters of historical significance. These people have been known to give interviews to scholars or reporters, or have been heard making comments on historical events, or sharing anecdotes with friends. Nigeria's Yakubu Gowon is a walking archive of information about the Nigerian civil war, since he was so deeply involved in it as head of the Federal side of the war. Milton Obote, the president of Uganda, is a mine of historical information about the last ten years of colonial rule in Uganda and the first eight years of his own rule.

In addition, there are former colonial officials, both African and European, scattered in different parts of the world, who may have private papers of their own and who may also be available for oral elaboration and narration.

Finally there are the millions of ordinary Africans who have been through changing times, sometimes exhilarating, sometimes tumultuous. They have their own memories available for the historical researcher. The oral tradition continues as one fundamental resource for African historiography.

Problems of comparative methodology

In a sense, methodology is the grand mediator between the researcher and the data. Methods of investigation and analysis provide the basic interaction between the scholar and what is being studied. Problems in methodology could therefore be divided into two parts—those that relate to the scholar, and those that relate to the data.

From the scholar's point of view, there is first the link between methodology and ideology. In many cases, to choose a particular method of investigation and analysis is to make an ideological statement. Ideology here can be defined as a system of ideas, values and perspectives that condition an individ-

ual's orientation and preference, and sometimes provide the basis of solidarity with other individuals of similar orientation. A research method, on the other hand, is a particular approach towards the task of collecting data, the techniques of analysing the data, the basis of interpreting the data, and the logic of reasoning employed in the process as a whole. The question arises whether the choice of a particular method can be divorced from the wider universe of a scholar's ideological orientation. The underlying ideology may be traditionalism, nationalism, liberalism, socialism, humanism or some combination of two or more of these normative trends.

Is ideological interference with scholarly objectivity more immediate in the study of current history than in the study of the past? In contemporary Africa, the risk of politicized scholarship is greater because of the higher levels of politicization in African societies. Among African scholars, nationalistic sentiment and normative opposition to imperialism are very difficult to put aside as one studies the colonial experience. Distinguished scholars like Cheikh Anta Diop have been accused of being nationalistic in the study of Ancient Egypt and in their response to contemporary twentieth-century politics in Africa. Some commentators on Diop's work, especially in the West, have accused him of using the glories of Ancient Egypt as a weapon against modern European imperialism and cultural arrogance.[2]

Cheikh Anta Diop's defenders might argue that ideological distortions began earlier in European scholarship, and that Diop provided only an antidote to that earlier ideological malaise.

The second major factor that could affect a scholar's relationship with his or her method is the social class to which the scholar belongs. A scholar at his best is a producer, and scholarship can be regarded as a mode of production of knowledge. Thinkers like Michel Clourcard have therefore inferred that the mode of production of knowledge is necessarily conditioned by the class struggle, since certain forms of knowledge are bound to benefit one class more than another.

African scholars are caught up in two class situations. In their own society they are among the more privileged groups. Those who are members of the International Scientific Committee of the Unesco *General History of Africa*, or have been commissioned to edit the volumes of the project, tend to belong to the elite of the international intelligentsia, traversing long distances by jet as part of their mode of production in the scholarly field.

Although African scholars are thus privileged when viewed in relation to the masses of their own society, they are citizens of under-privileged countries when viewed from the angle of global stratification and levels of power. As members of the elites of their own society, their perspectives may betray the biases of privilege and 'bourgeois' status. On the other hand, in their capacity as nationals of exploited countries and humiliated races, the African scholars

may betray the rebellious biases of those who wish to transcend their oppression.

Prior to ideology and class is perhaps culture. It may be true that to choose a method is to make an ideological statement as well as to betray a class position. But to choose a method is also to reveal one's cultural background. One of the unavoidable predicaments of the Unesco project is that it has to look to Westernized and semi-Westernized Africans for authors, editors, and members of the International Scientific Committee. Modern techniques for the study of history have come disproportionately from the world of Western scholarship. African scholars in turn have come disproportionately from either Western institutions of higher education or institutions based on the Western model. The languages in which those African historians were trained and in which they conduct the bulk of their scholarly work are mainly European languages. The paradigms of intellectual analysis are borrowed disproportionately from European intellectual traditions of either a liberal or a radical persuasion.

It is true that African historians have innovated more than have African sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists or economists. The study of oral tradition especially has been taken to new frontiers by B. A. Ogot and other African historians. But even in that case the scholarly paradigm of analysis, inference and documentation is still part of the wider world of Western scholarship.

From an African point of view, this Eurocentrism of modern scholarship is perhaps the most important illustration of the proposition that to choose a method of study is to reveal one's cultural background, just as it is a revelation of one's class position and one's ideological orientation.

There is also the connection between the method and the researcher. In this case, the proposition is that to choose a method is to confess one's generation. In the African context, especially, there is definitely a transition under way from 'bourgeois' scholarship to radical or Marxist approaches. This is discernible more clearly in some disciplines than in others. The 'young Turks' in economics and political science are looking more and more like each other under the rubric of 'political economy'. Class analysis and the study of imperialism are now widely regarded as the most relevant approaches to the study of Africa's experience.

African anthropologists and sociologists are for the time being less radicalized in that sense, but the trend is unmistakable even in their case. African creative writers and literary critics are still more 'bourgeois' in their professional writings than in their oral speeches. But their oral speeches reveal a growing radicalization.

The study of history in Africa is as yet less Marxist than the study of politics and economics; however, the radical young Turks are already emerging. Atieno-Odhiambo of Kenya is not only biologically a different generation from

Ogot: they also reveal generational differences in their methodological concerns and orientations. In political science Michael Chege and Anyang Nyong'o are together a different methodological generation from Ali A. Mazrui. In this context Marxism is a badge of the younger generation. The young Turk of Africa is more often than not a young Marxist.

That method does not characterize only the research; it also has a relationship with what is being studied. Techniques for studying oral evidence become more necessary in societies that are basically non-literate. Those techniques have to be improved upon. Further experimentation and refinement in methodologies for oral evidence are a major imperative in African historiography.

Those African scholars who prefer class analysis will have to confront increasingly the political economy of oral tradition. How do we assess the class characteristics of oral information across time? If oral evidence is disproportionately the evidence of consensus, and is transmitted as such from generation to generation, how can we learn about conflict and class struggle in such consensual transition?

With regard to current history, there is also the problem of studying classes before they have matured or consolidated themselves. The second half of the twentieth century is a period of considerable class fluidity, with many Africans emerging as belonging to more than one social class at a given period. At the lower level, for example, an African may be both an urban worker and a peasant. Vertically, a trade union leader could be a worker and, simultaneously, a member of the emerging bourgeoisie.

Another complication arises because class formation in contemporary Africa is not simply 'who owns what' but is also a matter of 'who knows what'. Certainly knowledge of Western culture and languages, and initiation into Western scholarship and skills, have been a major basis of stratification in the Africa of the twentieth century.

One problem for the class analyst is therefore not simply how developed the techniques of class analysis are, but how developed and mature class formations have become in contemporary Africa. In reality both the techniques and what is to be studied are often rudimentary. African historiography is already beginning to respond to the challenge.[3]

Another inherent methodological problem concerns the tension between focusing on an elite and focusing on ordinary people. Almost by definition, evidence about the activities and lives of the elite is more easily obtained than evidence about the lives of ordinary people. Since more people are likely to witness the lives of the well-known and the famous, and be familiar with the activities of the powerful and the rich, there is a great temptation in African history to concentrate on the leaders and the privileged. This is especially so when the historians themselves belong to the same socio-economic group as the people they study.

Finally, there is the whole debate concerning numbers. Economic history (and to a lesser extent political history) has begun to look for ways of quantifying historical developments. Philip Curtin's work on the slave trade provoked one area of controversy in quantitative historiography. Quantification is caught up in a major scientific paradox. On the one hand, quantification is a quest for precision. On the other hand, quantification is a retreat into narrowness. We may end up knowing more and more about less and less. What is not quantifiable becomes in some sense unknowable according to the more devout adherents of quantitative social science. The nature of our knowledge may therefore become more exact; the content of our knowledge on the other hand may become narrow and limited. This links back to the earlier discussions of whether to opt for quantification is to betray one's cultural, and sometimes ideological background.

Leopold Senghor, in his defence of the proposition that African reasoning is intuitive and discursive rather than analytical, refers us to Engels' suggestion that to be mathematical is not only to betray one's European culture but even to reveal one's Caucasian genes! The following is Senghor's quotation from Engels' work preparatory to the *Anti-Dühring*:

> Two kinds of experience . . . one exterior, material; the other, interior; laws of thought and forms of thinking. Forms of thinking also partly transmitted by heredity. A mathematical axiom is self-evident to a European, but not to a Bushman or an Australian Aborigine.[4]

Few people today would concede that to opt for quantification is to reveal one's genes! But for the time being it is true that most African social scientists are handicapped in the skills of quantificative and statistical analysis. Such skills are to some extent culturally relative, though by no means limited to European culture. After all, let us not forget that the numbers used by Europeans are called Arabic numerals, tracing their ancestry to the glorious days of Islamic science and to the contribution of Indian civilization to scientific culture.

In the more immediate terms of the context of African historiography, there is a general paucity of quantified data available in reliable forms. Even population figures of contemporary African countries are notoriously unreliable, and sometimes subject to a political bias. If the basics of the national census are uncertain, we can imagine the complication of quantifying political behaviour, economic performance or nutrition inputs in a given year. The computer culture is still in its infancy in African scholarship. It may, however, make sense to try to estimate quantitatively the costs of this computer gap to our real comprehension of African realities in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

These are some of the basic problems confronting the study of current history in Africa. We first explored the psychological problem of subjectivism, encompassing its individual manifestations, its collective forms and ethnic and national consciousness, and its role as a corrective to the subjectivism of previous historians. The psychology of the individual scholar and his loyalties and emotions are at the centre of this cluster of problems.

We then looked at the problems of political sensitivity in an Africa which is highly sensitized to politics. Many African societies in the second half of the twentieth century are less than open societies. What problems does that situation pose for an historian who is trying to understand current history? What about the effects of politics and access to data, as well as freedom of publication?

Thirdly, we investigated international diplomatic sensitivity, especially for a project which is sponsored by an inter-governmental organization. Some countries may be legitimate locations for research while others may not; South African and Israeli nationals may be politically disfranchised de facto if not de jure. The very content of history may have international diplomatic implications.

We then explored the difficulties inherent in the rapidity of change in contemporary Africa. Because the events are so immediate it is not always possible to distinguish between an episode and a trend. It is also difficult to grapple with the frontiers of salience and significance.

Problems of access to sources and evidence are also at the heart of historical studies. Current history reveals its own tensions. The vulnerability of written documents from one military coup to the next, the implications of being a society which has not yet institutionalized its archival preservation—either at the family level or at the national level—these are some of the central problems at play in affecting access to evidence and sources. As for oral evidence, contemporary history sometimes has advantages because many of the actors are still alive and may sometimes be persuaded to give an interview to a scholar.

Finally, we examined the complicated issues of methodology in so far as they relate to both the researcher and the data. Is the choice of a method a personal confession? How far are we condemned to study the elite who are very often members of our own privileged social class? How adequate is class analysis as an approach to understanding contemporary Africa? How definite are African class formations? Are they ready for, and susceptible to, the scholar's rigorous scrutiny?

The Unesco *General History of Africa* is a project that has inevitably captured some of the major contradictions of Africa in agonized transition from external control to internalized discipline, from intimate relationships

within kinship culture to new horizons of global participation, from cultures which have put a premium on precedent to cultures which must forge a capacity for anticipation, from societies where the spoken word was the arbiter between contending interpretations of reality to new societies where the written word asserts the right to record and to transmit, from civilizations of qualitative evaluation to civilizations of quantitative assessment.

It is in this sense that the Unesco African history project becomes in itself a microcosm of contemporary African realities. The issues which the last volume of the project will face—covering the latest phases of Africa's experience—will in part mirror what Africa itself is undergoing. The study of current history becomes, in this sense, part and parcel of the realities of current history in its wider ramifications.

Notes

1. Mutombo-Mpanya, 'Ideology and Methodology in African Ancient History' (unpublished manuscript, 1977).
2. A discussion of Diop's critics occurs in Mutombo-Mpanya's manuscript, 'Ideology and Methodology in African Ancient History', op. cit. I am indebted to Mr Mutombo-Mpanya personally for the stimulating private discussions we have had on issues of this kind.
3. The case for such a radical approach to the study of African history is put eloquently by Henry Bernstein and Jacques Depelchin of the University of Dar es Salaam in their article 'The Object of African History: A Materialist Perspective', *History in Africa: An Annual Journal of Method*, Madison, Wis., Vol. 5, 1978 and Vol. 6, 1979.
4. Leopold Senghor, *Prose and Poetry*, p. 43, edited and translated by John Reed and Clive Wake, Oxford University Press, 1965.

Problems of writing contemporary African history

J. F. Ade Ajayi

Introduction

For various reasons, historians shy away from the writing of contemporary history. In the first place, the basic training of the historian seems to presume that he will be dealing with a period of history about which he can collect, collate and analyse all available data with a degree of detachment. This ill prepares him to deal with a period in which he is an observer if not also a participant. He is aware that he does not have access to all available sources, since these continue to be generated and the most important remain under confidential cover in the control of those who generate them or become their custodians. He is also aware that if he wrote frankly as his sources and his analysis of events suggest, he might offend powerful individuals, groups or even governments. There is also the problem of bias with regard to events in which he may have a political or economic interest. His patriotism or partisan interest may colour his judgment. His proximity to the events makes it difficult for him to view such events in the right perspective, the long-term historical perspective that the basic professional training of the historian enjoins on him. It is not surprising therefore that the International Scientific Committee did not find many African historians specializing in contemporary history nor that they have had to invite a distinguished African political scientist from outside the Committee to be the editor of Volume VIII.

Let me add that historians are nevertheless currently being challenged to take more interest in contemporary history. The aversion of historians to contemporary history to which I referred above is the product of the German School of historiography which, since the end of the nineteenth century, has established the basis for academic history. Before then—and even since, outside the confines of academic history—it was the immediate past, not more remote periods, that held the fascination and had practical importance for the education of men of affairs. The immediate past can be viewed as such an essential link between the past and the present that historians cannot afford to ignore or abandon it to others. Thucydides began writing the history of the Peloponnesian War soon after it broke out. Many historians outside the universities continue

to write about the immediate past and many autobiographies, memoirs and contemporary biographies often rise above the level of source material and make important contributions as historical studies in their own right.

At any rate, the International Scientific Committee has decided that the synthesis of African history will not be complete or exercise the influence it deserves on thought, understanding and possible action in Africa if it does not cover the immediate past up to 'the present day'. It is important therefore that historians of Africa should accept the challenge, survey the problems and find solutions to the writing of contemporary African history, so that Volume VIII of the Unesco history should be infused with the same level of historical rigour, detachment and perspective that has shaped the earlier volumes.

What is contemporary Africa?

The initial problem of defining what for our purpose constitutes contemporary Africa has, to some extent, been resolved by the decision of the International Scientific Committee to the effect that Volume VIII should begin with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 and cover the period to 'the present day'. The Italian invasion is not seen as an attempt to complete the colonial conquest of Africa, but as part of the contemporary struggle to liberate the continent not only from nineteenth-century colonialism but also from contemporary neo-colonial economic, military and even political domination and threats of domination.

Nevertheless, we still need to define what we consider to be the essential characteristics of contemporary Africa and what the dominant themes of our history of the period should cover. So far, our emphasis has been on decolonization through the activities of liberation movements, nationalist or independence parties, economic development, cultural revival and other efforts at achieving self-identity and self-reliance. This de-emphasizes the old concept of modernization and takes a critical view of the results of efforts at economic, industrial and commercial development, in the light of the overall commitment to decolonization and the struggle against neo-colonial efforts to frustrate it. Decolonization thus provides a useful theme to sum up contemporary African history, but it is by no means an exclusive or entirely adequate theme.

It should be noted that while the forty years or more since 1935 might appear a short period to occupy one of the eight volumes covering the whole of African history, it is for most parts of Africa a period of rapid and intense change. Some people will argue that the change has mostly stopped short of any radical transformation of society in terms of the means of production and the balance of power among social classes. For most Africans who have lived

through them, however, the last forty years have seen major changes that should be reflected in the writing of history. Even where political independence has not been accompanied by fundamental social reform, it has meant restoring political initiatives to African rulers, often to an entirely new political elite. The importance of the transfer of political initiatives and the emergence of these new elites should not be underestimated. These changes have also been accompanied by the incorporation of Africa at an accelerated pace into the contemporary society of the wider world community which itself has been undergoing rapid change, especially in the technology of transportation and mass communication. Such insertion of Africa into a changing world community must affect our definition of contemporary Africa.

These dynamic factors in the evolution of contemporary Africa indicate that present-day Africa must be seen as consisting of more than a reaction against colonialism and neo-colonialism. Side by side with efforts to break down and outgrow the limitations of colonial structures and attitudes go efforts to evolve a new Africa based on continuities from traditional and colonial Africa, on new initiatives and new syntheses between the past and the pressures of the contemporary wider world. Our analysis of contemporary Africa must discover these new initiatives, especially in our social and cultural life. Our efforts at evolving new social and political structures should be evaluated not solely from the point of view of decolonization or a socialistic ideology of social transformations, but also in relation to this possible synthesis between past continuities and the pressures of the wider world of today.

It is important that the seminar should spend some time exploring and defining the major themes of contemporary African history, for it is the common understanding of these themes that can give coherence and the right perspective to history and help to minimize the many problems inherent in the writing of contemporary history.

Contemporary history and politics

In approaching contemporary history, the first thing to emphasize to historians and political scientists alike is that although contemporary history is akin to politics, the two are distinct. The seminar can usefully spend some time analysing the nature of this distinction and its significance for our work.

The difference is not so much in the subject matter as in the perspective and the methodology of the two different disciplines. I wonder if the political scientist will readily agree that his interest in the present is for its own sake. He makes comparisons between the present here and the present in other places. He may even compare the present here and now with the present as of an

earlier period. But the purpose of the comparisons is to provide additional insights for understanding the present, whether in terms of a descriptive analysis or in terms of refining the theory of politics.

For the historian, on the other hand, the relation between the present and the past is more than fortuitous and must never be lost sight of. The present is an outgrowth of the past and the past is an essential background to the present. It may be poor history to use the present to evaluate the past; but as the present unfolds itself, it adds to the past and provides new opportunities for viewing the pattern of past events. It is this pattern which provides the basis for the historian's understanding, and the pattern cannot be viewed as a whole if the present is divorced from the past.

Thus, the historian cannot understand the present as an entity in itself but only as a continuing part of the past. For convenience of study, the past is broken up into periods. The most recent past, as we have already said, is not as popular among historians as some of the earlier periods. But the periodization and the effort to observe the dynamics of change in, and essential characteristics of, each period should not obscure the fact that the study of each period is intended to contribute to our understanding of the overall pattern of events in the past.

The interest of the historian in contemporary history is therefore not an end in itself. The historian's perspective contributes something essential to an understanding of the present for its own sake. Many social scientists realize this and profit by it. But the fundamental concern of the historian himself goes beyond this to the search for meaning and understanding of the continuous past. Thus the historian hopes that his analysis of the contemporary society can have the same long-term significance that he expects his writings on other periods to have.

This does not make the historian, or the political scientist for that matter, immune from the pressures of governments or other powerful interests opposed to views that are out of consonance with existing orthodoxies and current policies. For even the most apparently detached historical writing can become an issue in politics. This of course touches on the scholar's struggle for freedom of thought and of expression, with its attendant risks and obligations. It is hoped that the long-term perspective of the historian, his sincere search for historical truth—as distinct from propaganda—will gain him some respect, if not complete protection. The continental approach of the Unesco history and the international involvement also offer opportunities for judicious choice of authors on issues that currently engender fierce local controversies.

It is not with political science alone that history collaborates in studying the contemporary past. History draws upon studies of every aspect of man and society—religion, education, literature, trade, industry, science, technology, etc. But, always, the historian tries to utilize whatever insights these

provide for the understanding of the present to assist him in his search for depth in understanding the pattern of past events. While all these different disciplines pride themselves on speaking to the contemporary generation about itself, historians are so preoccupied with the long-term perspective that they are constantly thought of as addressing the future as much as the present generation.

Mass communication and contemporary history

The need for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of different epochs of African history has often been emphasized. Indeed, this is regarded as one of the major contributions of African historiography to the science of history. It was advocated first as a device for filling gaps in written sources, but later as having a methodological value in itself even in the face of abundant written sources.

In writing contemporary history, the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach goes beyond the question of methodology. Because of our existence in and proximity to the contemporary period, we view its history from a broader outlook going beyond the conventional preoccupation with the state and the struggle within and among states. We show greater concern for the living conditions of people in society, not only in terms of socio-economic conditions, but also of literature, art, science and technology. This broader perspective must affect our definition of the themes of contemporary history.

The historian needs, for example, to explore with other disciplines the impact of science and technology on living conditions in contemporary African society. Even in the remotest areas, infant mortality has been reduced and the demographic effects of this need to be understood in an historical perspective. Similarly, there is the all-pervading influence of the technology of mass communication and transportation. There are now few places in Africa so remote that the motor vehicle and the radio are unknown. The implications of this for the nature of contemporary society deserve historical study. Three implications may be briefly mentioned here.

The first is the extent to which the technology of mass communication and transportation, by reducing the significance of distance, has continued to involve Africa in an ever-shrinking world. Because of this, the historian of contemporary Africa is no longer interested only in the activities of the invaders of Africa and of the Africans of the Diaspora. He also has to bear in mind the general impact of the outside world even where no direct relationships appear obvious. He has to bear in mind the conflicting as well as complementary roles of the forces of nationalism, transnationalism and internationalism. While each individual country and the continent as a whole seek to achieve complete liberation, self-reliance and self-identity, we discover that success in these

endeavours depends on the extent to which the forces of nationalism, regional groupings and world systems can be kept in balance.

The second implication concerns the extent to which the technology of mass communication has helped to mobilize the masses. They are made aware not only of national but also international issues. They participate in the discussion of affairs even in rural areas, and the rulers are aware of this. For this reason, the masses have come to exert an influence on history even in relatively closed political systems in a way that the historian cannot ignore. Their increased awareness gives a qualitative difference to the role of the masses in contemporary society which goes beyond the Marxist view of their social and economic importance as factors in production.

Thirdly, although the colonial period has accelerated the development of urban settlements which are now the centres of economic development, the seats of government and the homes of the new political elite, the majority of Africans still live in rural areas and their living conditions must concern the historian of contemporary Africa. The demographic effect of improved health facilities is felt most in the rural areas, with serious consequences for local agriculture and for migrations into the urban areas.

Such factors in contemporary society as internationalism, mass communication and rural development are constant themes in the social sciences. The historian now needs to view these as factors of change in contemporary society, to see them in their historical perspective and relate them to developments in earlier periods.

The problem of sources

Our understanding of the past is shaped by our mastery of the available sources. For the more distant past, circumstances have helped to select the available sources to the extent that the historian can master them in entirety. For more recent periods, the abundance of the material is such that the historian himself has to be selective with it. Usually, he has surveyed all the available material or he is aware of the variety of sources and he can therefore select meaningfully. For the contemporary past, however, the sources present the historian with many perplexing problems. They overwhelm him with their abundance, baffle him with their incompleteness and frustrate him with their peculiar gaps on essential matters. The result is that the historian cannot claim any mastery over the sources of contemporary history.

Since the invention of the printing press and the spread of mass literacy, the sources of contemporary history have become increasingly overwhelming to the historian. Although we complain about various factors that have destroyed and helped to 'select' sources concerning the more remote past, it

is this process of chance survival that has made the sources of the remote past more manageable for the historian. For our contemporary generation, however, the problem has become more confounded. The growth of literacy and the number of people now writing and printing, the invention of the typewriter, and now the photocopying machine, have generated an abundance of written, printed, duplicated, photocopied and microfilmed material that is truly overwhelming. Yet every bit of written material may be said to add something to our knowledge of the past. Even duplicate copies tell us, if not of the subject matter, then to whom they were copied or who bothered to keep them and for what purpose. Apart from the usual copies of correspondence and parliamentary papers, we are also now confronted with the mountains of papers and reports of various national and international conferences, committees, commissions, etc.

The abundance of the material is such that the task of selection is truly overwhelming. But that task itself could be tackled if the historian were given charge of the sources. Governments and private individuals jealously guard essential parts of this material. Even in countries maintaining the most open forms of administration, the councils of government meet in secret and their records remain secret. Governments exchange secret correspondence and essential documents remain classified. Thus, in spite of the overwhelming abundance of material, the dominant impression for the historian is of their incompleteness.

This is not only because of vital documents that have been withheld, or even because each day yields its own sources to add to a collection that can never be complete, but also because in our administration and way of life we are less and less dependent on the written word alone. A good deal of the means of communication is now not written. There is the baffling problem of the telephone. Recently, ownership of the transcripts of Dr Kissinger's telephone conversations at the time when he dominated international politics and preferred the personal visit and the telephone to traditional exchange of memoranda has become a public issue. It is instructive to note how many world leaders resort to the telephone and confidential conversations in times of grave national and international crisis.

Thus, the written accounts alone, even if no one withheld any, would not be adequate sources. The memoirs and oral testimonies of participant observers become important. Similarly, printed newspapers and magazines have become a dwindling proportion of the available means of mass communication and of the moulding of public opinion. The volume of newspapers has increased, to be sure, but the cinema—and, even more, radio and television—have displaced printed newspapers as major factors in the evolution of public opinion.

When one considers specifically African societies with the still low levels of literacy, the unscripted spoken word at political rallies, the party songs and slogans and oral testimonies of observers and analysts become important sources of contemporary history that cannot be ignored.

It is this abundance, complexity and incompleteness of the sources that intimidate the historian. He does not feel himself in control of the sources or able to select rationally. It is also partly for this reason that the historian seeks collaboration with other disciplines to acquire a better understanding of the sources. The historian needs the interdisciplinary approach, provided his concern, as an historian, for a time perspective remains dominant. Indeed, it is in relating the past to the present and the present to the evolving pattern of the past that the historian has some guidelines for evaluating the significance of his sources, thus providing some basis for rational selection.

The problem of bias

There is also the problem that with such an abundant and unmanageable array of sources the historian will select his sources in accordance with prejudice arising from patriotic or other partisan bias and not from a professional historical perspective, seeking to understand better the pattern of past events. The danger, then, is that a lot of the writing of contemporary history might fail to perceive the essential pattern of events, degenerate into ephemeral propaganda and have little lasting significance.

The problem of bias is real, but it needs to be redefined. The assumption that the goal of historical writing is to provide an objective account, so detached that people on both sides of a battleline would each agree on its truth, needs to be questioned. Understanding, rather than detachment as such, is what needs to be emphasized and understanding can hardly come without some involvement and some empathy. It is clear, however, that involvement can cause prejudice and bias which obscure rather than enhance understanding. But this is not an argument for discouraging involvement. The problem is how to distinguish the empathy that enhances understanding from the prejudice that obscures it.

It is clear that the problem of bias is not peculiar to the writing of contemporary history alone. If the argument of bias were to be taken to its logical conclusion, no national would be allowed to write his nation's history. The problem of bias appears to be greater in the writing of contemporary history than in the writing of the history of other periods because the sources of contemporary history are less organized and give less confidence to the historian. The personal knowledge and the involvement of the historian in the contemporary period can be an advantage in the assessment and selection of the material.

The seminar may explore the problem of bias and perspective in the writing of contemporary history. The ultimate answer is to be found in the training, competence and diligence of the historian, the extent to which he is

prepared and able to make the effort to understand and perceive the long-term patterns which distinguish historical explanation from propaganda. It is the dedication and the insights of the historian rather than his lack of involvement or personal knowledge that can protect him from the dangers of bias.

To some extent, the problem of bias can also be minimized by the continental approach which the International Scientific Committee has laid down as the guiding principle in writing the Unesco history. If every contributor were to write from the continental viewpoint, evaluating the continental rather than the local significance of events, relating the events to an overall continental synthesis, the problem of bias arising from local patriotisms or from partisan positions in local conflicts and controversies would hardly arise. Yet the continental approach itself has raised other problems.

Very few historians are knowledgeable enough to discuss the contemporary history of Africa in continental terms. As with other periods of our history, we have yet to evolve the basis of the continental synthesis. Trans-continental comparisons therefore tend to produce another type of bias, arising from uneven knowledge of two or more things that are being compared. Our sources guide us to the histories of localities or of individual countries, countries emerging from the colonial past with boundaries that do not necessarily follow lines of historical development. The location of archives in metropolitan countries or the lines of authority in the colonial period remain dominant influences. Thus the history of Guinea-Bissau tends to be related not so much to the history of Guinea as to that of Angola, just as the history of Benin (Dahomey) is more aligned with the history of Senegal than with that of the neighbouring and related peoples of Nigeria. Therefore efforts to evaluate the achievements in contemporary African history in the areas of literature, philosophy, religion, science and technology, must attempt to get beneath these survivals of intellectual barriers from the colonial past.

These barriers go beyond those of language or the location of archives in the former metropolitan capitals. They also include different educational systems and traditions of historical training. To these have now been added the complexities of differing social ideologies and conflicting views on the processes of historical change. We have yet to evaluate the problems created by these factors in the international effort to synthesize African history as a whole. For the writing of contemporary African history, these conflicting traditions and ideologies take on special significance, and ways of minimizing their effect should be discussed.

Case studies

The nature of these problems and possible approaches to minimize them can be explored by looking at a number of case studies in contemporary African history. Generally, such cases concern various conflicts about which there may be no consensus as to the causes, pattern of events or direction of eventual resolution. These controversies challenge the historian's craft, his ability to perceive the events in historical perspective and to throw light on the evolving pattern. The resulting analysis of the historian may still not be received with consensus, but it should at least increase our understanding of the pattern of events on a long-term basis.

Case studies should include events of internal conflict such as the civil wars in Zaire and Nigeria, which were of such magnitude and complexity as to invite outside intervention on both sides of the controversy. Such conflicts generate controversies about what happened and why, the role of different individuals or groups, etc., which are difficult to resolve. Such controversies in turn raise the question of sources and the perspective of the historian. Such events need to be understood not only in terms of *a priori* positions about the sanctity of inherited boundaries, but even more about the long-term historical relationship of peoples within the countries concerned.

There should be case studies of areas where national or international conflicts and controversies are raging today, and southern Africa readily comes to mind. While there was consensus in rejecting the apartheid view of contemporary history in southern Africa, there was no consensus as to alternative viewpoints. This was largely a reflection of the politics—the divisions generated by the concept of internal settlement in Zimbabwe, and whether the solution to apartheid was to be a transfer of power from white minority to any black majority or whether the black majority should be further defined in terms of commitment to a popular socialist revolution. These issues of contemporary politics seemed so dominant that there was little attempt to understand the events and the controversies in their historical context as they relate either to southern Africa or to the continent as a whole. The historian's task consists of insisting on better understanding of the events themselves in terms of the sources available for studying them, and in relating the events of contemporary history to the pattern of historical relationships and development of peoples of southern Africa.

Similarly, current conflicts and controversies in the Horn countries affect our perception of the issues of contemporary history in that part of Africa. There is a historical Ethiopian viewpoint at loggerheads with a historical Somali viewpoint which even the most knowledgeable and competent historian will find difficult to reconcile. Such a resolution is hardly the main concern of the historian. What he needs, whether he is Ethiopian, Somali or neither in his

political sympathies, is an ability to understand the events and the conflicting views, and to perceive the continental significance and long-term pattern of events, despite the current controversies over ideologies and the sanctity or otherwise of inherited boundaries. In other words, the controversies need to be understood in their wider historical perspectives.

The continental viewpoint has also raised the question of Afro-Arab relationships, which has been suggested as a case study in the problem of contemporary African historiography. This is an instance where current political attitudes encouraging closer co-operation between Arabs and blacks in Africa might tend to distort the pattern of the earlier relationship which included conflict as well as co-operation. It is a good example of issues in contemporary history which can best be understood in the light of previous history and not vice versa.

Finally, a number of case studies might be explored to illustrate the problems involved in judging contemporary leaders historically. The assessment of the roles of leaders in contemporary history is an important and necessary part of contemporary historical studies. Yet we can see only too well how popular views of leaders such as Nkrumah and Haile Selassie can change so quickly, even in their lifetime, and rapidly go down and up within a few years of their death. These examples provide a necessary warning and challenge the ability of historians to study near-contemporary leaders and attempt long-term evaluation of their historical role.

West Africa in Marxist historiography

A. B. Letnev

The author of this report has sought to trace the reflection in Marxist literature of the social and political activity of West Africans in its diverse manifestations, dating back to the 1920s and 1940s. He has attempted in addition to examine Marxist literature on the question as a whole, both Soviet and foreign.

The first Soviet authors to write about West Africa or about West Africans were M. Pavlovich (M. Veltman), A. Aleksandrov, V. Khudadov, I. Trianin, A. Krikkel and Guy Duval (in all probability a pseudonym).[1] None of them, with the exception of V. Khudadov, has written a book or article directly devoted to French West Africa.[2] However, Soviet works of the 1920s on French imperialism in general and its colonial policy in particular contain some passages in which an analysis is made of different aspects of French rule in West Africa (economic, military and strategic, and to a smaller extent political).[3] These works of the 1920s were economic-political essays, in which the authors dealt with the military potential of the colonies in general and the practical aspects of using the colonial army in the metropolitan country and outside it in particular. Soviet orientalists and Africanists were of course well informed about the participation of 200,000 soldiers from West Africa in the First World War. V. I. Lenin's remarks at the Second Congress of the Comintern about the French bourgeoisie, which '. . . impressed on soldiers from the French colonies that it was their duty to defend France' referred to the First World War.[4] But they were applicable in subsequent years, particularly during Poincaré's adventure in the Ruhr, in which colonial troops took part.

I. P. Trainin and A. Krikkel concentrated on socio-political problems more than others. Trainin, editor of the central newspaper of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities of the RSFSR *Zhizh natsionalnostej*, later an academician, analysed the first results of the Pan-African movement in the newspaper in 1921. He also wrote about the deputy from Senegal in the Bourbon Palace, Blaise Diagne, who played a prominent role at the first two Pan-African Congresses (1919 and 1921). Trainin, perhaps for the first time in Soviet literature, expressed a critical attitude from a Marxist point

of view towards the policy of compromise with French colonialism that Diagne followed.[5]

A year later, the first Pan-African Congress, the debut of Garveyism on both sides of the Atlantic and the political portrait of Diagne appeared before the Soviet reader in a study by A. Krikkel.[6] This work is also of interest because of the way in which it deals with the ideological influence that the First World War had on the Africans, the hidden motive of African nationalism, and the cultural assimilation of 'French' Africa. Speaking about the French colonialists, who, following the Antillean example, will seek in the course of a very long period to 'denationalize [assimilate] the Negroes of their African colonies', on the whole Krikkel correctly forecast the main line of French policy in West Africa three or four decades ahead.[7] Other early researchers of the region, V. Khudadov for example, give more or less substantiated predictions.[8]

In the 1930s Soviet specialists on Africa continued general studies of the West African colonies.[9] At the same time, researchers began to branch out and observed new aspects, including the development and the ideology of the socio-political movements. The importance of the connection between the international revolutionary trade-union movement and the national liberation struggle in the African colonies was emphasized in one of the works of this period written jointly by two Soviet scholars and a South African Marxist.[10] This launched a series of studies of the trade union movement on the continent, including West Africa.

In the 1940s scholars dealt less with West Africa than in the preceding two decades. During the Second World War, orientalists and Africanists were more interested in those parts of the continent which had become the theatre of active military operations. French West Africa was not in this area, and at best only general articles either partially or wholly took up this question.[11]

In the post-war years, when the colonial system of imperialism began to crumble, West African problems once again came to the forefront in special literature. In 1954 Africanists in Moscow and Leningrad published a major work called *Peoples of Africa* in the series 'Peoples of the World'.[12]

The section on Western Sudan, written by D. A. Olderogge and I. I. Potekhin, not only gives concise ethnographic information about the region's indigenous population, it also examines the ethnic processes in organic connection with economic and political processes. Such an approach enabled the authors to stress the importance of certain aspects necessary to understand correctly the historical development of the peoples in the French colonies of West Africa. Among them are: the French system of direct rule; the doctrine of the cultural assimilation of the 'natives'; the coexistence of Africans with French citizenship and the millions of 'subjects' of the French colonial empire; unevenness in the maturing of capitalist relations, and the large political gap

between the agrarian hinterland and the colonial town. Manifestations of the ideological and political struggle in French West Africa were discussed for the first time in *Peoples of Africa*, and approaches for a more detailed study of Diagnism, as well as other trends in social thought, were outlined. The authors described concisely but with precision the outstanding personality of the Benin democrat Louis Hounkanrin (Gankarun in their transcription) who in all respects was the exact opposite of Diagne.

Thus, a systematic study began of the ideological and political climate. But much remained to be done. In the mid–1950s, a leading Soviet specialist, referring to the continent's contemporary history, wrote that French West Africa had been studied in literature 'least of all and worst of all'.[13] Consequently, Potekhin in his later works tried to give the French colonies the attention they really deserved, and in several works in the early 1960s he dealt with the problems of West Africa under French rule.[14] Of special value, perhaps, is the in-depth analysis he made of negritude, its genesis and dynamics.

As already mentioned, much had been written previously in the USSR about Pan-Africanism and Pan-Negroism, but until then there had been nothing about negritude in general as a socio-political concept that had developed back in the 1930s. Potekhin was the first Soviet scholar to suggest that negritude should be interpreted as a late offshoot of the world-wide Pan-Negro movement that originated at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. He showed how negritude developed as an attempt by French-speaking African intellectuals to regain human rights for the Africans.[15] He conceived it as 'a protest against the imperialist policy of assimilation and suffocation of African culture.[16] At the same time, he revealed the contradiction in negritude, showing how it was both just (striving to restore the flouted dignity of people of the Negroid race) and reactionary (contrasting the black race with the white, dangerous for the progress of the negroid peoples themselves).

A substantial contribution to the study of negritude has been made by the oldest Soviet Africanist, D. A. Olderogge, who was the first to investigate the creative foundations of early negritude. He analysed the spiritual climate of the era which prompted this theory, named the African predecessors of L. S. Senghor and A. Césaire, and determined to what degree they were influenced by West European thinkers—Freud, Sartre, Frobenius and Delafosse. Guided by the principle of historical method, Olderogge accomplished what may be called the demystification of negritude. He showed the unscientific character of this conception, justly seeing it as 'only a rather hazy idea of the essence and characteristic features of the culture of the peoples of tropical Africa which found its expression in the emotional perception of a philosopher, poet and writer'.[17]

Subsequent authors invariably based their works on the methods and techniques the early researchers used to analyse social movements. This applies both to collective works, and those of individual scholars published in the 1960s and 1970s.[18, 19] To a certain extent they touched on ideology of social movements in West Africa.

These works have considerably broadened our knowledge about the concrete ideological and political processes in West Africa and on the continent as a whole. In addition, L. S. Senghor's views were examined thoroughly by B. S. Jerasov, O. V. Martyshin and A. N. Mosejko.[20] These authors attempt to reveal the theoretical roots of negritude as a reaction to European centrism, to show the characteristics of this trend, and at the same time to place it in a general African and world ideological context.

At one time Olderogge urged Africanists to concern themselves with the history of the term 'negritude', in order to 'show how its content changed constantly'.[21] As if responding to this call, Mosejko suggested that negritude should be divided into periods. She ascribed the 1930s and 1940s to the first stage, the anti-assimilative stage. The second stage was the 1950s when anti-colonial motives noticeably intensified. The third stage, not yet completed, began in the 1950s and is characterized by a change from irreconcilable negativism to an attempt to find a positive definition in the light of prospects for the development of Tropical Africa.[22] Of course, the author admits that this division into periods is relative. But on the whole, the approach to the evolution of negritude is outlined correctly.

