

African Social Thoughts: Sociological Analysis and Synthesis*

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INTRODUCTION

This essay is a comparative analysis of the social thought of Nyerere, Cabral, Onoge and Ki-Zerbo. Their ideological conceptualisation and theoretical perspectives on national liberation and social reconstruction are critically examined both individually and comparatively. Subsequently, this should make theoretical and practical evaluation easier. The objective is to find out which of the four satisfactorily captures revolutionary praxis and the prospects for social development in the African setting.

These social theorists call for the freedom of self-determination and stress the desirability and necessity of a 'socialist' Africa¹. African society, in order to restore its historical personality, must - so they argue - rid itself of foreign domination. In other words, they agree that Africa, of necessity, has to break with the centuries of unbridled domination by colonialism and imperialism; and that this break should ultimately see Africa adopting socialism (Cabral, Onoge), resurrecting the lost 'socialist' dynamic (Nyerere, Ki-Zerbo).

Ironically, they conceive and, therefore, define socialism differently. But in spite of their different conceptions, they share *certain* assumptions about socialism. For example, they are all fundamentally agreed that one dimension of a socialist system is the precedence of social interests over the interests of a few individuals. Ideally, the excellent structure is the entire social group in which power and sovereignty is vested. One aspect is that under socialism classes should cease to exist, since there is practical evidence that at one stage in society's historical development there were no classes. Classes, therefore, are historically *transient*, and class society will be eventually superseded by a classless society. But even these elementary assumptions should be understood in the context of their total theoretical bodies. Beyond these common skeletal assumptions, Cabral and Onoge radically break away, while the other two, Nyerere and Ki-Zerbo, part peacefully. And although they may use and apply similar concepts, they — he usages, that is — nonetheless vary greatly both in meaning and content.

J.K. Nyerere

Nyerere's ideology is African socialism². He argues in general that socialism is an attitude of mind, an attitude which is not institutionalised but one within peoples themselves: born as it were, within the individual's mind as an original social nature. For Mwalimu, the important thing is not so much the objective circumstances or the material possessions of an individual in society but rather how the individual *sees himself* - that leads him to view the existence of socialism as based on the attitude of mind. It is not the existence of different social classes in society, viz. rich individuals as against poor ones, that matters. As long as they - the rich - think along 'socialist' lines, all is well. Socialism for Nyerere is, therefore, a mental construct and has nothing fundamental to do with the material conditions. Put differently, not 'matter' but 'ideas' are the motive force of history. People *think and behave as if* their ideas are not strategically related to their material conditions. Like democracy,

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socialism is an attitude of mind, a mere ideological orientation within which the view is held that society should have equality, and self-reliance. As it is attitudinally defined, socialism becomes purely a superstructural phenomenon with all its attendant problems of subjectivism and conceptual discrepancies - a point to which we shall return later on.

Nyerere appears to view African socialism as fundamentally based on the principles of socio-economic organisation which existed in African traditional society before the advent of colonialism. This means that African socialism is not based on doctrinaire Marxism; neither will it follow the principles of scientific socialism as propounded by orthodox Marxism-Leninism. Building African socialism simply requires the recapturing of the socialist or communalistic attitude of mind which prevailed in the African before colonial rule. It is colonial capitalism that destroyed the spirit of 'familyhood', mutual co-existence and sharing - qualities which characterised traditional African living. Colonialism introduced values of 'individualism', competition, and acquisitiveness' leading to the present non-social society which no longer cares about the social welfare of its members.

Nyerere's writings are permeated throughout by strong belief in some sort of socialist organisation, as evidenced in *ujamaa programmes*³. This socialist reconstruction is based on a profound belief in the virtues of traditional social life and culture. And about the virtues of traditional African society he says:

One of the most socialistic achievements of our society was the sense of security it gave to its members, and the universal hospitality on which they could rely. But it is too often forgotten.... that the basis of this great socialistic achievement was this: that it was taken for granted that every member of society — barring only the children and infirm — contributed his fair share of effort towards the production of its wealth⁴.

In traditional African society, then, there were no rich or poor individuals in the sense of exploiter and exploited, for there was no accumulation of personal wealth. Wealth was communally owned. Every individual was cared for by society and, provided everyone contributed to the generation of social wealth, there was no need to worry about 'tomorrow' in the sense of hoarding for an uncertain future.

We were individuals within a community. We took care of the community, and the community took care of us⁵.

In other words, the obligation to work for the social and material welfare of the community as a whole was the over-riding moral principle. This communitarianism, Nyerere says, was socialism. Note that he uses the concept 'socialism' for this social formation. The implication, therefore, is that traditional African society is a ready foundation for present day social reconstruction - hence the concept of 'ujamaa'.

