

African Social Scientists are Incapable of Making Socially Correct Decisions

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The slave master took Tom and dressed him well and even gave him a little education, a *little* education. Gave him a long coat and a top hat and made all other slaves look up to him. Then he used Tom to control them.

Malcolm X

It is common knowledge that many Africans in key positions find it difficult to make decisions; or, if decisions are made, in the end, they prove to be wrong and irrelevant to the needs of the people and the country as a whole. It is true that many people, having realized that the decision is wrong or irrelevant to the real needs of society, ask why those in key positions do not use their influence and give better advice to the decision-makers. It is also true that those who are supposed to advise find themselves frustrated and even embarrassed when wrong or irrelevant decisions are made despite their 'strong' and 'objective' recommendations. This paper will discuss the reason which makes it virtually impossible for African social scientists to make, or influence the making of, socially correct or relevant decisions. This reason is embodied in the above statement by Malcolm X.¹

Some philosophers argue that to understand the truth one should not merely be contented with what one sees—with the apparent—but should look deeper to try to discover the laws that determine the apparent. Or, as the Marxists would put it, it is not enough just to look at the effect; to arrive at the relative truth one has to seek the *cause* of the effect. It is from this standpoint that we shall explore the reason behind our proposition. This being the case, it is suggested that the inability to make socially correct or relevant decisions is historically determined.

We are, however, aware that there is a school of thought among Africans which does not want to bother with historical causes. Some would say we are flogging a dead horse! But is the horse really dead? We reject such a stand because nothing we see now can be fully explained and understood outside its historical context. The importance of history is not merely to acquaint ourselves with the past, it is rather in order to understand why we are what we are, the forces that have moulded us, determined and influenced our consciousness. This is necessary in order to plan the future

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¹ Cited by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm in her speech: "The Black as a Colonized Man," reproduced in *Afro-American Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (May 1970), p. 5.

development of our society intelligently. That is, we should not merely look at the symptoms, we have to enquire into the causes of the symptoms in order to find a proper prescription.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first will discuss the concept of our topic and some of the factors influencing decision-making; the second will deal with the intellectual conditioning of the decision-makers; the third will examine the problems of mental dependency; and the last one will try to put forward a suggestion as to what could be done in the future.

I

Decision-making is not a simple matter of Yes or No. It is something reached by a person or a group of persons after considering a variety of relevant negative and positive factors, the reactions of those who might be affected adversely and those who might gain from the decisions. For example, when in 1958 de Gaulle challenged the people of France's African empire to vote Yes! or No! in a referendum to decide whether they preferred to remain in the French community or to become independent, the Africans were faced with two alternatives: to remain in the community as a subjugated people, but to continue to enjoy the crumbs that might fall from the rich man's table, or have 'freedom in poverty'. The rest of French Africa voted Yes to the community; the people of Guinea voted No! In each case a decision was made in the 'interest of the people' concerned. But the whole exercise was not as simple as that. Many factors influenced whatever decision 'the people' made.

The factors which influence the making of a decision are many and varied; they are psychological and physical, subjective and objective. And once a decision has been made, the decision-maker and those who support him will call it a *correct* decision until experience proves otherwise. It therefore follows that, before we can examine some of the factors which influence decision-making, we should first of all try to discuss what we mean by 'socially correct decisions'. The key word here is *correct*.

According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, correct, as an adjective, has three meanings: the first implies something which is in accordance with an acknowledged standard, especially of style or behaviour, that is, something which is considered as *proper*; the second refers to something which is in accordance with fact, truth or reason, that is, something which is *right*; and the third refers to a person who adheres exactly to a standard, to the set standard.

From these definitions we can see that *correct* is a relative conduct, action or behaviour which is measured according to a certain *norm*. A deviation from the norm is regarded as improper, wrong, a breach or sub-standard. Looked at in terms of *norm*, 'correct' could be viewed from an abstract norm dressed up in the form of ideas and principles derived from practice and experience of the people of a particular society; it could be a physical *norm* set to regulate physical measurement standards; it could be mere regulations and legal fictions or statutes. Our main concern, however,

is with 'socially correct decisions'. We are, therefore, more concerned with the 'proper and right' meaning of the term *correct*.

Social decisions are supposed to be concerned with what is *proper* or *right* for a particular society of human beings. But what is proper or right is determined by socially evolved principles which provide the yardstick by which one can judge whether that style or behaviour is in accord with the popularly accepted way of life of the people of that society; or whether what is to be done is in accord with what people—what society—would consider as right and proper as dictated by its peculiar needs and conditions of life prevailing at the particular moment of time.

Proper or right are relative terms, dependant on the socially accepted norms. Each society has its own norms as determined by the dominant social ideology based on the prevailing socio-economic conditions and relations. The moment socio-economic relations and conditions change, dominant beliefs are likely to be changed by new ones, and this will lead to a change in the *norm* and hence a new yardstick by which *proper* and *right* will be determined.

Thus, when we look at what are 'socially correct decisions' we are thinking in dynamic and not in static terms. This is in accordance with the law of the dialectics of nature whereby there is nothing permanent or immutable. New norms emerge, mature, become irrelevant and eventually give way. For that reason we agree with the Rev. Demant who stated that it is an error to regard "the relative positions reached at a certain time and often contingently beneficial at that time as having an unchanging basis in Nature or in a pattern laid up in the heavens."² Accordingly, what is a socially correct decision today may be wrong tomorrow because of changed circumstances and conditions which undermine the basic assumptions on which the original decision was based. This could be because the basic assumptions are either out of date or have proved false or irrelevant.

However, at any one time social decisions are influenced by many factors. Among these are: the basic assumptions based on the prevailing social system; objective socio-economic conditions prevailing in the society; the degree of knowledge of real conditions prevailing and the problems posed; level of social awareness of the decision-maker; degree of ideological commitment; socio-economic position of the decision-maker; pressure groups; external pressures—psychological, demonstration effect, economic, social, cultural and physical; and the degree of intellectual autonomy of the decision-maker.

As we all know, at any moment in time social decisions are called for to solve the problems that face a particular society. In a developing society the primary concern of the decision-maker is to find a solution to the phenomenon of underdevelopment—to eradicate poverty, disease and ignorance. These three form the objective socio-economic conditions that all poor countries of the world are faced with. Today the eradication of these

2 V. A. Demant, *Religion and the Decline of Capitalism* (London, 1952), p. 20.

conditions is called 'development'. Development is, however, not a new phenomenon. But in carrying out the development of their societies the developed countries of today had one basic assumption, that is, the system that was to be dominant: free enterprise in the capitalist part of the world, and a planned economy in the socialist part.