Social movements and social thought in West Africa have been studied in detail by Marxists in other countries, as well as by Soviet authors. Endre Sik, the eminent Hungarian scholar, diplomat and public figure, and holder of the International Lenin Peace Prize, undertook the study of African problems before many other scholars. A communist working in the Soviet Union, where he had been a prisoner of war from the Austro-Hungarian army, then a participant in the Civil War and a political émigré, Sik made a thorough study of African history. His works, published in the 1930s in Soviet editions, take a methodological approach which is important for African studies as a whole. He was one of the first among progressive scholars to realize the need for a systematized study of the ideology of national liberation movements in Africa in close relation with the development of the world revolutionary process. In 1930, he published in a Soviet magazine a concise outline of the study of problems of Tropical Africa from a Marxist-Leninist point of view. In the section devoted to historical research, he suggested studying 'the influence of the World War, post-war economics, the Russian, Chinese and other revolutions on the political development and ideology of African Negroes; as well as the development of anti-imperialist liberation movements after the war'.[23]

At the time it was only a formulation of the problem, though more comprehensive than what had been proposed eight years earlier by Krikkel. The solution of the problem began later, through the joint efforts of progressive historians of many countries. A valuable contribution was made by Sik himself. In the 1960s and 1970s he published in his own country (in Hungarian, French and English) a four-volume study of the history of tropical and southern Africa, which was the result of many years of scientific investigation. The second and third volumes of this edition have a definite bearing on our theme. They examine against a world-wide and continental background the processes of social development in French West Africa in the period between 1918 and 1945.[24]

The prominent French Africanist, J. Suret-Canale, Deputy Director of the Centre for Marxist Studies in Paris (CERM), worked long and fruitfully in the field of West African studies. He is a scholar of broad scientific scope, possessing great experience from his work in Benin, Senegal and Guinea. His authority as an expert on West African problems is generally acknowledged today in France.

Because of his extensive historical, geographical and economic knowledge, Suret-Canale prefers making complex studies of the history, geography and economy of West Africa, and has published well-known, comprehensive works on these subjects.[25] All of them in one way or another help to give an understanding of the complex ideological situation in this region. Suret-Canale was the first among French progressive authors to define the characteristics of the early manifestations of political life and forms of political thought in French West Africa, and to outline the reactionary, reformist and democratic trends of social thought. Through his efforts and those of other progressive scholars, the pioneers of the anti-colonial struggle—Lamine Senghor, Tovalou Nouénou, Louis Hounkanrin—found a worthy place in the history of West Africa. Suret-Canale wrote a masterful biographical essay on Hounkanrin, which also reveals Hounkanrin's progressive thought.[26]

The French Marxists Raymond Barbé and Jacques Arnault were well acquainted with the problems of interest to us.[27, 28] The socio-economic essays of the former and the political writings of the latter abound with instructive historical information. Of special interest are the series of interviews Arnault had with veterans of the liberation struggle at the beginning of the 1960s. Here it is possible to trace from 1937 onwards the ways in which the ideas of scientific socialism spread in former French West Africa and the forms it took.

Progressive scholars and political figures in other countries made a definite contribution to the study of the ideological climate of West Africa. Worthy of mention here are first of all the American Marxists—William Patterson (W. Wilson),[29] J. W. Ford,[30] W. E. Foster,[31] Henry Winston,[32] H. Aptheker.[33] These authors analyse the main ideological trends conceived in Afro-American and West Indian surroundings that had numerous adherents

also in West Africa—integrative, connected with the name of W. E. B. Du Bois, and segregative, going back to Booker T. Washington and Garvey.

Like Soviet scholars, foreign Marxists have for a long time studied the positive and negative aspects of the world outlook of the well-known Senegalese ideologist, Leopold Sedar Senghor. At various times this theme was reflected in the works of the English writer Idris Cox,[34] the Martinique cultural figure René Ménil,[35] the Hungarian Africanist Imre Marton and others.[36]

West African Marxists have also done important work. A most noticeable contribution to Marxist social science was made by Senegalese authors. The predominant theme in their work, however, is on post-colonial society.[37] At the same time, pre-colonial society is becoming an object of intense study.[38]

Less attention has been paid up to now to colonial political history. Nevertheless, documents and periodicals of the African Independence Party of Senegal, as well as scientific articles by progressive authors, contain assessments of the ideological and political climate of the colonial period. It is hoped that these assessments, which so far constitute only a formulation of important problems (for instance, the rate of the evolution of colonial society or the historic roots of influence of the socio-reformist ideology in Senegal) will be supplemented by systematized studies.[39, 40]

The first concrete steps in this direction are already being made. Thus, Senegalese Marxists today take an increasing interest in the country's democratic traditions, in particular in the democratic, anti-colonial heritage of Lamine Senghor and his comrades-in-arms in the anti-imperialist struggle in the 1920s. This interest is quite normal. Lamine Senghor was the first among the Senegalese democrats to understand that the world's first socialist country was a natural and reliable ally of the national liberation movement.

In all probability, there is more to the Marxist historiography of the problem under review than the works mentioned above. But even these (they may be considered the most outstanding) provide sufficient food for thought.

We see a definite continuity. Beginning with the 1920s, Marxists considered the social processes and social ideas of the region subjects for independent study. Besides, West Africa was not regarded as something self-contained; the processes under way there came within the world-wide historic context, and were analysed in close connection with the development of the world revolutionary process.

Contemporary Marxist authors rely on a solid scientific tradition more than half a century old. Everything studied by Marxist Africanists today (parties, trade unions, political ideology as a whole, the contribution to the anti-colonial struggle made by separate ideologists, etc.), is directly related to similar analysis, if not similar material, by earlier Marxist researchers of the region. It is certain that Marxist African studies today are based on a scientific foundation laid way back in the 1920s and 1930s.

Of course, this does not apply only to the works of Soviet Africanists. For instance, Suret-Canale was not the first French Marxist who wrote about Lamine Senghor. Back in 1927, this remarkable Senegalese democrat and anti-colonialist was 'discovered' and introduced to the French reading public by a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, the then editor-in-chief of *L'Humanité*, Paul Vaillant-Couturier.[41] Suret-Canale also studied one of Ho Chi Minh's early works, directly connected with West Africa.[42] This Vietnamese revolutionary wrote one more book, in which West Africa is mentioned several times and which gives an apt political portrait of B. Diagne, one of the first in Marxist historiography.[43] However, the second work, which appeared three years after the first, is less known to Africanists, as it was not published in English or French.

Returning to the general appraisal by Soviet scholars and foreign progressive historians of the ideological situation in West Africa, one circumstance should be noted. Objective factors prevented the early Marxist scholars from clearly understanding the situation. At first they did not notice certain degradations and nuances, for instance the simultaneous existence and antagonism of reactionary liberal and progressive trends of social thought under the colonial regime. This was by no means due to an inability or reluctance to analyse facts. For many decades the early researchers had no access to the original sources, through no fault of their own. It was extremely difficult to perceive from afar what was taking place in West Africa in those days, fenced off as it was by the colonialists not only from the USSR, but also from the public of the metropolitan country. That explains why the early researchers did not try so much to examine the views of West African democrats—their voice was hardly heard in the early 1920s—as they did to criticize their ideological opponents who already had an all-French (G. Diouf) and even an international (B. Diagne) forum.

Beginning in the second half of the 1940s the artificial isolation of the region, especially from socialist countries, ended.[44] In the post-war years, Marxist thought enriched the historiography of West Africa with new observations and, what is most important, with new appraisals. The author is far from contrasting the analytical method of scientific research with the synthetical. Thus, the following conclusion is permissible. Earlier specialists on the region concentrated mainly on an analytical assimilation of material, whereas now many scholars strive to make more profound generalizations. The belated, but persistent, interest bourgeois historiography has shown in social and political processes in the region is the result of the successes of Marxist Africanists in their investigations.

Notes

1. In this report 'West Africa' refers to the countries of former French West Africa.
2. V. Khudadov, 'Frantsuszskaja Zapadnaja Afrika [French West Africa]', *Novyj Vostok*, No. 25, 1929, pp. 146–67.
3. M. Pavlovich, *Frantsuzskij imperializm* [French Imperialism], Moscow-Leningrad, 1926; M. Pavlovich, *Borba za Aziju i Afriku* [The Struggle for Asia and Africa], Leningrad, 1925; Guy Duval, *Frantsuzkij imperializm v kolonijah* [French Imperialism in the Colonies], Moscow, 1929.
4. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 232, Moscow, 1966.
5. I. P. Trainin, 'Na Chernom kontinente [On the Black Continent]', *Zhizn natsionalnostej*, 3 October 1921.
6. A. Krikkel, 'Novaja Afrika [New Africa]', *Vestnik narodnogo komissariata po inostrannym delam*, No. 1–3, 1922, pp. 85–95.
7. Ibid., p. 92.
8. V. Khudadov, op. cit., p. 164.
9. A. Aleksandrov, *Frantsuzskie kolonii v Afrike* [French Colonies in Africa], Moscow, 1930; S. Raevich's review of the book *Afrique occidentale française* by C. Guy, Paris, 1929. See *Mirovoe hozjajstvo i mirovaja politika*, No. 8–9, 1930, pp. 159–60.
10. A. Zusmanovich, I. I. Potekhin, Tom Jackson, *Prinuditelnyj trud i profdvizhenie v negritjanskoj Afrike* [Forced Labour and the Trade Union Movement in Negro Africa], Moscow, 1933. (Tom Jackson was the assumed name of the prominent South African communist, Albert Nzula.)
11. Z. Moldavskaja, 'Frantsuzskaja Zapadnaja Afrika [French West Africa]', *Mirovoe hozjajstvo i mirovaja politika*, No. 12, 1940, pp. 90–8.
12. *Narody Afriki*. D. A. Olderogge, I. I. Potekhin (eds.), Moscow, 1954.
13. See Potekhin's preface to G. E. Skorov, *Frantsuzskij imperializm v Zapadnoj Afrike* [French Imperialism in West Africa], p. 4, Moscow, 1956.
14. See I. I. Potekhin, *Afrika smotrit v budushchee* [Africa Looks into the Future], Moscow, 1960; Potekhin's introduction to J. Suret-Canale, *Afrika Zapadnaja i Tsentralnaja: Geografija, Tsivilizatsija, Istorija*, Moscow, 1961; Potekhin, 'Osnovnye problemy istorii narodov Afriki [Main Problems of the History of the Peoples of Africa]', *Communist*, No. 12, 1961, pp. 99–109; Potekhin, 'Study of African History: Present State and Main Tasks' in his *African Problems*, pp. 122–42, Moscow, 1968.
15. Potekhin, *Afrika smotrit v budushchee*, op. cit., p. 77.
16. Potekhin, 'Panafrikanizm i berba dvuh ideologij [Pan-Africanism and the Struggle of the Two Ideologies]', *Communist*, No. 1, 1964, p. 108.
17. D. A. Olderogge, 'Pervyi vsemirnyj festival negrskih iskusstv v Dakare [First World Festival of Negro Arts, Dakar]', *Sovetskaja etnografija*, No. 3, 1967, p. 148.
18. V. G. Solodovnikov (ed.), *Antiimperialisticheskaja revoljutsija v Afrike* [Anti-imperialist Revolution in Africa], Moscow, 1967 (see Chapter III on ideological trends in Africa and the anti-imperialist revolution, pp. 163–208); S. R. Smirnov (ed.), *A History of Africa, 1918–1967*, Moscow, 1968 (concerning French West Africa in 1918–45, see V. A. Subbotin's study on pp. 178–97); L. D. Jablochkov and K. S. Kremen (eds.), *Idejnye techenija v Afrike* [Ideological Trends in Tropical Africa], Moscow, 1969.
19. B. S. Jerasov, *Tropicheskaja Afrika: Ideologija i problemy kultury* [Tropical Africa: Ideology and Problems of Culture], Moscow, 1972; B. S. Jerasov, 'Leopold Senghor i ego kontseptsija kultury [Leopold Senghor and His Conception of Culture]', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 2, 1967, pp. 87–99; O. V. Martyshin, 'Sotsializm i natsionalizm v Afrike: Ocherki razvitija novejshej obshchestvenno-politicheskoj mysli v stranah Afriki

[Socialism and Nationalism in Africa: Essays on the Development of Contemporary Social and Political Thought in African Countries]', Moscow, 1972; D. N. Filipenko, *Razbitye okovy: Iz istorii antikolonialnoj borby malijskogo naroda* [Broken Shackles: From the History of the Anti-colonial Struggle of the Mali People], Kiev, 1974 (about Mali in 1918–45, see pp. 97–150).

20. A. N. Mosejko, '"Negritjud" i sovremennaja filosofsko-esteticheskaja i teoretiko-literaturnaja borba v stranah Tropicheskoj Afriki' ['Negritude' and the Contemporary Philosophical, Aesthetic and Theoretical and Literary Struggle in Tropical Africa], *Teorii, shkoly, kontseptsii (kriticheskie analizy): Hudozhestvennyj protsess i ideologicheskaja borba*, pp. 242–68, Moscow, 1975.
21. Olderogge, op. cit.
22. A. N. Mosejko, Ob odnom iz idejnyh napravlenij v sovremennoy Afrike (teorija negritjuda), *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 3, 1968, pp. 172–3, 1976.
23. E. Sik, *K postonovke marksistskogo izuchenija sotsialnoekonomicheskih problem Chernoj Afriki* [On Propounding Marxist Teaching of Socio-economic Problems of Black Africa], *Revoljutsionnyj Vostok*, No. 8, 1930, pp. 92–3.
24. E. Sik, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire*, Vol. 2, 2nd ed., pp. 271–8, 285–6, Budapest, 1968; E. Sik, *The History of Black Africa*, Vol. 3, pp. 95–107, Budapest, 1974.
25. J. Suret-Canale's main works are *Afrique Noire Occidentale et Centrale*, Vol. I: *Géographie, Civilisations, Histoire*, Paris, 1958; Vol. II: *L'ère coloniale (1900–1945)*, Paris, 1964; Vol. III: *De la colonisation aux indépendances (1945–1960)*, Paris, 1972; 'Les fondements sociaux de la vie politique africaine contemporaine' in *Afrique Noire 1961: Recherches internationales à la lumière du marxisme*, pp. 9–56, Paris, 1960; *La République de Guinée*, Paris, 1971.
26. J. Suret-Canale, 'Un pionnier méconnu du mouvement démocratique et national en Afrique', *Études dahoméennes* (Porto Novo) (new series), No. 3, 1964, pp. 5–30.
27. R. Barbé, *Les classes sociales en Afrique noire*, Paris, 1964.
28. J. Arnault, *Du colonialisme au socialisme*, Paris, 1966.
29. W. Wilson, 'Pervaja mezhdunarodnaja negritjanskaja rabochaja konferentsija [The First International Negro Workers Conference]', *Revoljutsionnyj Vostok*, No. 9–10, 1930, pp. 294–304.
30. J. W. Ford, *Economic Struggle of Negro Workers (A Trade Union Program of Action)*, New York, 1930; *Negro Struggle Against Imperialism: A Report to the Second World Congress of the League Against Imperialism at Frankfurt, Germany in July 1929*, New York, 1930; *World Problems of the Negro People (A Refutation of George Padmore)*, New York, n.d.
31. W. E. Foster, *Negritjanskij narod v istorii Ameriki* [The Negro People in American History], Moscow, 1955.
32. H. Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda: A Critique of New Theories of Liberation in the United States and Africa*, New York, 1975.
33. H. Aptheker, *Istorija afro-amerikantsev: sovremennaja epoha* [Afro-American history: the modern era], Moscow, 1975.
34. I. Cox, *Social ideas in Africa*, London, 1966.
35. R. Ménil, 'Istoriko-kriticheskie zametki o negritjude [Historio-Critical Notes on Negritude]', in *Problemy ideologii i natsionalnoj kultury stran Latinskoj Ameriki* [Problems of Ideology and National Culture of Latin American Countries], pp. 273–80, Moscow, 1967.
36. I. Marton, 'De la négritude au "socialisme africain" : Analyse critique des conceptions de L.-S. Senghor', *La Pensée*, No. 130, 1966, Paris, pp. 3–10.
37. See Amat Dansoko, 'Trudnosti Senegala [Senegal's difficulties]', *Problemy mira i sotsializma*, No. 12, 1973, pp. 65–7.

38. See Kalidou Dème, 'Les classes sociales dans le Sénégal précolonial', *La Pensée*, No. 130, 1966, pp. 11–31.
39. Ibid., p. 31.
40. Amat Dansoko, 'Sotsintern i Afrika [Socialist International and Africa]', *Problemy mira i sotsializma*, No. 12, 1975, pp. 53–4.
41. See preface by Vaillant-Couturier in *Lamine Senghor: La violation d'un pays*, Paris, 1927.
42. 'Le procès de la colonisation française' in Ho Chi Minh, *Œuvres choisies*, Vol. I, pp. 195–346, Hanoi, 1960. This work was first published in Paris in 1925.
43. Nuen Ai Quac, *Chemnaja rasa* [Black race], Moscow, 1928. (This pseudonym of the future leader of the Vietnamese revolution is variously spelt Nguyen Ai Quac, Nguyen Ai Quoc.)
44. As regards French Marxists, access to West African colonies was opened somewhat earlier. The landmark here may be considered 1936—the year of the victory of the People's Front in the metropolitan country.

Migrant African labour and public policies in southern Africa: The human side of economic interdependence

David Chanaiwa

The problem in historical perspective

Migrant African labour was one of the first and most enduring forms of inter-territorial relations in southern Africa. Labourers came from the former British protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Swaziland, as well as from the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, and the European settler colonies of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. This process began with the diamond and gold revolutions in South Africa in 1867 and 1884 respectively, followed by large-scale farming, industrialization and urbanization in both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. The core public policies of the colonial era dealt with migrant labour and population control. Several successive inter-territorial agreements and administrative arrangements were established to facilitate the recruitment, transportation, accommodation and repatriation of migrant labour.

Interstate migration of labour would continue to be a dominant and complex issue in post-independence southern Africa. Currently, South Africa employs around 600,000 and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)* around 250,000 migrant workers annually from the neighbouring independent states of southern Africa. Malawi leads the list with over 280,000, while Botswana provides 60,000, Zambia around 40,000 and Swaziland over 30,000 emigrants annually. Thus we are dealing with a matter of foreign policies and public policies governing the economic activities and private lives of over 800,000 migrant labourers who are absent from their countries for, on average, 6 to 24 months while working in South Africa or Rhodesia.

For the out-migration countries, migrant labour is a major instrument of foreign policy, of earning foreign exchange, of managing unemployment and demography, and of planning social services. At present, the recently independent out-migration states have negotiated new agreements with South Africa and Rhodesia in order to utilize migrant labour for promoting national goals. The new arrangements deal not only with recruitment, transportation, accommodation and repatriation, but also with extra-

* This article was written before Zimbabwe gained full independence. —Ed.

territorial rights, family assistance, deferred payments to be spent later in the country of origin, income tax and social services.

However, the overall effect of inter-territorial labour relations has been the historically dichotomous relationship of economic interdependence between the industrialized settler colonies and the out-migration territories. The regional socio-economic infrastructure of southern Africa consists of the modern, industrialized cores of South Africa and Rhodesia and the underdeveloped peripheral economies of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zambia. The peripheral areas are politically independent, but economically dependent on South Africa and Rhodesia. Ironically, the dependency is likely to get worse upon the advent of non-racialism in South Africa and Rhodesia, which will make for increased labour migration and social integration of migrant labourers from their currently exclusive compounds into the rest of the society.

Dependency is also likely to increase due to the incapacity of the peripheral areas to provide adequate employment, and public services and an acceptable standard of living for their rapidly increasing populations. We are likely to have a self-perpetuating zero-sum equation, where economic development in South Africa and Zimbabwe will proportionately cause economic decline in the dependent states. Presently, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are dependent on South Africa for capital, manufactured goods, technology, employment and foreign exchange. Their public policies are conditioned by political developments as well as by the economic production, consumption and management of South Africa. Furthermore, as the out-migration states struggle to overcome underdevelopment by moving towards greater emphasis on social overhead projects, such as schools, communications, health, nutrition and rural development, their development planners will have to deal effectively with the historical problem of migrant labour.

Objectives

The main objective of the research project on migrant labour in southern Africa is to investigate and publish, in separate articles and in a book, an analysis of the causes and effects of foreign migrant labour in southern Africa, and the relevant regulations. It is hoped that the study, articles and book will advance both regional and international understanding of the complex relations between the problems of population, resources, environment, development and social services, as well as encourage further development of research, methodologies, institutions and information relating to migrant labour in southern Africa.

The overall expectation of this research project is that its results will

provide useful scholarly knowledge not only for scholars and their students, but also for public policy-makers and administrative agencies. For scholars, the project will attempt to reveal the problems associated with the theoretical analysis and field investigation of migrant labour. It will identify types and locations of sources, as well as past and current methods of research. With regard to public policy, the project will attempt to provide information that will assist policy-makers in assessing the causes and consequences of migrant labour, and the regulations concerning it, and in determining appropriate policies to solve problems in their own particular areas. There is need to make regional policy-makers aware that migrant labour is a function of other socio-economic goals and factors, and to encourage them to consider the effects of their public policies on the region as a whole, on individual countries and on the other sectors of their own society. In short, the project is designed to be historical, inter-disciplinary, comparative and statistical, as well as humanistic, practical and beneficial.

Of particular interest is the role of migrant African labour in relation to the historical origins of and the possible remedies for underdevelopment and dependency in southern Africa. To what extent was the current dependence of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and Namibia deliberately engineered by either the local settler bourgeoisie of South Africa and Rhodesia or the neo-colonialist forces of multi-national corporations? To what extent was it coincidental with the ecological, social, economic and political circumstances in both the settler colonies and the dependent territories? The role of British imperial policies in southern Africa and in British Central Africa will be re-examined in the light of migrant labour policies.

An attempt will be made to test and apply the current theories of dependency and underdevelopment. An initial study seems to suggest multiple causes of these phenomena in southern Africa. Historically speaking, settler colonialism in the Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State and the Transvaal during the period before the mining revolution at Kimberley and the Witwatersrand was very dependent on African slave and migrant labour from unconquered frontier areas. Colonial expansion and conquest turned hitherto foreign migrant labourers into domestic labourers but, given the racialist dualism of the settler regimes, the domestic worker remained as a migrant worker within his own country. Thus, in the colonial history of southern Africa there have always been a migrant labour policy and psychology that have affected both employers and employees, host countries and out-migration countries.

The problems of dependency and underdevelopment themselves only acquired their present meaning and significance after the out-migration countries obtained their independence. As colonies, they were in reality integral economic provinces of South Africa and Rhodesia and as such the problems of dependency were perceived essentially in terms of the centre-

periphery strategies. In colonial times economic development and prosperity in centre areas (settler colonies) was expected to spill over into the peripheral areas (protectorates). The problems of dependency and underdevelopment, therefore, are directly linked to the problems of nation-statehood and independence in southern Africa. The question is: To what extent do the former peripheral areas of a centralized settler economic system possess the resources and potential to exist as separate independent states? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of post-independence consolidation of nation-states in southern Africa?

Related to the issue of nation-statehood is the other issue of African leadership and, therefore, the decision-making processes of public policies. The crux of the matter is that the leaders themselves were products of the same capitalist materialism and development strategies prevalent in the settler, centre areas. They share with the settlers similar ideas about modernization, development, public services and even labour management relationships. The next question is: As nationalist petty bourgeoisie, do they perceive correctly the essence and dimension of the dependency? How different can and should their definitions and formulations of public policies be? In which ways do they determine the cost-benefit factors in their public policies and labour regulations? In short, could the acculturation of the African leader under colonial education and religion also be a cause of dependency and underdevelopment?

The relation between the dependency and underdevelopment and the social stratification (class system) prevailing in the out-migration areas also deserves investigation. Both dependency and underdevelopment seem to be largest in the middle group consisting of the urbanized, semi-literate and Western-oriented individuals who have less viable roots in the traditional rural economic system. They depend on wages or salaries, on the modern market system, transportation system and social services. In short, they suffer most from underdevelopment. The top nationalist bourgeoisie can always reserve and circulate proceeds from the scarce national resources among themselves and, thus, survive the harshest realities of underdevelopment. The subsistence-oriented rural masses too can literally withdraw from the modern market system into the traditional non-cash system of reciprocity and avoid the helplessness and dependency of the urbanized mass. It will be interesting to test this hypothesis to determine whether or not the migrant worker of today is of the helpless urbanized type.

With regard to causes, the following issues will be studied:

(a) the geographical, ecological and demographic factors in both the countries of origin and the host countries which have induced labour migration;
(b) social, economic, political and psychological forces in both traditional African societies and colonial societies that have facilitated labour migration;

(c) individual and family motives for migration;
(d) motivational strategies used by recruiting agents, employers, and governments to induce both out-migration and in-migration.

With regard to the regulations and functions of foreign migrant labour, we shall investigate:

(a) the history of government policies, regulations and agencies of both host countries and countries of origin;
(b) the history, goals, activities and effects of non-governmental recruiting agencies, such as the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association, the Natal Coal Owners' Association, the Native Recruiting Corporation;
(c) recruitment, transportation, accommodation and repatriation of migrant workers;
(d) the Contract Labour System;
(e) the Compound System;
(f) individual versus family or group migration, and compulsory versus voluntary migration;
(g) the age and demographic profiles of the migrants;
(h) the average distribution of wages, work conditions and periods, housing and social benefits among the labourers, host countries, and countries of origin, as well as among the different areas of employment-companies, mining, industry, agriculture and domestic work;
(i) the economic, legal and political status of foreign migrant labourers in host countries.

As for effects, we shall investigate:

(a) the consequences of labour migration upon the countries of origin and host countries, especially in matters such as production, investment, taxation, industrialization, standard of living, full employment and social services;
(b) the effects of migrant labour on public policies and external relations among the states of southern Africa;
(c) the effects of male absenteeism and the corollary compound style of life on family and village life, on marital and sexual mores, on birth rate and demography;
(d) the effects of migrant labour upon cultural change, regionalism and modernization in southern Africa.

Significance

It is nearly impossible to overstate the significance and role of migrant labour upon the history, culture, and public policies of southern Africa. By public policy we mean both the domestic and external laws, agencies, administrative

regulations and welfare benefits undertaken by government bodies to regulate the streams of foreign migrant labour, in order to accomplish public goals of full employment, maximum production, high rate of growth, stable prices, viable balance of payments and public welfare. Foreign labour migration and mobility has the potential of conflict between the self-interests of the migrant labourer who is concerned with maximizing personal economic opportunity and profit, and the public interests of the government which is concerned with such things as resource allocation, revenues, social welfare, demography, education, foreign exchange, and standard of living. Labour migration affects the individuals, their families, host countries and countries of origin differently. Public policy and government intervention stem from the public concern for the society as a whole in preference to the economic aspirations of individuals and corporations. Thus, foreign migrant labour affects the public policies of every country in southern Africa, as well as the lives of the vast majority of the inhabitants. It is difficult to understand the cultural-historical, socio-economic and demographic dynamics of southern Africa without a thorough study of the role of foreign migrant labour.

The project will be the first to study migrant labour on a regional basis, the first to treat the subject in its entire historical perspective, and the first to attempt a balanced study from the points of view of both host countries and countries of origin through archival research and oral interviews.

Methodology

The most important point to be said about the research project under way on the historical problem involving migrant workers is that it will be the first to study foreign migrant labour on a regional basis, the first to treat the subject in its entire historical perspective, and the first to attempt a balanced study from the points of view of both host countries and the countries of origin. So far labour migration studies of southern Africa have concentrated on the economic development of South Africa and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), especially on the mining operations and the corollary compound systems of Witwatersrand. Generally, research findings about migrant labour have been by-products of other studies, such as colonial economies, administrations and effects; and as such they have been of tangential interest in themselves. In this project, regional migrant labour is the central subject of study. For practical, methodological realism, this particular project has been confined to the migration of foreign-born African labourers from one country to another. The domestic migration of labourers from one area or job to another has not been included because the project would become too big. The emphasis will therefore be on the relation between foreign migrant labour and the socio-economic integration, the public

policies and demography of southern Africa. The approach will be historical, interdisciplinary, statistical, comparative and analytical.

Field-work will concentrate on:

(a) gathering empirical data in national archives, in the offices of governments, recruiting agencies, employment companies, trade unions and from private memoirs throughout southern Africa;
(b) conducting oral interviews with policy-makers and administrators in government and private employment whose major concern is the formulation and implementation of migrant labour policies;
(c) conducting oral interviews and written questionnaries among past and present migrant labourers and their families to seek answers to issues such as the causes of migration, frequency and duration of migration, places and types of work, means of transportation, types of accommodation, social services, conditions of work, relationship with family, and cash or goods sent or brought home;
(d) visiting some of the recruiting centres, compounds and villages of migrant labourers for an eyewitness, experiential account;
(e) discussing research findings with valued scholars in local universities and research institutes;
(f) attending local and regional conferences or symposia dealing with the subject of migrant labour or public policy.

Political sensitivities increase the research difficulties surrounding field-work on the subject of foreign African migrant labour in contemporary southern Africa. The region is currently undergoing a difficult, confrontationist process of change from settler colonialism to African independence. Simultaneously, there is a movement towards détente among the newly independent states, along with the post-independence nation-building which has necessitated the promulgation of new public policies and regulations and the creation of agencies, as well as the re-negotiation of inter-state agreements concerning foreign migrant labour. Thus, on the one hand, the informational input deriving from the research project will be very valuable both to scholars and to those public officials involved in the decision-making process. On the other hand, the settler regimes may not want some of their motives, policies and regulatory mechanisms to be publicized; while some of the dependent and underdeveloped nations also may not want their rather embarrassing position and limited options exposed.

The problem of political sensitivities, however, is part of any research that touches on contemporary issues and personalities. It may be partly circumvented by emphasizing and demonstrating the strictly scholarly level of the project's objectives and methods. Also, initial research has indicated that it is quite possible to obtain a great deal of the historical, factual and statistical data in libraries, archives and research institutes situated outside

southern Africa, such as the Yale University Southern African Research Program under the direction of Professor Leonard M. Thompson, the Southern African Program at Indiana University, Bloomington, under the direction of Dr Gwendolyn Carter, the Hoover Institute at Stanford University in California, and similar archives, programmes and institutes in England and Portugal. In southern Africa itself, the national archives of each country, the university archives and libraries and various institutes of African studies, labour studies and race relations generally, have quite an open and co-operative attitude towards scholars and field-workers.

The most difficult part of the field-work may be in the area of oral interviews and personal visits to labour recruiting centres, agencies and compounds. Obviously, it will be impossible to visit every centre, agency and compound, so that there must be a certain degree of selectivity. At the same time, I hope to be able to locate and make use of any relevant oral interviews conducted by local scholars in the past.

Contemporary history and politics

Walter Rodney

Ever since the first Plenary Session for the drafting of a *General History of Africa* (1971), there have been indications that scholarly opinion is deeply divided over the conceptualization of Volume VIII on contemporary African history.[1] As I have not been party to any previous official discussions, it is possible that my brief contribution will cover old ground or that it may move to the other extreme and miss the core of previous differences. Nevertheless, the planning of the volume is clearly beyond the stage dominated by debate on broad epistemological principles. My assumption is that there is a continuing commitment to the consensus reached in 1971 in relation to the outline of the projected volume on 'Africa since 1935'. The following comments on methodology will be directed towards the implementation of the said outline.[2]

Within the ambit of 'methodology', it seems useful to consider the following inter-related areas: the determination of emphasis; the evaluation and maximization of available sources; the role of ideology in historical synthesis.

The determination of emphasis

The writing of contemporary history is influenced by the sensitivities of persons still living. Consequently, omissions of territories or supposed slighting of the significance of any given movement or any given nation state is likely to incur some disapproval. By itself, this consideration verges on the trivial, but the broader and more substantial academic argument is that multi-volume histories must optimally demonstrate an awareness of the notion of 'balance'. It is necessary to anticipate a likely debate along these lines.

Balance is a measure of the relative importance of a set of historical facts, events and moments. The importance is determined partly by contemporaries of the given historical process and partly by each subsequent generation which helps to redefine the issues and the relevant historical questions. Modern, and more so contemporary, history provides no opportunity for uncovering various layers of interpretation, leaving the historian with precisely the same

criteria of importance as any other contemporary. Subsequent generations will presumably find issues that go beyond the search for independence in the era of the mid-twentieth century, as far as Africa is concerned. They will discover particular historiographical 'lacunae' according to their own social experience. Such issues and lacunae cannot be anticipated by the contemporary historian, who is therefore left with the function of accurately reflecting the preoccupations of the times. Approached in this way, Volume VIII would have to pay less attention to the balance after which earlier volumes have strived. It must expressly develop the best ways of presenting continental and regional surveys which are not bound by pre-commitment to an even spread of information and analysis with respect to each territory.

It is obviously intended that the theme of independence should run through the chapters and subsections of Volume VIII. The primacy which it is given is essentially a philosophical intervention. However, the question of method enters into the allocation of space and weight to the treatment of each topic. In a volume pertaining to an earlier era, each topic might well have been assigned *a priori* approximate parity, and this would be reflected in the same predetermined lengths per chapter. In the present instance, serious consideration should be given to the proposal that certain subsections be allocated a disproportionately large share of space and attention. Several examples can be identified under the captions: 'The struggle for independence', 'Problems of independent states' and 'The non-liberated regions'.[3]

The struggle for independence

Surveys of independence will clearly comprise the backbone of this volume, and every effort will undoubtedly be made to achieve a comprehensive coverage. At the same time, it would be useful to adopt criteria for highlighting particular situations. Firstly, the *earliest* of the successful political movements and parties should be singled out for in-depth treatment: the Sudan, Ghana (Gold Coast) and Senegal qualify in this respect. Secondly, attention should be focused on areas that had access to independence in a manner that was unusual and (more importantly) a manner that involved the rest of the continent and had international ramifications. This applies incontrovertibly to Algeria and the former Portuguese colonies, while a strong case can also be made for the pre-eminence of the Kenyan arena in the early 1950s and for the primacy of the Congo (Zaire) in the early 1960s.

The non-liberated regions

The continuing emancipation of colonial areas is itself a sharp reminder of the volatile nature of contemporary history. Even so, the fortunate fact that the

category 'non-liberated' is rapidly becoming anachronistic does not necessarily reduce the historiographical importance of the zone designated in this manner in 1971: notably, South Africa, Namibia (South West Africa), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) and the former Portuguese territories. There is every justification for treating 'southern Africa' as a whole and as a zone of inordinate politico-economic significance, which should stand out in a volume on 'Africa since 1935'.

Several issues that were included in the 1971 outline under various categories can be treated most conveniently and most effectively within the context of southern Africa, starting with economic change since the Second World War. Above all, political developments in southern Africa have had far-reaching Pan-African and international ramifications. The theme of unity and division emerges out of the responses of independent African states, a subject which should be dealt with at least up until the coming of Angolan independence. Southern Africa has mediated the relationship between Africa as a whole and the international community. A subject with great potentiality at this juncture would be the spread of an informed interest in Africa through a range of international institutions. Apart from the United Nations and its affiliates, one thinks of the Church (e.g. the World Council of Churches), international sporting organizations (e.g. the International Olympic Committee) and citizens' Liberation Support committees and movements scattered throughout Europe and America. These latter topics constitute a logical extension to those outlined under 'Africa in the Modern World'.

It is self-evident that the passage of time means that the non-liberated areas of 1971 must now be treated under the rubric of 'the struggle for independence' and 'problems of independent states'. However, the thrust of the above arguments is that southern Africa, whether free or unfree, has had a recent history which is sufficiently coherent for it to be dealt with as a regional entity. There is bound to be overlap as well as instances in which material can be introduced both as part of a discussion on southern Africa and as part of a discussion on other sections of the continent. But the issues alluded to above gain most of their interest and international recognition within the southern African setting. This should be conveyed through the internal arrangement of this volume on contemporary African history.

Problems of independent African states

This section also overlaps substantially with 'Africa in the Modern World', and it may prove artificial to make the separation. In any event, the proposal here is once more to select the most conclusive illustrations, rather than aim at a complete chronicling. Egypt (United Arab Republic) could serve as the focus of an extensive analysis that embraces the pursuit of a virile nationalist

policy under Nasser, the significance of the Suez Canal in the context of neo-colonialism, the impact of Pan-Arabism, inter-state relations among North African nations and the consequences of the Middle East conflicts on Egypt and other parts of the African continent. One of the criteria introduced earlier with respect to the struggle for independence is pertinent in this context: namely, the fact that the historical process in the United Arab Republic has involved the rest of the continent and has had international ramifications. In this instance, ramifications of such dimensions constitute a living issue in world history. Methodologically, the emphasis on Egypt would have an incidental advantage of siting events there within the ambit of African history, thereby combating the tenacious tradition which purports to make the Nile part of the Middle East.

Evaluation and maximization of sources

Reservations have apparently been expressed about the scholarly potential of this volume, because many existing data sources are known to be unavailable. Some of the said sources, such as documents time-barred in national archives, will become accessible in the near future—to the possible embarrassment of provisional interpretations. Yet, it is more practical to recognize the contemporary scene as data-rich and as one in which the available documentation has expanded so rapidly as to threaten to overwhelm those engaged in synthesis. The volume would be hopelessly bogged down if it sought to incorporate sources that were obscure or difficult to obtain. There is little reason to expect Volume VIII to go beyond the conventional practice of relying on existing scholarly monographs and articles, through which a variety of sources will enter the chapters and sub-sections to greater or lesser extent. The sources must comprise the following: archives; published official documents; oral evidence; newspapers; and field surveys. It would be useful to consider this (or something similar) as a check-list which would serve as a reminder to the editor and contributors so that a particular kind of source is not altogether omitted or seriously under-represented.

Archives

This customary base of historical writing is available in some instances only for the first decade of the period under discussion, and in some instances even that is not forthcoming. Besides, a general volume necessarily depends on prior archival research which has already taken the form of publications at the local and regional levels. Such publications are far from adequate with regard to the contemporary period. A few territories have examples of methodical archive-

based political histories of the independence movements. This may lead to an unevenness in presentation which is quite different from the deliberate emphasis suggested earlier. Ghana (the former Gold Coast) is relatively well endowed with archival research into the national independence movement, while the same cannot be said for Zaire (Congo). In the latter case, efforts should be made to correct the deficiency with the use of other sources.

Published official documents

This source is closely connected with archival preservation, but its utilization is not restricted to particular repositories. Major public statements are available from governmental and non-governmental agencies, from libraries and increasingly from collections which are marketed.[4]

Public documents are extremely formal. Those of an explicitly political nature usually state the results of deliberations without reference to the substance of the process which led to the final declarations and agreements. Even so, the value of certain formal documents is enhanced by the fact that they are often generated by activities that relate to the continent as a whole, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit Meetings and Non-Aligned Conferences. Those which come to mind most readily are associated with the venue of particular conferences—Accra, Addis Ababa, Lusaka, Mogadishu and so on. Any effort to maximize the use of public documents of continent-wide significance is in accordance with the spirit of the *General History of Africa* and of this volume in particular.

Oral evidence

The case for oral documentation in African historical reconstruction no longer needs advocacy. With respect to contemporary history, however, the oral material is not generated in the classical manner associated with descent groups and structures of authority. Instead, one is close to the situation of tapping living memory, which is not reliable for earlier generations. Moreover, the oral historian of the present must impose a system on what is essentially a random process through which certain participants have survived. In spite of the healthy regard for oral sources in African historiography, contemporary African history has lagged in this sphere. It is salutary to allude to trends in industrialized societies where researchers have found that the perspectives of the urban and rural working people emerge best from oral sources.[5]

Generally speaking, the editor and contributors cannot be expected to pursue oral evidence beyond that which has already been incorporated in local, national or regional studies. Fortunately, the current areas of strength in this regard coincide in large measure with zones of sharp anti-colonial confron-

tation: notably, the examples of Kenyan nationalist struggle and the liberation wars of Guinea-Bissau and Angola.[6]

Recollections by living leaders are included within the category of oral evidence; but these hardly require special emphasis, since their pronouncements are usually on record. Besides, it may well be conceptually sounder to promote the view from the 'average' participant rather than that of the leadership, which is invariably over-represented in extant documentation.

Newspapers and journals

The spread of a popular press and of journals of opinion will no doubt find mention in the relevant political and cultural contexts within Volume VIII. The data which they contain are invaluable and they often put forward a viewpoint that might not otherwise surface. Official correspondence between a given colony and the ruling power occasionally forwards excerpts from the popular press, illustrating the viewpoint of nationalists or some other sector of the colonized. The copious newspaper files have been poorly researched; and there are a few exceptional situations within this projected volume where it might be desirable and feasible to proceed directly to primary sources. The situations that one has in mind are connected with southern Africa.

The armed liberation movements of southern Africa and Guinea-Bissau operated under special disabilities in their attempts to disseminate information. Their reportage of certain facts in the form of military communiqués was seldom noted and, after having been brought to international attention, it was treated with scepticism. Yet, each of the major liberation movements maintained official journals over many years. In these, the movements gave expression to their version of the 'facts' of confrontation with colonial rulers and they also placed on record at various stages their views on policies, prospects and future needs for the people and territory in question.[7]

The existing secondary literature seldom does justice to these journals as important primary sources. This shortcoming should be partially overcome in the relevant chapters in Volume VIII. It is to be hoped that the new governments and the newly freed institutions of higher learning will have moved to ensure the collection of materials generated by the now victorious national movements.