Nyerere's brand of socialism repudiates both capitalism and what he terms 'European socialism'. His polemics against capitalism are reasonable, at least in so far as they describe the nature and undesirability of capitalism — the exploitative dimension, that is. He rejects the scientific socialism for its emphasis on class conflict. Since communalism and socialism for him are synonymous, he argues that African socialism has no classes; but that there existed unmitigated brotherhood. Hence, the apparent absence of class analysis in his thought. African socialism, therefore, is essentially opposed to what he calls doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between people. This - it will be noted - is a misconception of scientific socialism.

What are the social dynamics of present society and approaches Nyerere has in mind for the social reconstruction? Firstly, the social dynamics. We have mentioned that Nyerere defines socialism as an attitude of mind which is inherent in traditional

African society. In such a society accumulation of wealth was permissible so long as it was not used to exploit others. In other words, accumulation was welcomed - if it was used to benefit all. Wealth in itself, Nyerere argues, does not provide full evidence that the one who possesses it is a capitalist. **One is a capitalist only if one owns wealth for the purpose of dominating others, deriving power and prestige, and accumulating more at the expense of one's companions.** It is in light of this that Nyerere says a millionaire can be a potential socialist and a poor person a potential capitalist.

The question of the attitude of mind comes in here because the moment one 'section' of the community wants more without considering that others should have the same share, it has a capitalist attitude - one that values wealth and strives to accumulate through the exploitation of others. There is something wrong, Mwalimu says, with someone who would become a millionaire by accumulating amounts much more than the rest of the people could do between themselves. Nyerere, then, believes that accumulation of personal wealth is anti-social. The appearance of millionaires side-by-side with poverty in a society is enough proof that something is wrong with the society in question.

It would seem, therefore, that for Nyerere a socialist mode of production is not as important as a socialist mode of distribution. What distinguishes the capitalist from the socialist society is the manner in which wealth is distributed - which is based upon the attitude of the mind. Put another way, it is the attitude of mind which distinguishes a socialist from a non-socialist society; and it is not the method of production that makes a difference between socialist and capitalist society but the fair distribution of wealth.

Needless to say, Nyerere's version of socialism does not depend on the level of productive forces, or on how wealth is obtained (produced), but rather on discarding selfishness, (abuse of wealth and power) and sharing equally all of the social wealth.

How does Nyerere go about realising this societal reform in practical terms? The target is, understandably, the capitalist attitude of mind. Personal and private property, especially the individuation of land from its communal properties must be rejected. We must - he maintains - redirect our economies towards our traditional values; and in order to do that we must re-educate ourselves to recapture our former attitude of mind. Put differently, the Africans - in order to restore African socialism - have to go through a re-education process of some sort, for them to be enlightened on the issue that they are exploited by imperialism and its capitalist methods. This is the restorative imperative Nyerere prescribes, for he argues that African society has been torn apart by individualism and the private accumulation of wealth. So to recapture the socialist attitude of mind, to re-discover oneself, the restorative imperative should be political education of leaders, students, peasants and workers - in short, all members of society. The re-discovery process itself ought to be 'a going back' process - to the traditional past in order to locate and re-utilise that tradition which has been lost through the imposition of colonialism and all that goes with it: love for money, private ownership, acquisitiveness, individualism, etc.

J. Ki-Zerbo

Ki-Zerbo adopts a peculiarly methodological and ideological position, from which emerges his ideology of African socialism⁶. Like Nyerere, he is convinced that African socialism shaped the fundamental structures of the African traditional society. The socio-economic and political structures of the African traditional society, he says, are highly organised and are based on the authority of the old people,

hierarchy of power, of social consideration, and of prestige. The latter three, it is to be noted, were in consonance with the hierarchy of age.⁷ The other feature is solidarity, expressed both superstructurally and substructurally, in other words, communication expressed at the economic, social and political levels. The economic manifestation of this solidarity is the absence of individual or private property and, socially, it is manifested in the unmitigated hospitality. Generally, the solidarity has unlimited mutual responsibility. According to Ki-Zerbo, the above features lead to social egalitarianism, viz. total absence of classes in the Marxian sense. What he terms classes are in fact occupational groups⁸. This, he says, proves that

the exploitation of man never achieved the status of a system in the traditional society of Africa⁹.