A 'correct' decision demands thorough knowledge of the real problems that a society is faced with, the conditions that have caused such problems and the forces that are perpetuating them. This means that the decision-maker must be fully aware of his society, the attitudes of the people, their real needs and aspirations, the resources at their disposal, and the criteria of their allocation and distribution to meet the people's needs. The level of awareness or social consciousness is very important. It implies that the decision-maker has got to be devoted and dedicated to the service and cause of the people in whose interests he is supposed to make the decision. His sole aim should be to remove those obstacles that lie in the path of progress and hence the happiness and prosperity of the whole society. That is, his primary concern should be to render maximum service to the people—to the welfare of the whole society of which he sees himself as part. The level of awareness is very much determined by a person's social ideology—his world outlook and how he sees himself, his role and position within the society he is trying to serve. Does he regard society as being there for his personal satisfaction or does he consider himself as being there for society, to serve the collective interests of the whole society? Hence, does he put himself first or are his personal interests subordinated to those of society?

The ideological attitude and the level of social consciousness of the decision-maker are determined by his socio-economic position. A person who is directly affected by the problem in question will make a different decision from the one who is untouched. Take the simple example of salt. If a person has no problem in obtaining salt, and he is immune from popular pressure, then he may place priority on other consumer goods although socially salt has the highest priority. A Somali whose cattle are likely to die because of drought, places a higher premium on water than on literacy campaigns. Thus, it becomes obvious that pressure groups have a great influence in determining the direction the decision will take. For example, the decision to extend the *mailo* system, or individual, private land ownership to other areas of Uganda where it did not exist, was the result of the pressuring by some members of the Ugandan political elite because they too wanted to become 'land owners' as their colleagues in Buganda were. The same is true of the land consolidation system in Kenya. It was partly due to more 'progressive' settler elements who wanted to create their African counterpart land owning class, and partly to the African elite who envied the settlers' position.³ A strong anti-tax or anti-planning group can

3 See Audrey I. Richards, "Some Effects of the Introduction of Individual Freehold into Buganda," in Daniel Biebuyck, ed., *African Agrarian Systems* (OUP, 1973), p. 267, and also Ministry of Lands and Settlement, "Recent Land Reforms in Kenya," in *Land Law Reform in East Africa*, edited by J. Obol-Ochola (Kampala, 1969), p. 244.

easily influence the amount of tax that will be paid and the degree of economic planning that can be undertaken. An economically strong, locally entrenched, foreign group or enterprise can influence the whole decision-making process in a country. For example, who is against the marketing of Ugandan *waragi* (gin) in Kenya?⁴

We now come to a very important source of influence, that is, external pressures. These external pressures are exercised through the economic, political, social and cultural media. Economically, the rich countries of the West, and, especially, the former colonial powers, want to see their interests maintained and perpetuated. They are, therefore, keen to see to it that decisions contrary to their interests are not taken. For example, a decision to establish a leather industry in Uganda could adversely affect the Bata shoe and leather industry. It is, therefore, in the interests of Bata agents to make sure that no such decision is reached. Foreign managing agents will ensure that local industries they are managing on behalf of the local owners, be they private or public, do not compete with the metropolitan industries. Because of this, it took Nytil at Jinja almost twenty years to begin printing their own cloth because, if this had happened earlier, the interests of the managing agents—Calco—would have been in danger. Tororo Industrial and Chemical Fertilizers has never risen beyond what it was during the colonial days. If it had, Twiga—who were the managing agents—would have been cutting the trees on which they were standing. Uganda cannot even manufacture sulphuric acid! And what is true for these few examples is true of industrialization in general. The industrial countries of the West do not want others to turn to manufacturing.⁵ Hence they have to work very hard to influence any decision in that direction.

Nevertheless, although economic interests are of primary importance, they cannot succeed without appropriate, and therefore favourable, political and cultural conditions. Accordingly, there is strong external pressure to ensure that decisions in these social spheres are not contrary to the maintenance of the colonial structure and relations. But, in the final analysis, the success or failure of these factors in influencing decisions in one direction or another will depend on the intellectual autonomy of the decision-maker. If the decision-maker is intellectually deficient or dependant then he will merely perform according to the dictates of other people; he will fall victim to the *suggestive mechanism*. Intellectual inadequacy is the mother of mental dependency and hence superficiality. For this reason there are many decisions made to please foreign interests and pressure groups even if they are nationally disastrous!

4 When Ugandan *waragi* came on the market it was banned in Kenya by an African Minister. But obviously this was not in the interests of the African consumer; rather it was to protect the Kenyan market for foreign producers of gin and beer.

5 For example, according to *Newsweek* of 30 January 1961, Dillon, as Secretary of Finance in the Kennedy Administration, was not going to allow American aid to be used to build factories abroad, and especially when they "are designed to produce for the American market." And what is true of America is also true of capitalist Europe.

The foregoing has attempted to pinpoint some of the factors which influence decision-making and which are well known to us. But in order to see how difficult it is for the African social scientist to make socially correct decisions, even in a mere advisory capacity, we have to pick up the last point and discuss further the intellectual basis of decision-making.

II

Intelligence and intellectualism are two separate things. A person can be intelligent without necessarily being intellectual. Accordingly, although the number of African graduates at all levels is relatively impressive, the number of intellectuals is not, whether we like it or not. Thus, referring to the African elite, Andreski boldly states that it is misleading to describe them as intellectuals if the term intellectual is used to "denote somebody whose primary occupation is elaboration or interpretative dissemination of general ideas". He points out that: "The most striking fact even about the African university teachers is that they are politicians much more than intellectuals".⁶ Their main preoccupation is with promotions—how quickly they can get to the top. We have, therefore, people who have read books, who possess an impressive chain of qualifications gathered from all over the world, but who cannot use that knowledge to provide an answer to the solution of the burning issues of their own society. These 'high' qualifications are reduced to nothing more than mere tickets to a more comfortable seat in the rich man's theatre, to watch his own play, and a play that advances his own interests. Thus, as Andreski rightly observed:

as far as general standards of values are concerned, [Africans] have imbibed through their contacts with Europeans only the burning desire for money and the things which it can buy. The higher ideals which have inspired those who made Western civilization what it is (or should we say was?) appear even to the African intellectuals as words which are useful to invoke but which are devoid of any motivating force.⁷

This lack of, or low level of, intellectualism has led to a situation where we have in our universities people appointed to professorships not because they have any particular sentiments, beliefs, etc.,⁸ so that we can look to them for inspiration and intellectual activation, but because they hold a number of paper qualifications, the highest being a Ph.D. And when it comes to encouraging the development of ideas and beliefs they are the first to deride and discourage such trends. They are the first to speak against 'foreign ideologies'; the first to speak against universities being turned into ideological institutes! But, as Kenneth Prewitt wrote some time ago, "the

6 Stanislaw Andreski, *The African Predicament* (London, 1968), p. 141.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