Field surveys

Data of this kind are collated mainly by specialists who are not themselves professional historians. Even for an explicitly political history, one must resort to field-work covering a very wide range of enquiry, from education and cultural anthropology to agriculture and other applied sciences. All volumes are com-

mitted to the full utilization of materials and analyses offered by various specializations, efforts having already been made to allow for co-operation with scholars in disciplines ancillary to (African) history.[8]

Contemporary history tends to be subordinate to several other disciplines: notably sociology, economics and political science (including government and public administration). These specializations dominate the available secondary studies of the post-war epoch in Africa, a fact which raises the question of whether optimally the first choice for a contributor to recent political history should be a political scientist. Specialists in the politics of Africa have already dealt at some length with the key issues of class and state formation, the role of the military, the elaboration of ideologies, the emergence of civil conflict and so on. The alternative would be scrupulous attention by the historians to the literature from this collateral discipline.

Ideology and historical synthesis

This subject needs to be approached in the context of 'methodology' because some means must be found of giving scientific exposure to dissonant ideologies which are themselves part of the contemporary world. A concluding chapter on 'New Perspectives in African History' is strongly to be recommended. Both the old and the new perspectives are inextricably bound up with broader world-views; and scepticism over the question of characterizing the historical development of Africa and its laws is also premised on a world-view. At issue is the interplay of ideology in the realm of scholarship. To ignore this would itself be a heavily partisan position which would implicitly reinforce the school that portrays history and the social sciences as neutral or value free. On the other hand, a chapter on historical characterization and historical laws need not necessarily be ideologically partisan. Its principal function would be to indicate the range of existing interpretations, many of which openly ascribe to a belief in particular laws of motion in African history. In most instances, the belief is implicit; while in other cases the existence of any such laws would be discounted. It is essential to note how each of these approaches has shaped and continues to shape the reconstruction of contemporary African history and politics.

By way of illustration, reference can be made to two contrasting texts: A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (Longmans, London, 1973), and Samir Amin, *L'Afrique de l'Ouest Bloquée* (Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1971), translated as *Neo-colonialism in West Africa* (Penguin, London, 1973).

Hopkins does not explicitly identify himself ideologically nor does he state that he believes in any given laws as having characterized the devel-

opment of African society. However, in evaluating the modern period and Africa's involvement with the capitalist world, he assumes and accepts the neo-classical formulation of development through the 'market'. The work of Samir Amin is generally prefaced by ideological exposition of his own position and he seeks to identify the ideological bases of alternative views, such as those proposed by Hopkins. The projected Volume VIII may not find room to express a strong preference but it must at least bring these contrasts to the fore.

In effect, all colonial and post-colonial writings incorporate concepts of African development which are related to contemporary preoccupations with the fate of man and society in Africa and the world at large. Some of these views will emerge incidentally in dealing with given sections of the volume. In addition, differences can be identified for discussion by referring to a number of postulates and debates that have been current in academic circles, notably those concerning underdevelopment/dependency, dual economies/modernization, plural societies/tribalism and class/élite. The contributor(s) responsible for this analysis will of course have a world-view, but it should at least be possible to present the historical and scientific viewpoints *without any caricature*—perhaps in the form of an extended bibliographical review.

Notes

1. See especially *Final Report*, paragraph 30.
2. *Final Report*, Annex 1, p. 12, table of contents.
3. See *Final Report*, Volume VIII, sections D, E and F.
4. See, for example, *Resolutions and Selected Speeches from the Sixth Pan-African Congress*, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House, 1976, and Odette Jankowitsch and Karl Sauvant (eds.), *The Third World without Supervisors: the Collected Documents of the Non-Aligned Countries*, New York, Oceania Publications, 1978.
5. See, for example, Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Village Life and Labour*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975.
6. See, for example: Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama, *Mau Mau From Within*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1966; Harry Thuku (assisted by Kenneth King), *An Autobiography*, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1970; Gérard Chaliand, *Lutte Armée en Afrique*, Paris, Maspéro, 1967, translated as *Armed Struggle in Africa*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969; Robert Davezies, *Les Angolais*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1965.
7. See, for example, *Angola em Armas* (English version, *Angola in Arms*), Dar es Salaam, organ of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA); and *A Voz da Revolução* (English version, *Mozambique Revolution*), Dar es Salaam, organ of the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo).
8. See *Final Report*, Article 18(b).

The problems of contemporary African historiography: Attitude and approach

Christian Coulon

The points made in this paper aim to provide some theoretical and methodological guidelines for the analysis of contemporary African history. They raise questions rather than suggest comprehensive general answers. They do, however, contain certain suggestions as to how a piece of work of this kind should be tackled.

I should add that my comments cannot claim to cover the whole historical, geographical or subject range of Volume VIII, but are connected with my fragmentary experience of African studies. In particular:

(a) as regards the geographical area of my research, I have worked mainly in West African societies;

(b) my approach to these societies is that of a political theorist, although I have always been keen on multidisciplinarity. My original discipline has certainly influenced the methodological and theoretical problems that arise in presenting the contemporary history of Africa.

In my view, Volume VIII of the *General History of Africa* should avoid being purely and simply descriptive, like many works of this kind, but should put forward some interpretations of the phenomena studied. This would undoubtedly complicate the authors' task, but would make it possible to produce a piece of work that would be something more than a mere catalogue or set of geographical or chronological notes.

Such an undertaking obviously raises the problem of methods of approach. These are quite different, not to say contradictory, as between one 'school' and another; they always determine the collection of data, the topics dealt with and the treatment of them. A Marxist research worker will certainly not see problems of social class or political change in the same way as a research worker claiming allegiance to the Anglo-American developmentalist school.

In the case of a work sponsored by Unesco and involving a large number of contributors, it is extremely difficult to get a truly homogeneous approach, or even to give an exhaustive account of all possible approaches. But to ignore the problem and proceed as though it did not exist would risk considerably limiting the scope and interest of the book.

Indeed, the wealth of African historiography, and more generally of the social sciences applied to Africa, lies in the fact that they are controversial; and so long as it leads not to division but to interchange, controversy can advance our knowledge of Africa. Such controversy should be seen in its context, for African studies have developed according to the social, economic, political and cultural settings in which they have been carried out. Jean Copans has very aptly demonstrated this phenomenon in his article on the periodization of African studies.[1] In particular, the so-called 'decolonization' of African studies is evidence of a general radical change in our way of approaching the study of African societies. This problem of 'decolonizing' African studies is certainly worth raising in its own right in the volume on the contemporary history of Africa.

In order that these problems may be covered adequately in our projected study, it would no doubt be possible:

(a) to have an introduction of a preliminary chapter of the volume devoted to the past history, present crisis and future development of the social sciences in Africa and the controversy they arouse. A small working group could be set up to apply itself to setting out the scope and implications of this problem;

(b) for contributors to agree on the general flavour of the volume, and even on an overall way of tackling the problems which would nevertheless allow ample scope for each one's ideas and individual approach.

This general framework of interpretation should be based on a view of history free of mechanistic or evolutionistic influence. Thus the Western model should not be taken as a yardstick or methodological tool for African history. As the Nigerian sociologist O. Onoge so aptly puts it:

> . . . modernization and development studies overwhelmingly engage in a psychocultural analysis like the case, in bona fide colonial scholarship, where African cultures are held as the primary obstacles to development. Any incidental institutions (nucleated families, two-party governments, depoliticized bureaucracy and the like) found in the advanced industrial capitalist societies are held to be part of the *sine qua non* for development. In short, the vision of a developed Africa is a replication of Western culture and social arrangements. The contemporary crisis of the advanced capitalist States now being articulated by the youth movements is carefully hidden in the advocacy of the Western model of development.[2]

Such comments may seem to be generalizations unlikely to provide any clear guidance for the writing of a history of contemporary Africa. But avoiding an evolutionistic or modernistic approach means taking a fresh view of the driving forces behind African societies; it means not being concerned only with the institutions, roles and processes that supposedly make the history of any modern or modernizing society.

This is not to say that African history is *sui generis*, but merely that the attitude and language of the evolutionistic or modernistic approach ultimately bring out only the features of a one-track, élitist view of human progress. It is completely in keeping with the dominant ideology in our 'modern' societies, according to which all development or progress must be impelled and organized by a 'centre', a 'vanguard' or a 'rational bureaucracy', leaving little room for those who are not lucky enough to belong to the avant-garde. In short, taking these fundamental principles as our starting-point, we consider that a contemporary history of Africa should avoid two pitfalls which also generally go together:

(a) the first is to organize the history of Africa around élites, governments, parties and so on, i.e. the central political structures which supposedly 'make history'. We would suggest instead a broader, deeper conception taking account in particular of *what people were doing* and of *everyday life*;

(b) the second pitfall, which is a corollary of the first, is to take the utterances of governments and ruling classes as gospel, whereas in our view they should be regarded as the language of power, conditioned by the dominant position of those who structure and propagate them. We shall therefore stress the ideological features of these government utterances, whose mythological dimension seems to us every bit as important as its so-called objective dimension. For a sociologist, all words, whether uttered by a leader or apprehended through an institution, have been produced: and hence they have a social and historical context and must be interpreted accordingly.

It is worth dwelling a bit on these two points, for they seem to be the nub of the methodology and a way of defining the problem that is appropriate to a genuine history of contemporary Africa, and are also broad enough to be acceptable to most future contributors to the volume.

When I say that any history of contemporary Africa must take account of *what the people were doing* and of *everyday life*, I mean that a historian must not confine himself to the sort of official history that might emerge from biographies of great nationalist leaders, for instance, or political party programmes. It is important that the ordinary life of the peoples concerned should also be brought in as an essential ingredient of history.

Thus the struggle against the colonial powers was not the prerogative of the great African resistance leaders, nor subsequently of the nationalist parties. In their everyday life, and often in very original pragmatic forms, African peasants devised a whole armoury of active or passive resistance to colonization. For instance, refusal to grow coffee or groundnuts, and resistance to conscription, seem to us to a greater or lesser extent to indicate opposition to foreign domination; and it is facile, as is so often done, to call such protest

action conservative or traditional. Any history of Africa that does not take these phenomena into account is bound to be incomplete and over-simplified.

History cannot be reduced to what happens at the centre. The history of African nationalism, for instance, as stated above, is certainly not confined to that of the political movements set up and run by the Europeanized élite. The historian must study the messianic movements, the popular resistance movements and so on.

Likewise, in the period of 'national reconstruction' following independence, care should be taken to see that the *General History of Africa* does not concentrate unduly on the history of the constituent governments. Political analyses tend to overestimate the power of authority, and hence to behave as though only the ruling classes existed and imbued society with their influence. This attitude is common in the classic institutionalist approach which portrays governments as the essential feature of political life; and also among political development theorists, who concentrate mainly on 'modernizing' influences, roles and functions seen as dynamic and universal, to the detriment of other supposedly feudal, traditionalist influences, roles and functions.[3] In point of fact, it is not only all the 'modernizing' structures at the centre that make history. They have not always had as much power as has been supposed, and their paramountcy over society is often only partial. We ought, as H. L. Bretton suggests in his book *Power and Politics in Africa*, to destroy 'the myth of the powerful organization'.

> The developing administrative structures and bureaucracies that are capable of generating considerable powers at their apex, do not, as a rule, warrant the broad ascription of organization effectiveness that characterizes much of the literature on the subject.[4]

There is a whole 'peripheral sector' that places certain limits on what the centre can do as seen in the actions of government departments, political parties and leaders and their ideologies.

We feel that a history of Africa should concern itself with the impact of all these institutions on the grass-roots communities, and the way they do or do not link up with earlier institutions. Dynamism and modernization are not necessarily or inevitably on the side of the central élite: there are also dynamic forces among the people to be considered, and phenomena of social change, reinterpretation and innovation shown at the grass-roots in the everyday life of the peoples concerned.

Initiatives from below often occur also in institutions set up at the instigation of the centre itself. The local branch of a political party, for instance, may in fact be merely a 'traditional' type of association that has somehow acquired a new structure. Thus relationships between the centre and the periphery can give rise to all kinds of compromises.

My second point concerns the utterances that emanate from govern-

ments and their leaders and institutions. All too often government utterances are equated with history itself, whereas in fact they are the ideological product of a given society. In our view, this material ought therefore to be given its proper proportions again: we must not be taken in by verbal traps, but realize that it is a logical concomitant of government rather than the scientific language of modernization. Normative language cannot take the place of scientific method. The task of the historian, political theorist or sociologist is therefore to reconstitute these government pronouncements and a class's attitude to a society, to look for their roots and bring out their implications. Analyses of this kind often show that the import of government pronouncements is primarily designed to serve a purpose, and that they should be studied in this light. I shall take two examples to illustrate this point.

1. Talk about Pan-Africanism and horizontal, regional and Afro-Arab co-operation is one of the key points in African ideologies about the Third World. This leads logically to rejecting the organization of contemporary African societies into nation-states in favour of a supra-national set-up, and hence to a weakening of domestic sovereignty.

   But if we look closer, we find that this sort of talk operates at two levels: one to produce myths, and the other to serve a purpose. What is more, the former paradoxically is a pre-condition of the latter. The myth of regional solidarity between nations may also contribute to what is called national reconstruction, in the sense that foreign policy may be a convenient means of controlling the domestic situation. By playing with a myth (which for different reasons impinges on all strata of African society) governments find in diplomatic activity a self-justification which their domestic policy by itself does not afford. In this way they aim to win over many unruly sectors among the young and the 'intellectuals', for whom African unity has become a rallying cry; it may also appeal to the countryfolk, whose community life may have been disrupted by the interposition of frontiers to the detriment of their relations with their real ethnic brethren or their real economic partners. At this level, then, horizontal solidarity is seen to be a means of strengthening the government's hand, particularly in terms of symbolism and legitimacy.

   A similar comment applies to Afro-Arab relations, which can serve clearly defined domestic purposes. Thus it is conceivable that by establishing close relations with the capitals of the Muslim world African governments may hope to restore their image in the eyes of, and exert some domestic control over, their own Muslim communities, whose ebullience causes them concern.

2. Another example, which well illustrates the problem of government pronouncements and their purposes, is that of 'tribalism'. There admit-

tedly exists a nationhood problem in Africa, resulting from the arbitrary nature of colonial boundaries. But African rulers' denunciations of tribalism have another objective in view, namely to bolster up the government and the social classes that draw their support from it. So-called tribalism in Africa has, moreover, little to do with demands for regional or ethnic autonomy, which are actually manœuvres by political notables with local linkages. To equate ethnic or regional demands with tribalism, as political theories and African rulers all too often do, smacks of a government-centred ideology. In any event, this method of analysing the problems of nationhood leads nowhere. Here again, the utterances of those involved should be handled by historians and political theorists with the greatest circumspection.

These are some of the pitfalls that the contemporary history of Africa must try to avoid. The points I have made underline the need to take the theoretical and methodological bull by the horns, without of course losing sight of the academic character appropriate to this type of book.

Notes

1. J. Copans, 'Pour une histoire et une sociologie des études africaines', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. XI, No. 43, 1971.
2. O. Onoge, 'Revolutionary imperatives in African Sociology', in P. C. W. Gutkind and P. Waterman, *African Social Studies: A Radical Reader*, p. 39, London, Heinemann, 1977.
3. See Christian Coulon, 'Systèmes politiques et sociétés dans les États d'Afrique noire', *Revue française de science politique*, Vol. XXII, 1972, pp. 1049–73.
4. H. L. Bretton, *Power and Politics in Africa*, London, Longman, 1973.

Towards an ethnohistory of African state boundaries*

A. I. Asiwaju

In his most stimulating and highly perceptive comparative study of international boundaries, published in 1940, Whittemore Boggs, a geographer in the US State Department, has correctly submitted in the section on 'Effects of African Boundaries upon Native Peoples' that:

> . . . If we inquire how the international boundaries function in Africa . . . the influence of the frontiers upon the indigenous peoples and their response to the placing of boundaries through their ancestral territories deserve primary consideration. Little that bears directly upon the subject has been published; available material is widely scattered . . . .[1]

Nearly forty years later, the position has remained practically the same. 'Little [still] bears directly upon the subject' in so far as this refers to the analysis at the grass-roots level of the effects of the boundaries on 'indigenous peoples' in the border areas who, like their counterparts in Europe and elsewhere, 'are affected to an exceptional degree'. It also remains a fact that materials such as are now available are not only few but 'widely scattered'.[2] The extent to which Africans in strictly partitioned situations have continued to be neglected in the increasing body of literature on African boundaries is expressed in the collaborative work on African boundary problems published by the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies in 1969, which still ranks as second in the list of priorities for further research '. . . the problems of border populations'.[3]

Of the various publications that have been added to the Africana collection on the usually irritable question of African international boundaries

* This paper is conceived as a prelude to a book under active planning by the writer, to be entitled 'Partitioned Africans' and treated as a follow-up to the case study he has published as *Western Yorubaland under European Rule, 1889–1945: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism*, Longman (and by the Humanities Press in the United States), in 1976. I am grateful to the University of Lagos for the gift of a study leave; to the Hoover Institution for War, Revolution and Peace in Stanford, California, for their facilities; to the Fulbright-Hay Program of the United States for the necessary financial support and, far from the least, Adesoji Idowu and Abayomi Soneye for their lavish generosity and hospitality in California.

since 1969, four seem major enough to merit attention. These are works by J. C. Anene, J. R. V. Prescott, A. C. McEwen and Saadia Touval.[4] These four books are of interest not only because of a common failure to make partitioned Africans their focus but also because of their representativeness of the main scholarly interests and perspectives that have dominated African boundary studies so far. A brief review of the contents and general orientations should help in pointing to the gaps in literature which the approach described in this paper is expected to fill.

We may take, first, the issue of inadequacy of attention of partitioned Africans. For this purpose, Anene's and Prescott's complementary, if not overlapping, studies of the Nigerian case may be taken together. In spite of the tribute of Professor Jacob Ajayi that the work was concerned not only with 'the foreign acts of partition, but with the impact of colonial boundaries on the people in whose history the acts of partition were a major intervention . . .',[5] the actual focus of Anene's book is on the politics of the partition, on the interaction of European diplomacy on contemporary local African political situations in the era of the partition and the way this has affected the evolution of the boundaries rather than on the peoples through whose territories the lines were drawn and, in some cases, redrawn during the period 1885 to 1960. Nowhere in this otherwise fascinating study does the reader encounter a sustained or systematic discussion of the impact of the boundaries or of the indigenous peoples' modes of response to them. What is specifically argued throughout is the rationale for the various European powers in deciding to put the boundaries where they were and how nothing really different could have been decided in view of the essentially fluid political situations prevailing in the localities where the boundaries were located.

Except for the expected difference in orientation, as between an historian and a geographer, which is evident in the obviously higher narrative skills of Anene and the greater emphasis of Prescott on the spatial aspects (witness, for example, Prescott's preoccupation with concepts like 'allocation', 'delimitation' and 'demarcation' of the boundaries), and the inclusion by Prescott of a discussion of the regional boundaries, the two books overlap not only in terms of the source materials used by also in their general historical orientation. Both concentrate more on the relevant European diplomatic archives and perceive the local African scene largely through the available anthropological data and the published local histories. Local archives and especially oral historical evidence, which would have had to be tapped if the target of research had been the local African peoples, were largely neglected. The two researchers obviously undertook field-work in the boundary areas. Although Prescott would appear to have excelled Anene in this, the concern was more for the geographical aspects—the course of the boundaries and boundary markers—than for the human histories and cultures directly affected. Even if the two authors

had wished to tap the local resources for their different analyses, the sheer size of the area and the multiplicity and diversity of the local languages involved would have stood in their way, since neither of them, as far as I know, spoke as his mother tongue any of the local languages along the various Nigerian boundaries.[6]

Nevertheless, just how distinct and refreshing a different research orientation can be is indicated in what clearly appears to be a digression, a conversation which Prescott reports having in Ketu, the renowned ancient Yoruba city in the present-day People's Republic of Benin (former French Dahomey). At an informal interview with the author, the only one of its kind which the present writer can find in the entire book, the Alaketu (King) of Ketu was reported to have stated 'We regard the boundary as separating the English and the French, not the Yoruba'.[7] This statement is identical with the one credited to a Masai warrior who, in his protest against the 1898 Anglo-German Boundary Commission carrying out the demarcation of the Laitokitok section of the present-day Kenya-Tanzania boundary, declared that the commissioners 'were labouring under a misapprehension, as the land belonged, not to the Europeans, but to his own tribe . . .'.[8] These two declarations, made independently by spokesmen of widely different African cultures separated by thousands of miles and over sixty years of time, indicate a fundamental unity of views and opinions of partitioned African groups in the entire continent. In the Ketu area, as probably elsewhere in Africa, the statement summarizes the *modus operandi* for a cultural or ethnic cohesion across and in spite of the boundary throughout the colonial period and beyond.[9] An ethnohistory of African state boundaries must explore further the resources for this type of generalization through and application of detailed and reasonably knowledgeable scrutiny to microcosms of carefully selected partitioned African groups. This should advance knowledge of the subject, promote better understanding among African statesmen and internationally, and encourage the development of more humane attitudes in the formulation of boundary policies in the continent.

McEwen's and Touval's works may also be considered together on the basis of their failure to place the accent on African border populations. Both deal specifically with border disputes. However, while McEwen's study makes a contribution to international law and is designed to help provide a better understanding of the legal issues involved, Touval's provides the discussion and analysis of the political dimension of the problem. Although African societies and communities on the ground receive some consideration, the real terms of reference are concerned with the states. A comparison of the attitudes in these two works with those of the two works we have reviewed shows clearly that, while the historian and the geographer merely committed an offence of omission, the academic lawyer and politician committed the crime of a dis-

regard, even a sacrifice, of the partitioned Africans. McEwen put the case of international law very bluntly when he wrote that

> the legal status of African communities, as traditionally defined in the writings of classical Western jurists, has been that of mere *objects* of international law whose disposition was controllable only by recognized states that alone constituted true international *subjects*. Nor did it appear to matter whether or not the communities succeeded in ousting the control of the foreign state by force, for this was not regarded as a conquest in the international legal sense.[10]

This lack of concern or sympathy for local African peoples has been expressed similarly by Saadia Touval who has suggested, largely out of ignorance of the dynamics of history in the various African localities at the time of the partition, that rather than continue to hold them as victims of a historical circumstance, 'it would be more accurate to describe African societies as naïve'.[11]

The truth is that these two studies are not designed to examine the problems of local African peoples. The real concern has been for relations between states. To borrow from an Igbo metaphor, 'The concern has been for two or more quarrelling or quarrel-oriented elephants rather than with the grass and rats between them, who normally bear the greater part of the suffering incidental to every encounter between the heavyweights.'[12] To propose an ethnohistory of the boundaries, therefore, is to plead that the searchlight of research should now be made to focus on the grasses and the rats and not fixed permanently on the elephants who squashed the smaller creatures.

Quite apart from a lack of sufficient focus on partitioned African groups, the four books we have selected also afford the opportunity to examine the question of balance of coverage, as between the disciplines and the geographical regions, in the existing literature. With respect to the disciplines, there is little doubt that the preponderance of scholarly interest in African boundary studies has been that of experts in the related fields of international law, political geography, political science with particular reference to international relations, and diplomatic history.[13]

Of the other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences where contribution is expected and where little or nothing has been obtained, perhaps the most disappointing has been African anthropology, including linguistics. Notorious for their disregard of change within a time-scale, African anthropologists and linguists have, in their work, proved almost completely insensitive to the question of colonial partition and its impact upon the cultures and languages they have chosen to study.[14] Ethnic and linguistic maps of the continent have been drawn and redrawn, and African cultures, including some of the partitioned ones, have been studied in virtually complete disregard for the fact of the partition not only as a major intervention in local history but also as a key element in a new process of culture contact and change set in motion

in the new border areas.[15] Rather than positive contributions, anthropologists of Africa, especially the linguists among them, have only added new dimensions to an already complex ethnic situation. By their indulgence in the creation of new 'cover-names' for various African language groups, they have further complicated the problem of multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic categories and the task of identifying the ethnic components of the continent.[16]

A particularly significant deficiency in the balance of the disciplines at present is the conspicuous absence of co-ordination. A classic illustration of this isolationism is the failure of both Anene and Prescott to refer to each other's work even when there is overwhelming evidence that they were aware of each other's existence and common academic interest.[17] An ethnohistory of the boundaries must necessarily be multidisciplinary in approach and collaborative in execution. The disciplines must complement rather than attempt to outmanœuvre one another, so as to gain a wider and deeper understanding of this very important subject.

The second aspect of the problem of balance in existing literature relates to the geographical regions. Obviously, Anglophones more than Francophones or Lusophones have dominated the authorship of the available detailed case studies. Rather than focus on specific cases and examples, Francophone scholars concentrate on the general and are apt to make sweeping generalizations more on the basis of intelligent observation than detailed empirical research.[18] This approach, which reflects a difference in the Francophone and Anglophone traditions of academic training, has a limited value for an ethnohistory of African state boundaries. When we turn again to Anglophone scholarship in African boundary studies, it is easily discovered that certain areas have received far more attention than others. Nigeria, for example, has had perhaps more than its share of attention by historians, geographers, and political scientists; and even here, the western and the northern boundaries have been especially favoured.[19] An ethnohistory of African state boundaries should strive at a wider and more balanced territorial coverage through a highly rationalized technique of selection, which will be described presently.

It is easier to identify a problem than to explain it. With reference to the question of gaps in existing literature concerning African border populations, a number of factors may be noted. The first relates to the obsessions of the disciplines connected with boundary studies. International law, international politics, political geography and diplomatic history are all, by definition, studies of states, not of peoples. This has influenced the type of data that has been used. It is significant that, until very recently, scholars engaged in African boundary studies have confined themselves to diplomatic archives either of the former colonial powers or the successor African states and the relevant international organizations. Even when and where concern is shown for African views of issues, as may be illustrated by the works of J. C. Anene

and J. D. Hargreaves, it has still been the 'kings' and 'emperors' in the respective African societies, rather than the common masses, who have received consideration and attention.[20] No doubt, much has been learned and will continue to be learned from the strictly diplomatic perspectives; however, this orientation calls for something new and fresh.

Secondly, there is the confining effect of the boundaries themselves on scholarly interests and pursuits. Inasmuch as the boundaries set the limits of the areas of jurisdiction of particular states, the exercise of authority by the states effectively restricted most human activities, including intellectual pursuits, within the boundaries. One terrible effect of colonial partition on Africans has been the establishment of differential colonial educational systems and the introduction of official language barriers. These barriers have served to alienate Western-educated Africans culturally in areas along state boundaries where the 'educated' élites on both sides belong to the same African culture.[21] One manifestation of this alienation was the colonialization and eventual nationalization of African intellectual interests. Consequently, research, especially in the relevant fields of the humanities and the social sciences, which naturally should extend across the state boundaries, is generally terminated near or at the borders. This liquidation of scholarly interests in cross-border research then came to form part of the larger issue of a general neglect of African boundary areas by the secular authorities. Just as roads and other developmental projects usually peter out as one approaches the boundaries from centres of intensive acculturation within a given state, so also the interest and attitude of the scholar and the researcher. Thus, the African border locations became, not in themselves but in the mental outlook on the first generation of researchers and scholars, a kind of human doldrums.

Finally, there is the extremely demanding nature of the requisite methodology. An ethnohistory of African state boundaries calls for a balance between the traditional archival research and both extensive and intensive fieldwork. It calls for research in the metropolitan and even more particularly in the usually neglected local archives, especially those of the former colonial administrative districts in the African interior without the usual facilities or the amenities of modern life. It requires adequate working knowledge of the local African languages and their dialects, and of the official European language at the other side of the border, where research often involves the use of a different official language. To succeed, it requires a combination or co-ordination of the skills of the historian and those of related disciplines, especially anthropology and sociology. In short, the ethnohistorical approach demands far greater perseverance than has been the case with any of the preceding perspectives. The new approach is possible[22] and has now, in fact, become imperative.

In this new approach to the study of African state boundaries, the terms 'ethnohistory' and 'state boundaries' deserve some discussion in the interest of greater clarity. 'Ethnohistory' is used to indicate that the focus is on the peoples, the communities, the societies in the border areas rather than on the boundaries themselves; the descriptions and the histories of the boundaries will be of interest only to the extent of their impact on microcosms of culturally coherent areas, through which African state boundaries were drawn, and the modes of responses of peoples in such culture areas to the phenomenon of partition. The concept of history here will relate the present directly to the past. Carefully selected case studies will examine the history of the selected areas in two parts: the first will deal with the pre-partition situation and examine the degree of applicability of the notion of cultural unity. The second, by reference to some carefully selected themes,[23] will deal comprehensively with the history of the partition and its impact during and since the colonial period.

To examine the impact of boundaries on the local peoples is basically to examine the impact of the different political regimes and the perceptions and responses of each of the particular groups representing different administrations and the associated socio-economic systems. Ethnohistory of boundaries then becomes a new and important approach to the study of international relations. At the grass-roots level, it becomes an empirical study of relations between the different states as they affected and were affected by a third party in terms of the human or cultural entities that have often been divided and sandwiched between the territories of the relating states. Ethnohistory of African state boundaries becomes a study of African international relations through the spectacles of historical experience of Africans in strictly partitioned situations. In such a history, it will be logical to take a view of development as a phenomenon that cuts across the colonial and post-colonial eras. It is increasingly recognized that there is a connection and trend in the continuity of the styles and traditions of administrative control exerted by the colonial administrations and the successor independent states on the continent.[24]

Another term which requires further examination is 'state boundaries'. It is understood that this term refers only to the lines of separation between distinct states. In the colonial context, these would be lines between distinct colonial territories, irrespective of whether they were placed under the same or different metropolitan powers. In the post-colonial era, the term will relate to boundaries between two or more of the politically independent African states. The internal boundaries which pertain to each of the territories categorized above are excluded.[25]

Ordinarily, this is a simple distinction which should be easy to make. However, there could be serious complications if we consider certain historical changes that could make a given boundary both 'state' and 'internal' at different

points in time. A good illustration relates to the boundaries of the present Republic of the Upper Volta which did not become established as 'state boundaries' until 1947. From 1932 to 1947, for example, the present state boundary between the Upper Volta and the Ivory Coast was an internal boundary because the two territories were under the same French colonial administration based in Abidjan. During those years, this boundary was as 'regional' in status as the boundary between northern and southern Nigeria.

A second possible complication relates to functions, especially the question of the impact of boundaries and the manner of perception and modes of responses of the partitioned groups. There are situations in the continent where the intensity of feeling of partitioned groups is so similar that in practice it is difficult to make the distinction between these two types of boundary. There is, for example, the problem of 'lost counties' and the related question of 'sub-imperialism of the Baganda' in Uganda, where an internally arranged administrative boundary has strained the cultural and political relations of the Banyoro with the Baganda and brought about a tense relation that has badly affected political development in the country since independence.[26] Less spectacular, but significant nevertheless, has been the feeling of irrendentism that has been as strong among Western Yoruba groups placed in French Dahomey by the Anglo-French boundary of 1889 as among their counterparts whose areas were placed under Egba jurisdiction by the definition in 1904 of the internally arranged Egba–Igbado boundary.[27] In a recent study of internal administrative boundaries in the areas of present-day Oyo and Ondo states of Nigeria, Omolade Adejuyigbe has further demonstrated that the differences in effect between inter- and intra-state boundaries are matters of degree and not of type.[28] This present study, however, recognizes the analytical potential in the distinction between the two types of boundary: the 'state' boundaries being those between two independent political regimes, the 'internal' ones being those under the control of one and the same regime.

This new approach aims at covering the entire African continent and must rest on a reasonably representative selection of cases that will adequately reflect all the various types of situation. Consideration must, therefore, be given to two main criteria, one relating to the available combination of colonial administrative types and the other concerned with the various types of local African situations. Colonial administrations neglected the nature and character of the original partitions. A total of nine powers were involved, seven European and two African, as follows: Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Italy; Ethiopia and Liberia.

In a functional analysis, such as is being attempted here, all these powers cannot but be taken together; the traditional attitude which usually makes exemptions of Ethiopia and Liberia in existing literature on colonial rule

has recently been seriously and, I think, validly assailed.[29] Notwithstanding the traditional claims to independent status, it is common knowledge that the history of the boundaries of these two African states was the same as that of the other states which went through formal colonial rule: all were the results of European diplomacy and the political partition at the end of the nineteenth century. The recently published scholarly analysis by Monday Benson Akpan of the nature and character of the American-Liberian 'oligarchy' over the indigenous African populations in the Liberian interior and the references in the Minority Rights Group Report Number 5 by Godfrey Morrison to the attitudes of Haile Selassie's Ethiopia towards the Somali within the Ethiopian borders show further that the behaviour of these African states was, after all, not so different from the behaviour of the neighbouring European colonial administrations.

Given the fact that there were nine distinct political powers who had participated in the partition of Africa, theoretically forty-five colonial administrative combinations are computable. And if in every case it had been possible to locate boundary situations where all of these combinations could be identified, it would have been practicable to arrive at a list of forty-five types of situation where Africans had been exposed to a reasonably distinct form of colonial impact. However, as the asterisks in the Table 1 indicate, as many as twenty-three of the forty-five possible permutations were not represented anywhere in Africa on the ground. That leaves a total of twenty-two comparative situations on the basis of colonial administrative combinations that could actually be located. These twenty-two refer to only two-dimensional types of comparison, whether or not these relate to administrations of the same or different powers.[30]

Added to the two-dimensional category are situations of convergence by three or more different powers. Three very good illustrations are those of the Azande or the Zande, split between the Belgian Congo (present-day Zaire), British Sudan (the Republic of Sudan) and the former French colony of Ubangi-Shari (Central African Republic); the Somali, split between the French Côte des Somalis (i.e. Afars and Isas), the British Somaliland Protectorate, the Harar Province of Ethiopia, Italian Somalia, and the Northern Province of Kenya; and finally, the Yoruba, split between British Nigeria, French Dahomey and German Togo.

The third and final category of variations in differential colonial types to which African peoples were exposed was the Mandate or Trusteeship category, easily distinguished in the areas of former German colonies where African groups were often exposed to two or three different colonial administrations in succession rather than simultaneously.[29] Examples include the peoples of Burundi and Rwanda and those of the Cameroons. In such situations, the African experience of partition began with the administration of two or three

Table 1. African state boundary situations on the basis of colonial political relationships

British (Br)	French (Fr)	German (G)	Belgian (Bel)	Portuguese (P)	Spanish (S)	Italian (I)	Ethiopian (E)	Liberian (L)
Br/Br	F/F	G/G	Bel/Bel	P/P*	S/S*	I/I*	E/E*	L/L*
Br/F	F/G	G/Bel	Bel/P	P/S*	S/I*	I/E	E/L*	
B/G	F/Bel	G/P	Bel/S*	P/I*	S/E*	I/L*		
Br/Bel	F/P	G/S*	Bel/I*	P/E*	S/L*			
B/P	F/S	G/I*	Bel/E*	P/L*				
B/S*	F/I	G/E*	Bel/L*					
B/I	F/E	G/L*						
B/E	F/L							
B/L								

* Not represented anywhere in Africa.

different powers followed by another type of partition related to the termination of a previous regime and the superimposition of a new, often different, order of colonial control. For example, the Hutus and the Tutsi, of the Belgian Congo and the German East African colonies of Ruanda and Urundi, were subjected to the administrative authority of the Belgian and German governments for some time. Then the German territories were eventually taken over by the Belgians. In the experience of such Tutsi and Hutu groups in Central Africa, partition would mean exposure to different Belgian-German combinations seen by comparison from one territory to another or from one time to another in the same place.[30]

It is ideal but may not be necessary to commission a study for each of these twenty-two or so colonial combinations or partition situation types. However, this number, together with the chemical or pathological properties of each, should provide a good guide in the approach to the problem of adequate representation in the selection of the criteria of colonial combination or partition type.

Also to be tackled is the problem of selection of local African situations. Here the choice rests on any one of three related criteria: the political, the linguistic and the cultural. The late Professor Anene's study of the Nigerian case has proved the obvious difficulty in the way of the political criterion. Traditional African societies have been quite usefully categorized into two major types on the basis of their approach to political organization: they are either 'states', where there is evidence of a centrally recognized authority, or 'stateless' or 'acephalous' when a centralized authority is not in view. In the case of states, African political entities such as 'kingdoms', 'empires' and so on, were, as elsewhere in most parts of the world before the rise of nation-states, essentially unstable. Because of the fluidity of their frontiers, it is generally difficult, if not impossible, to state the case of partition in relation to African traditional state boundaries. This point is especially well argued in Anene's discussion of the northern half of Nigeria's Eastern Boundary where, in the area of present-day Gongola State (former Adamawa Emirate) before the Anglo-German partition, there was a succession of the Jukun, the Chamba and the Fulani hegemonies.[31] This Nigerian example can easily be generalized for a wider area of Africa. If we were to proceed by the political criterion, the 'acephalous' societies, which had no centralized political authority but remained a recognizable cultural entity and formed part of partitioned Africa, would have to be excluded.

The purely linguistic approach faces the same problem of fluidity but for a different reason. In this case, the difficulty is how to define the boundaries of speakers of a common language and in what sense the notion of homogeneity can be applied to them. Speakers of a language do migrate and a distinct language group could adopt the use of another language as an instrument for

wider communication. Both phenomena could be illustrated with the Hausa. Traditional Hausaland is the area occupied by the six original Hausa states or 'Hausa Bokwa' (Dauva, Kano, Rano, Zaria, Katsina and Zamfara, and Gobir). However, Hausas moved far afield, largely as traders, and their 'Zango' or 'stranger communities' are to be found elsewhere in Nigeria, in northern Ghana and even in the Republic of Sudan. Within their own part of the Nigerian region, as elsewhere in the Sudan belt, the Hausa language has been adopted as a second language by a large number of peoples, especially in present-day Benue and Plateau States, where most persons who have attented school are bilingual in Hausa and their mother tongues.[32] In this circumstance, Hausaland as a concept has come to embrace two meanings. In traditional Hausa thinking and their language, 'Kasar Hausa' (i.e. 'Hausaland') could mean either of two things: a reference to Hausaland basically covering the area of the original kingdoms, or any place where Hausa live or where their language is spoken.[33] This fluidity of reference found in Hausaland can be generalized for other parts of the continent, bearing in mind the examples of Kiswahili, Arabic and several Bantu languages.

However, whereas the political and linguistic criteria prove so intractable, the cultural category has always been of much greater stability. While political hegemonies come and go, cultural entities and bases have remained. For example, while the Jukun Empire, the Chamba Kingdom and the Adamawa Emirate have displaced and succeeded one another in the area of the northern half of Nigeria's Eastern Boundary, the Jukun (as a people), the Marghi, the Kilba, the Higi and the Fli as cultural entities have remained; and while it might be difficult to argue the impact of European partitions on the Adamawa Emirate, considering the fact that the hold of the emirate itself had not been altogether firm everywhere by the time of the Partition, there is absolutely no problem in stating that these four cultural groups were split into two by the Anglo-German boundary.[34] Similarly, while there may be a problem in speaking about the partition of speakers of the Hausa language, there is no argument whatsoever that Hausaland was split between British Nigeria and French Niger.

The cultural is, therefore, the most dependable of the three criteria that can be used to resolve the problem of selection on the basis of the Africal local situation. In this study, the concept of 'culture area' will follow the definition offered by Herskovits, as an area with an internal homogeneity and a capacity for differentiation from outside.[35] It is a community with a generally identifiable territory where the members speak the same language or dialects of the same language, possess identical socio-political and economic institutions and symbols, profess the same religion and moral codes, cherish similar customs and tradition and invariably make claims to a common origin in the remote past. Such groups or areas may or may not be organized into a single political

state; more often they are not. Thus, culture areas such as the Yoruba and the Bariba or the Borgawa split by Nigeria-Dahomey boundary, the Wolof astride the Senegal-Gambia boundary, the Maasai between Kenya and Tanzania—to mention a few—were not organized into only one political state; at any rate, at the time of the Partition, these culture areas were organized into several, often rival, kingdoms. This ethnic emphasis in the working definition excludes the other rival definition of 'culture area' which emphasizes the ecological and occupational characteristics and permits larger and broader dimensions in the classification of 'culture areas'.[36] This exclusion is meant to keep to the idea of focusing on the microcosm as against the general.