The true principle of such a society, he says, was 'to each according to his needs' Hence Ki-Zerbo calls for the recapturing of this lost socialistic dynamic, because the logic of his philosophy is that African society on its own would have been permanently socialist. Like Nyerere, and other 'African socialists' or leaders who advocate African socialism, they fail to understand that socialism arose at a specific stage of socio-economic development and that, therefore, it is different qualitatively and quantitatively from communalism. As an ideology, it represents a superstructural exteriorisation of material substructural conditions rather than a simple state of mind.

Ki-Zerbo's socialism rejects capitalism on the basis that it allows for accumulation of capital and profits by individuals, breeds social classes, sanctifies individualism and the systematic search for profit. He also rejects scientific socialism or Marxism. He demagogically declares that Marxism cannot be the general philosophy for African development because its analysis of society is fundamentally different from that followed by African socialism. African socialism, therefore, is very distinct from scientific socialism which, if accepted in Africa, would constitute another spiritual and ideological colonisation. He acknowledges, however, the positive contribution of Marxism - an indication of his philosophical eclecticism and syncretism

Ki-Zerbo schematically divided the historical evolution of Africa into three stages: traditional Africa, colonial Africa and new Africa which is culturally and sociologically advanced. They correspond roughly to traditional African socialism, capitalism and African socialism. The first stage has already been sufficiently discussed. The second, colonial Africa, is characterised as sociologically problematical because, as he puts it, colonialism plundered Africa materially, sidetracked its personalism and culture. It is a crisis-ridden stage. Here he concurs with many writers on the political economy of colonialism, but his perspective is overly culturalistic. He discusses the impact of colonial education, money, alcohol, and general clash of civilisations outside the substructural base, i.e., political economy. Like Nyerere's theory, it lacks a penetrating analysis of imperialism and underdevelopment.

The last stage refers to the post-colonial era. He says it is up to the African people to shape their destinies. The role of the African leadership is clearly spelt out - both political unions and cultural leaders should make critical choices to guide the evolution of a new culture and civilisation in Africa. He cautions, however, that such policies should not 'enter into flagrant contradiction with the recognized values of the original civilization'¹⁰

Like Nyerere, he is against a confrontational path toward traditional culture. The path to be taken is three-staged: Decolonisation of social values, self-

examination and invention of new social forms. Again, this is a purely super-structurally based strategy which does not say anything about economic reorganisation other than class formations which are declared undesirable but not adequately analysed.

African social reconstruction, from Ki-Zerbo's point of view, should be based on African socialism. He says "...it is obvious that the choice of socialism is almost naturally and inevitably the end of African revolution".¹¹

The social 'class' on which this revolution rests is the numerically superior African peasantry. Besides, he argues, it still retains the vestiges of traditional socialism, and continues to have extraordinary enthusiasm for work. The working class, he notes, is numerically and organisationally weak. The chieftainship as a transcendental structure has no future because of its past collaboration with colonialism and having been quantitatively changed by the latter. The decisive transcendental structure is the political party. On the ideological and organisational orientation of the party, he does not comment, except for references to unity and the dangers of the institutionalisation of a single party. The principal agents of this sociological revolution, he maintains, are the youth and women because of their sensitivity — youthful dynamism and creativity¹². Here he appeals to biological and instinctual criteria.

It is apparently clear that Ki-Zerbo's analysis is largely devoid of class analysis. He asserts strongly that there were no economic classes in Africa - thus socio-economic stratification and conflicting group interests did not exist. Social contradictions are presented as emanating from outside. In fact, the very notion of African personalism connotes 'oneness' rather than diverse personalities determined variably by their class positions¹³. As for national liberation, he is practically silent - probably because his analysis is based on countries that had attained independence already. He says "...but the people often do need to be guided, especially after such a deep and fundamental trauma as the colonial era"¹⁴

This presupposes a politically free Africa, yet ironically he wrote his works in 1962 when the larger part of Africa was still under colonial domination. One can infer that he deliberately overlooked the question of national liberation because he took for granted that Africa would be automatically free, whether through peaceful or military means. The contemporary liberation movements in African have nothing to gain in the way of a revolutionary theory from Ki-Zerbo's socio-political thought.

By now it should be clear that Nyerere and Ki-Zerbo have a lot in common. Their theories rest on a populist nationalism, which tends to synthesise traditional and modern values. The result is a confusing and contradictory set of principles which is not integrated into a coherent doctrine. The vague abstractions are never developed into a clearly defined programmatic guide to action.

A. Cabral

This becomes clear as we proceed with the analysis of Cabral¹⁵. Amilcar Cabral subscribes to the Marxist ideological and philosophical outlook. In creatively applying it to the Third World societies, he discovers that certain revisions are necessary. He has been described as a neo-Marxist¹⁶.