8 The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines a Professor as (1) "One who makes open declaration of his sentiments, beliefs, etc.; one who professes" and (2) "A public teacher of the highest rank in a specific faculty or branch of learning; spec. One who holds a 'chair' in a University or one of its colleges."

failure of learning lies with the teacher. Blame as well as approbation are his to claim more than normally recognized, learning is emulating."⁹ No man of ideas has emerged from the blue, the teacher has always had a profound effect on the intellectual development of his students. If he is a man who is excited by ideas his students will tend to be the same. This is how schools of thought have emerged and developed. Thus, according to Prewitt: "Even the most self-conscious academician can be traced to a particularly stimulating teacher".¹⁰ The fact is that since the days of Nkrumah, development of intellectualism in Africa has experienced a big setback. (It is worth noting here that Nkrumah was not popular with the African educated elite. Indeed, they quickly celebrated his fall in 1966,¹¹ and wrote derogatory articles about him, in which he was accused of having lowered "the prestige of African revolutionaries at large" by descending "to a certain primitiveness in some of his devices... used in his political organization".¹²) We no longer think and get excited with new ideas. We wait for others to take the intellectual lead even in our own affairs!

Throughout history, decision-making has been influenced by intellectuals. This was recognized by every society right from ancient times. The intellectual ability of the decision-makers was rated of great importance. And, as is well known, the modern world is a product of intellectualism. From the ancient days, therefore, the task of intellectual training was given to the educationists.

Every known society has devoted much effort to the intellectual development of its future decision-makers. In a communal society there are no economic classes. Social groups are based on age, and thus experience; the task of education is left to the older and more experienced members of society. In every African society the aim of education was to produce a full man. In this way both intellectual and practical education were imparted with equal emphasis.¹³ So that by the time a boy or a girl took to marriage he was a full man and she was a full woman. They both knew their social roles, their social responsibilities, rights and obligations. They knew when and how to take decisions and in whose interests. They knew who to seek advice from in time of uncertainty as to what was proper and right, as to what was to be done. And at a higher level, the elder who was called upon to lead the others was, for example among the Baluyia, the one

who, by his personality as well as by a number of qualities... stood out among his age-mates and who, in all matters and on all occasions where the interests of the clan community as a whole were concerned, proved himself capable of taking the lead.¹⁴

Among other qualities such a person had to possess, was the ability to preserve peace in the community; he was a man "who talked gently and

⁹ Kenneth Prewitt, "Makerere: Intelligence vs Intellectualism," in *Transition*, No 27, 4 (1966), Vol. 6 (iii), p. 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (London, 1968), p. 29.

¹² Ali Mazrui, "Nkrumah: the Leninist Czar," in *Transition*, 26, 3 (1966), Vol. 6 (i), p. 12.

¹³ Julius K. Nyerere, *Education for Self-Reliance* (Dar es Salaam, 1967), p. 2.

¹⁴ Gunther Wagner, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo* (London, 1949), p. 76.

wisely and who can make the people listen and return to reason when they want to quarrel or fight.'"¹⁵ But although the leader, the African decision-maker did not rely upon his wisdom alone. He, in fact, was nothing more than a chairman. He therefore relied upon the opinions of other elders before he would arrive at any decision. And since he was suspected of any bias, no one questioned his wise judgement on social issues. For he was trusted to be above petty jealousies and interests. He had at all times to assume an impartial position. His decisions were guided by the ideology of the dominant segment of society which coincided with the whole.¹⁶

In class societies the future decision-makers were given special education to prepare them for their future role. Thus, in Egypt, where formal education is supposed to have originated, the sons of kings and the wealthy class were taught the subjects of philosophy, writing and ethics. In India, the sons of the ruling class—the Brahmins—were to Sanskrit schools where they were taught subjects like philosophy, literature, law, astronomy and medicine.¹⁷ In ancient Greece, it was believed that "education is what makes a man..."¹⁸ Intellectual education of the ruling class was, therefore, greatly valued, and the Greek rulers of the various City States relied heavily upon the advice of the philosophers who were in fact employed to educate the sons of the rulers.¹⁹ Accordingly, it was through the influence of a philosopher (Aristotle) that Alexander the Great was able to build his unprecedented vast empire.²⁰ The Romans were not intellectuals, but practical empire builders. But although they were more concerned with character formation, the intellectual tradition of the Greeks did not escape their educational system altogether.²¹

After the Roman Empire, the Church that virtually inherited it, relied on intellectuals to uphold its dogmas.²² The authority of the Church over the masses of Europe was challenged and undermined by the work of intellectuals. The period called the Renaissance was the period of intellectual revival which had been dulled by the Church during the 'Dark Ages'. The Reformation which followed the Renaissance was, therefore, the work of intellectuals.²³ From the Reformation on, Europe experienced intellectualism of all shades, and the development from capitalism to socialism owes much to the intellectualism which flowered during the period.²⁴

The capitalist system has always relied on bourgeois intellectuals to condition, through education, the minds of the decision-makers. In Europe, for example, bourgeois intellectualism was based on *liberalism*. And all the

15 Ibid., p. 77.

16 Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism* (London, 1964), p. 57.

17 *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, by Gould and Kolb, eds. (London, 1964), p. 404.

18 E. B. Castle, *Ancient Education and Today* (London: Pelican Books, 1961), p. 10.

19 For example, Aristotle was a tutor of Alexander who later became Alexander the Great. See Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London, 1961), p. 173.

20 See Ernest Barker, *Church, State and Education* (Ann Arbor, 1957), p. 3.

21 *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, op. cit.

22 Bertrand Russell, op. cit., p. 351 for the role played by St. Augustine.

23 Ibid., p. 483 and p. 509.

24 See R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, reprinted 1960), concerning the role played by Calvin and Luther in the rise of capitalism. See also Eric Roll, *A History of Economic Thought* (London, 1953).

old universities of Europe have liberalism as the basis of their education curriculum and hence intellectual training. The sons of the decision-makers had, therefore, to go to special schools—Public Schools in the case of Britain—and from there to the old established universities. These were the future decision-makers in preparation. In the United States, decision-makers have always relied on the advice of the products of the old liberal universities: Harvard, Princeton and Yale.

Under socialism intellectualism ceases to be a monopoly of the ruling classes. Socialist intellectual development takes the form of the practice prevalent under a communal system. The task of the educational system is to put emphasis on both intellectual and practical training. They take the standpoint of Harold Laski that "there cannot be a responsible state until there is an educated electorate."²⁵ Nor is a democratic decision possible where the intellectual ability of the majority of the citizens is very much underdeveloped. Similarly, you cannot talk of equality and equal opportunity for all. Thus, as Isaac Deutscher pointed out, "the Soviet school... insists on the need for the specializing student to form a philosophic view of the world and not to become encrusted in his own speciality." Approving of such a system, Deutscher went on to state that: "A school inspired by it may produce not just technicians who know more and more about less and less", the so-called experts and specialists, "but people combining detailed empirical knowledge with a broad view of life."²⁶ This is the reason why the study of *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* is compulsory in all Soviet Union educational institutions. I am sure that the same spirit was behind the introduction of a compulsory Development Studies course at the University of Dar es Salaam.