This choice is not without its difficulties. There are two distinct problems: the chaotic situation about ethnic and linguistic names and labels; and the question of what David Dalby has recently called 'mobile' language and ethnic groups such as the Berbers who are spread across all the Maghribian state frontiers, the Tuaregs in Niger and Nigeria, the Cattle Fulani across the Nigeria-Niger and Sierra Leone-Guinea frontiers, and the Maasai astride the Kenya-Tanzania boundary. The problem of the multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic categories appears generally well known and attention is being seriously drawn to its adverse effects, especially the perversion of African authenticity.[37] Of special interest to this study is the application of different names to the same culture areas on the different sides of state boundaries drawn through them. Examples include the 'Yoruba' and the 'Sabe' or 'Shabe' in British Nigeria and the 'Nago' (sometimes 'Nagots' or 'Nagottes') and the 'Savé' in French Dahomey; the 'Baydyaranké' in French Guinea and the 'Bambaraca' in Portuguese Guinea; the 'Kpelle' in Liberia and the Kissi 'Guerzé' in French Guinea, the 'Loma' in Liberia and the 'Toma' in Guinea, the 'Zandé' in both Zaire (Belgian Congo) and Ubangi-Shari (Central African Republic) and the 'Azande' in British Sudan; the 'Fulani' in most British West African colonies such as Nigeria and Sierra Leone and the 'Peul' in all the neighbouring French colonies.[38] This situation, which was strongly influenced by the introduction and establishment of differing orthographic traditions and tonal idiosyncracies in the languages of the colonial powers, has recently been further complicated by the use of the Cyrillic alphabet by Russian Africanists.[39] The persistence of these differential usages across borders is an important reminiscence of the era of colonial partition. The use of new cover-names, invented by an increasing army of non-African linguists of Africa, has only helped to confound this problem. Along with other difficulties, this has made it difficult to prepare a check-list of all partitioned groups in the continent.

The second difficulty that needs attention relates to nomadic groups. Since these groups are not normally found within a fixed area, the question is often asked whether they could really be described as partitioned. The case of the Maasai shows that they could be so regarded because, though they roam,

most of the groups have a clear sense of territorial possession. It is true, of course, that since they move around, the effects of the European administration in their areas may not be easy to assess or compare. Nevertheless, close studies are still required to prove this and a good one may focus on the Tuaregs or the Fulani across the Niger-Nigeria boundary. It will, for example, be of interest to compare the impact of the two colonial educational systems.[40]

The logistic and strategic problems are easily outweighed by the intrinsic values of this study. Significance of both an academic and a political nature is discernible. As the first major attempt to pool together on a continental scale an admittedly small but growing body of scholarly analyses and expertise in strictly local African border studies, the project on partitioned Africans holds high prospects for a contribution to knowledge of a very distinctive character. There is a new research methodology which is designed to disseminate fresh information in the context of an analysis and orientation that remains to be popularized. An ethnohistory of African state boundaries helps to shift emphasis from the political authorities—so much the case today with studies in international relations generally and those focusing on the state boundaries in particular—to the common masses or communities split between the powers.

But much more than as a contribution to scientific knowledge, an ethnohistory of African state boundaries is a contribution to the furtherance of local and international peace in Africa and the wider world through a more enlightened public opinion and education. The study is therefore best pursued in the tradition of the Minority Rights Group (MRG) of Britain in terms of an avowed commitment to conduct detailed research and bring to light as much useful information as possible.[41] Studies of the problems of African border populations are essentially studies of minority groups. The fractions of culture areas which were partitioned and situated within different states often constitute part of the ethnic minorities in the states; invariably, they manifest tendencies towards irredentism.

In this form, African border populations deserve to be studied and researched in the interest of both internal and international peace. Partitioned Africans have either resigned themselves to their situations or have become quite active elements in a number of well-known separatist or secessionist movements that have made certain border situations in Africa among the hot spots of our world. Either way, there is latent discontent of varying degrees. With respect to areas like those of the Somali in the Horn area and East Africa or the Berbers between Morocco and Algeria, where border populations and their resources have become the targets of stiff and bloody contests between the nations; or those of the Ewe astride the Ghana-Togo boundary, where the contest has remained more or less a diplomatic warfare; or yet the third type,

relatively inarticulate, and easily illustrated by the Western Yoruba split by the Nigeria-Benin boundary, detailed knowledge of local border population problems should help African statesmen to develop a more humane attitude towards their boundaries. Rather than perceive their border areas and peoples almost always negatively, viewing them as a nuisance through the spectacles of official border patrol and customs preventive services, African governments need to become more imaginative in their treatment of border problems.[42]

Whittemore Boggs concluded his discussion of the European boundaries by suggesting that the solution to border problems rested in the 'simplification of the bundary function'. His words for the Europe of 1940 hold so much relevance for Africa today that they must be quoted in full:

> The boundary problems . . . can therefore never be solved to any considerable degree by shifting boundaries . . . The solution of many of the perplexing problems may be found in progressive and far-reaching simplification of the boundary function . . . Where all the furies that can be unleashed have failed to induce nations to lower the barriers, the warmth of feelings that would develop in common recognition of present mutual needs and interests might prove effective . . .[43]

Such 'mutual needs and interests' do not always have to be seen solely in terms of trade and services and the creation of regional economic communities; the peoples and cultures whose corporate existence was shattered in the wake of historical developments which resulted accidentally in the birth of modern African states and whose numbers are to be found on both sides of the various international boundaries also deserve recognition and attention. There is no demand whatsoever that the state boundaries be revised; all such boundaries, as elsewhere in the world, are the result of one political fiat or another. What is called for is deeper understanding. African statesmen always find it convenient to exonerate themselves by pointing to the former colonial masters as the makers of their artificial and largely problematic state boundaries; and they, like the states they are called upon to direct, deserve all sympathy and support. However, there is always the duty of reminding the politician of the responsibility and the humanism that must characterize attitudes and policies towards the same boundaries, at least in the interest of the border societies who already suffer enough from being partitioned.

Studies of African traditional societies situated along state boundaries may also have lessons for the new African states regarding improvements in the methods and approaches to solving or avoiding border disputes. Furthermore, specific questions may be noted in order to solicit information on this score. An important indication that African border populations may have some solutions is the record of the indigenous frontier tribunals organized by the local African chiefs on the boundaries between Ruanda-Urundi and the Belgian Congo (Zaire), Uganda and Tanganyika (Tanzania) respectively.[44] These courts,

which received much comment in the 1930s, functioned largely on the initiative of the African traditional authorities. In spite of the fact that these courts lacked the formal recognition of the European administrations, McEwen notes that their decisions were regarded as binding by customary law and were invariably heeded by the litigants.[45] He further correctly assesses the success of the tribunals as based 'on the fact that the applicable customary law on each side of the frontier, in the particular area concerned, was similar if not identical'.[46] One would like to know more about this interesting development than the older books have cared to indicate. The courts, like other aspects of African initiatives in the administration of justice in the colonial era, were probably squeezed out by the establishment of the European judicial machinery. The new history should furnish information on this and parallel developments elsewhere in Africa.

It should be noted, finally, that in spite of its specifically African focus, the study of partitioned Africans should have a wider appeal and must be consciously set within the broader context of partitioned peoples and cultures all over the world. An ethnohistory of African state boundaries should be treated as a window on the wider world. This global approach is of paramount importance to disengage the politically sensitive elements of this study from a dangerous parochialism. When African boundaries and boundary problems are discussed, efforts are never made explicitly to draw on wider settings which would have produced a soothing effect out of the feeling that the problems are not peculiar to Africa. It was not the first continent to be partitioned; arbitrary boundaries and resultant boundary problems abound everywhere. Indeed, Europeans had partitioned themselves and were continuing to partition themselves before and during the period when these governments engaged themselves to partition Africa. Poland, Turkey, Germany and Ireland experienced partition and differential governmental control in much the same way as many African states and culture areas.[47]

In both Europe and Africa, partition was essentially an act of foreigners, whether these were of the same or different race as the partitioned people; and partition was known in both areas to have caused comparable inconveniences and irritations of border populations concerned.[48] Boundary restrictions upon adjacent local populations in Europe, as discussed by Boggs, are applicable to Africa in almost every detail. The problems of pasturage, discussed in relation to the Lapps in Scandinavian countries and their neighbours[49] are comparable to those of the Masai on the Kenya-Tanzania boundary, the Fulani across several West African state boundaries and the Somali in the Horn of Africa and East African countries. Issues raised in connection with 'Boundary Regimes and Minor Frontier Traffic' on Hungarian-Yugoslav, German-Polish and Czechoslovak-Polish boundaries[50] compare with state control of most Francophone–Anglophone state boundaries in West Africa.

As in Europe, statutory provisions in the diplomatic agreements and protocols aimed at permitting freedom of movement of material and human resources across African boundaries are so qualified and minutely spelled out that the freedom of movement is more on paper than on the ground.[51] Similarly there are comparable absurdities in the way certain state boundaries were defined and demarcated.[52] Placement in a global interest should therefore reduce local sensitivities to a minimum level and inspire greater confidence.

Notes

1. J. W. Boggs, *International Boundaries: A Study of Boundary Functions and Problems*, p. 169, New York, Columbia Press, 1940.
2. These include, A. I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland under European Rule, 1889–1945: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism*, London, Longman, 1976, which remains the only available full-scale case study so far; A. Mondjannagni, 'Quelques aspects historiques, économiques et politiques de la Frontière Nigéria-Dahomey', *Études Dahoméennes* (RS), Vol. 1, 1963–4, pp. 17–59; L. R. Mills, 'An Analysis of the Geographical Effects of the Dahomey-Nigeria Boundary', Ph.D. thesis, Durham, 1970; D. J. Thom, 'The Niger-Nigeria Borderlands', Ph.D. thesis, Michigan State University, 1970 (also his *The Niger-Nigeria Boundary, 1890–1906: A Study of Ethnic Frontiers and a Colonial Boundary*, Athens, Ohio, University Centre for International Studies, 1975 (*Africa Series*, No. 23); J. D. Collins, 'Government and Groundnut Marketing in Rural Hausa Niger', Ph.D. thesis, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, 1974 (also his 'The Clandestine Movement of Groundnut across the Niger/Nigeria Boundary', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1976, pp. 254–78).
3. C. G. Widstrand (ed.), *African Boundary Problems*, p. 180, Uppsala, 1964.
4. J. C. Anene, *The International Boundaries of Nigeria, 1885–1960: The Framework of an Emergent African Nation*, London, Longman, 1970; J. R. V. Prescott, *The Evolution of Nigeria's International and Regional Boundaries, 1861–1971*, Vancouver, 1971; A. C. McEwen, *International Boundaries of East Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971; and Saadia Touval, *The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1972.
5. Anene, op. cit., p. x.
6. The claims in Anene, op. cit., p. xvii, about the use of 'oral tradition' are not quite borne out by the book.
7. Prescott, op. cit., p. 103.
8. McEwen, op. cit., p. 148.
9. For details, see A. I. Asiwaju, 'The Alaketu of Ketu and the Or meko of Meko: The Changing Status of Two Yoruba Rulers under French and British Colonialism and Independence', in M. Crowder and O. Ikime (eds.), *West African Chiefs*, University of Ife Press, 1970 (and the Humanities Press in the United States).
10. McEwen, op. cit., p. 16.
11. Touval, op. cit., p. 4. The analysis by Anene and, in a smaller area by Asiwaju (*Western Yorubaland*, Chapters I and II), of the historical situations in what became the boundary areas of modern Nigeria cannot lead one to accede to the judgment of Africans as 'naïve'.

12. My knowledge of this metaphor is owed to Ukpali Asika, *Enough is Enough*, an appeal for cessation of hostilities made to the secessionist troops during the Nigerian Civil War by the Federal-Government-appointed administrator for the area, Lagos, Federal Government Printers, 1967.
13. This is very clearly borne out by the entries in D. Zidouemba, 'Les sources de l'histoire des frontières de l'Ouest-Africain', *Rapport de Recherche de 1re Année de 3e Cycle Préparation au DEA: Histoire des sociétés de l'Afrique Noire*, Paris, 1976, and the bibliographical listings in the various works on boundaries consulted for this paper.
14. The only exception is M. J. Herskovits' brief reference in his *The Human Factor in Changing Africa*, pp. 56–8, New York, Random House, 1962.
15. See, for example, J. Greenberg, *Languages of Africa*, New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1970; G. P. Murdock, *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture History*, New Haven, Human Relations Area Files, 1960; J. J. Gibbs, *The Peoples of Africa*, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978; and D. Dalby, *Language Map of Africa and the Adjacent Islands*, London, 1977.
16. So serious has the problem of cover-names become that David Dalby, himself a contributor, has summoned up courage to confess to it and call for a moratorium on the invention of new ones and a suspension of usages which have not yet entered into full circulation! (See Dalby, op. cit., p. 10.)
17. J. C. Anene and J. R. V. Prescott were faculty colleagues in the old University College, Ibadan (the present-day University of Ibadan), one in the Department of History and the other in the Department of Geography. Their respective published books are revised versions of their Ph.D. theses of more or less the same titles submitted to the University of London in 1960 and 1961 respectively. Part of the explanation of this mutual exclusiveness probably lies in the discovery of each other when registering their titles in London; it was based on suspicion and fear of ensuring an originality enough for each work to qualify for the doctorates of the same university. What still remains intriguing is the fact that each still avoids the other post-doctorally, even to the point of publication, again within one year of each other, ten years after the two theses had become accessible to everybody.
18. See, for example, Yves Person, 'L'Afrique Noire et ses frontières', in *Revue française d'études politiques africaines—Le Mois en Afrique*, August 1972, No. 80, pp. 18–42; Philippe Decraene, 'Les problèmes de frontière. En Afrique Noire les leaders entendent assumer l'héritage des frontières coloniales', *Europe, France, Outre-Mer*, No. 396, January 1963, pp. 23, 24, 28; R. Cornevin, 'Ethnie, Frontière et Stabilité en Afrique', *Marchés Tropicaux*, No. 1071, 21 May 1966, pp. 1465–7; and Romain Yakemtchoux, 'Les frontières africaines', *Revue Générale de Droit International Public*, No. 1, January–March 1970.
19. See note 2 above.
20. J. D. Hargreaves, *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa*, London and New York, Macmillan, 1963; and *West Africa Partitioned*, Vol. I, London, 1976.
21. For the Yoruba case, see Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland*, op. cit., Chapter 10.
22. See note 2 above.
23. One such theme which, above all others, has over-stimulated younger scholars, especially those in economic geography and international trade, has been cross-border trade (officially called 'smuggling' or 'contraband'). See, for example, Mondjannagni, Mills, Thom, Collins (as in note 2 above) and O. J. Igue, 'Évolution du commerce clandestin entre le Dahomey et le Nigeria depuis la guerre du "Biafra"', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1976, pp. 235–58; E. K. Kouassi, 'Les échanges frontaliers entre le Togo et le Dahomey', unpublished thesis, Institut d'Études Politiques,

Paris, 1969, 166 pp.; and Dau Covu, 'Études des échanges inter-frontaliers Rosso-Mauritanie, Rosso-Sénégal', unpublished thesis, Faculté des Lettres, Université de Dakar, 1971.

24. See, for example, William B. Cohen, 'A Century of Modern Administration: From Fairherbe to Senghor', *Civilizations*, Vol. XX, 1970, pp. 40–9; Dean E. McHenry Jr, 'The utility of compulsion in the implementation of agricultural policies: A Case Study from Tanzania', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1973, pp. 305–16; and Jean-Claude Miller, 'Clan Headship and Political Change Among the Rukuba (Benue Plateau State of Nigeria)', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1975, p. 7.
25. Internal boundaries have been described by Boggs as 'simple administrative'; Prescott describes these boundaries as 'regional'.
26. H. Kyemba, *State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin's Reign of Fear*, p. 23, London, 1976; and A. D. Roberts, 'The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1962, pp. 435–50.
27. For a typical Western Yoruba resentment against placement within the area of Egba jurisdiction, see A. Factons, 'The Egbados in Chains', *Omo Egbado* (organ of the Egbado Students' Association, a sub-ethnic educated élite organization), published in 1965. Also, Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland*, op. cit., pp. 62–3.
28. O. Adejuyigbe, *Boundary Problems in Western Nigeria*, University of Ife Press, 1976; and my review of it in *Africa* (Journal of the International African Institute), 1978.
29. See, for example, M. B. Akpan, 'Black Imperialism: Americo-Liberian Rule over the African Peoples of Liberia, 1841–1964', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1973, pp. 217–77; and Godfrey Morrison, *The Southern Sudan and Eritrea: Aspects of Wider African Problems*. (Minority Rights Group Report, No. 5.)
30. For some preliminary efforts at listing ethnic groups and territories split by African state boundaries, see, K. M. Barbour, 'A Geographical Analysis of Boundaries in Inter-Tropical Africa', in K. M. Barbour and R. M. Prothero (eds.), *Essays on African Population*, pp. 310–18, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961. Ethnic groups split by Nigeria's international boundaries are discussed in Anene, op. cit., and shown on the map on p. 8 of Thom, 'The Niger-Nigeria Boundary, 1890–1906', op. cit. Barbour and, to some extent, Thom follow Murdock's Tribal Map of Africa, published along with his book *Africa: Its Peoples and Culture History*, op. cit. Murdock's map, however, now stands in need of a radical revision.
31. Anene, op. cit., pp. 94–140.
32. This situation results from the decision of the colonial government to impose Hausa as the local *lingua franca* for most of the old Northern Nigeria and cause it to be taught in schools to the exclusion of other minority languages.
33. See Abdullahi Smith, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*.
34. Anene, op. cit., p. 104.
35. Herskovits, op. cit.
36. Ibid.
37. Authenticity is used here in its most innocent form and therefore has little to do with the politically charged slogan in Mobutu Seseseko's Zaire. In this innocent form, attention of scholars and of the educated public generally has been drawn to the problem in A. I. Akinjogbin, *Dahomey and its Neighbours*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967; Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland*, op. cit., pp. xiii–xiv; and Dalby, op. cit., p. 9 and footnote 7.
38. I am grateful to Professor James Gibbs of Stanford for information on the Liberian border groups.
39. Dalby, op. cit.

40. The French West African Administration proposed in the 1930s to introduce a mobile school system which would permit registration and regular instruction of children of their mobile Fulani and Tuareg subjects, so that these could benefit from Governor General Brevie's policy of mass education. How effective was this policy? And what comparable course of action did the British propose for the same groups within their own borders?
41. I am grateful to Professor Roland Oliver of the School of Oriental and African Studies and a member of the Board of the MRG who spoke to me on this and other aspects of the project.
42. It is, for example, common for border populations to be stigmatized as 'smugglers'. Efforts to control this generally lead to double suffering for border peoples, suffering from the ordinary hard effect of a negative regulation and suffering from an even harsher manner of execution by generally corrupt customs staff operating in usually remote areas of the country. Meanwhile, smuggling is an activity in which the participation of border societies is generally less in scope and scale than that of entrepreneurs from outside the border areas. Border populations suffer more than they gain from charges of smuggling.
43. Boggs, op. cit., pp. 132–3.
44. Ibid., p. 173, and McEwen, op. cit., p. 41.
45. Ibid., p. 41.
46. Ibid.
47. For quick references, see Boggs, op. cit.; D. E. Carthago, *Partitioning Germany to Make a Third War Impossible*, London, William Molloy, 1945; K. Roosevelt, *Partition of Palestine*; D. O. O'Neil, *The Partition of Ireland*; H. N. Howard, *The Partition of Turkey*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1931; and S. P. Chatterjee, *Partition of Bengal*.
48. As Hans Kohn states, close kinship does not prevent feelings of resentment on the part of a dominated group against a dominating one in a colonial context; it did not prevent feelings of hostility of the Norwegians against the Danes and the Swedes, the Croats against the Serbs, the Slovaks against the Czechs, Ukrainians against the Russians (one can add Africans against Americo-Liberians, the Irish against the English, the Western Yoruba against the Dahomeans), just as it did not prevent the same feelings of African subject peoples against their various European colonial rulers. (See Hans Kohn, 'Reflections on Colonialism', in Straurz-Huper and Hazard (eds.), *The Idea of Colonialism*, pp. 11–12, New York, 1958.)
49. Boggs, op. cit., pp. 97–101.
50. Ibid., pp. 101–9.
51. Compare, for example, with A. I. Asiwaju, 'The Socio-Economic Integration of the West African Sub-Region in Historical Context: Focus on the Era of Colonial Rule', in S. Falegan and B. Akinyeni (eds.), *Papers on ECOWAS*, Lagos, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 1976.
52. The picture top right on p. 108 of Boggs, op. cit., showing Boundary Stone between two homes at Kamitz, Silesia and Weisswasser, Austria, on Prussian-Austrian boundary, reminds one of boundary markers—also low pillars—similarly absurdly planted between houses in the Ketu boundary town of Ilara near Imeko along the Benin (Dahomey)/Nigeria boundary. Germans on both sides of the European boundary, I am sure, cannot regard this as a line that separates them from their cousins across the line, any more that the Alaketu of Ketu and the Masai warrior, already noted, would believe that the European-arranged boundary splitting their ethnic lands separated the respective groups.

Changing views about Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba and Haile Selassie

Colin Legum

It is a remarkable and disappointing fact that twenty-two years after the death of Patrice Lumumba and eleven years after that of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, there has not yet been a single scholarly work devoted to an evaluation of the ideas and careers of these two major African leaders. The absence of any serious attempt to reassess the long reign of the last Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, is more understandable, since he died only in 1975.

Although a great deal has been written about Nkrumah and Lumumba, most of this has been in the context of general analyses of African political systems and ideas, and much of it has been written by either protagonists or antagonists of these two leaders—usually by their political rivals or supporters. While these contributions provide useful material for independent historical studies, they are no substitute for either full-length political biographies or careful historical studies. It is also worth noting that, apart from essays and articles, most of the books about Nkrumah and Lumumba are the work of Western writers and scholars, not of African scholars.

Dr Kwame Nkrumah (1909–72)

At the time of the military coup which overthrew President Nkrumah in 1966, much of what was being written about him was critical, more especially writing by his Ghanaian political and academic opponents, and by most Western writers. He was generally portrayed at that time as a leader who had betrayed the earlier promise he had shown as the first modern leader of African independence and as the standard-bearer of Pan-Africanism. His regime was widely represented as having been economically disastrous, as harshly authoritarian, corrupt and muddled—neither democratic socialist nor Marxist. The extreme view was stated later in his obituary notice printed in *The Times* of London (28 April 1972), in which he was described as the 'Ghanaian leader who became a detested dictator'. But this hostile view was by no means restricted to conservative Western opinion; an important section of African leaders endorsed it. Nkrumah was also accused of having sought to undermine the governments

of other African countries, and of having been engaged in a destructive role in the Organization of African Unity; at the same time, however, everybody recognized that he, more than any other leader, had helped to create the Organization. In Ghana itself, he was accused of having neglected the affairs of his own country while devoting most of his energies, and much of his country's resources, to promoting his ideas of African union.[1]

At a time (1966–70) when most of his closest associates were under arrest or otherwise under restraint, Nkrumah himself contributed most towards restoring some perspective to his ideas through a number of books published while in exile in Guinea.[2] But it was only with his death that a serious reassessment of his role began. Announcing his death, Nkrumah's friend and protector, President Ahmed Sékou Touré, declared:

> One of the greatest personalities of the African continent breathed his last at 08.45 today [27 April]. Our beloved brother, our comrade in arms who, during his lifetime, devoted himself to the emancipation and rehabilitation of the people of Africa, is dead . . . a man who devoted his entire life to the liberation of Africa to safeguard African dignity.

In death, Africa closed its ranks to pay homage to Nkrumah. He was acclaimed alongside Patrice Lumumba as one of Africa's 'patriot martyrs'. The Ghanaian military regime of General I. K. Acheampong at once took steps to accord him a state funeral in his native village of Nkroful. The mood was captured by the Ghanaian journalist and novelist, Cameron Duodo, himself a former Nkrumah critic, who wrote:

> Suddenly, the detentions without trial, the fear of the knock at the door in the early hours of the morning . . . all seems forgotten, as the newspapers fall over themselves to extol the virtues of the man they vilified six years ago . . . But beneath the superficial there is a deep longing for the achievements of Nkrumah—the dynamic use of government power to get quick results once a decision is taken . . .[3].

The *Spokesman*, edited by Kofi Badu, 'a former Marxist supporter of Nkrumah who, too, had become one of his critics', published front-page tributes on two successive days:

> The World derided him when it was said of him that he would not die, that like him or hate him, the works and deeds of Kwame Nkrumah would live for ever. It was not conceivable that the first truly African revolutionary leader who roused a whole continent to the consciousness of its freedom and dignity, who stirred visions of the power and might of the black man, and made him conscious of his being—the one leader whose courage and tenacity sustained the struggles of a whole continent, should ever be forgotten whether he be dead or alive.

The *Daily Graphic* (Accra, 28 April, 1972) wrote:

In party politics he was a master unsurpassed in strategy and organization. His vision of the greatness of Africa extended beyond the horizons of men of his type. He pursued this vision with so much absorption that he was criticized by some for over-ambition, and by others for not paying enough attention to his own country's affairs.

The *Graphic* went on to say that

his fault was his imprisoning of his political opponents without trial. But on the credit side there was much to be said about him. It was during his leadership that the country made significant strides in development. His wise counsel and statesmanship were appreciated in the world. It was therefore fitting that the National Redemption Council (NRC) had decided to accord him the honour deserving of his place in the history of Ghana. His philosophy and ideals would remain for generations.

Kenya's late President Jomo Kenyatta recalled his earliest associations with Nkrumah in the early days of the Pan-African Movement in Britain:

Through his life, Dr Nkrumah dedicated himself to the noble ideal of African unity and co-operation in all fields. His untimely departure leaves a vacuum in the uncompleted struggle for the realization of African dignity and complete emancipation from the colonial yoke . . ..[4]

Two other associates from those days, Malawi's President Banda and Nigeria's former Governor-General, Dr Azikiwe, praised him in similar vein. Paying his tribute as a 'personal friend', Dr Banda said: 'His death leaves a gap unlikely to be filled for a long time to come in Africa's history'.[5] Zik spoke of him as 'a great citizen of the world who raised the status of black men all over the world'.[6]

Mixing praise with criticism, Senegal's President Leopold Senghor commented that Nkrumah was 'one of the first African leaders to draw Africans' attention to their heritage and to authenticity. He was a great man and as such he also had his faults'.[7]

While recalling that Nkrumah had made mistakes and had faults, Sierra Leone's President, Dr Siaka Stevens, added:

It is my humble opinion that after all is said and done, the leading and heroic role which Kwame Nkrumah played in the initial dare-devil projection of the African personality on the international scene will be remembered for ever.[8]

In a striking tribute, the Tanzanian Government said, in a statement issued on 28 April:

He will be mourned by all who care for African dignity and for African liberation from imperialism, racialism, and exploitation. Kwame Nkrumah's place in world history

is assured, and in African history his first place is unlikely to be challenged. By the manner in which he led the Ghanaian people through his formation and leadership of the mass Party, the Convention Peoples Party, Dr Nkrumah established a new political pattern for this continent. He transformed the dreams and aspirations of isolated individuals and groups into a practical political force for freedom, which could be neither ignored, defeated, nor purchased.

The statement added that Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966 stemmed more from the bitter hostility towards him from the capitalist and imperialist forces of the world—and their African supporters—than from any mistakes or failures of his Government. It concluded:

He brought political awareness, dignity and self-respect to the people of Africa, and these are things which, once achieved, can never be taken away. The means by which he pursued his goals gave rise to some differences of opinion between Dr Nkrumah and other African leaders; but his goals of Unity and Freedom were, and are, the goals of Africa.

President Kwame Nkrumah was a pioneer. He suffered all the hardships, frustrations, and triumphs of this role, and he made its inevitable mistakes. But it will not be his mistakes which will be remembered. It will be the incomparable contribution which Kwame Nkrumah made to African development. We are all losers by his death.

Zambia's President Kenneth Kaunda, like President Nyerere, had not always seen eye to eye with Nkrumah at the height of his power, but at a memorial service in Lusaka, Kaunda announced that a memorial was to be erected to Nkrumah in the capital and a school at Kabwe was to be renamed for him. Describing him as a great son of Africa born in a humble home to fight relentlessly for freedom, not only of Ghana alone but the whole of Africa, Kaunda added: 'These small men who overthrew him thought they would finish him, and yet they are using his schools and hospitals and moving on his roads. What have they done to improve Ghana?'[9]

Nkrumah's contribution to the spirit of African unity became the predominant feature in the process of re-evaluating his life-work.[10] In the words of Dr Bolaji Akinyemi of Nigeria:

What Nkrumah contributed to African politics was that he was the moving force for the search for the institutional framework for African unity and the principles to embody the unity . . . The only legitimate conclusion one could and should draw at this stage is that Nkrumah alone brought Pan-Africanism home and kept it alive as a movement until others were prepared to join in. However, it is more than this, one could go one step further and assert that without Nkrumah, the OAU would not have been established in 1963 and Pan-Africanism would not have progressed as far as it has done. This is clear from a historical perspective of Pan-Africanism, from 1958–

1963. In spite of the fact that Ghana was not the first black African country to be independent, it was Nkrumah who launched the series of Pan-African conferences in independent Africa . . . The genesis of the Casablanca principles went back to Nkrumah's declaration at the time of Ghana's independence that Ghana's independence would be meaningless and incomplete as long as other parts of Africa were still in subjugation. From this principle also has emerged African preoccupation with the Liberation Movements. The OAU liberation committee was not the brainchild of the conservatives . . . A lot of his ideas were found too extreme and radical by his contemporaries. And yet, it is to his credit, that his radicalism of yesteryears has become the orthodoxy of today. No one is at present advocating solutions to African problems which Nkrumah did not advocate before. It took the invasion of Guinea for the OAU to think seriously of defence arrangements in 1971. Yet Nkrumah had predicted such invasions as far back as 1959. In 1958, Nkrumah warned about how the imperialists would exploit the problem of tribalism to destroy African states. Nobody listened, yet Nigeria was to learn the hard way between 1967 and 1970. That he was ahead of his time is not debatable, but he had the satisfaction of seeing some of his predictions come true and in the end, he, and not his critics, had been proved right.[11]

Nkrumah's rehabilitation by Ghana's military regime did not result at once in releasing the political forces of Nkrumahism: but these have continued to assert themselves in the elections held in Ghana in recent years.[12]

Few today still question the historic contribution of Nkrumah's ideas to the development of modern Africa. 'Nkrumahism without Nkrumah' is still a force in the continent—which makes it all the more remarkable that no serious scholarly works have yet been devoted to the man and his ideas.[13]

Patrice Lumumba (1925–61)

Like his friend and defender, Nkrumah, the great Congolese leader was rehabilitated in his country only after his death. A high tower in Kinshasa now dominates the capital from which he tried to escape in 1961, only to find himself held prisoner and later murdered, having first been savagely beaten. The irony of Lumumba's rehabilitation is that it is the work of the leader, General Mobutu Sese Seko, who first helped to overthrow him, and who later made him prisoner.

During his very brief period as the first Prime Minister of the Congo Democratic Republic (now Zaire) during the troubled times of independence in 1960, Lumumba was portrayed as an unstable personality who, by his unpredictability, contributed to the chaotic conditions that prevailed after the Congo had emerged insecurely from Belgian colonial rule. But he was also seen at the time as the leader who had committed himself totally, and in the end sacrificed his life, to the cause of his country's unity in the dark days when the late Moise Tshombe and his foreign supporters attempted to amputate

Katanga (now Shaba) from the rest of the country. Lumumba's nationalism is embodied in his immortal sentence: 'I am an idea . . . I am the Congo'.

All over the African continent, Lumumba is commemorated today by streets, squares, public buildings and institutions named after him. Unlike Nkrumah, he was almost universally seen to be a martyr figure while he was still alive. But although he was seen at the time as the champion of the Congo's unity and as a leader fiercely opposed to traditional colonialism and neo-colonialism, very little was yet known about the wider aspects of Lumumbism. These ideas only came to be more widely disseminated with the posthumous publication of his book *Le Congo, Terre d'Avenir, est-il menacé?*, which was also published in English under the title *Congo, My Country*.

The official homage paid to Lumumba when he was officially 'rehabilitated' read:

> Patrice-Emery Lumumba is a name which kindles the flame of revolution in the heart of every Congolese and every African whose ideology is based on nationalism—a truly African nationalism that is, in short, black nationalism. Yet in his lifetime Lumumba did not preach violence nor xenophobia, nor war between people of different races, tribes or nations.
>
> Peaceful coexistence was one of the dominant ideas of his political activities—unity, national unity, peace and harmony were the guidelines of Lumumba's thought. Even on his way to death he continued to preach love of one's neighbour and understanding between peoples through work together.
>
> Lumumba preached Pan-Africanism. Today we talk of the Organization of African Unity, yet he was not its prophet. He was not understood at the beginning, but today he has followers all over Africa and Asia, because he was and remains the torch-bearer of all those who are struggling for the rehabilitation of their human rights.
>
> President Mobutu has understood this, that it is not enough to earn high salaries; the important thing is to encourage production without which there can be no true well-being.
>
> Lumumba is dead and he is mourned by the whole country and by all revolutionary Africa. He is dead, yet he is still alive, for Mobutu is carrying on his work of reconstructing the country while safeguarding its unity.

This last sentence in the homage (which is often criticized) shows how important an asset the martyred name of Lumumba had become for the purpose of conferring legitimacy on rulership in Zaire.

Lumumba has become an inspirational figure for Africans—a revolutionary figure who could not be broken or diverted from his aims, even at the time when he faced certain death. His deathless words addressed to his wife in his last letter now belong to the epics of modern African political literature:

> Neither brutality, nor cruelty nor torture will ever bring me to ask for mercy; for I prefer to die with my head unbowed, my faith unshakeable and with profound trust in

the destiny of my country, rather than live under subjection and disregarding sacred principles. History will one day have its say, but it will not be the history that is taught in Brussels, Paris, Washington or in the United Nations; but the history which will be taught in the countries freed from imperialism and its puppets. Africa will write her own history, and to the north and south of the Sahara, it will be a glorious and dignified history. Do not weep for me, my dear wife.

Where, one asks, is that history being written in Africa about a Lumumba?

Catherine Hoskyns, the writer of a major political study on the Congo's independence,[14] reflects the changed attitudes about the first Congolese Prime Minister:

Lumumba's importance lies not so much in his political ideas . . . but in the fact that at the crucial moment he refused to compromise with those who opposed him. Most leaders in his position would have accepted a temporarily passive role, thinking that when times were more favourable they could resume radical action. By refusing to do this, Lumumba made a smoothing over operation much more difficult and forced the real nature of the situation and the real motives of the participants to emerge. He also made clear by his actions that he considered that pseudo-democratic government controlled from outside (as was the essence of the new US/UN policy) would be as damaging to his country's real interests as an openly reactionary and oppressive regime. It is because he forced these realities into the light, at the cost of his own life, that Lumumba has become a hero not only in Africa but in all of the Third World.[15]

A number of interesting but unsatisfactory accounts have been written about Lumumba's brief political career. But only two important accounts of his ideas have so far appeared. The first, *Lumumba: The Last Fifty Days*, by G. Heninz and H. Donnay (New York, Grove Press, 1977), received little notice when it first appeared in French in 1966. *La Pensée politique de Patrice Lumumba* (Brussels, Présence Africaine, 1973), by Jean Van Lierde, contains the author's correspondence with Lumumba, as well as a number of useful texts and documents. In his interesting preface to the book, Jean-Paul Sartre speaks of Lumumba as 'a black Robespierre'. There are also a number of valuable contributions in journals and magazines, but these still require to be carefully collated.

Lumumba's martyrdom lends itself to poetry and drama. His vision and his courage are magnificently portrayed by Aimé Césaire in his widely praised epic for the theatre, *Une Saison au Congo*. Césaire uses Lumumba's own words to convey the message of the play, beginning with that electrifying moment from real life when Lumumba leapt to the tribune after listening to a few well-meaning, ineffective words about the nature of democracy spoken by King Leopold:

I, Sire, [he began] think of the forgotten. We are those who have been dispossessed, those who have been beaten and humiliated, and spoken to with familiar insults.

Césaire produced what one British critic called 'a superb evocation' of the riches of Africa, of its tremendous sun, its fertile soil, its mountains, its lakes, and its great rivers.

Increasingly, as more has come to be written and known about Lumumba, it is this picture of a defiant prophet and patriot which has begun to form—and not just in Africa.

Nkrumah made an important contribution towards clarifying the role played by Lumumba in his *Challenge of the Congo: A Case Study of Foreign Pressures in an Independent State* (London, Nelson, 1967). He concludes with these words: 'Difficulties and uncertainties will have to be faced. But of one thing I am sure. The victors in the final battle for the Congo's independence will spring from the blood of Lumumba'.

Professor Thomas Kanza, a former Congo Ambassador to the United Nations and the United Kingdom, has written a number of small but useful studies of Lumumba and about the problems of his country which help to round out the background to the problems faced by Lumumba and his colleagues.[16]

Emperor Haile Selassie (1892–1975)

Haile Selassie died in his sleep as a prisoner on 27 August 1975—just eleven months after he had been deposed as Emperor by the Provisional Military Administrative Committee of Ethiopia. He had been on the throne since 1930.

The formidable last emperor of Ethiopia had always looked rather different to the outside world from the way he seemed to many of his own subjects, more especially in the latter part of his regime. To most Africans, he was the embodiment of the continent's oldest and most durable independent state; and he was especially esteemed because of his stand against the Italian fascists when Mussolini invaded his country in 1936. Many of the older African leaders grew up with the impression of the Emperor as a lonely, aloof and resolute figure in exile, determinedly resisting foreign invasion. It was a picture which fitted in well with the inter-war years' struggle against colonialism.

Although he was recognized to be a somewhat archaic figure in the new Africa struggling to be free, his presence was electrifying when he threw his support behind the creation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. His immense prestige was acknowledged by the alacrity with which his offer was taken up to make Addis Ababa the capital of the OAU. His regal charm and courtesy won over even radicals like Nkrumah and Sékou Touré. But it was the older generation of African leaders—like the late President Jomo Kenyatta and President Houphouet-Boigny who felt a particularly close affinity with this African patriarch.

It came as no surprise to most African intellectuals when the mutiny, which had grown up in his army in 1974, led to his dethronement in September of that year. Many African leaders protested on his behalf when he was later arrested, and offered to give him asylum, pleading for his right to end his life in dignified retirement. For many Africans, the dignity of independent Africa was associated with the dignity of the old emperor.

Although this image of venerability was not shared by many Ethiopians or by many other young Africans, the problem of readjusting the earlier views held about him to the charges brought against him by his heirs (as well as, incidentally, by his Somali neighbours), seems to have caused difficulties for many.

It is perhaps too soon to judge what final view Africa—or history—will form about Haile Selassie. There is almost nothing, as yet, to show that any significant changes of attitude have begun to form about him. A respectful silence has been allowed to fall over the last of Africa's historic emperors. It is hard to dislodge a myth—especially one which was important during a crucial period in the evolution of independent Africa.

Notes

1. See A. A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, London, Cass, 1966, and T. Peter Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah—The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship*, London, Hurst, 1972.
2. These works include *Class Struggle in Africa: Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, and a revised edition of *Consciencism and Revolutionary Path*, which was published posthumously. Nkrumah also gave his support to Geoffrey Being in the writing of *Reap the Whirlwind*, MacGibbon and Kee, 1968, an important account of Ghana from 1950 to 1966.
3. *Observer* Foreign News Service, London, 10 May 1972.
4. *Daily Nation* (Nairobi), 29 April 1972.
5. Radio Blantyre, 29 April 1972.
6. *New Nigerian* (Kaduna), 29 April 1972.
7. *New Nigerian* (Kaduna), 29 April 1972.
8. TPI, 28 April 1972.
9. *New Nigerian* (Kaduna), 29 April 1972.
10. *Afriscope* (Lagos), June 1972.
11. *Afriscope* (Lagos), June 1972.
12. See 'Nkrumah's Policies Must Hold', interview with Kojo Botsio in *West Africa* (London), 19 March 1979.
13. See a sympathetic study by Kwesi Armah: *Ghana: Nkrumah's Legacy*, London, Rex Collings, 1974. A useful reassessment of Nkrumah's role is offered by General A. K. Ocran: *Politics of the Sword*, London, Rex Collings, 1977. An important, but more general, treatment of Nkrumah's ideas of government is provided in Dr Bereket H. Selassie's *The Executive in African Governments*, London, Heinemann, 1974. A reappraisal of Nkrumah's Ghana is made in Basil Davidson's *Black Star: A View of*

the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah, London, Allen Lane, 1974. For a friendly, but critical, view, see the collection of essays by the doyen West Indian Pan-Africanist and Marxist writer, C. L. R. James: *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution*, London, Allison & Busby, 1977.

14. Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence: January 1960–December 1961*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965.
15. *New York Review of Books*, 22 April 1977.
16. Thomas R. Kanza, *Tôt ou Tard: Ata Ndele, Remarques Congolaises*, Brussels, 1963; *Propos d'un Congolais naïf*, Brussels, Présence Africaine, 1959; *Le Congo: A la veille de son Indépendance*, Brussels, 1959; *Éloge de la révolution: Remarques Congolaises*, Brussels, 1965.

Border disputes in Mauritania and the Horn of Africa

Pierre-François Gonidec

This paper does not set out to study border disputes in Mauritania and the Horn of Africa in depth. Its purpose is rather to show what contribution the international legal and sociological consideration of such disputes could make, from a methodological point of view, to the understanding of contemporary African history. For this will affect our way of writing this history, and hence of communicating it to present and future generations and placing it in the context of world history.

