A Thousand Flowers

A Thousand Flowers:

Social Struggles Against Structural Adjustment in African Universities

EDITED BY

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the thousands of courageous students and teachers who all over Africa have sacrificed their lives and liberty for the right to know and to be known.

Contents

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It might take a village to raise a child, but this book required many villages, towns and cities in both Africa and North America for its inception, growth and publication.

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Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis
and Ousseina Alidou
Coordinators of CAFA

Introduction

by the Editors

Most of the articles collected in this volume have been published in the course of the last five years in the Newsletters of the Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA); or have been developed by people involved with CAFA's work. Thus, an account of the goals of this organization is indispensable for appreciating the significance of the book.

CAFA was formed in the early 1990s by initiative of North American and African academics, who after working in African universities, decided to leave, either because they could no longer support themselves by teaching there, or because of the escalating government repression, or both. By the mid-1980s, in fact, as country after country adopted the structural adjustment programs (SAP) imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), presumably to stimulate economic recovery, the African educational system entered an historic crisis. All funds to public education were cut; many teachers and other academic staff were retrenched, and wages were frozen. As a result, in a few years, the existence of what had been one of the main conquests of the anti-colonial struggle—the development of an African educational system—was seriously undermined.

One reason why CAFA was formed to alert colleagues and students in the U.S. to this worrisome situation. Equally important for the formation of CAFA, however, were the struggles waged by teachers and students against Structural Adjustment which in the 1990s assumed mass proportions. In this context, CAFA's formation had three main objectives:

• *to provide a support structure* capable of responding promptly to emergency situations on African campuses.

• *to mobilize teachers' unions* and other academic organizations in North America on behalf of African colleagues and students.

• *to reframe the terms of the debate* surrounding the crisis of education in Africa.

By the 1980s, human rights organizations had begun to pay more attention to the violations of human rights on the campuses in Africa as well as other Third World regions. Not only did they record the increasing repression to which students and teachers were exposed (the increasing number of arrests, expulsions, military occupations of universities, torture cases, disappearances), but they set the parameters for an interpretation of the sources of the abuses and the principles to which academic authorities and governments would have to abide, in order to enforce proper respect for human rights in the schools. Key steps in this process were the Lima Declaration of 1988, drafted by initiative of the World University Service, and the three collections of case studies on Academic Freedom in Asia, Africa, and Latin America produced by the World University Service in 1990, 1993, and 1995. An important contribution to the debate on human rights and academic freedom was also the publication by Human Rights Watch of *Academic Freedom and Human Rights Abuses in Africa* (1991).

A key assumption in the perspective shaping these studies was that the main responsibility for the violation of academic rights on the African campuses is borne by the African state, which still has a tight grip on academic life, particularly at the tertiary level. From this viewpoint, the objective to be pursued was to move the state out of the universities, to liberalize the process of appointments and curriculum formations and, of course, establish that academic rights are human rights. Less attention was given to the role played by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the escalating African educational crisis; though many violations of academic rights occurred in the context of the implementation of the World Bank's "adjustment" policies, which students and teacher vehemently resisted.

It was to fill this crucial gap that CAFA was formed. Following are the assumptions that have shaped CAFA's approach to the repression of academic rights in Africa:

• Although the state is the immediate perpetrator, the ultimate responsibility for many violations of academic rights on the African campuses is borne by international financial institutions and, more specifically, by the policy of "adjustment" adopted by Washington and the European Union in the 1980s, that calls for the virtual recolonization of Africa's educational systems.

• The attack on the universities is part of a broader attack on the place of Africa in the International Division of Labor, on the value of African workers, and on the capacity of Africans to achieve self-determination, the still unrealized goal of the anti-colonial struggle.

• Defending the struggles of students and teachers in Africa is to defend the right of the African youth to study. This means the right to have equal access, with European and North American youth, and the youth of other countries across the world, to the knowledge and the wealth produced internationally, rather than being condemned to poverty and migration, the lot reserved for them in the plans of the international financial institutions now ruling Africa's political economy.

As the articles presented in this volume demonstrate, this approach is not oblivious to the pitfalls of post-colonial education in Africa; nor does it assume that the goal of the struggle over education in Africa is the achievement by African schools of the conditions of intellectual work prevalent in Europe or North America. However, it also rejects the argument that to oppose the demise of the African educational systems only serves to perpetuate the cultural legacy of colonialism.

Those who put forward this argument ignore that much of the criticism which they move against the content of education in Africa can be equally applied to the education provided by European and North American institutions, particularly today when profitability is rapidly becoming the number one concern in academia.

furthermore, the present attack on the African university systems does not come from below, and it does not seek a broadening of access to education, nor a transformation of the content and purpose of educational goals.

