'Women in Development' Ideology: The Promotion of Competition and Exploitation

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The aim of this article is to expose the contradictions inherent to the "Women in Development" (WID) ideology especially as it has penetrated Tanzania.[1] Examples taken from research in Mbeya in 1981, 1982 and 1983 are used to back up the assertion that WID ideology contributes to increased differentiation and competition among Tanzanian women and deepens their exploitation. This is so regardless of the stated objectives and intentions of WID proponents.

The competition referred to here is fundamentally a struggle for power and survival. In a context of growing impoverishment and deterioration of peasant agriculture, villagers compete with one another for control over local leadership positions in village government, church and other organisations. These positions provide new sources of income and access to scarce production inputs, including the sewing machines which have become a new currency for WID projects and agencies. Village competes with village to acquire loans and development grants from national and international agencies. There are not many possibilities, and in each district a few villages seem to monopolise all of them. Educated professionals, governments technocrats and politicians compete to acquire and maintain high level positions and to 'win' development grants and consultancies. The struggle which arise are not restricted to intra-class conflict, however. The exploiting classes must struggle to maintain power over peasants and workers, and to force the producers to produce more. This struggle is predicated upon the fact that peasants and workers do not submit willingly to class domination.

These struggles taken place in the context of the international capitalist economy and neo-colonial political, economic and ideological relations. In Tanzania today, all major development programmes depend on external finance. What is far more significant, however, is the role foreign capital now plays in meeting recurrent expenditures of the state. In turn 'donor' agencies and states play an increasingly direct role in advising if not managing development strategies.

WID is a part of the itnernational development programme for women of Tanzania and the Third World. Women are not all the same, nor do they all share the same interest - that is the basic argument of this analysis. Different and often opposing ideologies concerning women-in-society are being promoted (or demoted), and these reflect the conflicting material interests of different classes and/or strata of women. Bureaucrats, experts and capitalist entrepreneurs are in the process of developing a strong class consciousness of themselves vis-a-vis other classes and strata of women nationally and internationally, and vis-a-vis

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their fellow bourgeous men. WID ideology both reflects and strengthens this class consiousness. One of the major aims of this article is to present the views of peasant women and rural labourers which conflict with the bourgeouis WID line in order to challenge the supposed universality of WID. If WID represents the ideology of the dominant classes in society nationally and internationally, it is crucial to oppose it with the dominanted ideologies.

The WID ideology as expressed by international agencies as well as individual authors is presented in the first part of this article. It is followed by a critical examination of its expression in the Tanzanian context. Special attention will be given to the activities of the Tanzanian Women's Organisation (UWT) and recent efforts to plan for women's development at the national level. The different and often opposing views of different groups and classes of women in the countryside are analysed in the third section. The final section situates the development and promotion of WID ideology within the ongoing crisis of imperialism and capitalism in Tanzania and worldwide.

"WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT" UP FRONT

WID ideology is being promoted by all the major transnational development agencies, including the UN group and the World Bank group, as well as national development agencies like the USAID. In the preface to the World Bank policy paper, "Recognizing the 'Invisible' Women in Development: The World Bank's Experience", Robert McNamara (then President of the World Bank) had the following to say:

> Recent years have seen a growing awareness in the World Bank of a need to give explicit attention to the effects its projects have on women. This booklet illustrates some of the approaches the Bank has adopted to improve opportunities for women to participate in development and to help them evercome some of the economic and social factors that limit their participation in this process... As I have noted on an earlier occasion, expanding the social, political, and economic opportunities of women beyond their traditional roles of motherhood and housekeeping enables them to channel their creative abilities over a much broader spectrum of activities. [2]

The policy statement clarifies that one reason for its concern is that more than half of the poor are women. In agriculture and rural development, programmes are fostered to "raise their productivity and cash incomes" as peasant producers. This is partly achieved by increasing productivity in non-market oriented work, such as in cooking by promoting new kinds of cooking stoves. The urban development programmes focus on women heads of households, especially single mothers who are a growing percentage of the poor in the world: "Special efforts are needed to improve the productivity of these women, and to assure them of some cash income..." The World Bank promotes wage employment in the informal sector, including handicrafts production and other forms of cottage industries. Many projects provide credit and raw materials inputs as well as equipment to local entrepreneurs, but also to small industries and to export manufacturing industries owned by foreign and/or

national capital. In the Bank's own words, "Examination of a World Bank credit to the Mauritius Development Bank indicates that, in many of the industries created under the credit, female labour was preferred because of lower wage rates".

The Bank supports population control, since "Children have a better chance of survival in families whose size is valuntarily controlled". The policy statement continously notes throughout that the Bank lacks adequate knowledge about women, and their need to find out more in order to make the 'invisible' visible:

> Efforts should be made to identify local organisations that have traditionally been important sources of support for women, such as savings and loan societies, production groups, and societies for sharing equipment or tasks. More needs to be known about the dynamics of these organisations so that projects can work through them and enhance, rather than destroy, their potential.

It goes on to point out that some Bank projects have failed because of "limitations placed on women'. "Better understanding of women's roles and activities minimizes such waste and inefficiency and permits women to be more clearly identified as potential beneficiaries of projects"[3]

The World Bank makes use of an increasingly vocal segment of women international experts. They work in agencies like USAID's Office of Women and Development and in research institutions like the Equity Policy Centre and the International centre for Research on Woman in Washington. Indeed, many of the research projects carried out for USAID are handled by the last-mentioned centre, and USAID provides publication and overseas dissemination of their work. The WID ideology is also promoted by United Nations institutions like FAO and ILO. For example, the 1976 World Employment Conference adopted resolution 15 which aims at "integrating women into the economic and civic life of the country"[4]. This has often meant in practice the promotion of 'income-earning' activities for women in the Third World.