In a colonial situation, the development of the natives' intellectual ability varied according to the colonial power's policy. Where indirect rule was the aim, as under the British, the first missionary schools were meant to educate the sons, and later the daughters, of chiefs. In Uganda, for example, schools like Mengo High School, Budo and Gayaza were meant for the children of chiefs.²⁷ Because they were later expected to rule their people in the interest of the colonial power, it was necessary to condition their mental outlook so that they would see things as the white colonial ruler wanted them to see them. The French were not interested in the indirect rule method. The aim of their colonial policy was to *assimilate* the native elite of the colonies into the French culture, and thus make them "junior partners in governing the mass of unassimilated natives."²⁸ Education of the natives, therefore, aimed at providing black Frenchmen through cultural influence.²⁹

From the foregoing brief survey, we can see that all societies, all

25 See "Pseudo-politics and Pseudo-scholarship," by P. Kiven Tunteng in *Transition*, 41 (1972), Vol. 8 (iv), p. 32.

26 Isaac Deutscher, *The Great Contest: Russia and the West* (London, 1960), p. 29.

27 J. E. Goldthorpe, *An African Elite: Makerere College Students 1922-1960* (Nairobi: E.A.I.S.R., 1965), p. 2.

28 George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London, 1956), p. 195.

29 P. Kiven Tunteng, "Political Freedom and Mental Colonization," in *Transition*, No. 44 (1974), Vol. 9 (i), p. 12.

ideologies, are concerned about the mental or intellectual state of their future decision-makers. They have to be imbued with a certain state of mind to enable them to see things in their 'proper' perspective. The 'proper' perspective is determined by the dominant segment in the society. In a communal or classless society, the dominant segment coincides with the whole. In a class society, the dominant segment is the ruling class. The 'proper' perspective is therefore determined by the ideology of the ruling class.³⁰

III

On the eve of the colonial break-up in 1957, a Swedish liberal professor, Gunnar Myrdal, pointed out in a lecture at Cairo University that:

When a poor and backward nation becomes politically independent, it will find out, even if it did not know before, that political independence most certainly does not mean that it is automatically on the road to economic development. It will still be up against commulative social processes holding it down in stagnation or regression: the "natural" play of the forces in the markets will be working all the time to increase internal and international inequalities as long as the general level of development is low.³¹

Later, Andre Gunder Frank in agreement with the late Professor Paul A. Baran, stated in the Preface to *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, "that it is capitalism, both world and national, which produced underdevelopment in the past and which still generates underdevelopment in the present."³²

Following on from these two valid statements, I would add that the chief obstacle that hinders the African social scientists from making 'socially correct decisions' is the socio-economic *system* that imperialist colonialism imposed on us. This system enslaved us physically and mentally. Hence, intellectually, the obstacle could be renamed *psychological dependency*, or what has sometimes been called the *colonial mentality*.

The aim of colonial education was essentially to achieve mental enslavement of the African elite. It hoped to supply the colonial system with cheap but literate native labour. It was also meant to make the indigenous group feel inferior, to lose self-respect and a sense of a self-reliance and, instead, to encourage a sense of *dependency* on the European colonial master as the 'saviour from primitivity' and the 'benefactor'! We were to look to him for both spiritual and material guidance. Thus, as Andreski candidly pointed out:

the education dispensed by the missionaries usually helped to instil into their pupils the feeling of inferiority by teaching them to despise the customs and beliefs with which they grew up, and to be ashamed of their fathers.

He continued: "In the past the African pupils were openly taught that they

30 Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, op. cit., loc. cit.

31 Gunnar Myrdal, *Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions* (London, 1957), p. 61.

32 Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, 1969, p. xi.

belonged to an uncivilised and naturally inferior race by the missionaries who were simply imparting what they regarded as an obvious truth".³³

Mental and cultural colonization were essential if the African was to serve the colonial system as a producer of primary commodities and as a consumer of industrial goods. For, as Jahoda explained:

The crux of the matter is that the mentality of the inhabitants was viewed as an obstacle in the economic development of the country. From this standpoint some customs were not only primitive and unchristian, but also annoying to employers, e.g., when a worker suddenly had to depart in order to attend the funeral rites of a relative in a distant village.

Jahoda went on to point out that a similar situation was not unknown in Europe towards the end of the Middle Ages, when the number of holy days observed by workers was a source of distress to employers. The task of the educationists was thus "to eradicate what they conceived to be the most undesirable traits of Africans". The African behaviour and attitude to life were contrary to the requirements of the colonial capitalist system. Thus, the missionary aimed at eradicating the African's impulsive behaviour, his easy-going attitude to life, his dislike of rigid and routine work controlled by a time schedule, all of which were contrary to the way of life of a European society.³⁴

To inculcate a new discipline and outlook in the African, all sorts of methods were used including 'drills' and 'parades'. Thus as Jahoda noted: "retired sergeant-majors were imported who introduced schoolboys to precise uniformity of military drill". Even long after the sergeant-majors had left, African headmasters were continuing the tradition bequeathed to them by their masters. They "could still be heard bellowing staccato commands as the pupils marched into the classrooms."³⁵ The real aim was to hammer out of the African his way of life and replace it with Western values which were favourable to colonial exploitation. The African was urged to acquire a sense of competitiveness and hard work, and to learn that to feel lazy was a shameful thing. He was encouraged to acquire a taste for the type of goods that constituted the 'marks of civilization'.³⁶

At first, therefore, missionary education was essentially evangelical and technical. The aim was to produce lay preachers and catechists to spread the Gospel and to recruit new converts; then to impart elementary skills to produce semi-skilled labour necessary for the colonial economic system. We therefore find that a number of the old schools started as trade schools, and only adopted an academic outlook in the thirties. Even Makerere College was opened as a technical institution in 1923.³⁷

The academic outlook was meant to train Africans to fill the lower ranks of the colonial administration as semi-professionals, clerks, typists and messengers. Makerere fulfilled this need by training carpenters, tele-

33 Andreski, *The African Predicament*, op. cit., p. 86.

34 Gustav Jahoda, *White Man* (London, 1961), p. 95.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid., p. 94.

37 J. E. Goldthorpe, op. cit., p. 9.

graphists, medical assistants, teachers, surveyors and engineering assistants.³⁸ These people were never meant to be decision-makers; their role was to carry out orders.