Rather, it is part of a concerted attack on *all* public entitlements and worker's rights—from health care, to land use, food, transportation, employment—that has plunged Africans into a state of poverty unprecedented since the end of colonialism and, in some respects, worse than anything ever witnessed during the colonial period.

From this viewpoint, failing to defend the African educational systems would not increase the power of Africans to control their lives; it would only facilitate the attempt by the World Bank and IMF to return the African educational systems to their former colonial status, when all that Africans were allotted was a little reading and writing.

It is also true that, prior to structural adjustment, the African school system, was becoming more democratic, with students and teachers less and less coming from the ranks of the African elites and more and more bringing to the campuses the aspirations of the African people.

Finally, a major concern of CAFA has been to highlight the global context in which the attack on African education has developed, and demonstrate the similarity of the struggles waged by African students with those of students in Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the US as well (In the same years when African students were fighting the World Bank, the City University of New York colleges were becoming a battlefield, generating slogans which African students—or for that matter Mexican, Nicaraguan and Argentinean students—could have easily identified with.)

Everywhere, in fact, in the 1990s, we have witnessed the growth of student struggles in response to the increasing commercialization of education and the new social hierarchies that are being created on the basis of the differential in educational opportunity. At the core of the neo-liberal creed, hikes in tuition fees, the rise of "education for profit," the redefinition of education as a commodity rather than a right and a common wealth, have made it more difficult for students everywhere to continue their studies. At the same time, they have also created new forms of international solidarity and

organizing among students and academicians, across the "South/North" divide. For more and more it is being realized that resisting the privatization of education and its subordination to the dictates of all world bankers, is an indispensable condition for asking *what education is for*—a question that cannot be raised when the educational terrain is in hostile hands, no more than we can ask how to save the forests when these have already been sold to the loggers.

Through its almost ten years of life, one of CAFA's goals has been to contribute to this new international solidarity and organizing. For we believe that despite its present limits, the "right to study" is still one of the most important commons we have. It is certainly one that many generations have fought for, as demonstrated by the struggles of students and teachers in Africa today. Thus, as with every other public good on this planet, it is now our responsibility to preserve it and improve it, so that it can thrive "for seven generations to come."

Part I

Structural Adjustment and the Recolonization of Education in Africa

The World Bank and Education in Africa*

George Caffentzis

> What can I do?
> I must begin.
> Begin what?
> The only thing in the world that's worth beginning:
> *The End of the World, no less.*
> —Aime Cesaire, *Return to My Native Land*

In this article I examine a number of studies that the World Bank (WB) has published since the mid-1980s which put forward the "philosophy" underpinning its recommendations for African education: *Financing Education in Developing Countries* (FEDC), 1986; *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (FCSG), 1991; *Education and Adjustment: A Review of the Literature* (E&A), 1991; and Micheal Kelly, *Education in A Declining Economy: The Case of Zambia, 1975-1985* (EDE), 1991.

These studies, written by World Bank staff, as in the case of Kelly's EDE, show that the WB calls for a drastic reduction of higher education in Africa, as it has developed in the post-independence period. This reduction is advocated in the name of higher efficiency and a more egalitarian distribution of educational resources. Yet the evidence provided and the guidelines prescribed raise serious doubts about the actual motives behind this policy. More likely, the WB's attempt to cut higher education stems from its bleak view of Africa's economic future and its belief that Afri-

can workers are destined for a long time to remain unskilled laborers. This would explain why the World Bank has made the shrinking of Africa's higher education institutions the centerpiece of its policy and has identified the improvement of academic life with this reduction.

The World Bank Criticizes its Critics

The first impact of WB policies on African education was through the implementation by at least 30 African governments in the mid-1980s of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), frequently coordinated with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). SAP's conditionalities included the removal of subsidies to students for food and accommodation, a currency devaluation that inflated the cost of educational materials and cuts in government funding of education. But SAP's most devastating impact was on the average family income, which made it difficult for parents to continue to send their children even to primary school.

By 1986 the consequences of SAP were all too evident. Social spending in Sub-Saharan African countries (including spending for education) fell by 26% between 1980 and 1985. Statistics showed that enrollment rates were declining in many countries for the first time in their history. Books, from primers to physics textbooks, became scarce commodities. Cash-strapped governments, pressured by WB and IMF officials, cut room-and-board subsidies for secondary and tertiary level students, who had to end their studies or continue in demoralizing living conditions.

For critics of the WB and IMF the decline of African educational systems, especially in the formerly world-renowned universities, dramatically demonstrated that SAP, far from generating economic growth, threatened the capacity of African societies to reproduce themselves. The WB, however, has dismissed these criticisms, arguing that the real problem is Africa's post-colonial higher education system, which is bureaucratically bloated, inefficient, and inegalitarian. African universities—the World Bank has argued—are "sacred cows" consuming an undue amount of limited resources, they are an example of fiscal overgrazing, and they are responsible (particularly in times of austerity) for the underfunding of primary education.