Underlying WID ideology is the position that *all women share the same oppression as women, whatever their class or nation.* For example, the head of the Rural Employment Policies Branch of ILO argued that there is a;

> ... commonality in the experience of women who, by virtue of their gender, are typically left worse off or less well off than men of their culture and class. Even the direction of change for men and women of the same household has sometimes been opposite, at least in the case of Africa.[5]

The different interests of women and men within the exploited classes are emphasised (and fomented), rather than their shared interests *vis-a-vis* the women and men of the exploiting classes. When class is acknowledged to be a significant factor, it is separated from gender. The way class struggles have created different sex relations in different classes is ignored, the most oppressive of which are those which cross and national boundaries. WID shifts attention and political organisation away from class and national/struggles towards a

'universal' women's platform.

Critics of WID ideology often point out that women are already integrated into development as cheap labour in agriculture and industry. What may be more crucial, however is that women also represent the last line of resistance against state monopoly market relations in production *and* reproduction. For example, poor women peasants struggle first to feed their families, and grow crops over whose proceeds they will have more control and get a higher return. This means food crops, not export crops and sale on local and parallel markets rather then to monopoly institutions. As the third section will show, women represent an irrational factor for big capital, which must be straightened out one way or another. As the Bank says, "When women are isolated in 'female' employment, they are effectively barred.... from cultivating attitudes towards work that *modernization requires*". Women are not productive enough, nor submissive enough to capital or to the states which serve neo-colonial interests.

WID ideology is gaining currency in the neo-colonised countries of the world. International agencies promote a WID component in their programmes and packages of 'aid'. National researchers are funded to do WID-relevant research or to become consultants or counter-parts to the foreign expert. WID ideology has been adopted and promoted by intellectual women from neo-colonial countries who are increasingly drawn into the 'network' in Africa, as in Asia and South America the Caribbean, and Central America. Development agencies and other donor institutions are manipulating nationalist demands that African women should be hired to carry out research, evaluation or consultancy projects. Bourgeois nationalist ideology has in its turn absorbed the language of 'decolonisation' in order to promote *a colonial* definition of authenticity, that of the 'native' researcher. The Tanganyikan colonial officials used the ideology of anti 'detribalisation' and 'native custom' to promote the vicious system of labour reserves and the migrant labour system. Detribalisation was another word for the related processes of the development of working class consciousness (proletarianisation) and an anti-colonial bourgeois class consciousness. 'Native' informants were regularly used to authernticate colonical policies. These tended to be the 'native authorities' who were crucial in sustaining the system of indirect rule, and later the new, educated middle class (teachers, clerks, magistrates and middle level technocrats).

These is a two-sided character to nationalist ideology. It is a positive response against the dominance of foreign women in African women studies. The majority work within WID ideology and appropriate whatever knowledge they can acquire from African women in order to build up their personal careers as WID experts. Foreign women monopolise publication and research resources, and receive more respect from national government leaders. This is related to the resurgence of white supremacist ideology which accompanies the growing financial and technical dependence on industrialised capitalist nations. Donor agencies promoting WID are increasingly powerful in influencing what *kind* of research is to be done, and by whom, because of the scarcity of national

resources for research, publications of foreign travel. Therefore, women intellectuals compete with one another to get access to consultancies, research grants and invitations to workshops offered from foreign institutions.

At the same time, the majority of national researchers merely replicate bourgeois WID-type work, and can do it more 'authentically'. International institutions have recognised the need for 'window-dressing' their consultancy teams development programmes. They actively seek national researchers or leaders to accompany their own personnel/consultants on missions or to carry out an entire research exercise. In this way they are able to 'authenticate' their policy recommendations and/or demands. The interests of national WID intellectuals and big capital served by the international institutions, therefore, converge in the programme to nationalise WID.

Nationalism can, therefore, become an important ideological weapon to *promote* neo-colonial relations rather than to destroy them: "It is true that 'decolonisation of African history' is often conceived only as a question of methodology and theory and not of transformation of dominant material relations".[7] Women's liberation depends upon the transformation of the material relations of class, nation and sex. Decolonisation of research is one aspect of that struggle, but defined in terms of the class interests of the majority, who are peasants and workers. The question of women's liberation cannot be separated from that of the liberation of the African masses.

WID IN ACTION IN TANZANIA

Women's groups in Tanzania are continously being encouraged to seek assistance from government and/or non-governmental agencies rather than to mobilise local resources to solve concrete problems. In the process, they are being manipulated to focus on income-earning activities which are organised under the state-supported women's organisation of UWT. For example, the Community Development Trust Fund instructed District leaders in 1980, that "a big amount of money" had been set aside for women's projects. The only projects eligible for funding were those which were run by UWT, which were productive groups and not services, and which involved local women in order to remove differences which exist between themselves and others(!)[8]

Similarly, USAID has been trying to promote women's access to credit through its funding to the Tanzania Rural Development Bank. It also has a strong focus on WID within the rural training programme. The American Peace Corps is promoting something called "Women-to-Women Partnerships between American Organisations and Third World Groups". According to the Women and Food Information Network.

> Working with a Peace Corps Volunteer, and group of Third World women identified its most pressing problem and designs the most appropriate solution ... U.S. Partner group selects a project and provides all or part of the necessary financial support...[9]

This Peace Corps Partnership programme appears to be the originator of the Tanzanian 'Women to Women' *(Wanawake kwa Wanawake)* organisation which is currently being set up as a non-governmental institution. No reference has been made locally to the Washington programme, aside from mention of the potential usefulness of Peace Corps volunteers based in Tanzania. Such episodes in the career of WID illustrate the way certain classes of women are perceived to be potential allies for big capital whereas other classes of women are related to as 'problems'.