As the administration expanded, better trained natives were necessary to fill intermediate positions. Training of Africans who would be *assistants* to Europeans started. At this point Makerere stopped being a Technical High School and took on the job of training, for example, Assistant Medical, Veterinary and Agricultural Officers, Engineering Assistants, and teachers of Junior Secondary Education.³⁹ But, as P. C. Lloyd pointed out, the "official aim... was purely secular—to provide an executive class to staff the growing bureaucracies and provide a cultural bridge between the expatriates and the African masses."⁴⁰ Still this class was not expected to provide decision-makers.

The demand to introduce university education in Africa is more than a century old. Back in the 1850s, an African from Sierra Leone, Dr. James Africanus Beale Horton, who took an M.D. degree in Britain and later served in the British army as staff assistant surgeon, proposed the establishment of a medical institution in Africa "to prepare African medical students before they went overseas to hospitals in Britain." In 1868 his idea had evolved into a University for Western Africa. A further demand was made in 1872 by another African, Edward Blyden, also from Sierra Leone. Blyden's demand resulted in the founding of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone in 1876. In 1911, J. E. Casely Heyford, from what is now Ghana, also proposed the founding of an African university which he emphasized "must be no mere foreign imitation."⁴¹ But apart from Fourah Bay College, which was founded by the missionaries who feared that Blyden's demand might force the British Government to found a secular university, the idea of the African university was still in the future.

After the First World War, the Pan-African Congress, organized by the Afro-American scholar, Dr. Du Bois, petitioned the League of Nations, *inter alia*, for education "in higher technical and cultural training..."⁴² At this time the 'sleeping giant in the sun' was beginning to stir up. The missionaries were quick to notice the change, and began pressing their Governments for "an official policy of education in Africa". The British Government responded in its traditional manner by setting up a committee in 1924. This advisory committee recommended higher education in the colonies. However, they stated that: "Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life."⁴³ But while the metropolitan Governments had seen the need for higher education in their African colonies, the Governors

38 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

40 P. C. Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 79.

41 Eric Ashby, *African Universities and Western Traditions* (London, 1964), pp. 12ff.

42 Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* op. cit., p. 124.

43 Ashby, *African Universities and Western Traditions*, op. cit., p. 16.

(except in Uganda) were not interested. To them, the demand for higher education was not as vehement as was thought.⁴⁴ The idea was, therefore, shelved until it came up again after the Second World War.

In 1940, "a fresh vigorous policy for higher education overseas was being prepared." The leading advocate was Professor H. J. Channon "who came to be dedicated to the ideal of a great network of colonial universities to equip the countries of the Commonwealth for independence."⁴⁵ We should also note that the stir of the 'sleeping giant in the sun' was also invigorated by the war experience. In 1943, the British Government again set up two committees. The one under Cyril Asquith was "to enquire at large into higher education in the colonies". In 1945 this committee recommended a policy which has been called the 'Asquith doctrine'. According to Ashby:

The doctrine was a vivid expression of British cultural parochialism: its basic assumption was that a University system appropriate for Europeans brought up in London and Manchester and Hull was also appropriate for Africans brought up in Lagos and Kumasi and Kampala.⁴⁶

The recommendations of the report, which actually became "Britain's blueprint for the export of universities to her people overseas",⁴⁷ were adopted, and universities were built and organized in the colonies in the British tradition. Their prime purpose was to produce "men and women with the standards of public service and capacity for leadership which self-rule requires."⁴⁸ In short, they were, as in England, to nurture an elite. And yet, in 1953, the same colonial Government allowed the establishment of extramural departments in these same university colleges because of the "wish to prepare people for the responsibilities of self-government and also to minimise the chances for creating an elite group".⁴⁹

However, on the eve of independence, efforts to build up the elite groups were increased. University colleges were expanded beyond recognition. Apart from the Governments, private donors and foundations, Ford, Nuffield, Rockefeller, etc., stepped in and financed whole departments, especially social science departments. Technical aid was freely volunteered. Visiting professors and lecturers were sent over, as well as the Peace Corps, Teachers for East Africa, and so on. At the same time, scholarships were very generously awarded for overseas post-graduate studies.

Professors and lecturers were appointed from London, but when it came to appointing African lecturers, a lot of care had to be taken. There was careful screening. The same was true of those non-African applicants whose social ideas might be suspect. All these exercises were part and parcel of the preparations for the new form of relationship. They were part of the foundations that were being laid in line with the new thinking in Europe

44 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

45 *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

47 *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

49 See Jassy B. Kwesiga, "University Adult Education in Uganda: 1953-1968," MASC Occasional Paper No. 7

and America.⁵⁰ The colonial Governments' efforts were to create an elite of the indigenous people who would identify themselves ideologically with the metropolitan elite and who would be made to depend on the latter economically. The aim was, therefore, to create an elite who would see things as the Europeans saw them, who would accept without question the European model of development,⁵¹ who would agree with the Europeans that *modernization* means *Westernization*.⁵² Hence, "Europe will have to provide the model for Africa to copy it; Europe to be spiritually the giving, Africa the receiving partner".⁵³ Thus the aim was to create 'a white man with a black skin' who would see things through the whiteman's spectacles. These were the preparations for neo-colonialism.

But, during the same period, what were the developments in the political world? There was a definite rift between the educated elite and the leaders of the nationalist movements. The elite despised the nationalist leaders in accordance with their conditioning by their colonial masters; the nationalist leaders looked at the elite as the stooges and henchmen of the colonialists. Most of the educated elite were in the Civil Service where they were being conditioned to the Westminster model. The standards meant European standards. Democracy meant bourgeois democracy; and even the political elite was thinking along the same lines. But those who rode the political horse were mainly of the middle educational grade: the primary school teachers, the clerks, trade unionists and the like. And in all cases they received no training in decision-making. Accordingly, on the eve of independence most of them did not actually know exactly what they wanted. In every case independence merely meant the replacement of the white man by the blacks—'Africanization of Government'. The *system* was to remain intact. Accordingly, there followed a rush to seek advice from 'friendly' Europeans and Americans.⁵⁴ The white missionary played an effective role in a number of cases.

In the Civil Service Africanization was proceeding at an unprecedented pace. Former interpreters became executive officers, and then District Commissioners. Young graduates became Assistant Secretaries. Within less than five years they were being made Permanent Secretaries, but without the experience and ability of a British Permanent Secretary whose title they had adopted. Because they were inexperienced, and, worse still, mere imitators

50 *Voice of Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (October 1961); a statement by H. V. Hodson in *The Times* (London), 12 December 1961; and Jack Woddis, *Introduction to Neo-Colonialism* (New York, 1967).

51 See Johan Galtung, *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making* (Oslo and London, 1973).

52 See Janheinz Jahn, *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture* (London, 1961), p. 11, and see Terence K. Hopkins, *Third World Modernization in Transnational Perspective*, Institute of African Studies, Colombia University, a reprint from the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 386 (Nov. 1969), pp. 126-136.