The WB undoubtedly commissioned Michael Kelly to study and publicize the case of Zambia because its financing of education seemed to fit this picture. The Zambian government, between 1975 and 1985, in the midst of a severe economic decline, following the collapse of the copper prices on the world market, increased the funding of the universities while letting that for primary and secondary schools fall (EDE: 39). This prompted Kelly to conclude that the WB was right : "too much was devoted to the refined needs of too few at the higher level, and too little to the general needs of too many at the lower level" (EDE:61). Not only was the financing of education unbalanced, investment in higher education was inefficient: "Wastage, proliferation of small institutions, excessively large (especially non-teaching) staff and the nearly universal policy of charging no fees, contributed to high costs" (FCSG:7).

WB researchers also pointed out that the social return to investment in primary education was 28%, while on the tertiary level it was 13%. Again, the *social* return to public investment in higher education was 13%, while return to *private* investment in higher education was 32%. In other words, individual university graduates received about two and half times more income over outlay than the government; and they received from the government thirty times more than what primary students received. This—the WB reminded us—led to a very inegalitarian distribution of educational expenditures. For instance, the "white collar" sector (professional, government, and corporate employers) represented only 6% of the population, but appropriated roughly 27% of the educational budget, and were over-represented at the university level, where 40% of students came from the white-collar families.

Thus, the WB would have us believe that SAP is a blessing in disguise for African education. African governments, under pressure from SAP, would have a golden opportunity to "increase the efficiency of resource use," keep in check the demands of the urban elites (whose political clout has distorted sound economic reasoning) and impose a new educational egalitarianism. Typically, E&A author Andrew Noss admits that SAPs do cut public education spending and primary enrollment rates, but he retorts: "even these trends are not *a priori* bad and need to be investigated in more depth" (E&A:32). He suggests that we ask: "to what extent were declining

resources allocated more efficiently, and did internal efficiency improve to offset declining gross enrollment rates?" (E&A:32)

SAP is credited with creating an environment conducive to improving the quality of African education which is described as "unacceptably low" (FCSG: 82).

How can "quality" be restored ? The best way (claims the WB) is to "decrease unit costs, constrain output and expand cost sharing by beneficiaries (so as)...to free the necessary resources" (FCSG:82). That is, the surest way to improve African higher education is to decrease the investment in the universities (by laying off "unnecessary staff"), decrease the number of students, and charge high fees to those who remain. This is a hard program for *any* government to propose, particularly in the face of powerful urban elites; but with the help of SAP African governments presumably can appeal to the old dictum, "better few but better."

The New World Bank Policy and Education in Africa

By 1986 the restructuring of education had become for the WB an indispensable supplement to the more general SAP. Thus in FEDC it presented a package consisting of three options :

•Recovering the public cost of higher education and reallocating government spending toward the level with the highest social returns.

•Developing a credit market for education, together with selective scholarships, especially for higher education.

•Decentralizing the management of public education and encouraging the expansion of private and community-supported schools.

Let us consider each in turn. The "recovering costs" option would reduce student allowances for room and board, charge tuition fees for university education, and thus make more funds available for primary education. Critics might object that introducing fees would reduce enrollment. But the WB answers that there is so much "excess demand" for higher education in Africa that charging fees would not deprive the universities of qualified applicants. "In Kenya, for example, only 21% of qualified graduates found university posts.

In Nigeria the average acceptance rate for university education in 1979-80 was only 16%" (FEDC:18).

The "credit market" option would further obviate this problem, since the availability of loans would allow students and their families to borrow on future earnings. This scheme presumably combines efficiency and equity: "competition for places in higher education would no longer be limited to applicants who can pay at the time of enrollment" (FEDC:31), while recognition that "time is money" would stimulate those who take the loans to finish their studies punctually (FEDC:32).

"Decentralization of management" would get the governments—which typically institutionalize "featherbedding" and overstaffing—out of the schools, making them more efficient and cost conscious. Finally, getting schools closer to the grass roots "would mobilize additional support for education from families and local resources" while incentivizing a healthy competition among schools be they private, religious, or community-based.

The World Bank's Vision of African Education

The WB promises that this new system, if given time to work, would restructure African education within one generation. During this period the present university system would be replaced by "programs or centers of excellence" concentrating staff and resources on a regional basis, and producing small cadres of "high quality" academics and researchers. In the "missing middle" a new type of "on the job" and "in service" training would be created, that would call for private sector involvement and local efforts (by craft and workers organizations) while retaining overall public management and training (FCSG:83). The model for this system is the Nigerian Open Apprenticeship Scheme, where "the employer provides training and the trainee works for lower wages" while the government "tops off" the apprentice's wages ($5 per month) and also gives a small incentive to the employer ($15 per year). As for primary and secondary schools, these would be run by local communities, religious institutions, and private companies, taking up the cost of paying for teachers, school equipment, and buildings. To further lower costs, primary and secondary school level teachers would forego university training and attend instead "pedagogical provincial centers

and training schools," as in a program that was experimented with in Ethiopia under Mengistu.