A bourgeois women's position is beginning to be articulated by some Tanzanian officials, experts and businesswomen in national meetings organised to discuss women-related issues. The political significance of the bourgeois line was made very clear at the Chang'ombe Seminar in December 1981 which was called to prepare for the Plan of Action for Women in Tanzania. The bourgeois line argued that educated women are discriminated against in their careers and that women face discrimination in high-level education and employment. The press immediately picked up the gist of their argument in front page headlines reading to the effect that 'Women Want Promotions'. They fought for the resolution that a separate Ministry be established 'to promote the interests of women'. The other line argued that the majority of women were peasants and workers; that there should be a declaration of the right to work and to a livable wage or income for all women and men; that peasant women should benefit from the proceeds of their labour at village and household level; that women demanded democratic institutions at all levels; that new productive forces/technologies be developed in production and in domestic labour to lighten the load of women's work, whether or not this led to increased production for the market. Intense debate took place over these two positions. However, only token reference was made to the demands and concerns of working class and peasant women in the final resolutions.

The final recommendations were mainly technical and administrative. They included the following: increased expertise and educated personnel in UWT, and the creation of a full Ministry of Women and Children's Development; the promotion of day-care centres, with full government support; equality of intake in secondary and university education and promotion of employment/self-employment for educated women; increased participation of women in adult education; expansion of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, maternity wards and nutrition education; law reform regarding marriage, inheritance, credit and child affiliation; equality in village government leadership posts; equality of opportunity in promotions for wage-employed with sex ratios in responsible positions reflecting sex ratios in ability, skills and experience; increased participation of women in planning agricultural priorities and increased focus on women in planning and implementation regarding agricultural production, storage and processing; increased technology in food preparation; and increased research on the rising diverce rates, family education in schools and character training in schools and homes in order to combat out-of/wedlock pregnancies.

The power of such recommendations pales when compared to the kinds of

issues raised by women villagers (see below). Many of them reflect the competition between bourgeois women and men for top salaried posts and for control over the wealth they are accumulating at the expense of the majority of women and men who are peasants and workers. Others are basic equity demands which are far removed from the everyday life of peasants and workers. Sex equality in post-primary education, for example, is a distorted demand when only 1 — 2% of primary school graduates are admitted into secondary education. The middle class monopolise secondary and higher school places far in disproportion to their numbers, and class matters more for girls then boys. Many villages have not had even one child selected to secondary school in the last few years. Those selected are usually children of the teachers, the village leaders and/or the local traders and commercial farmers. In towns there is a distinctly different pattern of selection for schools servicing middle class neighbourhoods compared to those in working class and squatter areas. Given this reality, the equality issue cannot carry much weight with most Tanzanians.

The outcome of such meetings and plans is partly predetermined by how they begin. The Chang'ombe meeting for example, was set in motion by the "World Plan of Action for the Second Half of United Nations Decade for Women — 1980—1985". The recommendations of the Copenhagen Conference were introduced and the UN themes of 'education, health and work' were adopted as parameters of the discourse. The interpretation given to the aim of the women's decade was the 'development of women' and not women's liberation *(Kuwaendeleza wanawake,* not *kujikomboa).* The paper presented by the Prime Minister's Office centred around probable donors and the kinds of projects likely to be attractive to them. Indeed, donor representatives took part in the opening session. It must be therefore, asked whose plan of action is this? Why did the planning begin with a national level meeting of state officials (the majority) and experts, rather than mass meetings in village, factory, office and residential area?

In Mbeya, the WID approach was actively promoted by the Mbeya RIDEP preparatory team, partly as a condition of funding.[10] DANIDA had inserted a provision that attention be given to the most 'disadvantaged' people in the region. Mbeya RIDEP decided that women and youth - in general - are disadvantaged. A special consultancy was set up to investigate the position of women and how to promote them in development. Particular care was taken by the FAO consultant in charge of the RIDEP team to identify a national consultant to handle the women's question. He was reportedly advised by national bureaucrats to select a 'native-born' researcher due to the 'sensitivity' of the women's issue. This advice was followed and the author was a second-choice appointment after the first choice was forced to decline for personal reasons. This is the 'legitimisation by authentification' process mentioned above.

Although there was a lot of talk about allowing women to identify their own priorities, from the very beginning the RIDEP management had decided to promote income projects which would depend on an external donor. The final report on women combated the WID position on several grounds. It documented the fact that women peasants were producing income already - the

problem was their lack of control over proceeds of labour at village and household level and inadequate attention to needs of reproduction rather than market-oriented production. It recommended the promotion of village-level organisations organised by village women themselves around concerns identified by themselves.[11] It was pointed out that these might well involve programmes to socialise significant aspects of domestic labour: cooking, fuel and water provision, and child care, rather than strictly adding on more work in commodity production.

It called for land reform at village level such that women received rights to land in their own right, and not as dependent wives, sisters, children, etc. Other recommendations included legal reform so as to remove reactionary aspects of 'customary' law, the active promotion of equality in wage-employment and education, the promotion of industrialisation in the country side, the transformation of UWT into an organisation committed to women's oppression and women's liberation. There were also a long list of short-term specific recommendation in line with the above.

These recommendations were based on a thorough documentation of women's conditions in employment, education, health and politics at all levels. This was one of the few RIDEP reports which included direct input by villagers themselves. Village assemblies were held in 10 different villages where women "spoke bitterness" and clarified the crucial issues according to different segments of the local population. The third section draws on what was learned at these village assemblies to illustrate the different and often opposing views different groups of village women have, among themselves and *vis-a-vis* women bureaucrats. The report stressed women-related issues, but situated these in the context of oppressive and exploitative social relations, with particular emphasis upon the relations between the state and peasant women. These included contradictions which women noted in UWT and village government activities.