53 Jahn, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.

54 At the Constitutional Conferences, African nationalists employed the services of 'friendly' American or European lawyers. In Uganda, technical education was virtually stopped on the 'advice' of an American adviser to a Minister in the former regime.

of the British system, they needed to have 'advisers'. And the Ministers, who actually distrusted fellow Africans, and especially the civil servants whom they tended to treat like house servants in revenge for the pre-independence civil servant's attitude towards the politicians, came to depend more and more on foreign advisers. The same problem was found in the parastatal bodies. Inexperienced Africans became Chairmen, Secretaries and Managers. But lacking the experience and the know-how, they also had to depend on 'foreign experts'. Ironically, once these hurriedly promoted or appointed Africans were on top, they became so reliant on their white 'subordinates' and 'advisers' that they urged a break on 'rapid' Africanization in their various departments 'if standards were to be maintained'! This resulted in frustration among those African juniors whose ambition was to get to the top quickly, and also among some African progressive elements who had no way of putting forward their views. Thus, when independence came, the African political elite and the higher cadre had become a dependent people! On the eve of independence, Nzogola said of the Congolese:

leaders began to depend so much on foreign advisors for their political ideas, programmes, and strategies, that even after independence the need for foreign technicians was elevated to the level of a cult.⁵⁵

While, according to Tunteng:

psychologically, few African leaders — and this is particularly true of francophone countries—were prepared at independence to accept the burden and responsibility for their national development.⁵⁶

But has this dependence lessened with independence? The answer is that it has not. As we indicated above, on the eve of independence both Europe and America were planning the ways and means of influencing the new African nations. The most effective medium of doing this was through what Galtung has called *penetration*,⁵⁷ i.e., to influence the African elite ideologically, to make them dependent economically by having vested interests in the system, and to make them acquire a sense of fear because of their economic and military weakness.

And, as we all know, our educational system has continued to be that bequeathed to us by the colonial powers. We depend on the West for the supply of text-books used in schools at all levels. And even if they are written by Africans, they can only be published on the approval of the publishers themselves; they must be in keeping with the publishers' ideology—their 'editorial policy'. We still attach a lot of importance to overseas education. Our professional education is still geared to the standards either set or approved by the metropolitan countries. Year in year out, young post-graduate students are sent to Europe and America for further studies, after which some of them are appointed as lecturers and teachers at the universities

55 George Nzogola, "The Bourgeoisie and Revolution in the Congo," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (1970), p. 528.

56 Tunteng, "Political Freedom and Mental Colonization," *op. cit.*

57 Galtung, *The European Community*, *op. cit.*

and in the schools. Of course, the universities are still dominated by the grants from Western foundations and technical aid. We still cling to the membership of, for example, Commonwealth educational and professional associations. Thus, our political, economic and social-cultural outlook has not changed from that encouraged by the colonialists. In other cases, the black man is still trying to accomplish what the European has not yet achieved—to *assimilate* himself in the European culture. In some African countries the leadership elite prides itself in sending its children to study in the schools of the former colonial power!⁵⁸ Thus, it is through education that we are still being conditioned to serve the exploitative network. Or, as Professor Curle put it:

...by a strange irony, these educational systems which were supported by the colonial regimes because they were a useful source of minor functionaries, now provide the necessary servants of neo-colonialism and so are popular targets for international assistance.⁵⁹

But this international assistance, whether official or private, has the same aim: it is devoted to 'institution building', elite formation, modernization, political integration and the other clichés of the ideology of imperialism.⁶⁰

From the foregoing, we can see that the chief obstacle to decision-making in Africa is the phenomenon of mental dependency or colonial mentality, which is actually the result of what Mazrui has called psychological inadequacy which leads to a dependency complex and hence an inferiority complex. And I think Mazrui is right when he argues that this complex determines our behaviour and reactions towards the white world. That is: "Both cultural aggression in the black man and cultural imitation could be symptoms of an inner dependency complex, still struggling to find ways of self-liquidation".⁶¹

This psychological inadequacy makes us fear change and, therefore, new ideas. It makes us unconsciously accept the status of third class citizens and, as such, turn our continent into what Professor Oluka has called "The Follower Continent".⁶² Because, as a people who lack self-confidence, we cannot have a sense of self-reliance. And because we have no originality, we can only be performers.

However, in the first section of this paper, we mentioned some of the factors which influence decision-making. At this juncture let us try to see how psychological inadequacy does in turn influence these factors. We mentioned assumptions which are based on the prevailing system. These are actually social values which society assumes as the basis of its way of life. The colonial system, having destroyed African social values in the educated, never replaced them. Accordingly, we have no ideological principles to guide us in our thought and action. We are like a balloon in the sky

58 Nzogola, "The Bourgeoisie and Revolution in the Congo," *op. cit.*

59 Adam Curle, *Education for Liberation* (London, 1973), p. 118.

60 *African Studies in America: The Extended Family*, published by African Research Group, Cambridge, Mass., p. 7.

61 Ali Mazrui, "Learning the Three T's," *Topic*, No. 68, p. 14.

62 See Sam Oluka, "The Follower Continent," *Africa*, No. 10 (June 1972), p. 64.

which, having attained maximum ascent, can neither fly up nor come down. It merely floats in the air in any direction that the wind blows it. Or, we are comparable to a ship without radar which cannot map its direction or tell what lies ahead in its path! Because we lack social values we cannot properly and genuinely observe the objective conditions prevailing in our society; or know the real problems and wishes of our people. Missionary education trained us to despise our parents as pagans and primitives; this sense of superiority vis-à-vis our people still haunts us. There are many educated Africans—academicians included—who for years never set foot in their own homes in the rural areas, or who have no idea of real life in the villages. There are many who have no idea about the lot of the workers in the slums of Kisumu, Kisumu, Mulago, Makerere village and similar places. Our level of social awareness is just not there. We look at society as something that owes us a living.⁶³ We see ourselves as the only people who should benefit from the wealth of society; what happens to the rest is not our problem. The white doctor can devote his life to the 'wilderness' of the Congo; European missionaries have spent years trying to 'civilize' our people right in the 'bush', they have turned the African 'wilderness' into little Europes—and we admire them, we enjoy the fruits of their efforts—but we do not have the urge to do the same for our people; instead we want to eat what has already been cooked. We are in fact the biggest social *parasites*. This problem of low awareness of social consciousness is due to the absence of ideological commitment. As Andreski rightly observed:

The most depressing... features of the new African social order is the complete absence of idealism of even the most watered down quality; the worth of everything and everybody is measured by money... to an even greater extent than post-war Germany.⁶⁴

In fact, the individual who talks of ideals is despised. Accordingly, even in the university senior common rooms, the talk about money and what money can buy dominates overall. The struggle for higher degrees is in order to be in a position to be promoted, but *not* to seek knowledge for its own sake. Lack of ideological commitment and the dominance of the quest for money result in the loss of self-respect. It then becomes easy to fall victim to foreign and local pressure groups who usually resort to bribes to influence decisions. We become what Tunteng has called pseudo-scholars, who struggle to serve pseudo-politicians in quest for money and status.⁶⁵ As Sekou Touré pointed out, the lack of principles means that:

Some people too easily mistake their own interest for the interest of the people, and they are inclined to take themselves as a basis of appreciation, considering that the satisfaction of their personal ambitions would correspond to that of the needs of the people.⁶⁶

Thus, we sell our own people to international exploiters without any feeling

63 See speech by Rashidi Kawawa in the report of the Conference on the role of the University College Dar es Salaam, 1967, p. 9.