His theme is the 'struggle', and as such his whole ideological and theoretical construct should be understood in that context. Cabral was, when he died, a leader of the Guinea national liberation movement, PAIGC. On the surface, therefore, the 'struggle' he is referring to is the armed conflict against colonialism for African independence. Yet other struggles existed which he equally addressed himself to: the

struggle against internal contradictions (our own weakness) and the struggle against imperialism (neo-colonialism) which was part of the global conflict between international capitalism and ever-advancing socialism. Like Lenin, he believed that 'there could be no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory'¹⁷. He therefore sought to develop a general philosophy of human development and particular theories of the struggle against colonialism, of neo-colonialism and social revolution. But because his approach was a dialectical materialist one, he utilised creatively the already existing tools, in the course of which he makes indelible contributions and refinement to the general body of revolutionary thought.

He first addresses himself to general social evolution. He rightly notes that human society has passed through various stages and has done so unevenly - both regressions and progressions are possible depending on the contradictions and vicissitudes of history and their resolution. While affirming that class struggle is the motive force of history, he argues that it is so only at a specific historical period. After examining the determining elements of class struggle, he concludes that the true motive force of history is the mode of production - level of productive forces and the pattern of ownership of the means of production. This, he thinks, is necessary because otherwise societies with no socio-economic classes, and therefore class struggle, would be placed outside social history. Marx, however, never argued that class struggle was a phenomenon that pervaded and moved society from its origins to the communist stage. If he said so, the whole point would make his analysis absurd. When he talked of class struggle as the motive force of history, he was referring to specific historical stages: slavery, feudalism and capitalism. Communalism had no classes, so also the communist stage, and these have their own motive forces of development. It is not, therefore, a fundamental difference between the two, but a question of emphasis. In fact, Cabral's position leads one to ask again about what happens in the productive forces and relations of production that makes society move. And one goes back to Marx's answer that in class societies the motive force is class struggle.

Yet Cabral's position has also an originality of its own. It enables us first to locate the motive force in the history of communal society. Above all, his emphasis on the mode of production as the essential determining element in content and form of class struggle is crucially important for understanding the nature of the political economy of the Third World - particularly the colonised one, how their social structure relates to underdevelopment and the nature, thereof, of national liberation.

Using the concepts of mode of production or productive forces, Cabral is able to locate three stages in the historical development of human society. The first, characterised by a low level of productive forces which leads to private appropriation, corresponds to communalism. The second is class-ridden, has an increased level of productive forces which leads to private appropriation, and corresponds to slavery, feudal and industrial capitalism. The state and Verticality of the Social structure exist in this stage. The last, characterised by progressive elimination of private appropriation of the means of production, and higher level of productive forces, has no classes (or the class struggle) and therefore corresponds to the socialist-communist societies. The state disappears and horizontality in the social structure returns, but now at a qualitatively higher production level and social relations.

He also restates the dialectical materialist position that despite the general evolutionary schema discussed above, specific societies do not necessarily follow a rigid pattern. Both regressions and leaps are possible and this accounts for uneven development of societies. For instance, colonised societies were underdeveloped,

hence their evolution was interrupted, but they can quickly move to socialism without having to take the long time sequence taken by the capitalist societies of Britain and USA to develop capitalism.

Amilcar Cabral, unlike Nyerere and Ki-Zerbo, develops by creatively combining what already exists in the Marxist theory with the Guinean and international revolutionary experiences to advance a powerful theory of imperialism. He notes that imperialism is a historically transient phenomenon which should be understood in the context of the development of capitalism. It is, he says, a world-wide expression of the search for profits and the ever-increasing accumulation of surplus value by monopoly financial capital centred in Europe and USA. Unlike the other theorists, he, like Marxists, maintains that imperialism has been an historical necessity¹⁸. Nyerere and Ki-Zerbo simply dismiss it as an historical aberration which disrupted the smooth socialist continuum. In fact, Cabral's position is even more Marxist than neo-Marxists, such as Andre Gunder Frank, who only see the negative consequences of colonialism. Cabral views it as essentially having a double-mission: one destructive and the other constructive. In other words, imperial capitalism ruthlessly destroys the independence and self-sufficiency of the colonised in a setting of underdevelopment, but it also acts as 'the unconscious tool of history' by introducing new productive forces and relations of production in the process of which class contradictions are sharpened and revolutionary changes turn on imperialism itself. Cabral notes that imperialism has variably affected these missions. First, it has generally not fulfilled its role as capital in action, as it did in the countries of origin. It was, however, able to partially do so in some areas, in the process of which it increased the level of productive forces or infrastructure and introduced a new social structure - incipient petty and comprador bourgeoisie and antithetically a semi- or fully proletarianised class. Where it has significantly entrenched itself, those class divisions and other class contradictions have been sharper. These conditions, he says, differ under classical colonialism and neo-colonialism.