Compromises emerged in the consultancy, however, as a result of the very circumstances under which the consultancy was carried out. The terms of reference stressed an analysis of women's position "in rural areas in Mbeya". The report counteracted the 'rural' bias by noting that a large proportion of women were not peasants, and that many were working in wage and other employment in the informal sector. Nevertheless, the final thrust is definitely centered around villages and village women. The recommendations represented reforms to be struggled for within and outside of the state structure, including UWT itself. The most crucial error, however, is the inadequate linkage made between village and regional level to the national and international levels. Focusing on reform primarily at village level, isolated from the total neo-colonial context presents a distorted analysis of what is possible, even within the limited politics of reform. For example, the attention given to the possibilities of transformation of UWT ignores the contradictory class interests of top cadre and women peasants and workers. Promotion of village collectivisation in the absence of a coherent and organised struggle against the expansion of large-scale capitalist agriculture may provide capital with the cheap labour it demands and distract attention away from the primary contradiction between imperialism and the peasants and workers.

The limitations of such gestures as the RIDEP consultancy on women was revealed in the final outcome of the report. The Draft RIDEP plan (1982) incorporated many of the findings of the women's consultancy, not only in its brief section on women but throughout. Empasis was given, however, to those aspects which hinder increased productivity and output, such as labour bottlenecks in weeding, labour time spent in pounding, fuel wood collection and water collection. This utilitarian approach was combined with a liberal position on the need to promote equity for women and the poor and increased democratic participation at village level.

Nevertheless, the plan came out with a strong position on the question of women's control over returns to labour and independent access to the means of production, beginning with land and individual co-operative membership. The establishment of a more permanent advisory women's steering committee at regional and district levels was proposed, as well as positive discrimination in employment and education. Specific long-term recommendations inculded land reform such that the individual producer had rights to the land independent of family status (as wife or child), law reform to abolish discrimination and changes to reduce the labour burdens and increase the motivation of women in production.

Short-term recommendations included priority funding for plans and project proposals which directly benefited women villagers; the establishment of a planning mechanism whereby evidence of full participation of women and men in village assembly decision-making is shown; two-fifths membership of women in village committees and all other district and regional committees; allocation of land and other means of production to individual producers, not households; promotion of labour-saving devices; day-care centres; provision of inputs and extension to women and strenthening of UWT.

The FAO preparatory mission which produced the final RIDEP plan was highly critical of the draft plan's 'emphasis' on women.[12]

> They opposed the proposal of payment to the producer, for the following reasons:-
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> > As regards the proposals for initiating change in the present pattern of income distribution between members of a single family, the Mission considered that such measures would be difficult to implement. In addition, the effects of income redistribution on social welfare within a community has yet to be determined, e.g. the effects on the aged and children.
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> They were also alarmed about the growing resistance of women to oppression:
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> > The effects of the national education system on the long-term future of the social and economic condition of rural women need also to be analysed, particularly in relation to their attitudes towards performing traditional activities (such as weeding, etc.) and the effects of education as presently designed on production and family welfare."

In other words, women must be forced to adapt to their oppressed and exploited situation in order to sustain the rural economy. What the mission did

approve of was the encourangement of *women's groups'* within farmers' associations and co-operatives. 'Oppression by ghettoisation' may be assumed by the accompanying silence about promoting full membership of women in the co-operatives.

The final outcome of the Mbeya RIDEP women's 'programme' reflects the power of the international agencies to define 'development' and 'development strategies'. It also illustrates the current prioritisation of straight forward production goals, and the subordination of equity goals to them.

My participation in the Mbeya RIDEP programme illustrates the contradictory situation in which intellectuals find themselves in Tanzania. Participating in a government planning exercise, or in any other state or development agency programme, may contribute to the legitimisation, and strengthening, of the state and its international donors. This is so, in spite of the critical stance adopted.

The neo-colonial dimension of WID leads to the *devaluation* of the skills, knowledge, strengths and power of Tanzania women. Moreover, the emphasis given to activities and work which generate money negates the significance of all the major forms of production and reproduction which depend on women. These include food production, processing and storage, traditional healing of mental and physical ailments, child deliveries and entenatal and post-natal care, basket and mat-weaving and a multitude of other things. Greater value is given to the 'modern' fashion on knowhow and in neo-colonial Africa, modern usually means foreign, and foreign means Western and usually white.

An example[13] is given here of the way the dynamics of a local sewing group in Tukuyu town have been completely upset by the temporary presence of a young, white American volunteer. She works with several women's groups, providing instruction in the skills of sewing and fashion or garment design. This particular group consists of primary school teachers, wives of district authorities and other middle class women of the town. Up until the arrival of the volunteer, a skilled Tanzanian seamstress was teaching them how to cut designs without patterns, a necessary skill because commercial patterns are not produced. She also taught them how to use a foot-pedal sewing machine and to sew different clothes by hand. The American women has usurped her position, however, and the Tanzanian seamstress has withdrawn from the group. Her reluctance to attend meetings was reportedly because the members appreciated the foreigner's skills in using commercial patterns more than her own skills in creating her own patterns!

The new pattern of relations within the group was clearly visible at one meeting where both of the 'instructors' were present. The volunteer talked baby-talk to the women, all of whom were older than herself, with many children. At least some of the Tanzanian women went along with it, and did a giggle-act back. Others remained silent, sustaining a stony exterior but none told her directly to her face what they thought of her. She ought have to known by the flash of the eyeballs, a subtle change of facial expression and the silence itself that something was drastically wrong. Some clearly rebuffed her matronising attitude or communicated the fact that they were not impressed. The volunteer did not

enjoy working with this group.

> This is the worst group. I don't like it as much. I like the villagers. They really need help. These women, they're primary school teachers and stuff. Their husbands have good jobs, they've got plent of clothes.... the village women don't know how to do anything. They wear dresses torn at the armpits (appropriate gestures under her arm). I've been teaching women how to sew on buttons for the first time.

These words were spoken loud enough for several women to hear, in a tone of disdain which was far more expressive then mere words could be. As to her views about 'villagers' and 'school teachers', some of the town group were wives of district bureaucrats, but others were not. They certainly do represent a more educated and sophisticated group of women than most villagers. For that very reason, the volunteer would have been expected to identify individuals within the group with interests and views compatible to her own, and to create working relationships on a more equal basis than those likely to develop in the village setting. Indeed, it is revealing that the fellow instructor did not become a working partner, but instead a competitor subjected to unequal terms of valuation which had nothing to do with relevant skills and knowledge. It was obvious that the Tanzanian knew more about sewing and garment design.