64 Andreski, *The African Predicament*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

65 Munteng, "Pseudo-politics and Pseudo-Scholarship," *op. cit.*

66 Sekou Touré, *Toward Full Re-Africanization* (Paris: Presence Africaine publi-

of shame as long as our pockets are full! Contracts and agreements have been entered into on behalf of our people which have no relevance whatsoever to their needs; projects have been put up which merely deepen and strengthen our dependent status! Because we have no principles, we do not feel ashamed of the income inequalities that we inherited from the colonial system.

These income inequalities determine our social class, that is, our socio-economic position. As we know, a professor in Uganda earns over 33 times the monthly income of his office messenger. We see this as natural and proper. But then, because we fall in a different socio-economic class, we are not subject to the same socio-economic pressures as our people. Consequently, as Dudley Seers pointed out, if the elite

are separated too far economically from the majority of the population, they will be unable to understand the problems of the common people, especially those in the rural areas. They may hardly be able to communicate with them, let alone formulate workable policies for modernizing rural society. They will tend to be sceptical about the possibility of development, to underestimate the potential power of nationalism, to despise rural life (and rural dwellers) and to disparage manual efforts.⁶⁷

Psychological inadequacy makes us easy prey for the destructive effects of modern persuasive techniques:

The popular press, the trashy books, the shoddy films, records and above all, the television, are doing enough harm in the industrial societies, but in the poorer countries they smash the very foundations of social order by undermining the traditional values without putting into their place anything except anti-social hedonism and the worship of money.⁶⁸

Our colonial mentality means that we are not able to perceive the gravity of this problem and its effect on the development of our society. Thus, we easily fall into the political, economic, social and cultural traps laid by the international exploitative network.

Finally, intellectual inadequacy creates problems of superficiality of outlook, behaviour and action. We go out of our way to please others even at the expense of our own society. The African professional, much as he would like to pose as his counterpart in the West, fails miserably when it comes to abiding by the professional etiquette and principles that determine the behaviour, action and decisions of the Western professional. Hence, the common result is the abandonment of the principles we have imbibed superficially, for expediency.

Having pin-pointed the real problem that makes it difficult for the African social scientist to make socially correct decisions, let us now ask ourselves the question: *What can be done?*

67 cation, 1959), p. 52.

67 Dudley Seers, *The Transmission of Inequality in Africa and the World*, edited by Robert K. A. Gardiner and Co., Addis Ababa, 1970, p. 168.

68 Andreski, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

The view expressed by Congresswoman Chisholm that if we want to become unconquerable men and women we have "got to face the truth"⁶⁹ is a valid one. The truth is that we are still a mentally and culturally colonized people. This mental and cultural colonization operated through the educational system. And, as a former Ghana Minister of Foreign Affairs told a group of African students in London, it is a much more difficult task to achieve mental decolonization than to get rid of formal colonialism. It takes a much longer time, and greater efforts to change attitudes acquired through a long period of brainwashing, and especially in a world where the struggle for the mind is very fierce. And the fact is that it is very difficult for most people to rethink and question what they were taught. But, at the same time, it is also a historical fact that the modern world is a result of some people rethinking what they were taught and having the courage to repudiate it as irrelevant, and then advocating and propagating new ideas which they consider more appropriate to social development. It is also true that the overwhelming majority of the educated Africans believe that the system inherited from the colonial regimes is unchangeable and its way of life immutable! It is usually believed that all that is required is to 'Africanize' it: replace the white personnel, the white names, the white businesses and other enterprises and everything will be alright! And what is true of the system is true of the views on education. We do not want it to be transformed, we merely seek for reforms. This is why we have to invite foreign experts to develop our curricula. But we could pose the same question to educationists as Rev. Demant put to the Christians, that is: what has colonially imposed education

or its remnants, to say to the masses...in...Africa who are now in revolt against the economic forces capitalist society has brought to bear on them, while at the same time they are moved by envy and misguided emulation of many of its destructive cultural features?⁷⁰

The real challenge facing the educated who claim to be contributing to the development of their societies, is: "In a world in the process of transformation, is the African continent to be the only one condemned to stagnation, without future and without hope?"⁷¹

It has been claimed that we cannot accept this stagnation; we must have a future; we must have a hope: we must work for *change* and *progress*. But, as an Asian writer quite rightly argued, the nation is as good as its people and the people are only as good as their education.⁷² It follows, therefore, that the struggle for our mental liberation has to start within the educational system. As Professor Galtung suggested, if we have to acquire

69 "The Black as a Colonized Man," *op. cit.*: "Some of you look a little uneasy! But let me say to you, if ever we are going to one day become a race of unconquerable men, unconquerable women, we have got to face truth." This was her followup to the words of Malcolm X quoted at the beginning of this article.

70 Demant, *Religion and the Decline of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

71 René Dumont, *False Start in Africa* (London, 1966), p. 22.

72 Harindra Corea, *Freedom What Then: Ceylon since Independence, 1947-1959*, Colombo, p. 95.

autonomy—that is acquire power over ourselves—we have to do three things: to be ideologically unsubmissive, i.e., self-respecting, remuneratively independent or self-reliant, and fearless in front of the forces of neo-colonialism.⁷³ But before real autonomy is achieved, there should be mental autonomy first. And it is the task of education to inculcate this intellectual autonomy by imbuing into its products a sense of intellectual self-respect.