For the struggle of national liberation or national revolution, as he puts it, and its future perspectives, he notes that such struggles have generally lacked a theoretical basis, consequently the practice has not reflected the concrete reality within which it takes place. He echoes the Marxist-Leninist position:

The ideological deficiency, not to say the total lack of ideology, within the national liberation movements, which is basically due to ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claim to transform constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses of our struggle against imperialism²⁰.

In essence, Cabral's point is that the struggle takes place at two levels: one against the external enemy - imperialism, the success of which depends on the internal struggle against our contradictions. To this, he related the foundations and objectives of the struggle to the social structure. As a basis of the revolutionary theory, he made a detailed analysis of the social or class structure of Guinea. This way, the revolutionary potential of each group is assessed. This sharply contrasts with Nyerere's or Ki-Zerbo's approach which emphasises the 'African people' - no structuralisation is accorded this concept or, at least, a precise definition of its content.

How many⁶ unfinished revolutions' have occurred in Africa due to the failure to confront boldly the internal contradictions among those fighting against colonialism? Many, indeed, because of the failure to define what national revolution is, to what extent it is being waged, and under whose leadership. Cabral

addresses himself to these questions. First, he defines the struggle as a thorough-going one which does not merely end with the expulsion of the colonial administration. It should be a revolution, a true one, in which the masses are led by a revolutionary socialist ideology. Although a popular front should be established against colonialism, the positions of the peasantry and the working class and the socialist ideology should constantly and progressively re-assert themselves. The bourgeois progressive leadership which assumes leadership by virtue of education and higher level of consciousness, should commit 'class suicide' through the inculcation of revolutionary consciousness. Otherwise, without a revolutionary vanguard, equipped with a powerful revolutionary theory, the leadership will fall into the hands of a nationalist and reactionary bourgeoisie which will initially rally the people behind a populist nationalism only to disintegrate later when internal class contradictions re-emerge under an African bourgeois democracy.

Cabral advocates a revolutionary vanguard party composed of a socialist committed cadre completely identifying with the deepest aspirations of the people, fighting not only international capitalism but also internal reaction. Several theoretical and practical ramifications can be discerned from the concept of 'revolutionary vanguard'. Firstly, the revolutionary cadre openly stands for the oppressed classes, not merely 'African people'. In other words, there is a strong class content involved. Secondly, a revolutionary party is exclusionary rather than inclusionary - admittance is based on thorough grounding in revolutionary theory and ideology. This allows for consensus on the desirability of socialism. Party cohesion enables it to evolve strong organisational and mobilisational structures. A forward-looking ideology aiming for the yet unrealised communist stage pursues a confrontation course towards 'traditional' African cultures.

The above sharply differs from Nyerere's and Ki-Zerbo's position regarding socialist reconstruction. Nyerere's and Ki-Zerbo's hesitancy to identify enemies of socialism internally by not making class analysis means that the party or all ranks will be swelled by people who are not necessarily committed to socialism. Nyerere boldly remarks:

The true African socialist does not look on one class of men as his brethren and another as his natural enemies. He does not form an alliance with the 'brethren' for the extermination of the 'non-brethren'. He regards all men as his brethren....²¹

The inclusionary tendencies of Nyerere's socialism lead to lack of consensus on the ideology - as both socialist and non-socialist elements incessantly struggle under various guises. Consequently, there are problems of ideological elaboration, organisational weakness and total absence of ideological under-pinning in planning and bureaucracy. The latter is evidenced by continued reliance on western capitalist personnel and system²². In the end, the reconciliation of socialist super-structural inclinations and an essentially capitalist and bureaucratized economy results in juridical measures like the 'leadership code', which compensates for ideological deficiency.

Similarly, Ki-Zerbo's would even lead to a more dangerous development. His substitution of biological criteria for the class analysis puts his whole theory in doubt. Ki-Zerbo thinks the social revolution should be led by the young and the women - their class positions are not mentioned. He is also against a revolutionary Party for fear that its institutionalisation will be courting dictatorship. The notion of a 'general youth' and women implied that such a party will also be inclusionary - hence the

practical consequences discussed with regard to Nyerere's socialist organisation equally and forcefully apply to him. Nyerere has even an edge over him.