The material relations underlying such condescending behaviour help to explain why some Tanzanian women play along with it. In the case of the Tukuyu group, it may be a case of thread and neddles otherwise unattainable in local shops, and the hope for bigger aid later. At the national and international level, the Tanzanian state is now heavily in debt and dependent on external finance. The economy is looked into the worldwide capitalist market. Finance, commodities and capital investments are accompanied by expartriates. They come as evaluators, consultants, managers, private investors, academics, merchants and, since most of them are men, wives. Companies building roads and water holes set up residential communities totally isolated from the local inhabitants - what one colleague calls 'suburbia in the bush'. The neo-colonial reality has multiple dimensions, none of which can be ignored, including ideology.

"LET DEVELOPMENT BE TODAY, NOT TOMORROW, YESTERDAY'S HAS PASSED US BY"

The impact of all the carrots of aid being dangled before women leaders and villagers was very clear during the RIDEP 'tour' of six rural districts and ten villages within them. [13] There was inadequate time to visit the three villages originally chosen for each district by district leaders. The district authorities were upset by the changes, and pressed us to visit all three, even if meant five-minute stops. Their idea of a village visit turned out to be a quick speech followed by the representation of a shopping list by the village leaders, according to usual practice. They also pointed out that they were under a great deal of pressure from interested parties to 'spread it around'... 'it' being the promise of foreign assistance. We had to deliberately counteract the villagers' notion of

"The husband is the boss; he decides how much cash from coffee to give the wife" (Mbalizi)
"Isongole Trouble! The children have no clothes. Labourers make Shs. 600/- (per month), but it doesn't enter the house" (Isongole).
"We only tolerate things. Who will you leave your children with? There is trouble in all of Tanzania. We advise the men. But at the end of the month, he has no news about what the children eat for two weeks. When the money is finished, he comes back to quarrel" (Isongole)
"Will they eat gold? There is no food. What will you eat?" (Kiwanja).
"Our husbands marry other women with money" (Uyole).
"We work from morning till night" (Uyole).
"Hand cultivation is too tedious. You can't do enough" (Uyole).
"We have received no help. To build a house we need help, we asked, the men refused. But we help to build the school and the party building. If it's our farm, refusal" (Isongole).
"We have no soap... We smell ... just imagine, once a year to bath with soap, is that nice?" (Halungu, a very old and beautiful woman who danced as she sang this out).
"We are afraid to talk, afraid to be beaten by husbands who say 'you should be home cooking! Also fellow women attack you" (Uyole).
"We haven't been educated enough by UWT" (Mbalizi).
"We don't get it" (the chance to speak). Answered by another woman.
"We get it but we don't use it. Shyness, I don't know why". (Ruyewa).
"They throw out the one with voice, and choose the one who is quiet" (regarding women nominess for offices) (Isongole).
"Some say, 'Down with men" (Isongole).
"We are afraid to lead" (Isange).
"Some women cannot tolerate things, but you remember the children. You return. In the end you go crazy".

Before taking these views as representative of the majority of villagers, or even the most advanced segment in terms of level of consciousness, it is important to realise the complexities of such encouters. Most of the women who spoke used Kiswahili, although in some cases statements translated from local languages, but a careful record was not kept of this. Since the majority of women in most districts do not speak Kiswahili, or only a very rudimentary form, the women who can make use of it in public speaking are unusual. In a recent return visit to one village, it was clear that Kiswahili speakers tended to be members of the most powerful families, although several had had no formal schooling. Instead, they learned Kiswahili on their own with the help of their brothers in school to teach them. Moreover, they were a part of the christian community which promoted literacy classes in Kiswahili and women's activities of different kinds.

An additional point is that there was no conclusive way of ascertaining in the baraza meetings as to where speakers fit in the local power structure. A long period of time is necessary to win the confidence of the people and to be able to grasp the social relations at village, regional, national and international level.

what the nature of our village assembly (baraza) was by presenting an 'uchokozi' or provocation. We pointed out that we had come to listen to the women, to learn about their work and their lives, how they were resolving their difficulties, and their role in the village government. We stated very clearly that we had not come with any promises of assistance. Women pointed out later in most places that this was the first time meetings were called specifically for women, in which leaders and/or experts came to listen to the people.

The baraza ranged in numbers from one of 250 people (150 women); another of 175 people (125 women); to only 10 (7 women) in one place and 15 (10 women) in another. In all cases, a deliberate effort was made to include villagers and not exclusively the women leaders. The provocation format was adopted after a direct question-answer session proved impossible. The initial presentation raised central issues concerning women in the countryside. Women were then invited to talk about the work of women; women's lives; their position in the village government; women's groups; about land, credit, inputs and the proceeds of labour; about problems derived from villagisation as well as its benefits, about solutions they are implementing; and about the changes in women's lives from the past which was specifically addressed to the elderly women.

In every case, male leaders tried to answer on behalf of the women, in spite of our stress that this was a meeting for women to speak. Usually they were not trying to sabotage the meeting nor to hide things. Male elders and officials are simply accustomed to represent women to outsiders. They and the women district and regional leaders escorting us all adopted a patronising tone to the women. As soon as a leader began to answer 'on behalf', one of us politely reminded the leader loud enough for all the villagers to hear that today we had come to listen to the women. Later, after several women had taken over the floor, a few men were provoked to speak by the women's statements of bitterness or accusations against vilage leadership. In these cases a heated debate often arose in which the women invariably held their own although they sometimes took opposite sides in a dispute.