The problem of disputes in Africa is absolutely typical of the difficulty of understanding the complex web of inter-African relations out of which so-called current events, including border disputes, periodically emerge. It may be tempting to start from theory—every author having his own—and force the events into the framework of a given theory even if it means a Procrustean adjustment of the events when they do not exactly fit the chosen theory. On the other hand the barefoot empiricists, weary of the endless verbiage of so-called theory, would no doubt opt for specific detailed investigations into particular aspects of the observable phenomena (micropolitics); or else (like journalists reporting hot news) would confine themselves to a more or less felicitous description of the event.

In fact, if scientific knowledge is the aim, the inseparability of theory and sociological practice must be stressed. We must rise above the facile distinction between theory and empirical studies, which would draw an intolerably hard and fast line between those who think but do not observe and those who observe but do not think. The fact is that knowledge can only be truly scientific if it leads to objective truth, i.e. truth consistent with practice in society. The latter is often complex and contradictory and needs to be explained and set out. Moreover, this truth, being the reflection of practice in society, is necessarily a concrete truth as opposed to an abstract truth formulated on the basis of theoretical diagrams in the minds of researchers out of touch with reality. We need to convince ourselves that 'theory depends on practice, is based on practice and in turn serves the ends of practice'.

It is in this light—to our mind central to the issue—that we propose to study border disputes as a tiny part of contemporary African history.

Since our approach will be that of the lawyer and political scientist, we shall assess the value of the contribution that law, and specifically international law, can make to the understanding of these conflicts.

Our appraisal will lead us to emphasize the need to transcend the strictly legal approach and draw upon the resources of political theory (or sociology).

The contribution of international law

When internationalists study disputes in general, they draw two distinctions, which give rise to different concepts. The question is to what extent these distinctions and the concepts that flow from them hold good for the study of border disputes in Africa, and of what use they are.

Legal disputes and political disputes

Following a natural inclination in keeping with their area of interest, lawyers have identified a particular category of disputes, namely legal disputes, relating to the interpretation or enforcement of law. By contrast, all other disputes might be regarded as non-legal political disputes.

At first sight this distinction might seem to be readily applicable in the realm of border disputes, in so far as these borders were fixed by international agreements or by custom. Without referring to specific agreements, there is at least one general principle laid down in the Addis Ababa Charter, namely that of the territorial integrity of the states that arose in the wake of the tidal wave of decolonization (Preamble and Article 2).

Convenient though it may be, this purely legal approach does not really put border disputes in context. Whether it is a matter of the disputes that arose from Spain's withdrawal from the Western Sahara or of those that have arisen in the Horn of Africa, it is obvious that overriding the legal arguments (the validity of which might be questioned), there is a more deep-seated problem: namely to what extent a people (not to speak of a nation) in the Africa of today can itself decide its own destiny. Legally, the problem is insoluble. Even if it be accepted that peoples' right to self-determination may be regarded not only as a moral but as a legal right, the fact remains that it conflicts with another equally clear right, namely that of the State to its territorial integrity. We then have to choose between the State and the peoples. Clearly, it is a problem not of legality but of legitimacy, and hence a political problem.

We see from this that border disputes may sometimes be legal disputes, but that there are also political disputes and they must be defined. The flaw in the method used by lawyers is to define these disputes by distinguishing them from legal disputes: those that are not legal, in the sense outlined above,

must be political. In other words, the definition is a purely negative one, which is unsatisfactory. It is essential to define political disputes in positive terms. Moreover, it is to be noted that things are not always so simple. The distinction between legal and political is rather artificial, inasmuch as they do not form an antithesis but have a symbiotic relationship with mutual interpenetration. The Western Sahara question provides a striking illustration of this point. The fallacy lay in supposing that the supreme international legal authority, namely the International Court of Justice, could provide a solution to the problem of the Western Sahara. It must be admitted, as Madame Chemillier-Gendreau says, that 'legal formulae are cut off from reality. The legal reality today, given the values on which contemporary civilization is based, is the balance of power ratified by legal provisions after the event'.

We would not go so far as to say that the concept of legal disputes is completely inoperative. Legal aspects could probably be identified that could legitimately be settled on the basis of the law. But the concept is usually inadequate to cover border disputes.

This point is important not only for an understanding of the causes of disputes and their motive forces, but also for the choice of the appropriate way to settle them in the most satisfactory manner. On this last point, the learned legal mechanisms set up by the OAU have amply demonstrated their ineffectiveness, and there is no need to labour the point. Looking to the future, Africans must display some imagination in finding methods in keeping with their peculiar genius and hence better suited to the resolution of conflicts.

International and domestic disputes

Another distinction familiar to lawyers is that between international and domestic disputes. A conflict between part of the people and the legal government of the state, such as the Eritrean dispute, is domestic. A conflict between two or more sovereign states, such as that between Somalia and Ethiopia, is international.

In theory, this distinction is important, for it has legal consequences for third parties. A purely domestic dispute must be settled within the state concerned, without any foreign interference which would encroach on the sovereignty of the state. This rule is enshrined in both the United Nations Charter and the OAU Charter (Article 3). International disputes, on the other hand, leave scope for the operation of alliances and warrant intervention by the international organizations, whose duty it is to safeguard international peace. This is why, irrespective of the role entrusted to the Secutiry Council by the United Nations Charter, the OAU devotes an article (Article 2) to the problem of the defence and security of member states, and pays special attention to the peaceful settlement of disputes (Articles 3 and 19).

But here again, interesting though the distinction between domestic and

international disputes may be, it has its limits. Experience in Africa has made it abundantly clear that very often, and certainly as regards the disputes with which we are concerned, the international dimension cannot be eliminated even when the dispute is apparently a domestic one. No one would suppose, for instance, that the Sahrawi problem could be considered in isolation. In many respects various states apart from Morocco and Mauritania, the beneficiaries of the partition arrangement authorized by Spain, are involved in the dispute, as also are the United Nations and the OAU—even though the latter shows great reluctance to take sides or do anything.

We may conclude that the importance of the purely legal distinction between domestic and international disputes should not be exaggerated, since disputes that originate as domestic ones in practice acquire an international dimension, which must certainly be taken into consideration.

In more general terms, the fact must be faced that law alone cannot fully explain the various aspects of border disputes, though this does not mean that lawyers are doomed to come empty-handed to the conference table when problems arising from border disputes are being discussed. Our point is that we must not expect more from lawyers than they are capable of giving. In particular, what they have to say is important so far as the legal aspects of international disputes are concerned, especially the legal origins of such disputes and the most suitable legal mechanisms for settling them peacefully. But that does not exhaust the topic. The lawyer's contribution can and must be supplemented by that of the political scientist. The two must be allies rather than hostile brothers. Better still, a good political scientist should also be a good lawyer. This leads us on to an investigation of political sociology.

The contribution of political sociology

In our opinion, political sociology has the most decisive contribution to make to an understanding of border conflicts. It is the only discipline that can supply answers to a certain number of questions that internationalists are obliged to leave vague, and at the same time fill in the gaps often left in the lawyers' answers. Its contribution concerns such fundamental problems as the underlying causes of border disputes and their dynamics, i.e. the way they develop and are (or are not) resolved.

The causes of disputes

In methodological terms, the weakness of political sociology results from the multiplicity of theories dreamt up to account for the causes of disputes. An *embarras de richesse* can be a nuisance.

This is not the place to review these theories. Bearing in mind our general preliminary remarks, we feel that to account satisfactorily for border disputes means going beyond incomplete explanations. For example, one convenient explanation, which does away with the need for more thorough investigation, consists in laying the blame for disputes on what is pejoratively called tribalism. There is undoubtedly an element of truth in this explanation, but it is partial in both senses of the word.

We believe that the only really satisfactory explanation is an overall one. One of the fundamental laws of knowledge is the unity of all phenomena, the principle of totality. But this totality must be brought out as a concrete and not (as happens in the case of systematic analysis) an abstract one out of touch with reality. We think that the concept of a social grouping, encompassing all aspects of a given society whether or not organized as a sovereign state, should be introduced. This concept implies the predominance of a mode of production (and hence an economic base) characterized by a certain kind of production relations; but it also implies a superstructure (institutions, laws, system of values, religion, etc.).

This overall approach is the only way to arrive at an overall explanation of disputes, for it leads us ultimately to the social nature of the state which is at the root of both its domestic and its foreign policy. Dogmatic use of the concept should still be avoided, for it would have the effect of over-emphasizing socio-economic factors. The influence of superstructural factors is not to be neglected, and indeed they may to some extent operate independently, even though in the last resort the socio-economic base is decisive. In other words, we must never lose sight of the relationship and interaction between superstructural and socio-economic factors. The explanation of border disputes is consequently never a simple matter, in view of the multiplicity and variety of the factors involved.

Using the concept of social groupings has another advantage. By definition any social grouping is a concrete whole, and consequently always has something unusual or unique about it. Thus it lends itself to the concrete analysis of specific situations, and makes it possible to avoid incorrect generalizations.

For example, in the border disputes in Mauritania and the Horn of Africa, political analysis brings out the differences that exist over and above the common features. There are actually three kinds of dispute:

(a) irredentist disputes aimed at bringing together peoples with the same cultural identity now under the jurisdiction of different states (e.g. the dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia);
(b) secessionist disputes aimed at securing either self-government or independence for a people (e.g. the Eritrean dispute); and
(c) decolonization disputes arising from the condition imposed on the inhabitants of a colony by a colonial power (e.g. the Sahrawi dispute).

A further advantage of thinking in terms of social groupings is that in accordance with the principle of the unity of all phenomena a grouping of this sort cannot be considered in isolation. It is related to other social groupings whose nature must be investigated, for as we have said, a border dispute usually has an international dimension. To consider the interrelations in this way is all the more essential, given that in the last analysis a state's foreign policy is merely an extension of its domestic policy in another area and by other means.

The dynamic of disputes

It would be a terrible mistake to regard border disputes as static, frozen as it were at one point in time. Unity of phenomena may be one of the fundamental principles of knowledge from a methodological point of view, but it is essential also to stress the importance of the law of change. Border disputes are then seen to be in continual movement, bearing in mind that change can come about in two different directions. Either the disputes represent merely a development of an existing situation, or else they amount to a true revolution, i.e. a challenge to that situation. It is a question of quantitative change as opposed to qualitative change.

This distinction is crucial. It explains variations in the seriousness of disputes, the methods of warfare employed, the temptation to third parties to intervene or refrain from intervening, the type of solution likely to bring the conflict to an end, and so on.

It becomes apparent from a consideration of these two basic questions (causes and dynamic) that a sociological approach along these lines is infinitely more rewarding than a legal approach. It goes beyond it and yet does not invalidate it; and since border disputes are, sadly, part of contemporary African history, these two approaches must be taken into account. This means that recent history can only be the fruit of close collaboration between specialists in various disciplines. Even then, they still need to agree on a certain number of general guidelines to give them methodological guidance.

Sources for the history of contemporary civil wars in Zaire

B. Verhaegen

Introduction

Contemporary civil wars in Zaire

Between 1959 and 1979 five types of civil war can be distinguished in Zaire. The term 'civil war' is, of course, used arbitrarily to cover also anti-colonial movements, tribal conflicts and wars of liberation. Each of these conflicts and movements gave rise to specific sources of information.

The anti-colonial movements culminated in 1959 in violent clashes with the Belgian colonial authorities. Dozens of people were killed in Kinshasa[1] in January 1959, and in Kisangani and elsewhere in October of the same year. The demonstrators were not, however, armed and had not premeditated their actions. Thus it is only possible to speak of an anti-colonial civil war in Shaba in 1960–61, when the peoples of the North rose up systematically against the European administrators and clashed with the mercenaries.

Tribal conflicts broke out in Zaire from 1958 onwards, when the authority of the colonial government began to weaken. They were especially bloody in the Kasai region between the Baluba and most of the other tribes.[2] They continued sporadically until 1961–62, when the introduction of a federal structure and the redrawing of the administrative boundaries had the effect of calming them down.

The secession of Shaba (previously Katanga) on 11 July 1970 and the war between the central authority at Kinshasa and the forces of Tshombe was most like the classical civil war; but it was also a tribal war and an anti-colonial struggle.

The popular uprisings (or rebellions) of the Simba and the Mulelists in 1964 sometimes looked like a peasant war between countryfolk and town-dwellers; but they also (especially those led by Mulele in Kwilu) had the character of a popular-revolutionary struggle aimed at overthrowing the bourgeoisie and the ruling class and instituting a socialist regime. Tribal factors played a definite role both in the mobilization of supporters and in determining the adversaries they came up against. The intervention of European

mercenaries also gave the rebellions an anti-colonial and anti-white flavour at a certain point, although this was never a basic factor.

The two Shaba wars of 1977 and 1978 seem to have been wars of national liberation with a vague ideological and political content. The avowed aim was to overthrow the regime, but tribal and regionalist loyalties played a part, as indeed did a certain anti-Western feeling directed mainly against France and the United States.

Each of these 'civil wars' was the subject of more or less systematic studies by research teams. I have in mind the work done by members of the Centre d'Études Politiques in Kinshasa and of the Centre de Recherches et d'Informations Socio-Politiques (CPISP) and the Centre d'Études et de Documentation Africaine (CEDAF) both in Brussels. It was in the course of this research—in the field and in libraries—that the methodology of instant history (whose main features we shall consider in an initial section) was developed, and also a special strategy for collecting and making use of documentary and living material. Our efforts in this direction were encouraged by the variety of types of conflict, and by the fact that sources of information and research methods varied considerably from one conflict to another. While the anti-colonial struggle gave rise to a rich and varied literature, from both official and unofficial sources, the tribal wars produced almost nothing. The few documents that exist are mostly marred by obvious bias. On the other hand, the people involved, confident of their rights and sometimes well informed about one aspect of events, talked copiously when questioned. The peasant uprisings, initially unproductive of documents, yielded to the demands of the bureaucracy as they became established in the conquered territories and produced copious documentation of uneven quality; oral sources turned out to be very fruitful and valuable, especially as an adjunct to and a check on the documents.

The Shaba wars are undoubtedly the most difficult to understand. The protagonists being a regime wielding absolute power and keeping a strict check on information and the adversary one for whom discretion and mystery are a strategic factor, it is only to be expected that information should be wholly contradictory or defective. The official documents are untruthful; others are non-existent; and it is in the interests of all those involved on both sides to keep quiet, at any rate at present. All that is left is the evidence of ill-informed observers and press cuttings.

The approach adopted in research on the civil wars in Zaire

We do not propose to set out the methodology of this research here, but to outline briefly the approach adopted. Although this research is instant history, it is not to be confused with journalistic narration. Over and above a descrip-

tion of events and behaviour, it aims so far as possible to go to the root of things and bring out the contradictions and underlying structures. Hence it has historical perspective, whose depth depends on the subject under examination and on how the objective conditions determining the situation are analysed.

Much space is devoted to the verbatim reproduction of documents and evidence, so as to involve readers in understanding the facts and the texts directly and to give other historians the material to take history a step further. The research workers are thus aware that they are writing an incomplete interim history, that they do not own it, and that it is essential to let the voices of the protagonists and eyewitnesses of the historical event be heard.

History thought of as a history of the present and in the present is committed in the twofold sense that it commits the research worker, whatever he does or thinks, and that he must consciously commit himself. Writing history is a political act, and must be recognized and organized as such both from the practical standpoint and also from that of method and theory.

Contemporary history is inevitably crowded, complex and not yet crystallized. A great number of very different ingredients derived from many sources have to be mixed together. The task must be conceived interdisciplinarily and organized collectively at a research centre where all the material and information is available and the various disciplines and viewpoints can interact.

Lastly, the history must be capable of being read by those who took part in it, for they will be the best judge of it and the readers most directly involved. This means that it should not be written in learned language, and that it should be rapidly and widely disseminated among those involved in the events described.

Epistemological bases and methodology

This point was taken up in other contributions, notably those of Professors Ali Mazrui and Ade Ajayi. I shall confine myself to setting out the epistemological and methodological bases of instant history. It aims to hammer out a scholarly understanding of the present from sources rejected by conventional history, namely oral information, eyewitness reports, autobiographical accounts and contemporary documents.

It is a principle of instant history that those who took part in the events can play an extremely fruitful part in compiling the historical account of them, whether this be done deliberately, directly and in person in the course of an interview with the research worker or unintentionally and indirectly through the

medium of signs, words, writings or actions which the research worker must use to put the protagonist back in context.

Three conditions must be fulfilled if such participation is to prove feasible and rewarding: first, there must be a crisis situation: this is when the contradictions within a society or institution become malignant and unbearable and political struggle begins to gain ground over other forms of social change; second, the members of society affected by these contradictions must be aware of their situation and the political stakes involved and commit themselves to revolutionary action for change; third, the research worker must find the members of society concerned, observe their actions, listen to what they say, and if possible engage them in dialogue.

In setting out these conditions we have implicitly stated another principle of the method on instant history: unlike the positions of positivism and structuralist formalism, the research worker must have, if not a theory of history, at any rate a theoretical-historical framework. In using the concepts of crisis, contradiction, historical protagonist, awareness and political struggle, we have referred to historical materialism; in assuming the fruitfulness of exchanges between protagonist and research worker, we are using a position taken from dialectical materialist sociology; and to find the historical protagonist and the situation that led him to political action and decode his message or behaviour the research worker must rely on a dynamic structural view of society and history. Hence theory comes into it at every stage of the research, to save the research worker from the pitfalls of empiricism or of the dominant ideology.

Documentary sources

Definition

By documentary sources we mean oral or written information already constituted or collected other than by the research worker's own initiative, and which he must accept as it is. They may consist of official or private documents or archive or press material, findings of earlier surveys, evidence already collected, and even of oral traditions so long as they are not liable to be changed at the point when the research worker collects them. All these documents have one feature in common: they exist independently of the research worker's activities and must be accepted by him. Unlike live sources, their authors were not directly subject to the research worker's influence, even though they may at times have been aware that they were taking part in a scientific project.

The use of these sources partakes of classical historical methods. Ever

since J. Vansina showed that the sources of oral tradition are no different from those of written documents, all are subjected to the same rules of historical criticism, and the research worker must cope with the same problems: location and discovery of documents, collection, cataloguing, preservation, critical analysis and interpretation.

Documentary sources in Africa

The problem of documentary sources in Africa, however, has certain specific features. Some of them are well known, namely (a) the importance of oral sources, (b) the fact that most written sources dating from the colonial period come from abroad, which necessitates the development of a special critical methodology (for example, the use of a sociology of the relationships between the colonial administration and the native population, or between missionaries and natives); (c) the fact that the preservation of documents presents difficulties, though access to them is frequently facilitated by negligence on the part of the administration; (d) the increasing facticiousness of official and press documentation in countries with authoritarian regimes, etc.

Documentary sources in the history of the civil wars in Zaire

We have met these problems in the history of contemporary civil wars in Zaire, but they vary according to the type of conflict.

In the case of the anti-colonial struggles and the secession of Shaba, written and oral documents were plentiful, varying both in origin and kind. Collecting them was easier because of the weakening of the colonial regime from 1958 onwards, and because of the chaos in the early days of independence. Preservation, on the other hand, was completely lacking. This lacuna has been partly filled by CRISP's documentary publications, in the form of their yearbook and monographs.

The peasant revolts of Soumialot and Mulele are also well known, both from the documents put out by the leaders and cadres of these movements and also from the many eyewitness reports and accounts. They were the subject of voluminous publications by CRISP which remain the prime sources for understanding these movements.

Unfortunately work on producing this documentary and analytical material was suspended in 1968 after the publication of *Congo 1967* and Volume II of *Rébellions au Congo*, following a ban on their circulation in Zaire.

Since then the preservation of documents, whether official or not, about the recent history of Zaire has been highly unsatisfactory. The only comparatively complete collections of documents and periodicals are at CEDAF in Brussels, which has taken over CRISP's work in this field in order to make the

material available to all and make it possible to consult it at a distance. CEDAF is compiling an annotated bibliography on computer of all its documents on Zaire, and making them available on request either as photocopies or on microfilm. But it is unfortunate that present conditions do not allow such a centre to be situated in Africa.

Live sources

Definition and types

Live sources are brought into being or activated by the historian himself, in terms of his research topic. He questions a protagonist or eyewitness, collects an account or autobiography, records a statement or sets up a non-directive interview; but it is always he who takes the initiative to elicit the information. The author of the information may be aware of the historian's research project, but this is not essential. What is essential is that genuine communication should be established in one form or another between the historian and his informant. This is what gives this source of information its vividness.

Live information may be oral, for instance at an interview, or written, if the informant replies in writing to a request from and in accordance with instructions given by the research worker. The relationship between informant and research worker can be predominantly directive, non-directive or semi-directive. An entirely directive relationship, as for instance in an opinion pool, which precludes any dialogue between the two partners, does not yield genuinely live information.

Live information may have to do with an event—whether or not observed by the informant—a process, an institution, people or the person of the informant himself.

The object of the information may be specific and individual, as for example to compile a biography, or more comprehensive and collective, as for example to describe a sociological phenomenon.

The value of live sources for contemporary African history

Live sources fulfil not only the auxiliary or subsidiary function of filling in the gaps in documentary information. In our view they have virtues of their own that make them an essential tool of contemporary history, especially where Africa is concerned. There are three main reasons for this:

1. For the colonial period they correct and supplement documentary sources, which were mostly written by persons alien or hostile to African societies. There is no point in hark bingack to the radically ideological and

alienating nature of colonial language, be it that of colonial servants, missionaries or scholars. With rare exceptions[3] nationalist language in the late colonial period, which might be expected to be the diametrical opposite, bore a symmetrical resemblance to it. Both were ideological languages conditioned by a strategy of keeping or gaining power for a single class.

Evidence on the colonial period from the rural and urban masses, and even from classes not prone to nationalist language (schoolteachers, junior colonial servants, Army NCOs and so on), reveals forms of anti-colonial resistance together with vestiges of traditional structures and an urge for change whose historical importance is always underrated.

2. Independence did not fundamentally alter the relationship between official language, as used on the radio, in the press and in official records and documents, and the voice of the masses, who were less vocal than ever. Behind the myth of national unity, the African ruling classes monopolized all sources of information and documentation. A history that confined itself to documentary sources would be no more than a history of political power; and we may wonder whether we do not always overestimate the historical importance of political power, especially in societies subject to such profound social and cultural changes and whose future is pregnant with new political upheavals.

Oral sources, when used discriminatingly, can provide a mouthpiece for the real protagonists of society: peasants and rural cadres, schoolteachers, schoolchildren and young drop-outs, the mass of urban workers and unemployed, dissidents of all kinds, and so on. Yesterday they were the main victims of colonial rule and the main architects of its demise; today they are more exploited than ever by the collusion between the ruling classes and the forces of imperialism; tomorrow they will be the basis of any revolutionary change. The historical value of their evidence and behaviour is greater than that of the establishment language contained in the documentary sources, not only because the establishment is essentially transient both in legal constitution and in composition but also because its language is bound to be misleading.

3. Oral information also has an unrivalled virtue: it results from a personal interchange between the research worker, who has the theoretical knowledge, and the protagonist, who has the practical knowledge. When this interchange takes place dialectically and non-directively, the interviewee is accepted both as the protagonist in his history and as co-author of the information about that history. The research worker for his part agrees not only to be informed but also to be taught. A relationship of mutual interchange tending towards equality comes into being between the two partners. The spontaneity and sincerity of the protagonist must be

matched by the open-mindedness of the research worker and by his readiness to question the validity of his own knowledge and recognize the primacy of practical experience.

This approach to knowledge is the special tool used by the method of instant history, whose main characteristics we have outlined above.

Live sources and the history of the civil wars in Zaire

We have used a combination of three types of live information: semi-directive interviews, autobiographies, and eyewitness reports and accounts drafted at our request by observers or protagonists.

The interviews, initially non-directive, led to the devising of an interview plan and the systematic treatment as concretely as possible of all the important questions that thus emerged. We never set out to construct a sample. Some questions could be settled in the course of two or three interviews; others still remained open to the end, despite the mass of information collected. Our main concern was to choose our informants judiciously, to recruit them from varied backgrounds and to create a climate conducive to a fruitful personal interchange.

The autobiography method proved extremely useful as a complement to the more general information furnished by the documents and interviews. Autobiographies help to remove the disparities between formal portrayals of the national life as presented in political speeches on the one hand and real life, everyday social activity, ordinary people's actual motives on the other. Live accounts are thus a double antidote both to the facticiousness of official establishment language and to the formal conceptual language of the scholar.[4]

Reports and eyewitness accounts written at our request provided copious material that was often of high quality. The fluency with which social protagonists replied when asked provided a measure of their availability to take part in the process of understanding their own history. In our view there is enormous scope there for collecting information for contemporary history, even though there can be no question of using it except as an adjunct to other sources.

Conclusion

The distinction between documentary and live sources must not give rise to a positivist attitude whereby the former are accepted as the true sources of history and treated according to the rules of historical criticism, and the latter are despised and consequently subjected to different and specially rigorous critical treatment.

There is no conflict or radical difference between documentary and live sources. The former can be read and interpreted in such a way that, despite

their remoteness, the historian manages completely to reconstruct the protagonist's original role and make them virtually live-sources; the latter, once used by the research worker who activated them, in turn become documents for other historians.

The productivity of both is enhanced when they can be used in complementary fashion and within the same methodological and theoretical framework. This is the conclusion we draw from our study of the civil wars in contemporary Zaire.

Notes

1. Modern place-names are used throughout: for example, Zaire = Congo; Kinshasa = Léopoldville; Shaba = Katanga; Kisangani = Stanleyville.
2. The term 'tribe' is used according to the practice of the period. The criticism of this and related concepts will form the subject of another paper.
3. Some of Patrice Lumumba's speeches, in particular that of 30 June 1960.
4. As regards the use of autobiographical techniques, see our article 'Introduction à une méthodologie qualitative—les autobiographies', in *Les Cahiers du CRIDE*, Series II, No. 31, January–February 1979, Coll. CRISP, Brussels.

Africa and its border problems

Edmond Jouve

The demarcation of frontiers is still an issue of acute relevance in the Third World today. Africa has recently furnished one example of this, while in Latin America, there has been a boundary dispute between Chile and Argentina since 1854 over the possession of three islands at the southern tip of the continent (Nueva, Picton and Lennox Islands) commanding access to the Beagle Canal and consequently one of the most important geopolitical and strategic areas in the world. In December 1978, the heightening of the conflict brought the contending countries to the brink of hostilities. There are similar problems in Africa, one of which was brought to the fore by the former President Idi Amin Dada. On 1 November 1978, Radio Kampala announced that the border between Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania was henceforth to be the River Kagera, and Uganda troops moved in and annexed a territory of over a thousand square kilometres. But it was an unwise move, for it led to the downfall of the regime.

In fact, the concept of boundaries is a relatively new one in Africa. Before the emergence of the nation-state, the only dividing lines between the various peoples were borderlands or frontier zones with no clear-cut boundaries. The borders were only vaguely defined, as was formerly the case in Europe. Colonization disrupted this order of things. Lands were conquered and annexed, or simply appropriated at the whim of the invader. More often than not, therefore, the boundaries would be artificial and purely arbitrary. Imposed from the outside, they attest to a profound contempt for men and peoples, and reflect a relationship rooted in violence—a violence bequeathed by foreign conquerors.

What was the situation after independence? Theoretically, the prospects were wide open. But there were precedents. In the nineteenth century South America had conceived the theory of *uti possidetis juris*, by virtue of which the new states in the sub-continent were in 1810 regarded as coinciding geographically with the former Spanish colonies. In this manner, these countries found a way of dealing with the numerous disputes on their hands and of protecting themselves against forced occupation and unwarranted territorial claims. A reference to the principle of *uti possidetis juris* is an explicit acknowledgement

of the fact that an unexploited or uninhabited region is not *terra nullius*, and that it cannot therefore be appropriated without a legal claim. On 28 May 1811, for instance, a treaty concluded between Venezuela and the United Provinces of Granada guaranteed the 'integrity of the territories within their respective jurisdiction'. In 1877, an identical text signed by Chile and Argentina stipulated that the following rule of American public law, which the two governments accepted and supported, should be borne in mind, namely that 'the American Republics have succeeded the King of Spain in the treaties of possession and dominion he previously had throughout Spanish America'. In order to give greater effect to this rule, the Latin American states negotiated recognition of their independence and of their boundaries with Madrid. This was done by Mexico in 1836, Ecuador in 1840, Venezuela, Chile and Uruguay in 1846, Argentina in 1859 and Bolivia in 1861.

In America, therefore, the idea of territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers is a long-standing one. It is still relevant today. The Charter of Rights and Duties adopted in Montevideo in 1943, the Act of Chapultapec of 1945 and the 1948 Bogotá Charter all make explicit reference to it. The emancipated Asian states also adopted these principles. The Sino-Indian treaty on Tibet (29 April 1954) included respect for territorial integrity in its five precepts for peaceful coexistence. In the following year, the participants in the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung included abstention from acts or threats of aggression, or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of a country, in their decalogue adopted on 24 April 1955. The independent African countries seemed to hesitate for some time before making their position clear. Opinion was divided over the function a boundary ought to fulfil—unite peoples or link up states.

But in fact there was very little hesitation when it came to choosing between revising the boundaries and accepting the status quo.

Uniting peoples or linking states?

Should boundaries be bulwarks or connecting links? Should they be buffers or bridges? Should their function be to unite or to contain? Should they serve peoples or states? Is their function one of protection or confinement? If a people does not identify itself with the state, if the two do not coincide, then one or other of them might be tempted to rebel against the other. A people torn between several states might want to recover its lost unity. The obverse is that the state might attempt to secure its grip on captive peoples. These contradictions are a cause of conflict. The list of disputes since the accession to independence by many countries in the 1960s is long and there are more to come. Some have now been settled or are at a standstill, while others are still

continuing. In practice, the rights of peoples clash with the prerogatives of the state, and since the machinery of coercion is primarily in the hands of the latter, the state will generally emerge victorious from the battle, at least initially. And this will continue to be the case until such time as the peoples resolve to 'prove themselves', as Charles Chaumont puts it, if need be by dint of arms.

The African peoples decided initially to see what they could do themselves. It was a delicate undertaking. The ethnic map of Africa is a complicated and puzzling jigsaw. It is estimated that more than 200 ethnic groups are to be found in Kenya alone, 136 in Cameroon and 65 in western Cameroon. And these cases are not unique. There are 18 different ethnic groups in the Malagasy Republic, while there are thought to be some 50 in Benin and 70 in Zaire. The colonial powers took precious little care to preserve their unity, and there are Mandingo in Gambia and Senegal; Agni-Nzima in Ghana and Ivory Coast; Ewe in Ghana, Togo and Benin; Yoruba and Bariba in Benin, Nigeria and Togo; Hausa and Kanuri in Niger and Nigeria; Fang in Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon; Wolof in Senegal and Gambia . . . which is hardly surprising, since 44 per cent of all African boundaries were traced along meridians or parallels, 30 per cent were straight lines or curves and only 26 per cent made use of natural boundaries (watercourses, lakes, mountain ranges, etc.). The second demarcation of Nigeria, for instance, was based on the arc of a circle, with the town of Sokoto at its centre, and Gambia was marked out by tracing lines parallel to the river, ten miles inland.

Responsibility for altering the old frontiers lay with the conferences of the African peoples, the first of which was held in Accra from 5 to 13 December 1958. The participants adopted a resolution on the subject whereby they expressed the view 'that the artificial frontiers and boundaries laid down by the imperialists to separate the African peoples are to the detriment of the Africans and should therefore be abolished or rectified'. They went on to affirm that the frontiers separating ethnic groups or splitting peoples of the same ethnic origin were unnatural and not conducive to peace and stability, and declared that the heads of state of neighbouring countries should co-operate to find a definitive solution to those problems such as would be most appropriate to the interests of the peoples concerned and so enhance the prospects of attaining the ideal of an African Commonwealth of free states. Under President Nkrumah's influence, the Conference denounced 'the artificial boundaries established by the imperialist powers to divide the peoples of Africa, particularly those which cut across groups of the same ethnic origin and divided up kindred peoples'. Lastly, the authors of the text launched a solemn appeal for the abolition or rectification or such frontiers in the near future, in such a way as would be more consistent with the true desires of the peoples concerned.

Over the years, the 'revisionist' movement, which had been particularly active in 1958, lost its impetus, and at the summit conference in Addis Ababa

in 1963, only the President of Ghana proposed to do away with the boundaries bequeathed by colonization, declaring that the peoples of Africa demanded the rejection of the frontiers separating them. But his declaration met with little response. The states, which had been threatened for a time, had had time to prepare for battle and consolidate their position. It was soon plain to all that a fresh partitioning of their territory more consistent with the interests of the peoples concerned was not an imminent prospect. The states were determined at all costs to defend their heritage. But the ethnic groups themselves still make their presence felt and from time to time try to shake the foundations of the fortress and throw off the yoke that weighs upon them.

The independent states were in fact cast in the mould forged by the colonial powers. And the successive partitions of the colonial period were often to the detriment of the local peoples. Who indeed took any notice of them when the European powers determined their spheres of influence? In addition to recognizing the Congo Free State, the main concern of the participants in the Berlin Conference from November 1884 to January 1885 was to regulate occupation of the coast. Once they had divided up the coastal area, they proceeded to share out the hinterland. The 'trinket treaties' which were imposed on the local populations could thereafter be upheld as a legal title in the face of any claim by a European state to a territory it alleged was *terra nullius*. The Western countries used these treaties in their relations with other states as proof of their occupation. Then came the major treaties between France, Great Britain and Germany, which were based on 'agreements', travel accounts and reports by administrators, and most of which were concluded in 1890. It was at this time that the French and the British partitioned the Abron Kingdom, through which ran the border between the Gold Coast and the Ivory Coast, the Kingdom of Porto-Novo and that of Ketu. That period came to an end in the second decade of the twentieth century, as the finishing touches were put to the work of demarcation and partition. The boundaries appeared to be finally established, although in fact there were instances where the occupying powers proceeded to make further partitions within the territories thus defined. An example was Upper Volta, which was detached from the Sudan in 1919. Wiped off the map altogether when it was annexed to the Ivory Coast in 1932, it was eventually restored to existence under a law passed on 4 September 1947.

Maltreated as they had been during the colonial era, the African peoples took hope again when that period came to an end. But their hopes were quickly dashed. Their disillusionment deepened with the attitude taken by the heads of the African states. When it came to deciding whether the boundaries ought to be revised or maintained, they did not dare make any decisions such as would disrupt the status quo, which was where their own interests lay.

Boundary revision versus acceptance of the status quo

At the Addis Ababa assembly in 1963, the heads of state or government were required to state their position on the following question: Should the newly-independent African countries reconsider the boundaries laid down by the colonial powers? By and large, their answer was no. The President of Mali, Modibo Keita, proposed to take 'Africa as it stands' and suggested that 'territorial claims' should be forgone. 'African unity', he declared, 'requires of each one of us total respect for the legacy bequeathed to us by the colonial system, in other words the maintaining of the present boundaries of our respective States'. The President of the Malagasy Republic, Philibert Tsiranana, took an even stronger line. He felt it was neither possible nor advisable to alter any boundaries on grounds of race or religion. 'If one were to apply these criteria', he added, 'there would be some African states which would be wiped off the map'. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia took a similar view. He felt it was necessary to 'respect the map and the boundaries drawn—badly or not—by the former colonizing powers'.

The views of these leading figures echoed prevailing opinion on the matter. Two voices were raised in disagreement, however. Abdullah Osman Adan, President of the Republic of Somalia, referring at length to territorial disputes between states, declared, 'It has been said that any attempt to readjust existing boundary agreements would only make matters worse and that as a result the position should not be altered. We do not share this view.' Morocco, which was not a signatory to the Charter on 25 May 1963, adopted the text on 20 September of the same year, but with certain explicit reservations. In the words of Mehdi Zentar, 'it is important that it be known that the signing of the Charter of the OAU shall on no account be construed as an explicit or implicit recognition of the status quo, which to date Morocco has refused to regard as such, or as a relinquishment of the endeavour to achieve our rights by the lawful means at our disposal'.

The Charter of the OAU does not refer explicitly to the intangibility of frontiers, and it was not until the summit meeting in Cairo on 21 July 1964 that a resolution was adopted associating territorial integrity with maintenance of the boundaries laid down by the colonial powers. 'Considering that border problems constitute a grave and permanent factor of dissension; conscious of the existence of extra-African manœuvres aiming at dividing the African States; considering further that the borders of African States, on the day of their independence, constitute a tangible reality', the assembly of heads of state and government solemnly declared 'that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence'. This text was not approved by Somalia, which only accepted the principle of maintaining the colonial boundaries subject to two conditions: that it be done

on the basis of just and equitable criteria, and that it be based on mutual agreement between the parties concerned.

This position was to be reaffirmed at the meetings of the non-aligned countries. In their final report, the participants in the Belgrade conference (1961) declared that, respecting scrupulously the territorial integrity of all states, they opposed by all available means any attempted annexation by other nations. The heads of state and government attending the Cairo summit (1964) reaffirmed their determination to oppose, by all available means, any attempt to jeopardize their sovereignty and territorial integrity. They pledged themselves 'to respect the frontiers existing on their achievement of national independence', but with the reservation that any portions of territory appropriated by the occupying forces or converted into autonomous bases for the use of the latter should be restored to the country acceding to independence.

Just as the American states had done in the nineteenth century, some of the African states felt the need to have their acceptance of the status quo regarding boundaries embodied in official texts. In an agreement concluded in November 1961, Liberia made it known that it would not contest its frontiers with Ivory Coast. Upper Volta subscribed to the principle of intangibility of frontiers in its demarcation protocol with Niger on 23 June 1964. On 4 January 1967, the representatives of Ethiopia and Sudan reiterated their desire to recognize and respect their common boundary as currently traced. In some cases, the adherence to boundaries in existence at the time of independence is proclaimed in documents of domestic law. Under Article 69 of the Constitution of the United Arab Republic, adopted on 5 March 1958, any treaties concluded previously between Egypt, Syria and foreign states would remain in force within the territorial limits laid down at the time the treaty was concluded, 'in accordance with international law'.

The international organizations actively supported these efforts to determine the confines of the African states, and in some instances even anticipated the general trend. For instance, the Charter of the United Nations (26 June 1945) recognizes the principle of territorial integrity. Under Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter, the Member States of the United Nations state that they shall 'refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State'. This attitude had been constantly reaffirmed. In December 1960, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples stated that 'all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory'. On 11 December 1969, Article 3 of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development declared that 'respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States' was considered one of the 'primary conditions of social progress and development'. On 24 October 1970, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning

Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations reaffirmed that 'the territorial integrity and political independence of the State are inviolable'; and the same was true of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States adopted on 12 December 1974. It is quite clear that the prevalent attitude was in favour of the status quo. The decolonization of boundaries was postponed.

Decolonization of boundaries?

In an attempt to decolonize the former boundaries, various methods were tried. Katanga and Biafra took to arms. Other boundary disputes were nipped in the bud by peaceful means. In order to settle these disputed claims, politicians and international organizations had to work out laborious compromises, some of which were very much to the benefit of minority groups split by state boundaries (as in the disputes between Ghana and Togo, between Ghana and Upper Volta, etc). The causes of other conflicts were primarily political or economic (for example, the conflict between Algeria and Morocco). The state of peace resulting from a particular settlement can prove to be extremely shaky. Not all the efforts to settle disputes are successful, however, and some boundary conflicts persist today, some of which are particularly acute. Ethiopia is at the centre of two such disputes. There are others of varying importance which are distinctive in that they are desert wars in which there are considerable economic interests at stake, namely the dispute between Libya and Chad, the Western Sahara affair, etc.

The deadlock to which these disputes have led raises the question of the justification for boundaries. Should they then be done away with? Solutions have been proposed along these lines. If they were applied, an antidote might be found to the 'Balkanization' of Africa, the splintering of the continent. African unity is one of the remedies, and it has its advocates. In 1963, at the Addis Ababa conference, Dr Nkrumah denounced the existence of boundaries, seeing them as a fatal vestige of colonialism liable to lead the African peoples into civil war, and concluded that African unity alone could heal the festering sore of boundary disputes between the various African states. The Charter of the OAU itself refers to a 'larger unity transcending ethnic and national differences'. Other regional or continent-wide groups have in fact sprung up alongside the OAU (Entente Council, the Organisation Commune Africaine Mauricienne (OCAM), etc.), and organizations of an economic type have supplemented the political action undertaken (Communauté Économique États Afriques Ouest [CEDEAO], African Development Bank, etc.). These institutions still serve a useful purpose. But they are organizations based on co-operation, and their member states do not relinquish any of the prerogatives

associated with sovereignty. The organizations propose and the states dispose. A continent-wide African government is not a prospect for the near future. States and boundaries both still have a long life ahead of them.