O. Onoge

Onoge wants to see an intellectual revolution in the social sciences related to African culture and society - for, in his view, "the history of African sociology has very few redeeming features. In the main, it is perverse and counter-revolutionary from an African standpoints".²³

He, therefore, urges the new generation of Africanists to achieve a radical departure from past orientations - a move which, he says, will justify the incorporation of sociology as a discipline in African universities and research institutes. So far - Onoge informs us - Africanist sociology has studied only those conservative aspects (tribalism, chieftainship, law and order, etc.) that are directly relevant to the maintenance of colonial rule. Like applied anthropology, it has become what he terms 'applied colonialism' - working hand in hand with imperialism, and carrying out studies in accordance with vested interests of the colonial masters and the 'establishment'. Onoge is of the viewpoint that such anthropological studies are bound to have a 'functional' purpose and to be braced against Africa and the Africans. The colonial 'maxim' that Africans are not capable of governing themselves raises his concern that they (the Africans) are considered amenable to supervision and, by implication, exploitative practices.

From Onoge's standpoint, at least, this 'maxim' is in itself a counter-revolutionary stance.

For this reason he calls for the critical awareness of the prescriptions of the modernisation movement, which he regards as 'crushing poverty both intellectually and existentially'. Hence, "to escape from a sociology of conservation of our underdevelopment requires that we push these elementary facts into the threshold of consciousness".²⁴

Onoge then drifts away from traditional and conventional western thought on 'African studies' - a departure which Peter Waterman characterised as 'radicalism'. Generally, this term always has an analytic and revisionist function: designing theory and method to carry out a radical commitment. 'Complete' disengagement from colonial structures and ideologies, and substituting the 'Africanist' endeavour to reflect African history, culture and society seems to be the ideal. It is, however, not quite clear whether this radicalism and its main concern - the well-being of the African masses - is an objective realisable through the socialist economic and political strategy or the capitalist path. In part, this obscurity is due to the fact that radicalism has given birth to varying scholars - reformists, radicals, marxists, and neo-marxists - born of the same system but quite different in outlook to the extent of opposing each other. But they also share a common ground, notably, that existing social structures should be studied with the aim of removing obsolete structures which impede development, nation-building, economic egalitarianism and especially the revolutionising of the masses. Note that the very act of conscientising the masses for revolution is in itself a radical commitment, and that commitment comes before approach since after one has become aware of a reactionary situation, one gets involved in the strategies of overthrowing the oppressive system.

Overall, then, Onoge's social thought represents the new thinking about Africa and African underdevelopment, which was stimulated by the failure of the continent to 'take-off' during the 1960s. It also represents the African divergence from the colonial mentality and a commitment to the African people, especially the masses.

Its value lies perhaps in the fact that it poses relevant probing questions and brings into public and intellectual focus the long-standing issue of whether African societies should develop on the basis of an egalitarian strategy or 'free enterprise'.

Like Cabral, Onoge takes an explicit and overt political, moral and ideological stance though not rigorous and vigorous enough to provide laws of direction (as Cabral does) or indeed have an impact that is necessary for a desired change. However, social reconstruction for the two theorists does not (as in the case of Nyerere and Ki-Zerbo) mean returning to the pre-colonial, 'traditional' way of thinking and living. Neither does it advocate 'Western conventional methods of problem solving', i.e. the capitalist approach which, in any case, is not embodied in his 'revolutionary sociology' - the Africanist sociology dedicated to structural disengagement.

To sum, up, Onoge discusses the nature and role of sociology in the African context. From this he concludes that sociology in Africa has hitherto played a perverse and counter-revolutionary role. He arrives at this by looking at Africanist sociology both historically and its content and form. From an historical perspective, Onoge is in a position to argue that Africanist sociology is still **organically linked to the anthropological science** that gave intellectual justification to imperialism. To this end, Africanist sociology, like other intellectual disciplines in Africa, is still basically serving the neo-colonial and capitalist machineries. He cites the various stages through which anthropology, which influenced heavily other Africanist studies, passed as a **response to the changes**, philosophically and ideologically, of imperialism. Hence physical anthropology gave way to cultural anthropology, later to functionalism, then applied anthropology and finally to the racist psychological - personality theories of Seligman and Mannoni, among others. Of late, sociology has continued to be linked to imperialism by its emphasis on fields such as 'modernisation', social change and development whose content is influenced by diffusionist - functionalist theories. Its content also reflects a preoccupation, which Onoge terms the 'pursuit of mythical **culturalist resistances**'.²⁵ In other words, that Africanist sociology which claims to have broken with imperialism, is preoccupied with idealising and glorifying the African past at the expense of true historical reality. **Otherwise it is 'nationalistic'** thereby intellectually worshipping the **emergence of nation-states, rather than** critically and objectively struggling to provide theoretical basis for a revolutionary ideology which will lead to true African revolution and **development**.²⁶