Following are the main issues about which the women villagers talked at length (in parentheses are the number of villages in which a given issue was discussed at length): control over cash proceeds in the family (7); supplies of commodities like soap and sugar including those inputs needed for women's shops and other activities (7); too much work in farming and demostic labour, especially pounding and water collecting (6); women have to provide food and children's clothes (3); women fear to enter politics, afraid to be beaten by husbands, scorned by fellow women, and are ashamed to speak infront of men (3); male discrimination against women in elections and village barazas (3); poor women's leadership (3); withdrawal of husband's labour from farming into migrant labour or non-farm activities (2); polygamy (2) and women having to leave their husbands and children in protest against work, beatings and lack of control over proceeds of their labour (2).

Here are some of the statements made by these supposedly fearful women, in the presence of, and directed towards, men and leaders as well as other women:

Therefore, more can be learned from the barazas where an open confrontation of opposing views erupted. Since these often involved the higher authorities as well, they also clarify the fact that villagers are actors in a politics which reaches way beyond the boundaries of their villages, and that local-level conflicts and differentiation may not be significant in the face of the wider power structure they must operate in.

For example, in village X (125 women present) a debate about whether or not women's groups received enough assistance from the village government led to a general criticism about the whole village set up in production. At the beginning we were told that women have group activities in growing maize, in running a shop and a beer club. It was reported that the income earned was saved. Immediately a critical voice arose that said "we tried to establish groups, but we don't have a teacher". Another person added that they have no time to weed their own group farm, they're stuck on the village farm. "Otherwise - a fine! We are oppressed at the village farm and at home". Another person said, "The men refuse, they object, they say we are looking for men, maybe we don't learn anything there, we should not come". One woman suggested that a seminar of from one to three days be held for women, and she went on to say the following:

> Fellow women, our mourning has been heard, we have had ideas about development from a long time ago, but we didn't know where to start and what direction to take, now our leaders have remembered us. Let us push ourselves to keep up with them, let us not be behind them, so that they leave us behind and we lose our way. Let development be today, not tomorrow, that of yesterday has passed us by.

When we asked how many women were on the village council, one said "we can't answer. The chairman knows. He doesn't call us". In reply to this, the UWT branch secretary of the village said, "if we need help we go to the village secretary. With regards to production, we are not oppressed. We work for the village two days and one day for UWT". Her statement was not accepted by the meeting. Another critic of the government then pointed out that it is difficult to get use of the village tractor from the village leaders. After it was explained that the village farm was 100 acres, and the women's join farm was only $1^1/_2$ acres, Ward Secretary said, "That's not bad. The village farm is theirs, it's for everybody together. It is not for distribution of proceeds, but rather to produce more wealth". The issue of distribution rather than reinvestment is a major bone of contention in village activities as well as co-operatives. The leaders who singlehandedly control group resources favour reinvestment, partly because they are so instructed by leaders higher up. It was also learned that the initial capital set aside for the women's shop was stolen in 1978. Money, sewing machines, and other goods are stolen on a regular basis, and people often suspect that leaders are behind such disappearances.

Two different and opposing views were presented in this meeting, one which was highly critical of the government and its organisation of village production and another which was supportive and apologetic. The former view was the

popular one at that meeting. It is extremely significant that the critical view linked together the way women were oppressed within family relations and village relations. Since the structure of administration and management of the village is a part of the entire national structure of government and party, the criticism of one is a criticism of the entirety. The way in which control of production resources like tractors is monopolised by government leaders is also central to the discussion and reveals the competition which exists between women's groups and the village government. Similar forms of competition and often intense struggle to control labour as well as cash proceeds and production implements and raw materials have been observed elsewhere[14].

The issues raised by these women are basically *class* issues. Women and men in the poor classes at village level share a common oppression and exploitation. This is usually identified with the actions of state officials they must contend with on a regular, face-to-face basis. At the same time, women experience a specific oppression as women peasants at several interconnected levels.

About eighty-five women attended the baraza in village Y, which is situated near the regional headquarters, unlike village X which is more remote. Differentiation is greater here, with some families owning exen, implements or tractors, and other having to hire out their labour because they own no land. A debate developed about child-care centres. The centres are officially promoted by the government including UWT, but villagers are expected to cover all the costs themselves. One person said there was no place to house the centre, "We tried, not yet, we're waiting for it". Another asked, "How do you set one up?" With a perfect semblance of ignorance. Finally another pointed out, "The building is there. There is no payment. The teachers have refused to work without pay" The Chairman of the village stepped in and said that the village government wanted to start three centres. They put aside maize for porridge, the teachers were trained, but the problem was to get the mothers to take their children. "The teachers were demoralised. The women need education about taking their children there. Every family should pay 2/- per month for every child". Here we see the women blamed for their own stubborness and stupidity in not being enthusiastic about sending their children to the day care centres. They clearly have strong reasons against it which may or may not relate to the fact women are expected to pay for it (not the village and perhaps not 'fathers') and that their children are minded by non-kin.

When earlier the women complained about getting supplies of food for children, especially sugar and milk, women leaders from the district and region pouncedon them: "What do you mean, milk for your children? That is the trouble with you-women - you use powdered milk instead of breastfeeding your children", One woman tried to explain: "Some don't breastfeed because they don't have enough milk. That's why they need powder milk. Others are workers, daily workers, they have nothing to leave their children". Again, this was challenged by one of the women UWT leaders. When I pointed out there could be a real constraint on women which doesn't allow them time to breastfeed due to work, the women villagers cheered and applauded. The village chairman shouted, "Your talking is disorderly". Finally one women posed the question as

to why mothers no longer have enough milk to nurse their children or to feed them. "In the old days, if there were problems other women nursed the child or else you could beg milk from neighbours. In the old days there were cows, and the mothers got milk and yoghurt for themselves and their children. Now the nutrition levels have gone down. Food is a big problem. Pregnant women do not eat enough food... You pay for everything, the price is too much".