The fact must be faced that African unity is still a pipe-dream. It is argued by some that we should come down to earth and forgo that idea for an apparently less ambitious project, which would consist of setting up a cluster of federations on the African continent. Since all boundaries cannot be eliminated at one stroke, why not begin by doing away with some of them? But any attempts along these lines have misfired. In Africa, the unitary state has triumphed hands down over the federal state in the contest between them. The concept of boundaries has been strengthened as a result, so that a better policy would be to try to live with it and give it credit where credit belongs. Another suggestion might be to consider replacing boundary lines by frontier zones, which would be given a special legal status allowing for co-operation between border authorities, more flexible customs arrangements and border-crossing facilities, and shared utilization and exploitation of rivers and certain resources. Whatever solution is adopted, the African states must also endeavour to find the most appropriate answer to the problem of minorities, and refuse to become a 'prison for peoples'. This might go some way to eradicating the damage caused by the colonial powers which, by drawing lines on the maps of regions where the white man had never set foot, as Lord Salisbury put it, placed a canker in the heart of Africa.

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Economic and social history in Volume VIII

Jan J. Milewski

Selection of problems: 'general' or 'specific' history in Volume VIII?

For many reasons, Volume VIII of the *General History of Africa* should have, in my opinion, a structure different from that of the earlier ones.

First, in the previous volumes the reader can find discussion of many problems and factors which are also important for the content of Volume VIII. For example, ethnic structure, cultural background, types of colonial policy in various countries, etc. So in many cases it will be sufficient to refer to an earlier volume and chapter.

Second, contemporary history imposes on the historian such a broad range of facts, data, sources, etc., that the selection of problems becomes even more important here than it is in writing about earlier periods. Both in terms of problems and facts, contemporary history must be extremely selective if it is going to be a scholarly success.

Third, Volume VIII is supposed to include a sort of 'general' history of the continent of that period. Whatever 'general' means, it should include both internal transformations of the African societies, as well as Africa's external relations. For the international team of historians this is a fascinating but very difficult task. The experience we have had so far in this matter seems to indicate that discussion of the contemporary inter-state relations of African states, as well as of relations of African states with non-African states and powers, attracts much more attention than other, no less important subjects. It seems that at the present stage of our work the only satisfactory solution to that problem would be to make a clear distinction between political and diplomatic history in Volume VIII. I realize that this view may not be very popular. I am not advocating the elimination of any single problem, however, but only suggesting that they all be given a very clearly defined place both in the discussion and in the Volume.

Fourth, contemporary history should help us to understand the contemporary problems of the continent, which means the problems of today and tomorrow. None of us wants to see Volume VIII outdated by the time it goes

to the printer. If we want it to have lasting value, this can be achieved only through the discovery and explanation of mechanisms of change in African societies, not just by publishing a collection of facts, figures, names and short-term developments. The realization of such an ambitious task, I strongly believe, calls for a selective approach to the history of Africa after 1935.

Having this in mind, I would suggest that the main emphasis in the Volume should be placed on the social and economic history of contemporary Africa. I repeat, this does not mean that I am suggesting the elimination of any single problem from the other fields of historical science. My proposal is concerned only with the question of proportions and priorities. Besides the problems already discussed, the following factors also argue in favour of giving priority to economic and social history in the Volume.

1. Social and economic changes are the key factors of all developments taking place on the continent, although they are very often overshadowed by the spectacular political events. If we are going to discover the mechanisms of change and contribute to a real understanding of the contemporary history of African societies, we have to study first of all the basic conditions and factors of change. That is the only way of searching for the truth, which is the main task of the historian.
2. Social and economic history, as far as most African countries are concerned, is a very neglected subject. In our international venture, we are therefore getting a chance to fill a serious gap in the knowledge about Africa. At the same time, our research in that field may stimulate studies by other scholars from African countries. That is another important reason to concentrate our work on the proposed aspects of contemporary history.
3. Serious study of contemporary social and economic history seems to be the best way, if not the only one, to understand many aspects of the political history of the continent. It relates very closely to both the internal as well as external political life. In terms of internal politics: how one can seriously explain the mechanisms of rule of many regimes without studying their associations with the country's enterprise, without knowing their links with specific social groups, without asking about economics of the particular ruling group? The same applies to the external political life of many countries. These things are so well known, that they do not require further discussion in this paper.

Once we agree on economic and social history as the main focus of Volume VIII, we should ask what particular approach within that branch of history would be the most useful in our work. That brings us to the very old question facing historians.

An old dilemma of the historian: single-road or multi-road development?

I am reminded here of a very old dilemma confronting historians, because of its serious influence on the choice of problems studied within social and economic history, as well as on the choice of methodology. To put this old dilemma in a very simple way: do we subscribe to the concept that the human societies developed along a single road, common to all societies, or do we believe that an approach that assumes that there were many roads of development is more fruitful from the scientific point of view? This is a fundamental question of the philosophy of culture. For the historian it is also a crucial choice, since it implies a choice of methodology, a choice of problems studied and of the eventual nature of the work.[1]

The single-road concept originated with the birth of modern political economy. That concept was well expressed by Adam Smith. To have development of any backward country, one needs little more, he said, '. . . than peace, low taxes, bearable administration and justice, and then all the rest will move by the natural way things are going'. Later Karl Marx put the idea of the single road in a clearer way, since that was the basis of his whole concept of the transformation of societies. In the introduction to the first edition of *Das Kapital*, he made a statement that remains the classic and shortest explanation of the single-road concept. 'A country that is more developed from the industrial point of view shows the less developed country a picture of its own future.[2] That single-road concept has subsequently been developed by many authors since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Today it determines the approach, methodology and main spheres of interest of many historians.

At the same time, one should not overlook the concept of multi-road development. This concept, originating with the works of Spengler, later developed by Toynbee, still seems to have many followers among historians, both African and non-African. One can understand why some historians today feel that the multi-road approach offers them a better chance for historical analysis.

There is no need to continue discussing the question of single-road or multi-road concepts. We should rather try to find out which approach to the study of contemporary history of Africa would give us the best tools of research and the best chances of understanding all the complexities of today's Africa. The proposal made in that connection by the renowned economic historian Witold Kula seems to be very suitable for our task. In studying contemporary social and economic history, Kula proposes to accept one common starting point for all societies around the world. That starting point would be the most striking phenomenon of the modern world, according to Kula, i.e. industrial civilization. The phenomenon lies not only in the very existence of such a civilization, but in the fact that all societies around the

world are trying, in one way or another, to imitate it. So, Kula says, instead of disputing about the single- or multi-road concepts, historians should concentrate on studying the different roads that lead to the future unity.[3]

It goes without saying that this proposition is as far as possible from advocating any simplifications in the work of historians. Just the opposite: in order to understand all that is common, Kula says, the historian has to respect and study carefully all that is distinct. The historian, he believes, should not only try to find regularities common to different societies, but should also try to discover all possible irregularities in the historical processes. And not just for the sake of finding irregularities, but with the aim of trying to find regularities within irregularities. No irregularities in the processes are incidental.

The main problems of the economic and social history of Africa: 1935–80

Having in mind the propositions made above, let us now consider what are the main areas of the social and economic history of contemporary Africa that should be given preponderance in Volume VIII. Of course it is an extremely vast problem, and one can either write a book on it, or put it very briefly. The second is the only solution at the moment.

All historians will agree that the most important single economic process in Africa during the period of 1935–80 was the development of the market economy. This process was taking place, as we know full well, in very peculiar conditions, which were not shared by any other continent: Africa was subject to colonial rule, colonial exploitation, absolute dominance of foreign capital, absolute control of economic relations with the outer world and markets by the foreign firms, competition of foreign goods in home markets, etc. It is not surprising that in such conditions the development of the African market economy was very slow and unstable. Nevertheless, in spite of all these difficulties, we find very strong and clear attemps on the part of African societies to overcome those difficulties, to raise their own standard of living, to organize enterprise, to create employment, and to compete with Europeans even in situations where this seemed impossible. The following seem to be the most important economic processes, which have largely been responsible for extensive social and political transformations of the African societies:

Development of market production by the African peasant for three destinations: local, domestic and foreign markets. This process had numerous trends in various countries of the continent, and its intensity also varied over the period covered by Volume VIII. As far as West Africa is concerned, several subsequent trends in this respect may be mentioned briefly: revival after the Great Depression (1936–9); slump of the Second

World War (1939–45); slow-down after war revival (1946–9); 'boom' of the early 1950s, and so on. It goes without saying that this development was determined by numerous factors caused by local determinants: the development of mining, industry, plantations, etc., creating local demands for foods; the development of the domestic market and interregional exchange of home-made foods, other goods and services (for example—Nigeria from late 1930s onwards); and most of all by the fluctuations in foreign demand and the prices paid for African agricultural products. Therefore it would be very unwise to try to determine any 'general' trends in this respect for the whole continent. One would strongly recommend that numerous studies be made on this problem in various parts of the continent. If that is not possible, at least some case studies should be carried out on the main types of market production development.

Growth of non-agricultural economic activities outside the sector of European-run economy (trade, crafts, transportation, food preparation etc.). These activities have been concentrated in the towns, although there are very many exceptions to that rule.

Economic migration, stimulated by numerous needs for a higher income than could be achieved in the place of residence. Such migrations have ranged from local through regional to inter-colonial and later inter-state ones. The social, economic and political importance of these migrations cannot be overestimated. When the period after 1960 is studied, the migrations outside the continent cannot be neglected, especially as far as highly skilled labour is concerned.

Growth of a new social stratification, caused by the factors mentioned above. The new stratification has been based on: personal wealth; prestige coming from highly qualified professions, which is very often closely associated with personal wealth; or possession of a high post within the administrative, bureaucratic, military or academic structures. The new ways of social upgrading do not, of course, eliminate those that existed earlier in African societies. Therefore the result of the growth of a market economy, as far as social stratification is concerned, can be characterized briefly by a rapid increase in the number of criteria governing social stratification, and the continued enlargement of inter-relations and interdependence of the various types of social status.

Among the processes noted as giving rise to new social strates, the fast growth of the African wage employment groups is one of the most important. Again this growth had different trends and rates in various parts of the continent. One should analyse it in terms of the branches of the economy during the period after 1935. Special attention should be given also to employment in the colonial administration before 1960, and in the

independent administration after independence. Employment in the public sector after independence should be studied very carefully, since in many countries after 1960 that sector became the largest single employer. The change in the professional structure is one of the key problems.

The processes of the new social stratification also include the growth of African entrepreneurship. Whether particular authors agree or not on the question of development of African capitalism, the last process cannot be missed. It is a well-known fact that the rate of growth of African enterprise after 1935 was different in various countries, and that this process was differentiated even more from the late 1950s onwards. In some countries it is still insignificant, whereas in others, entrepreneurs became the most dynamic social factor of economic development. In countries like Ghana, Kenya, Ivory Coast and Nigeria, to mention only a few, it is impossible to understand the social, political and economic development after the early 1950s without studying the role of the African entrepreneur.

The growth of industrial employment after 1935, and especially from the early 1950s, makes a case for itself in many countries. Looking on that problem from the point of view of the continent as a whole, one is facing a variety of quite contradictory trends. In many countries up to now this development hardly appears at all, or just does not exist. In others, like southern Africa or Egypt, we have substantial industrial employment already at the beginning of the period under study and continuous growth, although at different rates, up to now. In other countries, industrial development appears during the last decade of the colonial rule (Nigeria), and gathers momentum from the 1960s onwards, as a part of the planned development. In some other countries, industrialization and industrial employment start only as a direct result of government economic planning a few years after independence, and continue at quite a substantial rate up to the end of the period studied (Algeria).

The methodology of studies of the main economic and social processes

The methodology applied in the research is an integral part of the work of each historian, and it is likely that different methodologies will be applied in Volume VIII. Therefore it would make no sense to discuss here which one would be the most useful for the problems mentioned, since the choice of methodologies is closely associated with the choice of authors, and that is the task of the Scientific Committee. Mention may just be made of the two

most general approaches to the problems described above. They may be called quantitative and Marxian. The first one will put the main stress on the rate and size of the changes, whereas the second will analyse the processes in terms of class analysis and of the growth of social conflicts caused by the development of the class structure.

Whatever methodology is used, it seems to be in the interest of the whole work that it should be applied very flexibly, paying continuous attention to all the social and economic factors which determine the individuality of African cultures. A historian studying the economic and social developments of the period ought to make use, as far as possible, of the achievements of other social sciences, including sociology, ethnology, studies of ideologies, psychology and so on. This open-minded approach is the only one which can protect the author from any strict divisions of studied societies into 'modern' and 'traditional', 'closed' and 'stabilized', or into 'classes', 'groups' and so on. Apart from some exceptional cases, it seems that in all African countries the processes of social stratification and transformation are far from being completed. Therefore the main focus should be on the analysis of the multiplicity of new inter-relations and inter-dependencies within the societies, which are created by the processes studied.

Development of a 'liberal', 'open' economy, or a capitalist one?

Having in mind the above suggestions, we may consider the problem whether the development of Africa after 1935 can be studied in terms of development of capitalism on the continent. Two observations should be made at the beginning.

Firstly, the objection to the study of economic development in terms of capitalist formation is not a phenomenon of African historiography alone. As we know, the concept of capitalism up to now has had very bad press among many European historians. Up to now, many of them refuse to study the subject, and even restrain from using the term at all. One can quote numerous economic histories of Europe of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where the word capitalism does not appear once. That does not, of course, apply to the term and concept of capital. The attitude of European historians in this respect has influenced many African historians. Although very few economic histories of African countries have been published so far, the term capitalism hardly appears in them.

The second observation relates to the national origin of capitalism, which is of considerable importance in the case of the history of colonial Africa. If we agree to use the concept of capitalism as a research tool, we can agree

further (with the necessary simplification) that in the history of Europe we find a national, or indigenous capitalism developing. In other words, the development of capitalism in England was dominated by Englishmen, in Germany by Germans, in France by Frenchmen, etc.

In colonial Africa, the situation was just the opposite. Capitalism was brought to the continent as an entirely foreign system. What is more important, it was imposed on African peoples in the conditions of foreign political domination, under colonial rule. Therefore, at the beginning of the European expansion in Africa, in the late nineteenth century, the only active capitalism was a foreign brand. The expansion of foreign firms and capital to Africa is well known, and need not be dwelt upon, but this subject cannot, in my opinion, be neglected in Volume VIII.

More interesting for our present discussion is the development of African capitalism, capitalism created by Africans themselves. Since I wrote a book on the early development of capitalism in Nigeria from 1900 to 1945, I would not like to describe the process in itself now. Let us rather consider what we mean by the capitalist system. That may provide material for the discussion about how far we can speak of the development of African capitalism in other African countries. There are many definitions of capitalism, but for the historian the most suitable, as far as I can see, is the one prepared by the economic historians from my university. Its value lies mainly in the fact that it tries to enclose a wide range of factors which build the system. At the same time, the definition proposed for discussion includes the most important aspects, as seen by the Marxian and non-Marxian Western historians and economists.

Capitalism is an economic system, according to that definition, which at the time of its early development is very progressive, and has the following characteristics:

All means of production (tools, land, natural resources) are unrestricted private property. This property is not affected by the privileges of any other individual or group.

The above-mentioned means of production are used as capital, not just to produce for the direct needs of the owner (farmers, family, etc.). The purpose of the owner's activity is to achieve a money income with the use of the means of production.

A growing part of the output is devoted to the market and to the anonymous buyer of goods produced. Less and less of the output is devoted to the direct needs of the producer. An increasing proportion of the needs of the producer are satisfied by goods bought on the market.

Paid labour becomes a very important factor of production. The labour employed is free in social and political terms, and no factors other than pay make people work. The employer has to calculate the cost of labour

into the economics of his production, which was not taken into account in the earlier systems (feudalism, communities, etc.).

The subsistence household is separate from the other economic activity. In other words, people look for their income either by developing market production side by side with their household needs (for example, a farmer producing for the market), or by working as paid labourers.

Relations between people become commercialized. Former social links are replaced by the material links and dependencies. All economic activity of the people becomes the subject of economic calculation. All factors and aims of the economic activity are expressed in a comparative unit of measure, namely money.

Economic activity based on such calculation becomes more rational, since it has to take numerous factors into account. Economic rationality eliminates many 'traditional' habits of handling the economic activity. That change opens a wide field for the individual incentive, for the choice of methods and spheres of activity, for competition.

Maximum profit is the main stimulus and purpose of economic activity. That applies especially to the class which accumulates most of the means of production in its hands. That class has a strong tendency to increase its capital, and to invest it in those areas where the highest rate of profit can be expected. That factor plays a crucial role in the acceleration of economic development.

Sources of social and economic history of Africa after 1935

The opinion of historians about the availability of sources for African history has changed entirely during the last two decades. Up to the early 1960s, there was a general feeling that the shortage of written sources would hamper any serious study of the African past. Since that time, another feeling has emerged, a fear lest the small group of historians of Africa may not be able to cope with the abundance of written sources. That applies especially to the twentieth century studies. In recent years we can observe continuous growth of the source collections in many African countries, as well as those outside the continent. One can expect that in the course of the next two decades this growth will continue. Therefore, for the group working on Volume VIII the problem lies not in finding the sources, but in a selection of the most important ones. The selection of each author is guided by his own interests and knowledge; nevertheless, I should like to make some suggestions on this point. It seems to me that the two types of source material in particular should be given priority in preparing the volume.

One major source is material held in private African archives and collections. This type of source is best exemplified by the enormous collection of Herbert Macaulay papers, preserved at the University Library, Ibadan. Of similar value, although for an earlier period, is Coker's collection in the same library. One can find comparable collections in the libraries and archives of Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Senegal. Without serious studies of these archives, it is impossible to write the social and economic history of Africa after 1935. Many collections are still in the hands of the families involved, and one wonders whether Unesco could not help in transferring them to the archives of the particular countries (for example, the Odutola papers).

The second major source for historians of the period is oral, and Volume VIII cannot be completed without extensive use of such sources. No one can set about writing on any aspect of contemporary African social and economic history without consulting oral sources, including workers, migrant farmers, labour leaders of the various ranks, entrepreneurs, traders, and others. So the problem is not whether oral sources are important or not, but what types of oral source are the most crucial for Volume VIII, and how to gain access to them.

All other sources do not require discussion in this paper, since they will be the subject of general discussion at the Seminar.

The suggestions presented above concentrate on only one aspect of the contemporary history of Africa. This does not mean that the author underestimates other problems, which are of concern to other scholars. Whether the main weight in Volume VIII should be given to the economic and social transformation of African societies from 1935 onwards is a matter for discussion.

Notes

1. W. Kula, *Problems and Methods of Economic History*, pp. 685–9. Warsaw, 1963 (In Polish.)
2. Quoted from a Polish translation, so accuracy after double translation is subject to reservation.
3. K. Piesowicz and E. Kaczynska (eds.), *Modern Economic History*, p. 133, Warsaw, 1978. (In Polish.)

Part II

Report of the meeting of experts on the methodology of contemporary African history

Introduction

The meeting was convened by the Director-General of Unesco in pursuance of resolution 4/1.2/1 adopted by the twentieth session of the General Conference and took place in Ouagadougou from 17 to 22 May 1979.

The meeting was attended by the following experts: Professors H. A. Aguessy (Benin), J. F. Ade Ajayi (Nigeria), K. Arhin (Ghana), A. Asiwaju (Nigeria), D. Chanaiwa (Zimbabwe), R. Cornevin (France), C. Coulon (France), J. Devisse (France), P. Diagne (Senegal), P. Gonidec (France), E. Jouve (France), J. Kambou (Upper Volta), J. Ki-Zerbo (Upper Volta), G. Madiega (Upper Volta), A. A. Mazrui (Kenya), J. Milewski (Poland), B. A. Ogot (Kenya), B. O. Olorunthimehin (Nigeria), N. Shamuyarira (ZANU) and B. Verhaegen (Belgium).

The following experts had been invited to the meeting but were unable to come to Ouagadougou: S. Duputhe (PAC), C. Legum (United Kingdom), I. Mandaza (Zimbabwe), S. Mogale (ANC) and Y. Tandon (United Republic of Tanzania).

The following experts were also invited to the meeting but apologized for not being able to attend: Professors A. Boahen (Ghana), J. H. Clarke (United States), J. Coleman (United States), B. Davidson (United Kingdom), J. Fage (United Kingdom), I. Fall (Senegal), A. Gromyko (USSR), K. Ilunga (Zaire), A. Laroui (Morocco), A. Letnev (USSR), W. Rodney (Guyana) and L. Sylla (Ivory Coast).

The following observers were invited to attend the meeting: the Organization of African Unity, the Institut Cultural Africain, the Association des Historiens Africains, the Holy See and the Société Africaine de Culture, and Messrs Nacanabo, Bayili and Touré, of Upper Volta. Only Mr Khietega, representing the Association des Historiens Africains, and Mr Bayili attended the meeting. Mr Sori Conté, who was to have represented the OAU, was not present.

The Director-General of Unesco was represented by Mr Maurice Glélé, African Cultures Programme specialist, Cultural Studies Division, Sector of

Culture and Communication. The Voltaic National Commission for Unesco gave its full support to the organization and smooth running of the meeting.

The opening session was held on 17 May 1979 at 9.45 a.m., under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr Domba Konaté, Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of the Upper Volta, in the presence of His Excellency Mr A. Traoré, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and representatives of the diplomatic corps. In his opening address, Mr Domba Konaté praised Unesco's achievement in bringing the monumental *General History of Africa* project to the stage where it was now being published. He expressed the hope that the experts would do excellent work and have a most enjoyable stay in Upper Volta, and proceeded to declare the meeting open.

In his reply, Mr Glélé, speaking on behalf of the Director-General of Unesco, thanked the Government of Upper Volta for having organized the meeting. He then reported on the state of progress of the project as a whole and called on the experts to situate Volume VIII in the historical perspective and line of continuity traced by the other volumes, and to give most careful study to the questions put to them. (The statement made by the representative of the Director-General is given in Appendix I.)

Composition of the Bureau

The meeting of experts appointed the following officers: Professor J. Ki-Zerbo (Upper Volta), Chairman; Professors B. O. Olorunthimehin (Nigeria) and D. Chanaiwa (Zimbabwe), Vice-Chairmen; Professor A. A. Mazrui (Kenya, Editor of Volume VIII), Discussion Organizer; Professor J. Devisse (France), Rapporteur.

Adoption of the agenda

A long and at times animated discussion was spurred by the presentation of two draft agendas, one which the Unesco Secretariat had addressed to the experts and the other presented by the Editor of Volume VIII, who wished to have his draft considered in place of the one proposed by the Secretariat.

Provisional draft agenda presented by the Secretariat

1. Can the history of contemporary Africa be written? The methodology to be adopted: the different approaches possible.
2. The period to be covered: 1935–75 or 1935–80?
3. The problem of sources.
4. Problems of conceptualization and definition (e.g. 'ethnonyms', 'clans', 'tribes', 'kingdoms', 'empires', 'feudality', 'state', 'nation', etc.).
5. The choice of themes.

6. The different interpretations of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in contemporary political Africa.
7. Case studies:
   (a) the questions raised by the writing of the history of the military regimes;
   (b) the political thinking of Nkrumah, Nasser and Lumumba;
   (c) border conflicts (e.g. Mauritania and the Horn of Africa);
   (d) Afro-Arab relations;
   (e) contemporary civil wars (e.g. Zaire and Nigeria).
8. Recommendations and suggestions for the preparation of Volume VIII.

Draft agenda presented by the Editor of Volume VIII, merging his own draft agenda and that of the Secretariat

1. Can the history of contemporary Africa be written?
   (a) The general global context.
   (b) The period to be covered: 1935–75 or 1935–80?
2. The historian and problems of subjectivism and personal bias.
3. The historian and domestic political sensitivity in African countries.
4. The historian and international diplomatic sensitivity in one's own times.
5. Contemporary history and rapid social change.
6. Contemporary history and access to sources.
7. Contemporary history and comparative methodology:
   (a) problems of conceptualization and definition;
   (b) 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in contemporary methodologies;
   (c) problems of data collection and selection;
   (d) the vocabulary of analysis and discourse (e.g. 'ethnonyms', 'clans', 'tribes', 'kingdoms', 'empires', 'feudalism', 'capitalism', 'class', 'state', 'nation');
   (e) epistemology and methodology.
8. Basic themes of contemporary history:
   (a) culture change and social change;
   (b) the tensions of territorial identity (e.g. border conflicts like those of the Horn of Africa);
   (c) the tensions of ethnic identity (civil wars like those of Nigeria, Sudan, Chad and Zaire);
   (d) the tensions of civil-military relations;
   (e) the challenges of economic and social development;
   (f) the search for new or relevant values and ideas (e.g. the dilemmas faced by Nkrumah, Nasser, Lumumba and Fanon);
   (g) the study of liberation and decolonization;
   (h) the study of Africa in world affairs.

The Volume Editor felt that it was the task of the meeting to reply, as it had done in Warsaw, to the questions which he was raising in his capacity as Editor and which he had set out in two papers. The draft agenda he was putting forward was designed to meet his requirements, while at the same time incorporating additional items taken from the Secretariat's agenda.

The Secretariat pointed out that the draft it had presented complied in all respects with the requests made by the International Scientific Committee in the following documents:

1. The report of the meeting of the Bureau in Paris in July 1977 (pages 8 and 9 of the English version):

Having examined the proposals of various countries wishing to hold symposia on the contents of Volume IIII, the Bureau approved the following proposals:

(a) *A single general seminar* should be held in Africa at a date which would enable its results to be used in the drafting of Volume VIII. The following subjects were submitted forthwith for reflection and research. They would serve as a basis for the meetings and other work preparatory to the single seminar, and for the work of the seminar itself.

Problems of methodology

(i) Can we write the contemporary history of Africa?
(ii) Problems of sources.
(iii) Problems of substance. What are the historically important topics in contemporary Africa?
(iv) Problems of interpretation: history vs. contemporary orthodoxies and heresies.

Case studies

(i) Problems inherent in writing histories of military regimes in Africa.
(ii) History of decolonization: (a) southern Africa; (b) the Horn of Africa.
(iii) Africa and the Second World War.
(iv) Afro-Arab relations: 1935–75.

2. The report of the plenary session of the Committee in Nairobi in 1978 (page 44 of the English version):

Three themes were proposed in addition to those already selected by the Bureau in Paris: the methodology of present-day history, the meeting-place of research techniques differing from those in conventional history; the end-purpose of such historical research; rural development in Africa.

The members of the International Scientific Committee were invited to put forward further proposals.

3. The report of the meeting of experts on 'Ethnonyms and toponyms' held in Paris in July 1978:

> (ii) in the first instance, it would be advisable for the proposals made under point V.2 of this report to be referred to the symposium scheduled to be held in Ouagadougou in May 1979 in connection with the preparation of Volume VIII.
>
> The experts considered that it was no longer possible, without thorough scrutiny, to use words whose meanings appeared to have constantly fluctuated or to have been ambiguous in the course of the discussions. This was true, for instance, of words like 'ethnonyms', 'clans', 'tribes', 'kingdoms', 'empires', 'feudalism', 'state', 'nation', etc. They accordingly considered that a very substantial effort would have to be made to conceptualize, and hence define, African terms that were much more suited to describing the socio-cultural conditions which the peoples of Africa had experienced or were experiencing.
>
> Until such time as the desired results were achieved, the experts suggested that an effort be made to avoid the use of words inherited from the period when the history of Africa was written outside the continent and was inspired by alien concepts, not to mention deeper motivations that sometimes cast light on the lack of understanding of, or contempt for, the peoples of Africa and their history and institutions.
>
> Terms that are considered as not being very appropriate could, in the first instance, be used in inverted commas. This is the practice used in this report in respect of the term 'ethnonyms', for which the experts were unable to find a satisfactory definition. In point of fact, this term could be replaced by other types of paraphrase, and the same is true of many other cases.

After a variety of compromise proposals had been put forward, the Bureau of the meeting merged the two drafts on the basis of the document presented by the Secretariat and proposed the following agenda, which was adopted unanimously:

1. Can the history of contemporary Africa be written? The methodology to be adopted; the different approaches possible.
   (a) The general global context.
   (b) The period to be covered: 1935–75 or 1935–80?
   (c) The historian and problems of subjectivism and personal bias.
   (d) The historian and domestic political sensitivity in African countries.
   (e) The historian and international diplomatic sensitivity in one's own times.
   (f) Contemporary history and rapid social change.
   (g) Epistemology and methodology.
2. The problem of sources.
3. Contemporary history and comparative methodology.
   (a) Problems of conceptualization and definition (e.g. 'ethnonyms', 'clans', 'tribes', 'kingdoms', 'empires', 'feudality', 'state', 'class', 'capitalism', 'nation', etc.).

(b) Problems of data collection and selection.
(c) The different interpretations of 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in contemporary political Africa.

4. The choice of themes.
5. Case studies:
   (a) the questions raised by the writing of the history of the military regimes;
   (b) the political thinking of Nkrumah, Nasser and Lumumba;
   (c) border conflicts (e.g. Mauritania and the Horn of Africa);
   (d) Afro-Arab relations, 1935–80;
   (e) contemporary civil wars (e.g. Zaire and Nigeria);
   (f) how to study liberation and decolonization.
6. Questions raised by the Volume Editor.
7. Recommendations and suggestions for the preparation of Volume VIII.
8. Miscellaneous.

After a preliminary discussion, the meeting considered the working documents commissionned by Unesco or presented by a number of experts:

Dilemmas of African historiography and the philosophy of the Unesco *General History of Africa*. A. A. Mazrui.

Subjectivism and the study of current history: political, psychological and methodological problems. A. A. Mazrui.

Problems of writing contemporary African history. J. F. Ade Ajayi.

West Africa in Marxist historiography. A. B. Letnev.

Migrant African Labour and public policies of Southern Africa: The human side of economic interdependence. D. Chanaiwa.

Contemporary history and politics. W. Rodney.

The problems of contemporary African historiography. C. Coulon.

Towards an ethnohistory of African state boundaries. A. I. Asiwaju.

Changing views about Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba and Haile Selassie. C. Legum.

Border conflicts in Mauritania and the Horn of Africa. P. F. Gonidec.

Methodology of the history of contemporary Africa: Sources on the history of recent civil wars in Zaire. B. Verhaegen.

Africa and the test of its borders. E. Jouve.

Towards the economic and social history in Volume VIII. J. Milewski.

Discussion of the agenda

Items 1(a) and (b)

The experts first heard a statement by Mr Glélé recalling the reasons why the International Scientific Committee had considered the meeting necessary. Professor Mazrui, Volume Editor and discussion organizer, said that, in his opinion, the purpose of the meeting was to enlighten him about his work as Editor, which involved not only co-ordinating the chapters and drafting the chapter headings but also organizing the entire volume, in which it had to be possible for his ideas to find expression.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that a bibliography covering the period from 1935 to 1978 had been requested by Professors Cornevin and Olorunthimehin.

The experts were unanimous in replying in the affirmative to the first question: 'Can the history of contemporary Africa be written?', although none of them underestimated the difficulties inherent in the venture. There was in fact a strong conviction that a question of duty was involved and that the study of independent Africa had to be carried forward as far as possible.

Discussions concerning the starting date of 1935 were virtually irrelevant, since a decision to that effect had been taken by the International Scientific Committee and the date chosen governed the breakdown of the subjects dealt with as between Volumes VII and VIII. Two proposals, one to make 1960 the starting point of the study, and the other to start with the end of the world crisis in 1929 and its impact on Africa instead of with the Ethiopian War, were not adopted.

The experts were unanimous in rejecting 1975 as the closing date. Many of them felt that the study ought to be continued to a time as close as possible to the date of publication of the volume and that, in any event, important recent events should not be left outside the scope of the work. However, the idea was put forward in a variety of forms that the final date at which the authors concluded their study could, with the Editor's approval, be 'modulated' according to a time-scale, depending on the actual contents of the chapters.

The meeting accordingly considered that the most suitable title for the volume would be '*Africa from 1935 to the present day*'.

If another title were to be adopted, it ought not to be 'Africa in the age of decolonization', since the experts considered that the concept of decolonization was inadequate to cover the whole series of events that had taken place in Africa during the period in question. It was suggested that other concepts be used in addition, and the terms 'liberation' and 'development' were put forward. A clear definition of the proposed content of those terms would

probably have to be given before they could be used, as will be seen further in this report.

One expert suggested that the following title be adopted: 'Africa from 1935 to the present day. From Africa under colonialism to independent Africa: decolonization, liberation, development and independence'.

Items 1(c), (d) and (e)

The experts did not feel that the problems described by the Volume Editor in connection with the three points raised gave cause for concern. They had largely been resolved by the working methods laid down by the Committee. Those methods had so far been effective in circumventing the drawbacks involved, which were by no means specific to Volume VIII.

With regard to the question of subjectivism and personal bias, several experts even felt that there could be no question of historians being cold and distant. Provided they were aware of their passions and their subjective reactions, and provided they stated from what premises they were writing, historians had every right to display warmth and sympathy towards the subjects they were handling and the outlook they adopted. They also had to show the necessary rigour and honesty by mentioning viewpoints other than their own, and they should not set themselves up as being the sole dogmatic witnesses of what they were describing.

In that connection, Professor Ogot, President of the International Scientific Committee, said that the Committee would be extremely attentive to the choice of authors, in agreement with the Volume Editor, and to reading the chapters, when the time came.

The specific problems involved in selecting authors resident in certain countries of southern Africa which were not members of Unesco or the United Nations systems gave rise to a point of clarification by the Secretariat, in line with the precedents already established by the Committee. There was no discussion on a number of concepts, such as 'capitalism', which some members of the Committee might be prompted to criticize or reject, since that was an issue for the Scientific Committee.

Items 1(f) and (g)

In an impressive tacit consensus, the experts considered that these two points were of capital importance, and they were accordingly the focal point of the discussions.

The concept of 'rapid social change' gave rise to considerable differences of opinion. In the Volume Editor's view, such rapid social change was symptomatic of present-day Africa. It was quantifiable and was bound up with the

increased pace of history. He cited the example of population growth and man's increased productive capacity all over the world, although it was arguable whether the second criterion was applicable in Africa.

Differences of opinion were voiced regarding the viewpoint adopted by the Volume Editor. These were naturally not concerned so much with the obvious fact that developments in Africa—as in the rest of the world—have been much more rapid in the past forty years than in previous decades as with the choice of methodology for studying the changes observed.

In the first place, the concept of 'modernization', as used in the past by some scholars, was severely questioned. Those scholars claimed to have discovered a method of approaching 'rapid change', by contrasting, sector by sector, the efforts of the modernizing élites with the inhibiting influence of the 'traditional' elements of the population, who were often branded as 'feudal'. The method laid stress on the 'modernizing' discourse of the authorities, without taking any account of the 'small fry'—the people left out of history—or even of the desire for other forms of change felt by other sectors or social classes opposed to the people in power.

One expert put forward a further set of critical observations based on an identical analysis of the grave dangers involved in studying fragmentary and piecemeal phenomena. By chopping up the economic and social facts that he wished to describe, the Volume Editor would be depriving himself of a method of explanation that would shed light on overall patterns. For centuries, and especially since the last century, all parts of the planet had been moving into the era of industrial and electro-industrial development, either directly or on the rebound. Whether Africa liked it or not, it was involved in that long-term movement as a supplier of labour and raw materials and also as a consumer. The well-known book by the late Sir Eric Williams was cited as an illustration of some of the effects of that development on Africa.

None of the participants denied the pertinence of the analysis. On the contrary, one of the experts underscored the point, describing the changes of all kinds that he had observed in Africa over a period of forty years, as a result of what he called the 'modernization shock'. The same expert also recommended that use be made in this regard of the proceedings of the symposia held by AUPELF (the Association des Universités Partiellement ou Entièrement de Langue Française) in Paris in 1963 and Beirut in 1964.

Notwithstanding this observation on the global nature of world industrial development and on the de facto solidarity of the different regions of the world, differences of interpretation were noted among the experts.

In the first place, those differences centred on the magnitude of the consequences which such world-wide changes had brought about in the life of Africa. Industrial development, which was a phenomenon that could be clearly defined in chronological terms, was perhaps on the point of decline,

and the values it had brought with it, and which underlay capitalist-style imperialism, might also be on the decline. If a proper assessment were to be made, the long-term effects of the phenomenon, which was external to Africa, would have to be compared with the effects of the introduction of Christianity and Islam into the continent and also with all the other far-reaching changes that African societies had undergone over thousands of years.

The foregoing analysis was not, however, acceptable to those experts who appeared to believe—although they did not say so in unequivocal terms—that the logical outcome of the participation of Africa, albeit reluctantly, in worldwide industrial development was bound to lead to the African continent's 'march towards an industrial society'.

Even though that hypothesis on Africa's short-term future was expressed with varying shades of emphasis and unsystematically, it elicited a strong adverse reaction. Many experts who acknowledged the considerable validity of the global Marxist analysis as an excellent working tool for the *a posteriori* study of societies, were reluctant to believe that the method could be used as a basis for constructing global models for the future evolution of African societies. The fact that a fairly large number of experts repeatedly rejected *all* superimposed models only went to show that the particular model in question was not the only one involved. Indeed, reactions were, if anything, probably even more violent against imported global explanatory models generated by the Western-style education which most of the participants had received in the capitalist world.

In any event, the African experts strongly emphasized their 'right to be different', with regard to the economic—and indeed industrial—development which the peoples of Africa demanded, without their still being regarded as 'underdeveloped' as soon as they strayed from foreign models.

This observation gave rise to a series of other comments on the qualitative value of the global industrial development under discussion. One expert asked whether development was synonymous with industrialization. In the view of a number of participants, the effects of the consumer trap were probably not any more favourable in Africa than they were in the rest of the world, and its logic, which was specific to industrial capitalism, probably had to be queried as well. It was worth asking whether societies that were tending towards galloping consumerism were not liable seriously to undermine African values in the long run.

Several of the experts then went on to ask what changes the Volume Editor really had in mind. Did he mean visible, quantifiable changes such as movements of workers to towns, population growth or consumer demands generated by the market economy, or was he thinking of slower and more deep-rooted changes in which entire societies were irretrievably converted to a new life-style? Was he thinking in terms of copies of models for change that had

been devised and tested elsewhere, or of the outcome of the thought which the Africans themselves, by analysing their societies, had given to the changes that were indispensable and feasible? Was not confusion being created by using identical words to describe entirely different facts? In that regard, for instance, reference had been made to the specificity and long-standing nature of urban settlement in Africa, and to the serious drawbacks occasioned for the continent by the grafting of 'developed models' or urban organization on patterns that had been established for thousands of years. Who were the people for whom such changes were taking place, and which levels of society were involved? Was it not a fact that such changes broadened the gap between the 'haves', who profited from all aspects of that development, and the 'have-nots', who made progress possible; as had been the case in the history of all liberal industrial societies?

The issues involved were very wide-ranging, and could have led to criticism of economic liberalism and to a plea for an 'adjunct to development' to soften its injustices and harshness, but that debate did not take place.

It was agreed, however, that the psychological effects of modernization on the peoples of Africa and the fascination which consumer goods held for them could not be disregarded. Here again, political issues had an influence, especially when a 'dialogue' was being conducted between the people in power and those they governed.

It could be gauged from the scope of the issues discussed that all the experts wished to have done with 'piecemeal' analyses and with all the clichés contrasting 'modernization' with 'tradition'.

It was accordingly to be expected that the discussions on item 1(g) of the agenda would further underscore the deep-seated differences of opinion existing between a number of experts and the Volume Editor. Those differences emerged as much in respect of epistemology as of methodology.

A short but inconclusive discussion took place on the subject of the 'contemporary history of Africa' versus the 'history of contemporary Africa'. The experts were unanimous in rejecting the idea of a history strictly tied to the recounting of events in a straightforward narration. They were also generally sceptical about the uncritical and over-confident use of statistics.

All the experts expressed the hope that Volume VIII, like those preceding it, would be drafted from the standpoint of global, explanatory history. Nobody was under the illusion that the task would be easy, particularly on account of the vast mass of data. It was generally agreed that the first synthesis would not be perfect, both because many of the patterns were incomplete and would have to be examined and because of the legal inaccessibility of many of the sources for the time being.