Having noted the internal weaknesses and **contradictions of the counter-revolutionary Africanist sociology** above, Onoge prescribes important features which he terms 'revolutionary imperatives'. The first is that African sociology should break radically from the methodologies and theoretical perspectives which have been, historically, entrenched in Africa by the two traumatic experiences of slave trade and colonialism in its various forms. Methodologically, African sociology should develop distinct approaches which will, firstly, be at variance with those he calls counter-revolutionary and, secondly, provide a **philosophical and ideological basis for** revolutionary practice. In short, these methodologies should be radical, but one is not sure whether he was alluding to more Marxist or dialectical materialist inclined approaches.

Another imperative is that African sociology should be Africanist. By this he does not refer to some nationalism based on continental grounds but practically refers to the true realities of Africa. He argues, therefore, that sociology in Africa should reflect the conditions and nature of the continent as a whole, otherwise it becomes an irrelevant discipline whose content reflects conditions and interests of

Western imperialism. Hence the theoretical constructs he calls counter-revolutionary.

Another major revolutionary imperative is the revolutionary role of sociology. Onoge has faith in the potentially revolutionary power of sociology. He therefore believes that once sociology in Africa adopts the above imperatives, it will first radicalise other social sciences and, above all, provide a revolutionary theory for African radical transformation. The above imperatives complement one another and the production is a sociological discipline which has redeeming features for the African continent.

An African sociology with redeeming features is one that, among other commitments, is dedicated to 'structural disengagement'. The term 'structural disengagement' has been misconstrued to mean complete isolation of Africa, but Onoge uses it correctly to mean the total break with imperialism. This means that African liberation and development can only occur after all forms of imperialist domination have been obliterated. This can only be achieved by national liberation, then followed by destruction of institutional and structural links which were entrenched during colonialism and recently by neo-colonialism.

Onoge therefore raises a salient point which many Africanist theorists and leaders have failed to perceive: that Africa, in order to develop unimpeded, has to do away with those institutions or structures that tie it to imperialism - such structures will be economic, political, cultural, educational and, indeed, intellectual orientations. Implied in the whole notion of 'structural disengagement', therefore, is not only that Africa should develop 'independently', equally with other continents and equally also in international fora and socio-economic and political relations, but the destruction of 'capitalism' itself in Africa²⁹.

The role of the Africanist sociology in this operation will be again to provide the necessary revolutionary expertise, which would have greatly imbibed this sociology, provide a theoretical guide in terms of proper conceptualisation of the African reality, inform the revolutionary ideology and, lastly, guide the action of 'structural disengagement'.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EVALUATION: A SYNTHESIS

Before a theoretical and practical evaluation is made, it is pertinent to make an overview of contemporary African reality and to see how far each of the social theorists captures this reality. Africa is emerging from the traumatic experience of imperialism, classical and neo-colonialism. Imperialism inextricably tied it to international capitalism. Under-development resulted from imperialism. Today the majority of Africans suffer from material, intellectual and spiritual poverty. Apparently, the majority of the African leadership established bourgeois-democratic states and the oppressed classes have gained relatively nothing from the national revolutions. These revolutions were not true since they were hijacked along the way. Neo-colonialism came and international capitalism continued to reign high. Then came the 'coup phenomena' but they too failed to grasp the concrete realities of Africa. Committed or radical leaders have largely failed because of lack of theory of both the internal conditions and imperialism. In the end a new era of oppression of the masses has begun. The African economies are in shambles. Leaders and social scientists continue to search for alternative solutions to foster African development - economic, political, cultural and other aspects.

Nyerere, Ki-Zerbo, Cabral and Onoge are among such social theorists and practitioners struggling to capture this revolutionary praxis: to successfully marry theory

and practice and vice versa - as a tool for changing the course of history and criterion for historical evaluation; the organisation of the conditions leading towards ultimate human emancipation and the self-change the oppressed people achieve by their self-discovery through organisation.