A lot more thinking is needed about the whole concept of day care centres. As shown above, state authorities emphasise the promotion of day care centres as a fundamental aspect of women's development. If that is so, why are peasant women so indifferent, if not hostile, to placing their children in such centres? Central to this question will be the different kinds of centres that children of the different classes have access to, and the fact that infant and child mortality rates are so much higher for peasants and agricultural workers. [15] In other words, the lives of peasant and farm worker children are already at risk, and the most significant factor in their deaths is inadequate food consumption. This may also clarify the significance that the village women gave to inadequate supplies of milk and other food for their children. The hypocrisy of the women leaders was probably not lost on the peasants, given the monopoly such officials have over such scarce commodities for their own children. More basic, however, is the fact that these classes of women do not share the same reality of impoverishment, absolute poverty and intesified labour, and that some exploit and oppress others.

The baraza in village Z involved only about 15 or 20 women sitting on the ground, while a few men sat on benches. The village is not far from its district headquaters. This was the only place where a shopping list of requests was presented after the provocation. Someone asked for a grain mill and piped water. It turned out the village had a grain mill which had been unrepaired for a long time, as well as the water pump. The largest UWT membership was found here, 137 members out of the 284 women in the village- but only two women were in the village council. At this meeting a similar conflict emerged concerning the children's day care centre. A male school teacher announced his efforts to start it up. So long as milk was provided, the children were brought - when there was no more milk, the children stopped coming. It came out at the meeting that before this teacher's arrival, two women had been trained to run such a centre. He had no knowledge about them, and seemingly never inquired. The teacher started his talk-down, saying "Many times it is necessary to educate the women". In other words, women were blamed for not sending their children to the centre and centres were assumed to be necessary.

People then discussed the failure of women's groups in the village. Someone pointed out that money often got lost. The UWT district secretary immediately denied this, saying "That's not true. Many dropped out, until the only ones left were the chairperson and the secretary (of the local UWT branch). It is necessary for everyone to explain where her money is" (a few applauded, many simply stared her down). Then the District Community Development Officer - a man - began to attack the women in a particularly hostile and denigrating way:

> Women's activities get stuck because of drunkeness, they are more drunkards than the men. They leave the children with no food. It is the mothers who are killing the

children out of drunkeness.

Women rejected this indictment, though some laughed uneasily. The UWT District Secretary spoke in *agreement* with his attack on the women. The CD officer went on with his tirade:

> Women are very smart these days. They prepare the food after coming back from the fields, and leave it for the man at home. They cook before they go off. Children are not given food. Now there is no marriage.

The teacher joined with him and said women did not meet in their women's group because they were lazy.

This episode exposes the competing ideas about what women's 'development' is all about. How can we understand the fact that state authorities have to browbeat women to participate in WID-type activities. Doesn't the issue of drinking reveal the effort by the state to redefine what is women's development?

These three accounts hopefully bring out the different positions on the issue of women's development or liberation at village/district level. UWT and government leaders promote WID ideology. Moreover, they are often condescending and hostile to peasant women. Their hostility appears to centre around various forms of resistance or survival strategies adopted by women villagers which contradict state efforts to control the labour process in production and reproduction. They also illustrate the growing tension between women and men due in part to the growing significance of market relations in their lives. Women are particularly concerned about security of food supplies. As an increasing amount of food requirement is purchased by village families, control over cash income becomes a major source of conflict. Male incomes are not sufficient to provide for cash purchases, even when these are drastically reduced. As women are forced by economic compulsion to produce more and more for the market, they begin to assert their right to control the proceeds of their labour. As women investigate the question of distribution of labour proceeds further, they confront the contradictions emanating from the national and international classes who exploit their labour.

Peasants women do more than speak bitterness at barazas. They are acting to resist pressures to produce according to the demands of capital and the state. The voices raised at the baraza are the product of action already taking place. In this region and others, women have insisted on concentrating on food crops over which they have more control and can get better prices on delivery. Now many men are making similar choices. Wives have refused to work for the husband without certainty of payment. This is especially common in tea production which requires heavy labour inputs for eight months of the year. They have also carried out a kind of strike action in refusing to work on village government projects like building certain buildings if these are not the priorities already specified by the women. They also refuse to join or also withdraw from oppressive women's groups or enterprises.[16] These and other struggles clarify that present women already produce income. What moves women is that they lack control over that income and over the labour produce as well, that their

income in real terms is falling, and that essential commodities are increasingly scarce. These and other issues posed above are substantive and challenging to neo-colonial social relations. If properly organised, they lead the women to inquire about exploitation and oppression beyond the family, while developing the courage and ability to transform personal relations as well.

These developments indicate the readiness of women peasants to move, to seize control of their lives and transform society. What is required is the development of organic intellectuals from amongst themselves, joined by others to create the conditions necessary to see and understand reality, and to understand what is necessary to change it - to realise that what is, does not have to be. This requires a programme of consciousness-raising, various forms of mass dissemination of ideas about issues, and *organisation around those concerns which the majority of women have already begun to* grapple with. These are not the same issues usually raised by middle class women (see above). Moreover, they are not limited to sex-defined contradictions. That these are potentially revolutionary was understood very well by one of the top regional authorities. When the issue of assuring 'payment to the tiller' - i.e. distribution of labour proceeds within the peasant family - was raised, the response was: "Whatever happens, we don't want revolution. If women have their own money, why will they marry?"

COMPETING IDEOLOGIES

Through this analysis I have tried to show how two different and opposing ideologies concerning women have emerged. One, Women in Development, has the backing of the powerful international and foreign aid agencies and the state. The other, which is not yet articulated in a coherent way, can be derived from positions taken by some peasant and farm worker women (as well as urban workers).[17] Underlying these two ideological positions is the struggle by imperialist forces to subjugate women peasants to their demands, and an opposing struggle by women peasants.