All the participants were agreed on the definition of the form which the history of contemporary Africa should take. It had to be global, which

meant much more than merely being general. Among the experts who made their views explicit, the majority considered that Marxist analysis, if scientifically applied, was the best tool for tackling such a global study. However, a number of significant qualifications were made about the use of the method. Some were of the view that it might have general theoretical value and could offer considerable scope for forecasting purposes. That was a view which had already emerged at the Gabarone symposium on the historiography of southern Africa and at the Warsaw meeting on Volume VIII. Other experts noted with concern that if Marxist models were handled clumsily and inflexibly, they might not correspond to African realities. As historians, they were concerned at not always finding the answers to the questions posed by the societies they were studying. However, the first group of experts did not answer that point—as they might have done had the debate been conducted on a purely theoretical level—by arguing that the genuinely scientific application of the method in a manner that was neither dogmatic nor automatic should enable those using it to avoid the very real drawbacks pointed out by the second group. But that was another issue.

There were three possible attitudes towards the problems raised: dogmatic Marxist certainty, critical Marxism constantly engaged in re-examining its methodology, and the approach adopted by non-Marxist historians, who were just as concerned about producing serious and honest global analyses.

One idea which came up on several occasions in the course of the discussions was that, while the fact that the history was being written under the auspices of Unesco offered undisputed working facilities, difficulties might arise owing to the Organization's position *vis-à-vis* the Member States. Mr Glélé recalled several times that the Director-General had guaranteed the complete intellectual freedom of the International Scientific Committee in that regard. The Committee had progressively laid down what amounted to a set of rules of conduct for collective work in regard to all the volumes. The strict presentation of Volume VIII was accordingly preserved, as had been the case in respect of the earlier volumes.

Several experts expressed the hope that the Committee would help authors to be on their guard against undue pressures and censure. In that connection, some experts referred to the freedom which bards and court poets had enjoyed in Africa prior to the nineteenth century. They hoped that the historians would be acknowledged as having a certain moral authority, so that they could write the volume in order to give Africans a clear picture of the facts and help them take decisions that would commit their future. The Volume Editor hoped that the use of one method or the other would be acceptable and that the choice which the author made would not lead to his political or cultural outlook being stigmatized.

The volume had to be as much a history of peoples as that of states—in

that regard it was in line with the decisions adopted by the International Scientific Committee—and care had to be taken to strike a proper balance from that point of view, although that did not appear to be the case in the table of contents as it stood at present. The work was to be a history of global economic and social structures which explained long-term and deep-rooted patterns, but it was also a history of cultural factors to a much greater extent than one of individual personages, no matter how great their standing. Although the experts were not able to advance very far in their analysis, the request was repeatedly made that the study be constantly focused on peoples, on all social levels, and on the 'masses' rather than merely on the governing classes and teams. Attention should, wherever possible, be drawn to the gap existing between the pronouncements of the authorities and their behaviour, on the one hand, and between the way in which those pronouncements were handed down and the way in which they were perceived by the people, on the other.

The insistence with which the experts stressed the prime importance of the continuity and depth of field specific to history, and also of the observation of differing paces of development, whether they involved economics, mental attitudes, political structures or cultural or other factors, showed that they were concerned to ensure that the Volume Editor and the authors would never overlook the fact that they had to explain African patterns which culminated in the twentieth century, but which, to be properly understood in some cases, had to take account of phenomena that had occurred several centuries earlier. The continuity of African history rejected the breakdown into periods such as the pre-colonial period, which was regarded as being 'traditional' and as having values which are now said to have lapsed; or the period of colonization, in which rapid but unquestioned modernization took place; or else the period of independence, since when 'rapid change' was supposed to have occurred as a result of the state's adoption of the techniques of modernization. That view, often taken in books on Africa, which fosters the distinction drawn between 'tradition' and 'modernism', was quite unacceptable to the participants.

Lastly, the experts felt that historical depth of field was the only means—although it could be achieved by a variety of methods—of avoiding the pitfall of making over-hasty judgments on isolated events and, having thus avoided the pitfall, of preventing some parts of the work from being out of date before it was published.

The experts likewise made a point of recommending that a particularly careful balance be struck between events occuring outside Africa in instances where those might affect the continent in a wide variety of sectors, and developments internal to the continent, which were of prime importance. The experts cited examples covering such different areas as the development of capitalist societies, imperialism, arms sales, and the support provided by progressive forces from outside Africa. They all stressed the fact that certain

aspects of the life of the continent, and especially its forms of dependence, would be incomprehensible if the volume omitted to study the causes of such dependence and all the various forms of interdependence.

The methodology which had to be used stemmed from all the foregoing comments. Above all, it had to be situated *in the historical perspective.* Historians endeavoured to identify lines of continuity and to find explanations from the past for certain aspects of the present, rather than to compare current facts taken out of context with other equally isolated facts. They did not give prominence to eminent public figures but to deep-rooted global situations which shed light on the conditions governing the historical emergence of such figures. The President of the Committee cited the example of work that had recently been done on the phenomenon of violence in Kenya. The researchers involved had been less interested in its individual manifestations or in the 'heroes' it had thrown up at particular 'historical moments', than in the sociological medium—*ngoroko*, which involved both marginal cattle thieves (who were also found in Uganda and Tanzania) and specialists in political assassination.

A much clearer understanding would be gained of the political difficulties encountered by the authorities in various regions of Africa—regardless of who they were—by studying the phenomena of widespread autonomy and of resistance to any form of external administration, often inherited from earlier periods of African history, than by implicating the circumscribed activities of small dissenting minorities or the plots hatched by paid agitators.

All this went to explain why historians, especially when dealing with the twentieth century, were not in a position to dispense with the assistance of the other human sciences, none of which could be excluded from their field of inquiry. Although, for want of time and funds, there could be no question of embarking on new fundamental research for the volume, arrangements would nevertheless have to be made to ensure the collection, by and for the designated authors, of all the interdisciplinary material they would need to draft their chapters. It was by no means certain that historians were automatically the only or the best qualified people to write the chapters, but all the authors should have the sense of historical perspective outlined in the discussions. The implication was that in many cases it would be difficult to call on only one author. It was considered that there were several possible approaches to the problem. There could be one main author assisted by collaborators who were specialists in other fields and were capable of reading the material available in languages other than those known by the author. Other possibilities were that a multi-disciplinary team could be commissioned to prepare the chapter, and one author would draft it on behalf of the team; or teams working on a regional basis could be commissioned to produce an initial summary of the data on particularly difficult subjects, and those data could subsequently be communicated to the author responsible for the chapter.

The experts considered that, in selecting authors and assessing their profiles, there should be complete flexibility, and that choices should be made on a case-by-case basis, in the light of the nature of the chapters involved.

In reply to a question raised by the Volume Editor, the experts considered that it would be advisable to select more mature authors who had already given proof of their abilities, but that new blood should be brought into the project by enlisting the services of young African researchers of a high standard.

Speaking on behalf of the Director-General, Mr Glélé called the experts' attention on several occasions to the fact that it was impossible for Unesco to finance further research for the volume. It had already financed several meetings on methodology for the preparation of Volume VIII, and other meetings were planned. The brunt of the effort had now to be devoted to drafting the volume.

Items 2 and 3(b)

Regardless of whether the term 'sources' was used in the English sense or the French sense, the problems involved were considered to be comparable. These problems are outlined below.

The abundance of sources

There is an abundance of basic written material on the twentieth century which can be exploited, including traditional sources such as archives, and non-traditional sources such as tracts, posters, newspapers, plays, poetry, almanacs and so on. One expert pointed out that between five and ten books on Africa are published every day, and that the authors of half of them are Africans.

This mass of data, together with the fact that there has been no prior selection and the quality of the sources is uneven, is probably one of the most serious problems the authors will have to face.

It is true that some sources which historians would normally use are at the moment subject to disclosure laws, and there is little prospect of their being made completely accessible.

The distribution of data sources is also probably uneven in the different regions of Africa. For instance, a great deal is known about Chad, but virtually nothing about Equatorial Guinea.

The dispersion of sources

The second major problem is the fact that sources are scattered throughout the world and are in a large number of languages. The experts did not offer much

by way of a solution to the problem. In addition to sources in the habitual working languages, it will naturally be necessary to consult the considerable output of work on twentieth-century Africa written in Arabic, Russian, Polish and so on.

This situation certainly militates in favour of the idea that the prospective authors should already be familiar with bibliographical work and with first-hand documents.

However, there were some positive features. World-wide statistics existed and were assembled in the publications of the United Nations and other major organizations. They were readily available, but they were not always utterly reliable.

The need to consult other types of source

Oral sources have to be used to supplement written sources and fill certain gaps. Contemporary oral sources differ from ancient oral traditions, in that they are elaborated jointly by the researcher and the interviewee. There are limits to the method, but if care is taken to discover the actual social protagonist who had a decisive impact on the event, whether it involved an individual person or a group—situations differ considerably—the exercise can be very rewarding. Naturally, like any source, they have to be subjected to critical appraisal and do not automatically provide the information which the historian needs.

One expert pointed out that, in order to criticize and interpret the information, it is necessary to have a theory of history and society and a theory of knowledge, both of which are capable of shedding light on the conditions in which the document is produced. He went on to note that if such sources are carefully situated in their context and criticized, they often reveal the non-visible structures of situations, which tend to be concealed by the interpretations which the ruling classes wish to put on them.

A rich fund of audio information could be established by recording popular songs, whether of a political character or not, and by greatly increasing the number of interviews.

In addition, the methods used in a number of African societies to transmit information critical of the official information media through parallel channels should not be disregarded.

The systematic compilation of the proceedings of symposia, theses and research papers presented at universities throughout the world would be facilitated if an appeal were made with the support of Unesco to all the organizations in possession of such documents.

Lastly, newsreels and photograph libraries, which often had an abundant quantity of material, would not only provide a source of illustrations for the volume but could also supply documents which might require considerable critical scrutiny but were likely to be very rewarding.

Items 3(a) and (c)

The experts had been invited by the Volume Editor to consider Item 3(a) at the Committee's request, but they felt that it was not possible to provide 'definitions' on a case-by-case basis or to 'conceptualize' the terms appearing on the rather incomplete list put to them. They preferred to attempt to lay down a set of norms for the use of terms that might be liable to give rise to controversy. These norms are listed below.

1. The Committee had outlawed the use of the word 'tribe', and that decision could not be reversed. Generally speaking, the experts hoped that the Committee's decision would be observed consistently and carefully throughout the *General History of Africa*, from the first volume to the last. The experts similarly felt that it was advisable to abide by the proposal made at the symposium in Paris in July 1978 whereby terms which gave rise to problems should be written in inverted commas until such time as they were superseded by more suitable terms.

The expert generally considered that terms that were demonstrably pejorative should be banned, except for the historical study of their use provided for in paragraph (2) below. They agreed that a measure of flexibility should be exercised in regard to the other terms until research had made more progress and resulted in a more satisfactory solution; each time such a term was used, however, it should be clearly explained and backed by theoretical references shedding light on it. There again, the experts considered that the procedures which the Committee had adopted for the drafting and reading of chapters guarded against any untoward surprises.

2. In any event, the study of the development of certain terms, even pejorative terms, should not be neglected, since it forms part of the historical depth of field.

3. Similarly, the surveys being conducted in Liberia, Nigeria and Ivory Coast into the development of toponyms and 'ethnonyms' shows what a vast amount of information can be collected by the systematic study of all the variations identified.

4. The case of 'ethnonyms' deserves special attention. The names of peoples were often fixed from 1930 onwards, on the orders of the colonial administrations. In some instances, peoples were forced to adopt the names which neighbouring peoples gave them. It was felt that all African peoples should certainly be given the names by which they call themselves, but a study along those lines is liable to take a very long time.

5. Careful attention should be paid—and this again is a historical aspect—to the polemical nature of the words used in political discourse, such as 'feudalism' or 'feudal' to designate all 'reactionaries' or even adversaries. It would be possible to quote other examples where the non-

scientific use of words tends to detract from their scientific connotations.

6. The experts singled out the words 'tribalism' and 'regionalism' for closer consideration.

The first term, which is widely used in Africa today, arises out of the discourse of authority against its enemies. However, by an interesting contradictory device, it has recently been used against the authorities in Zaire by the Front National de Libération du Congo in its latest publication, *Nationalisme contre le tribalisme* (Nationalism versus tribalism). This is yet another instance of the extreme caution with which the authors will have to proceed.

Regionalism, on the other hand, is often used to denote abusive practices perpetrated by the authorities by favouring certain regions to the detriment of others.

7. After an analysis of the term 'people' and 'nation', it was recommended that the first be used, generally speaking, to designate coherent cultural groups which were sometimes designated in the past by the terms 'tribe' or 'ethnic group', while the second term would be used in the sense commonly employed in the African states at the present time, in connection with nation-states. However, it was pointed out that some African states had already acknowledged that they were 'multinational' and that, in some cases, the multinational state might be a satisfactory answer to the tensions that sometimes existed.

8. After having recognized the existence of classes in Africa, although they pointed to the difficulty involved in identifying those classes exactly in terms of the vocabulary borrowed from Europe, the experts considered that it was necessary to give a more detailed definition of their wishes regarding the use of terms relating to African societies.

One expert pointed out that the complexity of those societies could in no way have been foreseen by Marx and that, in any event, the vocabulary which he had used could not correspond to African realities of the twentieth century as lived by the people of the continent. The experts accordingly recommended that the social vocabulary which the Africans used in their different languages to describe their own societies should be employed wherever possible.

However, this attempt to clarify vocabulary did not dispense with the need for a theoretical analysis of the workings of those societies. It was again repeated that Marxist analysis appeared to be the most operative model from the theoretical standpoint, provided it did not merely entail blithely grafting European terms onto African social realities. The picturesque example of the 'kulaks' who had been studied in Ugandan society brought a note of humour to the discussions. If the necessary theoretical study was carried out properly, it ought eventually to lead to the development of original and appropriate matrices for analysing African societies.

9. It was recommended that the Volume Editor lay down precise instructions for the guidance of authors on all the points that had been discussed, and that he draw up a list of difficult words and concepts for them.

With reference to item 3(c) of the agenda, the experts felt it necessary to recall that the *General History of Africa* could hardly be 'orthodox', if that term was taken to mean censured, emasculated or colourless. The History had to be capable of accommodating 'heresies' and 'heretics' and of leaving room for dissidents in its pages or in the critical notes expressly provided for in the Statutes of the International Scientific Committee, which was the sole body answerable to Unesco for the implementation of the project, without any outside interference.

The experts did not wish to go beyond the statements of principle they had made. The matter of legal qualifications and recognition lay completely outside their field of competence and control, as it involved internal opposition groups or liberation movements.

In addition, a point of information was given concerning the name of Azania. There were still considerable differences of opinion regarding the possible use of that term. It had just been accepted by the PAC, but the Africans of the south of the continent were not all in favour of adopting it because it was not an African name.

Item 4

The Volume Editor asked the experts to give careful consideration to the table of contents he had drafted after the Nairobi meeting.[1] The experts subsequently made a large number of comments in the light of their consideration of the document. These comments are outlined below.

Headings of sections, chapters or paragraphs

One expert made a general observation to the effect that not only was the terminology used not Marxist: it was even anti-Marxist. The Volume Editor denied the assertion and said that his concern had been to ensure that the authors would be entitled to choose from a wide variety of methods of approach. Another expert spoke of titles that were characteristic of an ideology of modernization, which had been seriously queried by the meeting. He quoted the title of Chapter 15, paragraph (vii), as being a pertinent example.

Chapter 2 (v): How was it possible to speak of the development of African resistance in 1935? One expert felt that it would be more correct to show that, in the first place, the abuses of the colonial system had been contested and that an attempt had been made to seek equality within the system. This had been followed by nationalism and the rejection of the system and the struggle for independence.

Chapter 3: The title should read 'Africa under British and Belgian domination'.

Section IV: The links between the Nazis and South Africa during the Second World War should be noted.

Chapter 6 (iv): What is the reason for the Western Sahara being included here? (vi): This section appears to duplicate Chapter 3.

Chapter 7: Why is Mauritania included here, when it formed an integral part of West Africa at the time?

Chapter 8: Paragraphs (i) and (x) deal with the French-speaking countries. Why are they separated? The organization of the chapter is not logically or chronologically consistent. Paragraph (ii): Is it correct to use the term Zaire in this instance?

Chapter 9: Paragraphs (iii) and (vi) should be merged under the single title of 'The Mascarenes, Seychelles and Comoros' and be placed immediately after Madagascar.

Chapter 11: The title should be reviewed in connection with 'Technology transfer'.

Chapter 15: Several experts were rather perplexed at the title of paragraph (vii). The aim under paragraphs (iv), (v), (vi) and (viii) appears to be to study the class phenomenon, but is this not shown more clearly?

In paragraphs (iv), (v) and (vi), are the classes involved linked to the market economy? Is the class emerging in paragraph (viii) in the service of the state?

Chapter 16 (ii): The frailty of *parliamentary* and administrative institutions.

Comments on substance, the actual structure of the plan and on the gaps to be filled

The Volume Editor should try to fill out the headings of all paragraphs in more detail, since they are sometimes rather obscure as they stand.

The entire table of contents has been constructed in terms of an ideology. That ideology should be specified. Several experts expressed strong reservations about the overall structure of the plan. A number of experts had serious misgivings about the excessively state-oriented and élitist aspects of the standpoint adopted, as illustrated by the titles of the paragraphs. It was also pointed out that Sections II, III, IV, V and VII, which called for thorough rearrangement, made no mention of imperialism.

In the event of the Scientific Committee not changing the structure of the table of contents as it stands at present, the experts hoped that the contents of the introductory chapter would be extensively reviewed. A number of experts made the following proposals:

Comments should be made on the methodology used by the authors of Volume VIII and on the original features which that methodology might display compared with earlier volumes.

A precise description should be given of the determining factors, both outside and inside the continent, which shed light on the trends of the past half-century. (In the existing plan, this study is so chopped up and scattered that it is not clear whether it could ever be brought out in its totality.)

There should be a comprehensive study of the processes of reaction of Africans against dependence, highlighting the links between their attitudes of reaction and the structures through which they gave them expression, such as religious movements, trade unions, and so on.

It would be useful to make a study of the significant differences between the various types of transfer of power at the time of independence.

It would likewise be advisable to show how Africa was brought into world ideological conflicts.

Section I

This section should bring out the external conditions which accompanied and conditioned developments in Africa. Consideration should be given to the action taken by imperialism to break down the large-scale structures that existed in Africa at the time of independence, and the opposite action which the same imperialism is now taking in favour of the grouping together of small states that are not regarded as viable.

Section II

There is no mention in the existing plan of the ideologies of decolonization. This section should include the study of voluntary associations—youth, ethnic, professional, literary, recreational, development—as (a) mechanisms of migrant adaptations to the urban situation, (b) nurseries of the nationalist movements, and (c) progenitors of the political parties.

One or two chapters should be added to this section, dealing with the struggle for independence.

Section III

This is probably the section which gave rise to the greatest number of comments. Over the forty-five years which the volume will cover, there is no provision for a global analysis of the factors that generated change. Changes in the living standards of the continent's population are not studied clearly or globally, nor is any distinction drawn between social classes. The references to these factors are widely scattered. Overall population trends are not examined.

Neo-colonialism and imperialism do not appear to be dealt with as external but essential agents in the life of Africa, as they should be.

Several participants thought that the entire section and each of its chapters should be recast.

With regard to this and following sections, the Volume Editor was asked whether the authors would be expected to speak of the continent as a whole in each case, or only of limited geographical sectors, and, if so, which sectors.

Section V

It was proposed that the scope of this section be reduced and a chapter added to Section VI. Qualified specialists should be consulted for some of the chapters in this section; they could be of help in greatly improving the formulations and probably also in recasting the plan.

During the examination of the general contents of this section, the Volume Editor was asked to study the phenomena involved without breaking down global developments into a disjointed series of facts. Social changes, for instance, should obviously not be studied separately from cultural changes.

Chapter 18 This chapter calls for thorough revision, and it already appears out of date compared with the present-day language policy of the African states.

Chapter 19 There are a large number of contradictions in this chapter and not enough chronology. The different forms of theatrical expression and televisual creation should not be overlooked. The sociology of literature should be examined, say under the heading of 'the writer and his public'.

Chapter 21 This chapter should be completely revised. There have been many changes in this field too. For instance, the controversy over ethnophilosophy should be studied.

Section VI

Several experts commented on the title of the section. Pan-Africanism may have been linked too closely with other facts. *Integration* should not be confused with *co-operation*, and a distinction has to be made between *economic* and *political* integration.

Chapter 23 A number of meetings that were of significance to the continent, such as the Kigali meeting and the North–South Conference, appear to have been overlooked. Emphasis should be placed on the 'ideologies of co-operation', on Afro-Asianism, and on the place occupied by Africa in the three-continent link-up.

Section VII

One expert was not satisfied with the current prospects. He would like to see Africa occupying a clearly-defined position in a world of superpowers, in the midst of the struggle for competing hegemonisms. The same expert did not feel that the existing breakdown of the chapters was satisfactory.

Chapter 29 Several experts found the title of this chapter vague and wondered what it would contain.

The experts pointed out a number of gaps which should be made good.

The role of students and student organizations in Africa throughout the period should be studied.

The role of women should be taken into account.

The study of trade unions and their role should be developed to a much greater extent.

The history of the peasant world and everyday life in that world should occupy a much larger place in the plan.

The 'middle-class' phenomenon should also be studied in much more detail.

There should be no apprehension about discussing the racial conflicts occurring on the continent, such as those between Blacks and Whites in the south, and Arabs and Blacks in the north.

There is no provision at the moment for a chapter or paragraph on Afro-Arab relations.

A considerable amount of space should be devoted to the problem of information and to the role of the transnational, multinational or national press agencies from outside Africa.

There appears to be no provision for covering the attempts made to bring about federalism in various regions of the continent, even in instances where those attempts failed.

There is no mention of bilateral relations between African states, which are now greatly increasing in scale.

There is no mention of present-day African political thinking.

Subcommittee on the table of contents

In view of the large number of sometimes pointed comments and criticisms expressed, Professor Ogot, the President of the Scientific Committee, requested that a subcommittee be set up to put forward proposals for amendments to the plan, working with the Volume Editor. The President's aim in making the proposal was to facilitate the work of the Bureau and the Committee when it met in Paris in July for a final review of the table of contents of the volume.

The Rapporteur of the subcommittee submitted its conclusions to the plenary session. The experts did not have time to discuss them, and all the documents presented by the subcommittee are accordingly submitted for the consideration of the International Scientific Committee. These documents are reproduced in Appendix 4.

Item 5

The Volume Editor said that the points put forward for discussion at the request of the Bureau were in no way intended to represent draft chapter headings for the volume.

Item 5(a)

The experts were primarily concerned to avoid stereotypes that did not offer any clarification, even if they had opposing meanings and were pleasant to handle, depending on the political options involved. Such stereotypes included terms such as 'modernizing army', 'reactionary army', 'the army as a social melting-pot', 'the army as the crucible of the nation', 'the army which does not meddle in politics', and so on. Almost all the experts thought that the army in Africa, as elsewhere in the world, was only a scaled-down image of the society surrounding it, and of the latter's tensions and contradictions.

The Volume Editor made a brief review of some of the recent literature on contemporary military regimes in Africa. The focus was initially on the causes of military coups, while more recently the focus in the research has changed to consequences of military coups and the comparative performance of military governments. The Volume Editor invited views about the problems of doing research into military regimes and under such regimes, bearing in mind especially Chapters 15 and 16 of Volume VIII.

The experts endeavoured to reply to those questions, but often considerably modified the scope of most of them.

1. The prime aspect of interest to historians was not the comparison of regimes whose only common feature was a vague term which could not be easily defined. On the contrary, historians sought to understand, in each case, why it was possible for such a regime to emerge in a particular country, in the light of what socio-economic analysis it could be understood, and on what cultural precedents from the more or less distant past it was based. In a second stage, once a case had been properly studied, historians might agree that one regime could be compared with another and consideration be given, for example, to the 'contagious' nature of military coups d'état, which seemed to have been so characteristic of at least one decade in African history. Once each case had been examined in complete detail, a typological comparison of all the factors involved would be an interesting exercise, but only then.

2. The very idea of a 'military regime' was difficult to pin down and define. Was it the technique used to take over power, or the presence of men in uniform holding the reins of state, or were specific techniques of administration involved?

In the view of some experts, the 'soldiers' seemed to be strict administrators. Other experts noted that when the army came to power, it often

suppressed elected assemblies and trade unions. However, no proper study had been done to show what it put in their place or why, on some occasions, it restored the same assemblies and trade unions, or even whether the same practices were still being followed.

Several experts considered that the influence wielded by the military was not a new phenomenon in the history of Africa, and that only the appearances, techniques and sophistication had changed. Once again, no clear-cut feature emerged as far as language and terminology were concerned.

3. A much more interesting point calling for emphasis was that there were only *apparent* differences between military and civilian governments.

It was suggested on several occasions that the two were interchangeable, sometimes due to outside intervention, as in the case of Uganda, and sometimes perhaps for internal reasons. In the latter case, one military regime might be interchanged with another military regime inside the same country, in the name of purported contradictory ideologies.

In many instances, military regimes might, in the initial stages at least, appear more acquiescent as the vectors of outside influence than civilians. In this regard, the example of world-wide arms dealers was cited. And yet, as far as the techniques of administration were concerned, both civilian and military regimes called on the same social administrators, who were all more or less from the same background. Civilian advisers and ministers co-operated at all levels with the soldiers in power, and the reverse was also true.

Several experts considered that the identity of interests and functions might be a reflection of an identity of class. Other experts thought that the exercise of power might prompt the army to set itself up as an autonomous class.

The most important phenomena calling for study are certainly concerned with social structure of the army and the specific role it plays in the body politic as a whole.

The technique of the takeover of power. Was the military coup d'état a specific technique or was it only one technique among others for taking over power in Africa? At first sight, the military coup d'état might not appear to be more bloody than any other method. However, the conditions which enabled such coups d'état to take place differed widely from one country to another. The very interesting example of Upper Volta was recalled in that regard.

Remaining in power. This might require a variety of techniques. Sound administration cannot be ruled out any more than can the unleashing of terror on the 'unarmed masses'. The latter technique is by no means characteristic of military regimes alone. The example of Idi Amin Dada was contrasted with that of other African countries with 'civilian' governments. Displays of force and parades seemed to be another specific technique, and it was easy to find examples of civilian governments which used the same techniques.

An even more interesting observation was made in connection with examples of the links existing between soldiers in power and other military people from countries outside Africa who might help them to stay in power. In political terms, however, those examples were subject to very different assessments and interpretations.

In point of fact, here again, it was stressed that it was not unknown for civilian regimes to be subject to similar kinds of intervention. For instance, the pressures exerted by the World Bank could perhaps shed light on the rehabilitation of a Minister of Foreign Affairs, who, only a short time previously, had been stripped of his functions and condemned to death.

The experts also wondered whether or not military rule was instrumental in making border disputes worse, and whether it aggravated or reduced social tensions. It was also asked whether the repeated occurrence of coups d'état did not increase political instability in Africa and, lastly, whether it was possible to arrive at interesting global conclusions from making a study of the conditions in which military governments relinquished power.

There was general agreement that the governments in question did not bear any special responsibility for the fact that, at the present time, more than half the world's refugees were in Africa.[2]

Item 5(b)

The aim under this heading was obviously not to attempt to assess the influence and role of statesmen or theoreticians who had played outstanding roles in Africa and the rest of the world over the past fifty years (and the list of whose names could easily have been extended).

The Chairman of the meeting made a timely observation in recalling that the *General History of Africa* was supposed to be a history of peoples and cultures. There were other times and places for inquiring into the exceptional stature of such exceptional men and on the conflicting reactions which, like all exceptional men, they had aroused. The Rapporteur ventured to refer the experts to the report of the Gaborone meeting, some of the passages from which were relevant to the problem being discussed, in that they dealt with the relationship of 'great men' to the historical environment from which they emerged.

The experts expressed the hope that steps would be taken to increase the pace at which the works of African thinkers were published, since they could help their present-day successors in their thinking and decision-making.

Item 5(c)

The Volume Editor said that it was high time, one century after the Berlin Conference, to 'take stock' of frontiers in Africa.

One expert said that, for 'internationalists', the term 'border conflicts'

was rectricted in scope and had a very precise connotation. As a legal specialist, he could only be concerned with conflicts for which there was a legal basis—a border agreement—but not with political conflicts between states.

On the other hand, another expert broadened the concept of 'border conflicts' to cover the whole range of disputes created by the existence of post-colonial frontiers in Africa. He felt that the concept of 'borders against peoples' deserved special attention in the volume.

Until 1958, the question of borders had remained a relatively open-ended issue, from a standpoint that was relatively favourable to the peoples of Africa, but it had been closed completely as a result of the decisions which the OAU had taken in 1963 and 1964. There appeared to be three possible solutions to the border problems whose importance had been stressed by the two previous speakers. The first was a return to unitary conceptions, as Nkrumah had advocated. The second envisaged the organization of regional groupings of the confederal or federal type, so as to soften the adverse effects of borders on peoples. And the third required a change in the conception of the borderline in favour of a 'border zone', which could be quite wide and could make life easier for peoples who were 'separated'. The case of the Ewe was mentioned in this respect on several occasions.

In any event, another problem, although somewhat different, still existed in some states and was referred to on several occasions. The problem was that of minorities. Little additional information emerged from the discussions of those statements, and their conclusions were approved by all the experts.

It was recommended that steps be taken to examine how the problem of border areas was solved in pre-colonial Africa. It was also important to study the reactions of the peoples to 'border conflicts' and to the armed conflicts which might result from them.

Item 5(d)

The Chairman made an introductory statement in which he singled out a series of points which could be put to the experts in Paris in July. Those points were taken as a basis for the discussions.

1. The first question that had to be asked was what the expression 'Afro-Arab relations' really meant.

Other questions might also be asked, such as: What distinguishes Arabs in African countries from other Arabs? To what extent had their existence on the African continent and their interaction with other Africans affected their religion, culture, and so on, and differentiated African Arabs from other Arabs?

A number of examples were cited when this problem was discussed in greater detail.

The colloquium on Afro-Arab relations to be held in Paris in July 1979 should include a discussion of this distinction between Arab Africa on the one

hand and the rest of the Arab world on the other, from the point of view of the work involved for Volume VIII.

The question 'What is an Arab?' was also raised. Since Somalia is a member of the Arab League, are relations between, say, Kenya and Somalia, a case of 'Afro-Arab relations'? The definition of an Arab could pose epistemological problems.

The basic discussion ought to be extended to cover the following two areas: the relationship between Pan-Arabism, the Pan-Islamic movement and Pan-Africanism and the relationship between the OAU and the Arab League.

2. In any event, 'Afro-Arab relations' had considerable historical depth of field. They were older and more decisive than Euro-African relations, but they had increased in intensity only since the fifteenth century, primarily as a result of colonialism. There should be a comprehensive reassessment of those relations, since they affected existing situations. Problems such as the Muslim slave trade and the influence of Mohammedan law on African structures were mentioned. The historical existence of 'Arab racism' was not considered very likely. The bilateral character of trade of all kinds between the Arab regions of Africa and the rest of the continent should not be overlooked. Islam was not responsible for the rise of the empires and states of West, East and Central Africa, and Swahili civilization already existed in its essentials before it was enriched by the Arab contribution.

3. The wide range of options in several fields which were currently being followed by Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiryia or Egypt offered interesting prospects for the study of very different types of relations existing between those countries and the states of Black Africa. The activities in Africa of a country like Saudi Arabia should likewise be studied.

4. The main question that had to be asked in connection with Afro-Arab relations was whether, globally speaking, the Arab countries had contributed to the liberation of Africa. From that standpoint it was possible to note the high-water marks of solidarity, such as the influence of Nasser in Africa, the action of the Casablanca Group and Conference, solidarity against Israel, and Arab support for the independence of Djibouti and the Comoros. In a longer-term perspective, the solidarity forged at Bandunghad to be noted as well. The current status of relations between the OAU and the Arab League could also be examined.

5. The study of trade relations called for close attention. Were those relations egalitarian or not? What forms did Arab aid take? What types of co-operation were there? Was there any possibility of 'two-way' complementarity between the Arab and Black African countries, or of 'triangular' complementarity between them and Europe? In view of the closer links by air and land, was it possible, for instance, to contemplate exploiting the resources of the Sahara in the common interest?

6. Were cultural exchanges a one-way process, with the spread of Arab language on the continent going hand in hand with its Islamization? What was the scope of student exchanges?

7. Over and above relations between states, it was very necessary not to overlook the importance of Islam, with its brotherhoods and associations and the powerful sense of community they were cultivating, particularly through the Hadj, which was constantly growing.

8. The areas to which the study would have to give priority were those of the contact states, from Mauritania to Sudan, and the area on the east coast of the continent, with its ancien African sub-stratum onto which Muslim influences had been grafted, especially since the fourteenth century.

9. The choice of authors capable of handling these questions was by no means a special case in the context of the rules which the International Scientific Committee had laid down and complied with in that respect.

Item 5(e)

It was necessary to establish clearly what criteria made it possible to draw a distinction between civil wars and liberation struggles. The experts felt that it was difficult to work out a typology in this area. One of the few reliable pointers was the fact that none of those conflicts had developed without foreign intervention. The experts did not go any further into the issues involved.

Item 5(f)

All the experts confirmed that the term 'decolonization' seemed inadequate for the purpose. However, it had to be used to characterize one of the stages in the politics of African liberation. The participants took account of the conclusions of the Warsaw symposium on that point, without sharing them entirely.

A very wide-ranging discussion took place on the concept of liberation.

One of the experts pointed out that liberation, which could only be achieved through armed struggle, should not be confused with decolonization, which was the outcome of peaceful processes such as negotiations, the granting of independence, and so on. In his view, decolonization was almost always liable to result in a formal state of independence which concealed a colonial situation.

Other experts considered that all African countries that had formerly been colonies would inevitably reach the decolonization stage, some of them by peaceful means and others through violence. That stage could be regarded as being the starting-point of the struggle for liberation, which was an open-ended process involving the liquidation of all forms of economic, social and cultural domination and the development of self-expression in all fields.

Some experts noted that almost all the countries had, in fact, gone

through a period of armed struggle, at least indirectly, inasmuch as their nationals had been engaged in the struggle for freedom against fascism during the Second World War. One expert laid particular emphasis on the impact of that war. The participation of Africans in the Second World War was part of the history of the liberation of Africa, quite apart from the effect that that conflict had on the colonial empires.

Most of the experts agreed that the adoption of extreme positions on the issue had to be avoided. It was going too far to claim that only countries that had engaged in armed struggles had acceded to a state of liberation, since problems of decolonization could arise even in those countries, following independence.

It was also wrong to put all the countries without exception on the same plane. On the whole, decolonization was regarded, rightly or wrongly, as having a rather passive or restrictive meaning, whereas liberation through armed struggle paved the way in structural, dynamic and global terms for liberation in all fields. In other words, armed struggle was a privileged means of acceding to genuine decolonization and liberation.

Another line of argument developed at the meeting was that it could not be guaranteed that armed struggle would bring about a state of liberation, or that it would be acceptable to all sections of the population (for a related discussion, see the final report of the Warsaw meeting, pages 5–6).

Items 6, 7 and 8

There was no discussion on these items.

On the presentation of the draft recommendation which was subsequently adopted by the experts, Mr Glélé took the opportunity of once again reiterating all the reservations he had made throughout the meeting about any further commitment of funds for the preparation of Volume VIII.

Closing session

The provisional final report was amended and subsequently adopted on 22 May. The experts asked the Rapporteur to record their warm thanks to all those who had made it possible for the discussions to proceed so smoothly and for the report to be prepared.

Concluding the discussions the Chairman said that significant progress had been made in a few days, particularly in regard to methodology, and that the sort of itinerant 'School of African History', made up of the meetings held to finalize the *General History of Africa*, enabled everybody to move ahead by confronting each other's opinions and reflecting on their differences.

The representative of the Director-General thanked the experts for the work they had accomplished and expressed the hope that Volume VIII would remain strictly within the historical perspective traced out for the work as a whole.

Recommendation to the Director-General of Unesco

In the course of the discussions, many of the experts stressed the need to make use of a set of *oral sources compiled through interviews* for drafting this volume of the *General History of Africa.* The field-work involved required financial resources which the African researchers concerned did not have available at the present time.

The meeting expressed the hope that the Director-General would endeavour to find funds to finance such surveys, on the basis of specific projects, although they should certainly not delay the drafting of Volume VIII.

Notes

1. See Appendix 3.
2. The experts were informed of the forthcoming publications of 'Armée, Armement et Tiers Monde', in *Annuaire du Tiers Monde, 1978,* Paris, Éditions Berger-Levrault, 1979.

Appendices

1. Address by the Representative of the Director-General of Unesco

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Director-General, Mr Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, and in my own name, I should like to thank you and, through you, to thank the Government of Upper Volta for having invited Unesco to hold this meeting of experts on 'The Methodology of Contemporary African History' in Ouagadougou. I should also like to welcome and thank the different experts who have responded to Unesco's invitation and have come here to contribute to the implementation of the *General History of Africa* project, whose importance they all fully gauge. I am particularly pleased to see among you some of the members of the International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa, and especially my friend Joseph Ki-Zerbo, one of the Vice-Presidents of the International Scientific Committee, and Professor Ali Mazrui, who bears the heavy burden of the editorship of Volume VIII.

As you know, the *General History of Africa* project is one of the most important in Unesco's cultural studies programme. Its aim is to help the peoples of Africa to assume their cultural identity as they become increasingly conscious of it. At the same time, it is hoped that, by furthering understanding, the *History* will foster peace between peoples and among all mankind.

The *General History of Africa*, the preparation and drafting of which have been entrusted to a thirty-nine member International Scientific Committee, two-thirds of whom are African and one-third non-African, ranges from the origins of man right up to the present day. The Committee decided that the work would be presented in eight volumes, as follows:

Volume I: *Methodology and African Prehistory.*
Volume II: *Ancient Civilizations of Africa.*
Volume III: *Africa from the Seventh to the Eleventh Century.*
Volume IV: *Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century.*
Volume V : *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.*
Volume VI: *The Nineteenth Century until the 1880s.*
Volume VII: *Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880–1935.*
Volume VIII: *Africa from 1935 to the Present Day.*

The first two volumes are now with the printers and will be published before the end of the year. Volumes III, IV, V, VI and VII are being drafted and if, as I hope, the present pace is maintained, they will be published from 1980 onwards at the rate of two volumes a year. All these volumes will be published not only in the principal hard-cover editions in Arabic, English and French, but also in a paper-back edition identical in all respects to the main edition as regards text and illustrations, but at a

substantially lower price. Consultations are already under way with a view to having the first two volumes translated into Hausa and Kiswahili, and other African languages such as Fulani, Yoruba and Lingala may also be chosen to ensure wider dissemination of the work. Arrangements have also been made for the publication of the first two volumes in Portuguese and Spanish by 1980. In addition to the versions in Arabic, English and French and the versions in African languages, the *General History of Africa* will also be published in other languages such as Chinese, German, Russian, Turkish, and so on.

Preparations for Volume VIII, which will cover the period from 1935 to the present day, are still the subject of discussions and consultations in the International Scientific Committee. As you are well aware, the problems connected with this volume relate to both scope and content, as well as to the manner in which a period of history in which most of the protagonists are still alive can be tackled with the fullest possible scientific rigour through a lucid and unruffled approach. The International Scientific Committee is conscious of the complexity of the subject and of the methodological difficulties with which historians have to contend, and political scientists, sociologists and legal experts have all recommended that Unesco organize a series of top-level scientific consultations, with the assistance of experts from different cultural backgrounds and areas and from different socio-political systems, in an attempt to identify and define the techniques needed to write the contemporary history of Africa from 1935 onwards. Last year, in Warsaw, a first meeting of experts was held to examine the question of decolonization in Africa, in particular in the Horn of Africa and southern Africa. Another meeting is scheduled for this July at Unesco Headquarters in Paris on the 'Historical and Socio-Cultural Relations between Black Africa and the Arab World'.

We are meeting in Ouagadougou today for what I hope will be a frank, vigorous and searching discussion, in which we shall examine the problems posed by the methodology of contemporary African history. In fact, as can be seen from the final report of the Warsaw meeting, the 'complexity' of the subject and its acutely topical character, the participation in the Warsaw discussions of representatives of the national liberation movements recognized by the OAU—whom, incidentally, we are expecting in Ouagadougou any time now—and the ideological and political leanings of the participants all distinctly affected the trend of the discussions, and the resulting political and ideological turn they took tended to cloud the historical perspective.

You, as experts, are not being asked to reopen the now classical debate about historical methods, especially in regard to current history. Instead, you are being invited to refine and single out those approaches which, from the scientific standpoint, will make it possible to maintain the *General History of Africa* project, as it was conceived and is being implemented under the auspices of Unesco, in its proper historical perspective, even when it has to deal with the very recent period which has been so heavily marked by the stepping-up in the pace of history and the clash of ideologies.