Accordingly, Onoge, as noted earlier on, argues that Africanist social science should make a radical break with the past: it has to change its focus of study i.e. tendencies to concentrate on such areas as 'modernisation, social change', etc. which he views as neo-colonial trends. In other words, it should adopt more revolutionary methodological and theoretical approaches which will analyse concretely the objective conditions of Africa. To his mind, Bernard Magubane's works constitute the most exciting Africanist sociology which has subjected various 'schools' of social anthropology to severe criticism³⁰. Nyerere misses by ignoring the importance of the analysis of the social structure (class analysis) and, therefore, his contention that socialism can be achieved without widespread conflict and struggle. His ideology is only suspicious of imperialism (which is not enough), and conversely he is suspicious of the socialistic camp. His theory misses the dialectic by its concern with distribution alone outside the processes of production. Yet Marx, as far back as 1875, wrote:

Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democracy) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution.³¹

Ki-Zerbo falls squarely within the criticisms laid against Nyerere. Both their ideological formulations leave much to be desired as attempts to capture praxis. It is not enough for Ki-Zerbo, nor for revolutionary theory, to rail against imperialism as Cabral rightly notes, but to elucidate what it is and formulate practical theories to fight it. Neither is it enough for him to say a party is necessary without specifying its organisational composition and ideological orientation. His anti-Marxist stand robs him of indispensable tools of analysis and revolutionary practice. If put to practice, their theories become ideological weapons of mystification in the hands of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interests. No matter how committed they may be, socio-economic forces simply become too formidable for their theories - hence results are often meagre and goals remain unfulfilled, 'unanalysed abstractions' so to say.

Amilcar Cabral's thought is far more superior, both in terms of theoretical clarity and practical relevance. The tenets of his theory are clearly systematised, there is presence of systemic focus. That is, theoretical linkages between, say, colonialism and colonial social structure, underdevelopment and imperialism, national revolution and imperialism, national revolution and internal contradictions etc. There is emphasis on theoretical and ideological commitment as opposed to practical commitment alone - the two are inseparable. National liberation and social revolution are treated as part of a single organic chain, so that a socialist reconstruction should manifest itself in the preceding national liberation. National liberation is in fact taken or elevated to the international level where the struggle between capitalism and socialism ensues - and all this reflects thorough theoretical analysis. Of course Cabral has not concretised his ideology into specific strategic directions, but the marked coherence and systematic theory points to its positive results.

FOOTNOTES

1. On this subject see, in particular, J.K. Nyerere, *Ujamaa Essays on Socialism*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968; A. Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970; O. Onoge, Revolutionary Imperatives in African Sociology, in: Peter C.W. Gutkind and Peter Waterman (eds), *African Social Studies: A Radical Reader*, London: Heinemann, 1977; and J. Ki-Zerbo, African Personality and the New African Society, in: G. Mutiso and S.W. Rohio (eds), *African Political Thought*, London: Heinemann, 1975
2. There is a succinct account of the development of ideas about 'African Socialism' in J.K. Nyerere, *A Selection from Writings and Speeches 1965 - 67*, Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968
3. J.K. Nyerere, *op cit.*
4. J. K. Nyerere, Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism, in: G. Mutiso and S. W. Rohio (eds), *African Political Thought*, p. 513
5. J. K. Nyerere, *op cit.*, p. 7
6. J. Ki-Zerbo, *op. cit.*
7. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 61
8. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 62
9. J. Ki-Zerbo, *-ibid.*, p. 62
10. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 64
11. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 75
12. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 62 ff
13. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 66
14. J. Ki-Zerbo, *ibid.*, p. 64
15. A. Cabral, *op. cit.*
16. See Peter Waterman, On Radicalism in African Studies, in: Peter C.W. Gutkind and Peter Waterman, eds., *African Social Studies: A Radical Reader*, p. 11
17. V. Lenin, *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, 1916.
18. A. Cabral, *op. cit.*, p. 80
19. A. Cabral, *ibid.*, p. 82
20. *A. Cabral, *ibid.*, p. 75
21. J. K. Nyerere, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12
22. On this point, see Issa G. Shivji, The Mixed Sector and Imperialist Control in Tanzania, in: Peter C. W. Gutkind and Peter Waterman, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 207-217
23. O. Onoge, Revolutionary Imperatives in African Sociology, in: Peter C.W. Gutkind and Peter Waterman, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 32
24. O. Onoge, *ibid.*, p. 40
25. O. Onoge, *ibid.*, p. 41
26. O. Onoge, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41
27. O. Onoge, *ibid.*, p. 41
28. O. Onoge, *ibid.*, p. 40
29. O. Onoge, *ibid.*, p. 41
30. See especially B. Magubane, The Crisis in African Sociology, in: *East African Journal*, 5, 12, pp 21-40; and A Critical look at Indices used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa, in: *Current Anthropology*, 12, 4-5, pp 419-46
31. 'Critique of the Gotha Programme': *Karl Marx - A Biography*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977, p. 574

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