When it comes to the form education should take if intellectual self-respect is to be achieved, there have been various proposals. We noted above what a British advisory committee recommended in 1925, concerning education in the British colonies, that education was to be adapted to the way of life of the people it was meant for. In 1968, Andreski observed the problem created by the use of imperfectly understood foreign languages. He pointed out that another reason why wrong decisions were being made was that the ruling elite which took over from the colonial masters “ascended the ladder of success by passing examinations in subjects completely unrelated to what they were doing or could see, such as the British constitution, or history lessons designed to make them French patriots.”⁷⁴ In 1969, P. C. Lloyd noted that “in the 1950s one could meet an African youth with a good pass in School Certificate geography, able to describe the difference between crystalline and sedimentary rocks, but unaware that his own village lay across the boundary of the two.”⁷⁵ In 1972, Walter Rodney argued that “Colonial schooling was education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment.”⁷⁶ In other words, the education given was, and still, is, irrelevant to the needs. What it does, as Professor Curle has observed, is not to free us “from ignorance, tradition, and servility,” but to fetter us to values and aspirations of the middle class which many of our people are unlikely to achieve.⁷⁷ According to Dudley Seers, the type of education received may make it hard for the individual to cope with his country’s problems, because “an economics student, for example, will find Keynes’ economics—even ‘development economics’ as usually taught—a better preparation for an academic career in a rich country than for the practical tasks of economic development”, and that someone with a Ph.D. in history “may be quite unable to talk of the historical context of his country’s problems.”⁷⁸ It is this irrelevant education which has made it difficult for “so many African leaders to think realistically about general problems (so distinct from the day-to-day tactics)”. This incapacity “remains one of the major obstacles to an important improvement in the conditions of their countries.”⁷⁹

However, many people in the world have attached great importance to education as an important lever of development. Perhaps Professor Curle

73 Galtung, *The European Community*, op. cit., p. 35.

74 Andreski, *The African Predicament*, op. cit., p. 86.

75 Lloyd, *Africa in Social Change*, op. cit., p. 80.

76 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London and Dar es Salaam, 1972), p. 264.

77 Curle, op. cit., p. 1.

78 Seers, *The Transition of Inequality*, op. cit., p. 159

79 Andreski, op. cit., p. 88.

summed up the basic assumptions which these well-wishers of the poor countries had in mind. They assumed that economic growth could go a long way towards solving the problem of underdevelopment; that economic growth could be achieved through appropriately adapting the practices of the rich nations, i.e., their know-how, and especially through the aid which these nations could supply; and that education or human resources development was the key to economic development because it could provide the necessary skills, spread opportunities and thus reduce the inequality gap.⁸⁰ But experience has proved that education as it is imparted cannot achieve the goal envisaged. In fact, despite the impressive increase in educational facilities and opportunities “global poverty and hunger are now worse than they were twenty years ago when international aid was getting into its stride.”⁸¹ What has actually happened is that the slave master has been using Tom to control other slaves who look up to him. As Curle put it:

As the representatives of the rich nations in the poor countries increased in numbers, as the colonial officials were replaced with technical experts, foreign advisors, representatives of a host of agencies—and above all by businessmen, so a new *elite* began to emerge. These were the local agents of foreign corporations, officials who smoothed the way, ministers and others whose good will it was desirable to purchase, labour leaders who could control the workers.

These indigenous liaison elite are the people who have actually benefited from ‘aid’ and foreign investment. Their gains have been derived from local contracts, gifts, high salaries, privileges and opportunities for travel and scholarships abroad. These people have become dependent on and have profited from their links with the rich countries of the world, and the latter, in turn, see this liaison group as essential to their vested interests.⁸² This means that education has merely created a people whose sole purpose—even if they do not know it—is to continue and intensify the exploitation of their own people and their own societies in the interest of multinational corporations that form the international exploitative network. These people perpetuate the system which is responsible for our past and continuing poverty.⁸³ The educated have abandoned the people, physically, economically, socially and culturally and sold them to international sharks. Thus, according to the report of a French commission, colonial companies are sometimes as powerful as the national Governments, occasionally, even more powerful.⁸⁴ Hence, in many African countries the real decision-makers are foreign experts, agents of international monopolies, advisers and representatives of foreign companies.

From the foregoing we can see that the real obstacle to decision-making is the *system*. It follows that if we are to create conditions that will enable Africans to make socially correct decisions, then the educational system has

80 Curle, op. cit., p. 14.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 116.

83 Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, op. cit.

84 French Aid, *The Jeanneney Report*, ODI publication (London, 1964), p. 12.

the colossal of eradicating colonial mentality. It has to aim at activating mental *rebellion* against imperialism and psychological dependency.

The instigation of this rebellion has to start from the universities and the teacher training colleges. It is only committed teachers against the system who can inculcate the same mental rebellion in their students. It is only teachers who have a sense of self-respect who can imbue the same to their students.

The word 'rebellion' very often frightens people. But if we go back a bit we realize that if our people had not decided to rebel against colonial rule, few of us would hold the positions we do now. Thus, when the people of Guinea took a bold step and voted No! to de Gaulle's ultimatum, they had declared a rebellion against French domination. Similarly, we can go on discussing and condemning imperialism and neo-colonialism. But we cannot escape their effects unless we rebel against their destructive mental and cultural features—unless we declare ourselves mentally *autonomous*.

The idea that modernization means Westernization is bogus and has no basis. We can improve the life and conditions of our society without looking at our problems through Western glasses. And now an increasing number of African militants hold this view.⁸⁵ The educational system should aim at creating an African in his own image and *not* a European with a black skin. It should aim at encouraging its products to think in terms of *change* and the creation of what Professor Curle has called a counter-system to the present one which is full of exploitation, strife and violence.

We can only become good decision-makers if the system enables us to respect ourselves and our people, and to dedicate our services to their cause. Only those people who are humble enough to go to the people, live with them, and learn from them will be able to make socially correct decisions. The education given should encourage its products to identify fully with the rest of society. Probably it is appropriate to conclude here by citing Sekou Touré's exhortation:

Each one must go back to the African cultural and moral sources, recover his own conscience, reconvert himself in his thoughts and in his action, to the values, to the conditions and to the interests of Africa.⁸⁶

In the foregoing pages we have touched on many points. But let us stress, in conclusion, that this paper has been written because of a strong belief that what Malcolm X stated is actually the truth. Whether we like it or not we are educated to serve a *system* which is actually against the interests of our society. Accordingly we are unable to make socially correct decisions. To remedy this situation we have to stop pretending and face the truth.

It is our firm conviction that we can only ignore the battle of ideas waging today at the disadvantage of our own societies. The world is being remolded by ideological struggles and we are right in the middle of this

⁸⁵ Hopkins, *Third World Modernization*, op. cit.

⁸⁶ Sekou Touré, *Toward Full Re-Africanization*, op. cit., p. 51.

battle whether we are conscious of it or not. But we cannot progress unless we are ideologically unsubmissive, unless we have intellectual independence and self-respect. As long as we are a mere 'follower continent', mere imitators, we shall for ever remain third class citizens without a future, without hope. We shall for ever remain hewers of wood and drawers of water for the rich world.

Thus, if we really want progress, the time has come when we should wake up out of our years of slumber, tear off the symbols of the world of 'make believe' and be ourselves mentally and physically. We have to break those so-called economic and cultural ties with imperialism.