I need hardly recall here the methodological issues which posed such a challenge to the awareness and intelligence of historians from the First World War onwards, and the bewilderment which the crisis of historicism caused among such scholars as Troeltsch and Karl Heussi. It was with a sense of anguish that Sir Maurice Powicke, the Oxford historian, spoke in his *After Fifty Years*, published in 1944, of the uneasiness and anxiety bearing down on historical thinking. As J. H. Plumb stresses in *The*

Historian's Dilemma, the crisis in history is part and parcel of the general crisis in the human sciences. We might also mention the reaction of American historians, who came out in favour of a more sociological view of history, or the school led by Henri Berr in France, which became renowned for the work it produced in the *Revue de Synthèse Historique*. In Berr's view, which was shared by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, history is the natural point of convergence of all disciplines contributing to the comparative study of all societies. As far as the French school is concerned, these different tendencies have been most strikingly presented by Glénisson in his study *Méthodologie française contemporaine—Contribution à la recherche historique en Afrique de 1940 à 1965*.

Marxism-Leninism has played a decisive part in the upheaval and agitation that has rocked contemporary historical research, although the ideological and institutional superstructure cannot be disregarded either.

As for taking an unruffled approach, we may draw inspiration from the words of Foustel de Coulanges, who said 'It is not I who speak, but history speaking with my voice'. In the same vein, both Ranke and Lord Acton considered that historians could and should eschew subjectivity in analysing and interpreting events. However, we may ask ourselves, as Dilthey does, whether historians can remain detached to the extent that what they feel and think in no way affects their understanding of the past, and whether their socio-cultural environment does not interfere with the way in which they select, analyse and interpret the history of the present day which is taking place before their eyes and in which they are involved. Although the debate is by no means settled once and for all, techniques do exist that make it possible to apprehend and present contemporary history, and even instant history, in a scientific manner. Historians who delve into the history of Africa can therefore draw benefit from the methods used in other regions of the world, and even improve on them.

You will have to consider first the problem of establishing the facts and then that of interpreting them, by going beyond the circumstantial evidence in order to grasp the permanent, structural or recurrent features and forms of the development of present-day history in Africa. You may indeed feel that the study of the period from 1935 up to the threshold of independence, say roughly to 1960, is rather straightforward in that, with the passage of time, the dust has settled on events and all passions have been spent.

On the other hand, the history of independent Africa clearly poses a frightening challenge to historians and to any specialist in the social sciences. You, the experts, with your differing backgrounds and your training in different but complementary skills, are being asked to take all the ages of history in your stride and to present future generations with a complete and living history of Africa as it appears to us at a given period in time, whether it be 1975 or 1980—in other words, you are being asked to take up the challenge. Knowing your abilities and your constant search after historical truth, I have no doubt that you will ensure that a decisive step forward will be taken in the contemporary historiography of Africa.

I wish your meeting every success.

Maurice Glélé,
Representative
of the Director-General of Unesco

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3. Draft table of contents for Volume VIII

Ali A. Mazrui

(Revised by the Volume Editor after the recommendations and suggestions made by the Committee, during its Nairobi meeting, April 1978)

For special attention

1. The sections which have been the most extensively revised are Section II ('The Struggle for Political Independence since 1945') and Section III ('Socio-Economic Changes').
2. Section VI ('Pan-Africanism: Liberation and Integration') has also been reorganized, though less extensively.
3. Other sections have undergone relatively minor changes.
4. The question still remains whether this volume should not bear the new title of '*Africa in the Era of Decolonization*' (the concept of '*the* Ethiopian war' may have been overtaken by events).
5. It is also worth considering the possibility of extending the period of Volume VIII to 1980 instead of 1975 (the volume itself may not be published until well into the 1980s).

Introduction

(i) The extent of change in Africa over this period
(ii) The scale of traditional continuities
(iii) Relationships between Africa and Europe in modern times
(iv) Relationships between Africa and Asia in modern times
(v) Relationships between Africa and the Black Diaspora
(vi) The growth and organization of nationalist and liberation movements
(vii) Africa in world affairs

Section I: Africa in a decade of world conflicts, 1935–45

Chapter 1: Fascist Italy's occupation of Ethiopia

(i) Italy's belated adventure in imperial annexation
(ii) The impact of the invasion and occupation on Ethiopia

(iii) Consequences of the occupation for the peoples of Somaliland and Eritrea
(iv) Forms of resistance to the Italian occupation
(v) The repercussions of the occupation on other parts of Africa
(vi) The League of Nations and the policy of sanctions; Africa in world affairs

Chapter 2: Africa and the Second World War
Tropical Africa under French administration

(i) The Popular Front and French colonial policy
(ii) Implications for Africa of the French defeat
(iii) The policies of the Vichy regime in the colonies; the French resistance movement in Africa
(iv) The war effort in the colonial territories: food production and enlistment; the role of Africans in the liberation of Europe
(v) The development of African resistance and of new colonial policies
(vi) The end of the Second World War: colonial conflicts and colonial reforms

Chapter 3: Africa and the Second World War
British and Belgian Africa

(i) The war effort in the colonial and mandated territories: food production and enlistment
(ii) The liberation of Ethiopia: the role of African soldiers
(iii) African soldiers in the war against Japan
(iv) The Union of South Africa in the Second World War
(v) War and new political horizons
(vi) The end of the Second World War. Colonial reforms

Chapter 4: Africa and the Second World War—Northern Africa

(i) The Mediterranean and the Suez Canal: problems of strategy and access
(ii) The Desert War: North Africa in the balance
(iii) The withdrawal of the Axis powers from North Africa
(iv) The role of the African soldiers
(v) North Africa and West Asia in wartime
(vi) The development of Arab nationalism and the aftermath of war

Section II: The struggle for political independence since 1945

Chapter 5: 'Seek ye First the Political Kingdom' (Nkrumah)

An overview of the causes, strategies, goals and consequences of Africa's struggle for political self-determination and independence (author: Volume Editor)

Chapter 6: North Africa and the Horn

(i) The Egyptian monarchy in decline
(ii) Libya: prelude to revolution and aftermath
(iii) The Maghreb: Tunisia and Morocco
(iv) The Maghreb: the Algerian War; the Struggle for Western Sahara
(v) Sudanese independence: a nation divided
(vi) Ethiopia after the Italian occupation
(vii) The problem of Eritrea
(viii) Somalia: the quest for unification
(ix) The impact of external powers since the Suez War of 1956

Chapter 7: Western Africa

(i) Expanding aspirations and post-war reforms in British West Africa, Mauritania French West Africa, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Canary Islands
(ii) The crisis of leadership: traditional and modern
(iii) Economic factors and their influence on the development of nationalism
(iv) The role of labour organizations
(v) The role of cultural organizations
(vi) Strategies of resistance: from the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain to the residue of the Jihad tradition
(vii) Constitutional change and transition to independence

Chapter 8: West Equatorial Africa

(i) Continuity and change in French Equatorial Africa
(ii) Mining and commercial interests in Belgian colonial policy for Zaire
(iii) Churches and missions as a factor in Belgian colonial policy
(iv) Ruanda-Urundi: international trusteeship and social realities
(v) Angola: class formation and economic change
(vi) Ethnicity, regionalism and nationalist sentiment in West Equatorial Africa
(vii) Ethnicity, caste and nationalist sentiment in Ruanda-Urundi
(viii) The collapse of the Belgian Empire: African and global implications
(ix) The collapse of the Portuguese Empire: wider implications
(x) The changing role of France in West Equatorial Africa
(xi) Tensions and change in Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé

Chapter 9: Eastern Africa

(i) From the Malagasy revolt in 1947 to the Malgache Revolution
(ii) Mozambique: retarded colonial policy
(iii) Oceania: Mayotte and Réunion
(iv) The legacy of colonial forms of organizations: British East Africa
(v) Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland: geopolitical and racial tensions
(vi) The Seychelles, Mauritius and Comoro Islands: new horizons
(vii) Constitutional change and transition to independence

Chapter 10: Southern Africa

(i) 1948: the election victory of the Nationalist Party and its implications
(ii) Apartheid in theory and practice. The 'Bantustan' policy and horizontal segregation. African resistance. African National Congress and Pan-African Congress
(iii) From the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to the struggle for Zimbabwe
(iv) South West Africa: from a mandate of the League of Nations to a trusteeship of the United Nations
(v) Continuity and change in Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland
(vi) From Sharpeville to Soweto
(vii) War in Zimbabwe and Namibia
(viii) The international community and the politics of liberation
(ix) The wider impact of Mozambique and Angola: the role of the front-line states in final stages of liberation

Section III: Socio-economic changes

Chapter 11: Education and technology transfer

(i) The heritage of African traditional education and technology
(ii) The colonial structure and Western training
(iii) New techniques and class formation
(iv) New skills and employment patterns
(v) Education and economic modernization
(vi) Education and cultural development
(vii) The role of the transnational corporations
(viii) Capital-intensive and labour-intensive strategies
(ix) Education, appropriate technology and nation-building

Chapter 12: Agriculture and rural development

(i) The money economy and the commercialization of African agriculture
(ii) The impact of cash crops on rural social structure
(iii) Patterns of marketing and price mechanisms
(iv) The impact of World War II on African agriculture
(v) Ecological and social constraints on production: the struggle for equity and rural development after independence
(vi) African agriculture in a world economy

Chapter 13: Industry and urban growth

(i) The urban bias in colonial development
(ii) The money economy and employment

(iii) The impact of the mining industries
(iv) Labour migration and the rural-urban continuum
(v) Urbanization and new social structures
(vi) The impact of transnational corporations

Chapter 14: Comparative strategies of economic decolonization

(i) Africa's integration into the world economy: a cost-benefit analysis
(ii) The new dependency and the search for solutions
(iii) The strategy of disengagement and self-reliance
(iv) The strategy of maximizing economic growth
(v) The strategy of the New International Economic Order
(vi) The strategy of counter-penetration
(vii) Africa's continuing search for economic sovereignty

Section IV: Socio-political change

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(i) Centralized and non-centralized traditional political systems
(ii) The resilience of traditional political responses
(iii) Belief and practice in political behaviour
(iv) Social stratification in pre-colonial days and its legacy
(v) The colonial experience and the structure of privilege
(vi) The modernization of status
(vii) The traditionalist citizen in a modern state
(viii) New frontiers and ancient communities: the tensions of conflicting identities

Chapter 16: Nation-building and changing political systems

(i) Political parties and the last days of colonialism
(ii) The frailty of legislative and administrative institutions
(iii) Ethnic, regional, ideological, religious and class tensions: the struggle for containment
(iv) Independence and the failure of Western parliamentary institutions
(v) The growth of executive power in African political systems
(vi) The growth of the power of the military
(vii) Soldiers, politicians and administrators: adversaries and partners
(viii) Social cleavages and new social classes
(ix) The crisis of authority in modern Africa
(x) Defence problems and the tensions of sovereignty

Section V: Socio-cultural change

Chapter 17: Religion and social change

(i) Religion and African societies
(ii) The role of traditional African religions
(iii) The role of Christianity
(iv) The role of Islam
(v) The functions of syncretism, messianic and millenarian movements

Chapter 18: Language and social change

(i) Bilingualism and multilingualism in Africa
(ii) The search for national languages
(iii) The spread of Arabic and European languages, the impact of the written word; the search for new or revised orthographies
(iv) The social and economic implications of language

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(i) The pre-colonial literary heritage
(ii) Oral literature: classical and current
(iii) The impact of European languages on African literature
(iv) The rise of the novel and other forms of modern literature: the African writer and his readers
(v) Literature and cultural nationalism
(vi) Literature and social change

Chapter 20: Art and society

(i) Music, dancing and singing in African societies
(ii) Sculpture and the visual arts
(iii) Painting: from rock to canvas
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(v) Africa and the world in artistic interaction
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(i) The heritage of the nineteenth century: indigenous and external
(ii) Man and the cosmos: traditional conceptions
(iii) Man and nature: conflict and harmony
(iv) Man and society: the doctrine of indivisibility
(v) Current trends in philosophy and thought
(vi) Ideology and policy: the influence of socialism, nationalism, traditionalism and liberalism on national choices
(vii) Ideology and the emergence of new world-views

Section VI: Pan-Africanism: Liberation and integration

Chapter 22: Africa and the Black Diaspora

(i) Genesis, birth and forms of Pan-Africanism: the Manchester conference; trans-Atlantic Black solidarity
(ii) Pan-Africanism and the Caribbean
(iii) Pan-Africanism and Latin America
(iv) Africa, Black America and world culture

Chapter 23: Pan-Africanism and regional integration

(i) Cultural factors in regional integration
(ii) Economic factors in regional integration
(iii) Relations with world economic blocs, with special reference to the European Economic Community
(iv) Regional and inter-regional African co-operation: OCAM, the East African Community, the Maghreb, etc.
(v) The role of technical collaboration
(vi) Regional communities in Africa: a balance sheet

Chapter 24: Pan-Africanism and liberation

(i) Economic factors in the occupation of southern Africa
(ii) Military factors in the occupation of Arab territories
(iii) Political solidarity and the struggle of liberation
(iv) The Organization of African Unity and liberation movements
(v) The Organization of African Unity and the Arab League
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Section VII: Africa in world affairs

Chapter 25: Africa and liberal capitalist countries

(i) The colonial legacy in Africa's relations with the West
(ii) Africa and the international capitalist system
(iii) Economic and technological imbalance: the roots of dependency
(iv) African and the European Economic Community
(v) Africa and North America
(vi) Africa and Japan
(vii) Africa and liberal capitalism in historical perspective: problems of co-operation and penetration
(viii) Africa and Western socialist movements

Chapter 26: Africa and the socialist countries

(i) African colonies and the influence of Western communist parties
(ii) International communism and anti-colonial movements
(iii) The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and decolonization of the Third World
(iv) The People's Republic of China and decolonization
(v) The political economy of Africa's relations with the socialist countries
(vi) Africa and the socialist world in ideological interaction
(vii) Africa as a theatre of international rivalries

Chapter 27: Africa and other developing regions

(i) India and Egypt in the birth of non-alignment
(ii) Africa and the People's Republic of China
(iii) The evolution of the Afro-Asian movement
(iv) Africa, Asia and Latin America: the beginnings of an economic alliance
(v) Africa, the developing countries and the search for a new international economic order

Chapter 28: Africa and the United Nations

(i) 1945: The birth of the United Nations in San Francisco and the anti-colonial potential of the United Nations Charter
(ii) The United Nations' role in the liberation of Africa
(iii) The United Nations and apartheid in South Africa
(iv) The United Nations and Namibia
(v) The United Nations and the Congo crisis
(vi) The United Nations and Zimbabwe
(vii) The Economic Commission for Africa
(viii) The potential of the Nairobi Secretariat on Human Environment
(ix) Unesco and the search for cultural and political liberation
(x) The United Nations in Africa's development
(xi) Africa and the search for a new international law

Chapter 29: Towards the year 2000

A conclusion

4. Report and proposals of the ad hoc subcommittee

The subcommittee held three meetings before reaching a number of conclusions and putting forward its suggestions.

The first meeting was held from 9 to 9.30 p.m., on Saturday 19 May 1979, and was attended by Professors Gonidec, Milewski, Verhaegen and Pathé Diagne, who acted as co-ordinator. Professor Asiwaju apologized for his absence.

The meeting was essentially devoted to making contact and to exchanging views on the different problems raised by the table of contents as submitted. On the whole, the comments made reflected the issues of substance and form which had been raised at the plenary meeting. It was agreed that a second working meeting would be held, at which written drafts setting out the observations and suggestions in a systematic manner would be presented, either in the form of an overall alternative plan or in the form of amendments to the sections and chapters of the original draft plan.

The second meeting was held on Sunday 20 May, from 6 to 9 p.m. The purpose of that meeting was to examine and discuss the different drafts prepared. All the members of the subcommittee were present at the meeting, together with Professor Mazrui, who had been invited to take part in the discussions.

The third meeting was held on Monday 21 May, at 8 a.m., and was devoted to drawing conclusions from the previous two meetings. The four written contributions presented at the meeting by Professors Pathé Diagne, Milewski, Verhaegen and Gonidec appear at the end of this report. Professor Asiwaju made a verbal statement, the substance of which is embodied in this report. The most significant criticisms levelled against the draft plan are grouped together and reviewed below. Those criticisms formed the basis for the suggested alternative plans and for the proposed amendments to entire sections and chapters, which are also outlined below.

Form and methodology

Generally speaking, it was noted that the plan was lacking in interlinking features, and thus in continuity and coherence.

The breakdown into periods and the historical linkage between facts are not always obvious. The main dates standing out in the period covered by Volume VIII are not always indicated and justified. The 'montage' of the first part of the plan—(a) Italian fascism and the Ethiopian War, (b) the Second World War, and

(c) the independence struggle—with the second part—'Study of Themes'—appeared to be rather cursory or imprecise.

Some members felt that it would not be easy to handle the distinction between the first chronological part and the second thematic part. Repetitions could not be avoided in an exercise where individual chapters were written by different authors, unless precise guidelines were laid down as to the limits and thrust of each chapter. The Volume Editor might well find himself having to contend with a considerable or even insurmountable problem of co-ordination.

Furthermore, as it stood, the presentation, which relegated the factors determining the trends to the second part—after the analysis of the movement towards independence—was in the reverse of the order usually adopted in a proper methodology.

It was noted that there was not always a guiding thread or a real chronology linking the constituent elements of the sections and chapters.

The plan was severely criticized in that regard. Some members of the subcommittee made a point of citing examples of whole sections and chapters to show that the entire first part, where the chronology ought to be fairly strict, was often simply a catalogue of facts and themes rather than a history taking account of complex and overlapping subject-matter. That criticism applied to almost all the chapters of Section I and, above all, those of Section II.

The standpoint

Virtually the entire subcommittee repeated the criticisms made of the plan at the plenary meeting.

The standpoint was considered to be élitist or even capitalist and had no bearing on the life-experience of the peoples involved. In the view of Professor Asiwaju, it gave a false reading of true history as lived by the masses. This reproach was expanded on by all the other participants who criticized the approach proposed in the plan for its excessive 'positivism' and its 'developmentalist' character, especially in the second part, which was centred on themes that were essentially viewed from a 'modernizational' and 'normative' standpoint, so to speak. One of the participants accused the plan of turning its back on a materialist explanation, of not allowing of a comprehensive description of historical evolution, and of not situating the phenomena of dependence, exploitation or imperialism in their true perspective. Other participants stressed the fact that the position taken was liable to appear out of date even before the publication of the volume that was meant to be a reference work.

It was also stressed that the whole sense of the struggle waged by the peoples of Africa and the dynamic movement they had triggered off in an as yet uncompleted process involving the reconquest of their freedom, their identity, and their areas of political, economic, cultural or technological equilibrium, required a more original and specific approach. The entire ideology of the plan was seriously queried.

The substance

There was qualified agreement on the fact that Volume VIII ought to be a history of a crucial period which, over some forty-odd years, had had to contend with the future problems of a continent that would henceforward be thrown into confusion by a world on which it had to impose its own action, destiny and interests. As a result:

The history of the political, economic, social, cultural or technological facts from 1935 to 1980 and beyond had to be visualized in that perspective.

The major themes of the period had to be analysed along those same lines in political, economic, social, cultural, technological or ideological terms, in other words by establishing an uninterrupted chain forming a single whole and displaying the same pattern, from the anti-fascist struggle in Ethiopia to the winning of independence and the effort of national reconstruction in the Maghreb, Ghana, and sub-Saharan Africa or to the ongoing struggles in southern Africa.

In point of fact, the proposals for recasting the plan and the proposals for amending it were all more or less consistent with that standpoint.

Structure of the drafts

Three of the drafts put forward consisted of complete but overlapping outline plans. However, there was not enough time to scale them down into a single project, even though their authors agreed that they were complementary not only in the spirit which prompted them but also in the way in which they were linked together.

The draft proposed by Professor Pathé Diagne consisted of, in the first part, a chronology of actual developments; and in the second part, an analysis of dominant trends or policies with respect to major themes.

This plan primarily developed the first part and suggested a reorientation and a more precise approach to the analysis of contemporary themes and policies covered in the second part.

The plan proposed by Professor Gonidec displayed a similar linkage pattern and stressed the need for an introductory presentation of the main infrastructural and superstructural factors that were subsequently to become dominant. The proposals were as follows: in the first part, the trends from 1935 to 1970—a period of war followed by the processes involved in independence; in the second part, an analysis of contemporary policies and problems in political, economic, social, cultural and diplomatic terms; in an epilogue, Africa in a state of crisis in the face of world problems and the problems in southern Africa.

The plan put forward by Professor Verhaegen gave prominence to a Marxist presentation of history and hinged on an analysis of world-wide capitalist developments sketched in as a background to economic, political, social and ideological change in Africa.

This plan was criticized by Professors Gonidec and Pathé Diagne more because of its overtly economic approach than because of the outlook and standpoint it represented. It could be acceptable as a section or chapter illustrating the development of the factors involved and, from that angle, the subcommittee felt that it was not

inconsistent with the other two drafts, although they were regarded as being more suited to the historical account required in Volume VIII.

The draft proposed by Professor Milewski merely amended Section II of the draft presented by Professor Mazrui.

Suggestions

At its fourth meeting, which took place on Monday 21 May, from 8 to 10 a.m.; the subcommittee agreed on the following proposals to put to the International Scientific Committee:

1. In view of the criticisms made in respect of substance and form, it was essential to undertake a far-reaching review of the spirit, thrust, structure and choice of the themes contained in the present draft, especially since the subcommittee did not hear the reactions of the Volume Editor.
2. Volume VIII was a very special element of the *General History of Africa* project. It posed problems of unprecedented complexity. It was for that reason that it would be advisable to expand the conceptual context of the plan by seeking contributions from specialists in other fields, in order to obtain a clearer picture of the problems and to ensure that the standpoint of the volume was more in keeping with the demands of a contemporary African history shaped by the aspirations and struggles of the peoples of the continent.

Document 1. Draft table of contents by P. Diagne

Introduction

Section I. Africa in a decade of world conflicts, 1935–45

Chapter 1: The rise and growth of fascism in Africa.

The Italian adventure. Repercussions on: Somaliland; Eritrea; other parts of Africa.

The coming to power of Franco and Salazar in Spain and Portugal: Repercussions on Africa.

The League of Nations and the evolution of the trusteeship and mandated countries. Cameroon and Togo; South-West Africa; Tanganyika; Rwanda-Burundi.

Anti-fascist and anti-colonial movements and their repercussions in Africa. The Popular Front in France; the socialist movement and anti-colonialism in Belgium; the Labour movement and anti-colonialism in the United Kingdom.

Chapter 2: Africa and the Second World War; tropical Africa under French rule.

Chapter 3: Africa under British and Belgian rule.

Chapter 4: Southern Africa.

Section II. The struggle for independence after 1945

Chapter 1: 'Seek ye first the political kingdom' (Nkrumah): introductory chapter.

Chapter 2: Factors in the nationalist upsurge and decolonization.

Economic changes: the evolution of capitalism world-wide and its consequences for African economies and societies.

Political developments in Africa and the metropolitan colonialist countries. The crisis of colonialism and the reappraisal of relations between the metropolitan powers and their colonies.

Movements of ideas and the impact of ideologies on socio-economic and socio-political developments in Africa.

Religious dissent and demands for identity.

Demands for civil rights; forced labour and mass movements.

Revolutionary peasantry and rebellions.

Urban workers and trade union movements.

The role of élites from the Manchester Congress to the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists.

Bandung, or the emergence of Third-World consciousness.

The independence of Ghana: a symbol. (Ghana became independent in 1957 shortly after Tunisia and Morocco, but its worldwide and continental impact was considerable, as evidenced by the fact that the First All-African Peoples' Congress was held in Accra.)

Chapter 3: Political parties, liberation movements, wars of secession and constitutional developments.

Armed struggle. In East Africa: the Malagasy revolt, the Mau Mau movement; in West Africa: the RDA and the UPC; in the Maghreb: Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria.

The emergence of independence, 1960–70.

(a) The role of mass parties on constitutional developments: in the French possessions; in the British possessions; in the Belgian possessions.

(b) Consolidation and broadening of independence in the face of colonial resistance: liberation movements, the PAU and the Liberation Committee; the struggle against the Portuguese regime; the struggle against apartheid and racial minority regimes; southern and East Africa.

Section III. The post-colonial state: internal endeavours and outside pressures

Chapter 1: *Nation-building and its difficulties.* Institutional developments; the single party and national unity; the centralized nation-state—monocratic tendencies; crises and instability.

Chapter 2: *Internal causes.*

Political conflicts and interests.

The arbitrary nature of borders, underdevelopment and economic micro-space.

Frustration among the masses.

Monocratic tendencies.

The frailty of institutions; the temptation of violence and armed force.

Trials and failures of social and economic models: growth and underdevelopment. Social inequalities, political violence and restriction of freedoms.

The challenging of regimes.

The pressures of internal and external opposition: civil wars.

The democratic thaw: from the one-party system to pluralism.

External causes.

Africa coming to grips with world hegemonism: strategy of obstruction, reconquest and destabilization.

Co-operation and/or exploitation.

Relations of co-operation and/or domination: political; economic; technological; cultural.

North–South relations and the new international order: Africa in the world economy and geopolitics; privileged relations with the former colonial powers—the meaning of the Commonwealth and its consequences, the French-speaking countries, etc.; privileged relations with European communities: the EEC and Comecon.

Relations with the socialist countries: scope, areas and consequences.
Relations with developing countries; non-aligned political groupings; economic groupings (UNCTAD, Group of 77, etc.).
Africa and the international institutions.

Section IV. Contemporary problems and tendencies

Introduction on possible alternative courses.
Power to the people.
Development strategy and the reconquest of areas affecting economic, political and socio-cultural equilibrium.
Chapter 1: Socio-economic changes: overall survey from 1935 to 1980.
Chapter 2: Socio-political changes: overall survey from 1935 to 1980.
Chapter 3: Socio-cultural changes: overall survey from 1935 to 1980.

Section V. Africa and its future in the face of the hegemonies and the super-powers or the outlook for the year 2,000

Document 2. Suggested alterations to the table of contents, based on the comments of the subcommittee, by P.-F. Gonidec

General observation

The standpoint adopted by the subcommittee was that the character of Volume VIII, like those preceding it, should be such as to form an integral part of a general history of Africa.

It follows therefore: firstly, that emphasis should be placed on the developments (or 'revolutions') that have taken place in the period covered by Volume VIII, and that particular attention should accordingly be paid to the factors responsible for such developments (inputs) and their consequences (outputs); and secondly, that, since the work is meant to be a general history, every effort should be made not to overlook the different aspects of the evolution of African societies (infrastructure and superstructure) or the influence of exogenous factors, both those which were obvious during the colonial period (colonialism and the different forms of support given to emancipation or liberation movements) and those in force during the period following independence (neo-colonialism and imperialism).

General conception of the volume

The tentative plan for Volume VIII raises a fundamental problem of methodology for a work, purporting to be historical. The first two sections are devoted to the decolonization movement in the different regions of Africa, while socio-economic, socio-cultural and other changes are covered in the other sections.

In a proper method, this order of presentation should be reversed. The first part should be devoted to showing all the decisive factors governing developments up to independence.

In this connection, the external factors should be highlighted—although they should not necessarily be given prominence. These would include the influence of the socialist countries, the foreign policy of the United States, the indirect influence wielded by the liberation struggles in Africa, the action of the international organizations, changes in colonial policies, etc.

Although it is difficult to separate internal and external factors, a second subsection in the first part should be devoted to the changes taking place in African societies during the period under review, in other words to recounting its economic, social and cultural history (culture being taken in the broad sense).

A second part could then be devoted to showing the *process by which the countries acceded to formal independence*. One important aspect of this would be the ways and means used (armed struggles or political combat) and their consequences, while another aspect would be concerned with the protagonists involved, including élites, the masses, political parties, social organizations, and so on.

It then has to be asked what policy the colonial powers adopted towards nationalism. Was it a delaying policy? Did they introduce structures designed to prolong the colonial situation? Was it a policy of divide and rule? Did they install people who were not likely to be troublesome? Reference should be made to the insertion of the continent into non-African units such as the European Economic Community, the Commonwealth (which is mentioned nowhere), the Franco-African community, the system of international co-operation, and so on.

The third part would cover the period from independence to the present day. The subcommittee proposes the following themes:

the evolution of political regimes;
economic policies;
social policies;
cultural policies;
foreign policies.

The last part could deal with southern Africa, which has specific features and has not yet gained its independence.

With the proviso that the first part would be developed as outlined, Chapter 10 could be kept, although stress should be laid on the international context and internal contradictions (cf. Zimbabwe).

Document 3. Draft table of contents by B. Verhaegen

The draft table of contents presented by the Volume Editor seems to run counter to the rules of contemporary historical method. It does not allow of a comprehensive account of historical developments. In point of fact, it rules out a materialist explanation of history and does not situate the phenomena of dependence and imperialist economic exploitation in their proper perspective. The terminology used is developmentalist and normative.

The draft presented here is both chronological and systematic. The three periods singled out have an economic and political significance, and provision should be made for dealing with the following topics in each of the three periods:

1. The world economy from the situational and structural standpoints and the international political situation.
2. The degree to which the capitalist mode of production has been established in Africa: How is profit extracted?
   The nature of capitalist accumulation and the mobilization of productive forces. How is profit distributed and exported?
3. The workings of the political and ideological machinery.
4. What is the position of the social protagonists and how do they react to the mobilization of productive forces and to the workings of the political and ideological machinery?
5. The contradictions, conflicts and crises leading to political change and a new period.

The period from 1935 to 1945

1. The economy and the world political situation: the beginning of economic recovery in 1935; the conflict between democracy and fascism in Europe; the economy on a war footing from 1939 onwards.
2. The start of the changeover from the primitive accumulation stage (the primary sector and the transportation of goods for export) to the complex accumulation stage (the secondary and tertiary sectors).
   However, account has to be taken of the war economy, which switched emphasis back to the primary sector and slowed down the development of accumulation, and mobilized the productive forces through coercion.
3. Colonial policies in the service of the war effort.
4. Situation of the social protagonists: living standards and population growth; geographical, occupational and social mobility; aspirations for change.
5. Crises and conflicts in the colonial system on completion of the war effort: insurrections, strikes, urban and rural revolts, Messianism; repression; the growing awareness of the lower middle class; introduction of a new colonial policy to cope with these events and changes.

The period from 1945 to 1960

1. The establishment of the international organizations. Rivalry between blocs, the intervention of socialism. Economic growth since 1949 and the effects of the Korean war. The economic crisis of 1956–7, which makes it possible to understand both the increased pace at which independence was granted and the crisis of the new states.
2. Acceleration and diversification in capital accumulation: the growth of the primary sector as a consequence of the war and the worldwide increase in demand; the development of industries for the local market: textiles, foodstuffs, construction, etc., which is bound up with the general increase in purchasing power and the rise of the lower middle class; the development of the tertiary sector (administration, trade, education, etc.). Profits are ploughed back (until 1955) or exported.
3. New colonial policies. Liberalization or conflict: in the metropolitan countries; on the international scene; in Africa.
4. Situation of the social protagonists and their objective conditions.
   Urbanization and proletarianization: living standards; schooling; population growth; formation of new social classes and in particular of the lower middle class composed of government officials; the peasant class.
5. Growth of political awareness, contradictions, crises and conflicts: anti-colonial struggles in all their forms; colonial wars; independence.

The period from 1960 to 1980

1. The world economic and political situation: the economic recession from 1956 to 1962; structural changes in Western capitalism: multinational corporations, international economic institutions, the new economic policy of the Western countries, etc.; the economic activities of the socialist countries; the intervention of the United Nations, etc.
2. The new strategy and structures of capitalism in Africa.
   How could profit be extracted from the post-colonial states? Technological imperialism and counter-development; circumscribed capital accumulation in strategic or highly profitable sectors; trade in new products, such as armaments and luxuries, etc.; plundering, fraud and corruption.

How is profit shared and used? What is the function of the new state apparatus and the classes in power; corruption and clientelism; the national middle class?
Who finances technological imperialism? Public indebtedness, the international organizations; living standards of the productive classes.

3. The workings of the new state apparatus and its evolution. Pan-African institutions and ideologies.
4. The social protagonists; social classes; co-operation and foreign imperialism.
5. Contradictions, crises, class struggles and conflicts; coups d'état; civil wars, military and foreign intervention.

Conclusion

This draft table of contents is not, in itself, Marxist. The way it is set out would make it possible to give an explanation of history, although it would not necessarily be a materialist explanation.

All the topics listed in the Volume Editor's draft can be found in the outline described above.

This outline could be used in two ways. It could either replace that presented by the Volume Editor, or else it could be used in part to form a chronological section or part preceding the breakdown by subjects. In the latter case, however, it would be difficult to avoid a number of repetitions.

Document 4. Suggestions for changes in the table of contents by Jan Milewski

The suggestions presented here are concerned only with the economic and social history of Africa in Volume VIII. I do not discuss any other problems or the construction of those parts of the table of contents dealing with the political, diplomatic and cultural history of the period covered by the volume.

I wish to make it clear that these suggestions include very few 'innovations' or 'additions' to the scope of the problems presented by the Volume Editor, Professor Ali Mazrui, in his table of contents. What I was chiefly trying to do was to separate the main problems of economic and social history and to put them into single chapters or subchapters, so as to permit their discussion and presentation in one part of the volume. If that suggestion were accepted, the chapters on economic and social history could also be used as a reference for the other chapters. For example, once the main trends of the standard of living of the African population (1935–80) are discussed under one heading, all other relevant problems (labour movements, strikes, peasant protests and revolts, etc.) need only be referred back to that chapter. In any case, I hope indeed that Volume VIII will be a reference book for years to come. The discussion of separate problems in social and economic history, each in 'one piece', will make the material of the Volume more readily accessible.

I am taking the liberty of suggesting that the present Section III—Socio-Economic Changes—be divided into two sections: a new Section III—Economic Changes—and a new Section IV—Social Changes.

In each of the new sections, the problems involved in the economic and social history of Africa (1935–80) should be discussed in an exhaustive manner. The main chapters and subchapters of both new sections are given below. The exact delimitation of the chapters and subchapters is clearly the work of the Editor, and I would not wish to interfere with it. Nevertheless, the chapters and subchapters presented below include the most important problems, in my opinion, and they should be discussed at length in the two new sections proposed.

New section III—Economic changes

Chapter 11: General aspects of African economic changes (1935–80)

1. Africa and world economic changes (1935–9, 1939–45, 1945–60, 1960 onwards).
   Main trends in the growth of the world's and Africa's income, Africa's share in: world trade, industrial output, industrial consumption, energy output and consumption, capital investment, etc. Africa's and the world's terms of trade.
2. Standard of living and quality of life of the African people, 1935–80.
   Demographic changes: growth of population, mortality, diseases, epidemics, health control, life expectation, etc. Nutrition, trends and evolution. Droughts, hunger migrations, hunger, etc. Growing differentiation in per capita income on the continent (up to 1960 and afterwards).
3. General evaluation of the colonial economic heritage (circa 1960). A cost-benefit analysis.
   Links and dependence, directions of colonial investment, areas of dependence. Structures of economies of African countries and needs of the metropolitan colonial powers. Growth of post-colonial (post-1960) links and dependency: exports, import, capital, know-how, skilled labour, etc. Consequences.
4. Main types of economic structure in the African countries and trends in their evolution (1960 onwards).
   Similarities and differentiation, causes of both, growth of differentiation after 1970–3.

Chapter 12: Agriculture and rural development

1. The basic role of agriculture in the economies of African countries—stability and change (1935–80).
   Changing place of agriculture in various countries, trends and rates. Share in GDP and employment. Trends in development of money economy and commercialization.
2. The economics of African agriculture: types and changes (1935–80).
   Land ownership, size of households, destination of production (farmers' self-consumption, local, domestic, foreign markets). Problems of capital, credit, savings, investment, technology. African and European agriculture on the continent. Factors affecting growth of food production and farmers' incomes.
3. Patterns of marketing of agricultural produce and the price mechanism (1935–80).
4. Ecological and social constraints on production: the struggle for rural development after independence (1960–80).
   Governments' policies, co-operatives, individual enterprises. Strategies, plans, constraints, results.
5. Agriculture as a factor in internal economic development after 1960.
   Contribution to: GDP, food consumption, production of raw materials for home and foreign industries, agricultural exports. Dangerous problems for the future: food, raw materials.
6. African agriculture in the world economy (1935–80).
   Africa's changing share in world agricultural output, exports and imports. Growing dependence on food imports. Agriculture and the balance of trade of selected African countries—exemplification (1960–80).

Chapter 13: Industrial development

1. Consumption of industrial goods and development of industries up to the early 1950s. Causes of the situation, colonial policy and development of industries on the continent. Patterns of consumption of industrial products (consumer and capital goods, etc.). African demand for industrial goods, trends and fluctuations.

2. Changes in industrialization during the last decade of colonial rule (1950–60).
   Beginnings of industrialization in several African countries, causes of change. Types of industrial development. Technological dependence.
3. Industrialization after independence (1960–80).
   Patterns of industrial development. Economics of new industries. Share of domestic and foreign capital, skills, labour, etc. Consumption of home-made and imported industrial goods—trends and changes. Industrial sector in GDP.
4. The impact of multinational (transnational) corporations on industrial development.
5. Impact of industrial development: mining industries (1935–80).
6. Impact of industrial development: processing and manufacturing industries (1950–80).
7. Growth of the industrial labour force (1935–80).
   In this chapter, the following aspects should be analysed in economic terms: industrial migrations, incomes of industrial workers and their standard of living, and links with rural communities, etc.

Chapter 14: Urbanization

1. African and world trends in urbanization (1935–80).
   Trends in various parts of the continent, causes of differentiation.
2. Economic background to urbanization.
   Differences in patterns of urbanization. Differences in urban-rural incomes, expectations, realities. Employment and unemployment of urban inhabitants.
3. Urban incomes: trends, structures, range.
   Growth of polarization of urban incomes. New groups (classes) of high urban incomes. Economic situation of work-seekers. Non-industrial urbanization and urban incomes.

Chapter 15: Internal integration of the economies of the African countries

1. Development of national domestic markets.
   Factors in the interregional (within the country) division of labour. Growth of the interregional (within the country) exchange of goods, labour (skilled and unskilled), capital, services.
2. Government planning and regional development (within the country).
   Strategies for reducing differentiation of development and incomes within the countries: concepts, problems, plans, results.

Chapter 16: Strategies for economic decolonization and development

1. The new dependence and the search for solutions (1960–80).
2. Strategies for maximizing economic growth: planned and 'spontaneous' developments (1960 onwards).
   Development of economic planning in African states: institutions, organization, types of plans, results and difficulties.
3. African governments and the economic integration of the continent.
   To be analysed here only in economic terms. Plans, strategies, regional (inter-state) unions, agreements, etc. Economic background and possibilities for continental integration.
4. African governments and international strategies for development.
   New economic order, Gatt, commodity treaties and agreements, etc.

New section IV—Social changes

Chapter 17: Changing social structures

1. Main characteristics of the social structures, trends and changes.
   Differentiation of structures in various countries; causes, characteristics, consequences. Social, cultural and religious factors strengthening structures.
2. The rural population, role in societies, dynamics of social change.
   Factors of change and continuity. Regional differences. Types of socio-economic organization.
3. Urban population, social growth and professional structures, social characteristics.
4. Social stratification: 'classes', 'groups', 'élites', etc.
   Old ('traditional') and new ('modern') social stratification, their interrelations and interdependence. Social, professional, economic, political and other factors affecting and influencing new stratification. Question of ownership of the means of production and of access to public finances and to political power. Bureaucratic-administrative-military élites. Conflicts of interests within élites. The élites and the masses.
5. Growth of the 'intelligentsia' (1935–80).
   Social origins in particular countries. Political and economic aims, methods, attitudes. Domestic and foreign links. Changing status after independence. Role of education.
6. Growth of the industrial working class (from 1935 onwards).
   Includes workers employed in mining industries. Trends in various countries. Attitudes, class consciousness, links with rural communities.
7. Growth of the industrial and commercial entrepreneur group (class), 1935–80.
   Social origins, directions of activities (by branches of the economy). Obstacles during the colonial era. Role after independence: differentiation in particular countries. Links with public and foreign capital (rivalry and co-operation).
8. Social background to the new political systems and regimes (1960–80).
   Social background of the post-colonial parliamentary systems. Social basis of the new military and revolutionary regimes. Links with various social groups and factors. Ethnic factors—myths and realities.

From this point onwards I have no other suggestions to make regarding the table of contents prepared by the Editor of Volume VIII, Professor Ali Mazrui. This implies that, if the above-mentioned suggestions were in any way accepted, the *new* Chapter 17 should be followed by Chapter 15 of the Editor's table of contents, and then by the Editor's Section IV—Socio-Political Change. It goes without saying that, if my suggestions were in any way accepted, some of the Editor's subchapters from his Section IV could be omitted, since I have transferred them to the new Section IV.