What is the material base for WID?[18] The IMF and the World Bank are being used to carry out a full-scale attack against the national sovereignty of the Tanzania *people,* along with nearly all the other *neo-colonised peoples* of the world. Now that the Tanzanian government is firmly hooked into debt peonage, the Bank group is insiting that it adopt in full the IMF conditions for continuation of major lending programmes. These include an even higher devaluation rate than the 20% recently exacted; liberalisation of state controls in the economy; increased crop prices but a continued freeze on workers' wages; reduction in 'non-productive investments', especially health, water and education services; and the promotion of export crop cultivation "by any means necessary": smallholder production, agrarian capitalism; and joint ventures with foreign capital. The rich peasants who survive the new agricultural policies, the capitalists and the foreign firms may benefit from the above, but increased costs of consumer and producer goods will automatically lower the real incomes of the majority of peasants and workers below their already intolerable levels.

Moreover, expansion of export crop cultivation is predicated on declines in food Production. This is acknowledged by the Bank's insertion of a food relief component in its agricultural policy package for Tanzania.

Increased agricultural production will depend on an adequate supply of cheap labour to work as seasonal labourers since the economy lacks the resources needed to import or to manufacture implements of mechanisation which could substitute for labour. The problem of inadequate supply of tamed cheap labour has been due partly to the capacity (if necessary and with the high risks evidenced by infant/child mortality rates) for self-sufficiency of peasant families, and this in turn rests to a large degree on the labour input and resistance of peasant women. WID income-earning schemes promote capitalism, and simultaneously the creation of women allies for imperialism. At the same time, 'income-earning' projects camouflage the failure of global capitalism to absorb the masses into productive work and to raise their living standards. WID projects are ideologically useful as evidence of concern for women, however, and they may succeed in short-circuiting the possibility of women's organised rebellion before it begins. Imperialists force struggle to create and promote organisations and individuals compatible with their own interests. We have historical precedent of colonial-suponsored Bibi Maendeleo clubs (Women Development!) which taught women sewing and cooking and white male supremacist ideologies at a time when women's militancy in peasant uprisings was growing.[19]

The crisis of imperialism is being resolved through concentration and centralisation of power in increasingly authoritarian forms at international level. The growing power of IMF exemplifies this tendency. At the same time, the majority of the people of the world are being fragemented and individualised in countless ways. Contradictions among 'the people', such as oppressive sex, ethnic, and even peasant-worker, relations are objective and real, but could be resolved through progressive programmes of struggle. Instead, they are being intensified, which helps to hide the way women and men workers and peasants of all nations are being increasingly exploited and/or made into 'superfluous appendages' like the unemployed women and children of South Africa.

> While real policies and programmes to deal effectively with the crisis are missing, imperialist states have been working very hard to force the people into crisis, i.e. to work on their mentalities, impose a certain conception of the world on them so that the contradictions among the people become antagonistic ones, to orient the people's attention away from the real causes of their miseries.[20]

FOOTNOTES

1. This article is based mainly on work carried out by the author as FAO consultant, in collaboration with Mary Kabelele for Mbeya RIDEP in 1981 and 1982. (See Mbilinyi, M. 1982 "Women in the Rural Development of Mbeya Region" Mbeya RIDEP Project Report FAO/Tanzania).
   The material on the Tukuyu women's groups stems from research funded by the ILO in 1983 (See Mbilinyi M (ed) 1984 "Co-operation and Exploitation" ILO Report: Geneva). An Earlier version of this article was submitted to an IDS Staff Seminar, University of Dar es Salaam in October 1983 and to the annual meeting of the Tanzania Home Economics Association. Criticisms of these earlier papers have contributed towards the present conceptualisation and presentation, and are greatly appreciated. A longer version is to be published in a collection edited by Longido H. and V. Miner "Competition Among Women" (forthcoming).
2. World Bank 1979 *Recognising the 'Invisible' Woman in Development: The World Bank's Experience* World Bank: Washington DC p 22
3. *Ibid* pp 7 - 22
4. International Labour Organisation 1980 *Standards and Policy Statements of Special Interest to Women* ILO: Geneva
5. Agarwal B 1981 "Agricultural Modernisation and Third World Women" ILO Rural Employment Policy Research Paper ILO: Geneva (Preface)
6. World Bank 1979 *op cit* p 12
7. Wamba-dia-Wamba E 1983 "History of Neo-colonialism or Neo-colonialist History? Self-determination and History in Africa" Paper Presented to the History Teachers' Conference 27 - 30 April 1983 University of Dar es Salaam.
8. Umoja wa Wanawake (UWT) 1980 Rungwe District Files 24 March 1980
9. Women and Food Information Network 1983 *Newletter* 10 boston
10. RIDEP stands for the so-called integrated approach to rural development which has been promoted in Tanzania by the World Bank and adopted for all the regions. DANIDA sponsor the Mbeya RIDEP.
11. Mbilinyi 1982 *op cit*
12. Personal communication from the Project Co-ordinator, Mbeya RIDEP 5 June 1982.
13. Mbilinyi 1984 *op cit*
14. Mbilinyi 1982 *op cit*
15. See Nkhoma A 1984 "Utengule Usangu Village - Mbeya" in Mbilinyi/1984 *op cit;* a recent study of struggle over control of beer brewing.
16. Mascaranhas O and M Mbilinyi 1983 *Women in Tanzania: An Analytical Bibliography* SIAS: Uppsala Mbilinyi M 1982b "The Unity of 'Struggles' and 'Research': The Case of Peasant Women in West Bagamoyo, Tanzania" in Mies M (ed) 1982 *Fighting on Two Fronts: Women's Struggles and Research* Institute of Social Studies: The Hague.
17. Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi 1983 *op cit*
18. Ibid
19. See Meena's article in this issue of *The African Review* for a rigorous analysis of this question.
20. Mbilinyi M 1983 "The Struggle for National Independence 1919 - 1967" Draft Chapter for UWT "A History of Women's Struggles in Tanzania" (forthcoming)
21. Wamba-dia-Wamba 1983 *op cit*