The WB's vision for African education by 2020 consists then mostly of primary schools, a middle-level system immediately shaped by the needs of the local labor market, and a very selective higher education system, operating at the lowest possible public cost. Here students would be paying their way through parents' contributions and/or loans. and spending would be monitored by international agencies and foundations, in order to ensure the most efficient transmission of a knowledge package largely imported from abroad.

Contradictions and Implications

This WB vision does have an air of realism about it. Who, for example, would oppose the expansion of primary education or "high quality" university education in Africa? Moreover, the pessimistic premise inspiring these recommendations—Africa's economic problems cannot be solved quickly—seems to be true. The numerous SAPs sponsored by the WB and the IMF in the 1980s have deepened the economic crisis in Africa, and no government has been able or willing to escape WB and IMF imperatives. Certainly, education funding appears constrained by austerity for the foreseeable future. Thus, we should perhaps conclude that what the WB advocates is the best of all possible worlds.

However, a closer examination of both policy and vision shows that they contradict each other and run against the basic facts. It also shows that this advocated adjustment of education is bound to have extremely negative consequences from which African education might never recover.

Factually, the WB's picture of campus life is out of touch with reality. On most African campuses, student life today verges on the catastrophic. Overcrowded classrooms, students running on one meal per day, failing water and electricity supplies, collapsing buildings, libraries without journals or books, lack of educational supplies from paper to chalk and even pens are the visible test of what SAP, stripped from the ideological smoke, actually prescribes. In addition, the police and/or the army are frequently stationed on or near the campus and classes are filled with informers, to preempt or suppress students organizing and protesting. The faculty lives and works

in similar conditions, with drastically reduced, below-subsistence wages, sufficient at best to pay for a week's food bill, so that many are forced to emigrate or find extra-academic jobs in order to survive. It should be noted here that the administrative overstaffing that the WB so frequently decries is often the product of an attempt to keep the faculty running despite the lack of basic equipment; sweepers for instance are absolutely necessary during the months of the harmattan in West Africa to keep offices operating, as the universities have no functioning vacuum cleaners, air conditioners, or even windows. No U.S. university student or teacher would consider the lot of their African counterparts—even before SAP—acceptable, yet the World Bank adds insult to injury by its picture of profligate academic inefficiency.

There is an ever deeper contradiction between the WB's policy and vision. The WB peers into the future and prophesies: "To survive and compete in a competitive world in the 21st century, Africa will require not only literate and numerate citizens, but also highly qualified and trained people to perform top-quality research, formulate policies, and implement programs essential to economic growth and development" (FCSG:81). Yet, its SAP policy guarantees that this requirement will never be fulfilled. African education is *already* on the verge of extinction. Consider the following statistics:

•There are less than 500,000 higher education students in all of Africa with a population of about 500 million; i.e., there is approximately one University student per 1000 people. In Zambia, e.g., in 1980 there were only two people in a 1000 that had any higher education training.
•The enrollment rate for higher education Africa in 1986 was 2%; if Nigeria were excluded, the rate would be 1%.
•Africa has the lowest higher education enrollment in the world. In 1986, the Latin American rate was 12%, while the average for the developing countries (African included) was 7%.

The African higher education student is an endangered species. Thus, any policy that lowers enrollment rates—hovering now near zero—can be seen as a policy of *academic exterminism*, for any change in education financing that does not guarantee a stable (if not increas-

ing) absolute and relative population of students threatens the very existence of the university system in Africa.

By this measure, the WB's policy is unequivocally exterministic. By defunding higher education, charging substantial fees and eliminating student allowances, the WB reduces the probability that any qualified student will be able to pursue a university education. The "excess demand" argument the WB uses and the appeal it makes to a "credit system" to demonstrate that university enrollment would not fall in the face of cost-cutting, are based upon faulty premises. Excess demand and access to credit schemes depend on a crucial variable the WB is also committed to reducing: *the average level of real African wages*.

Undoubtedly, there is an "excessive demand" for higher education in Africa. Like their peers in every part of the world, the African youth sees education as the key to a more secure life and a better future; thus they make great sacrifices in order to obtain it. But given the steady decline of real wages in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, one can doubt the existence of *effective* excess demand (i.e. demand supported by financial resources). How can families and communities afford to pay when wages are frozen below subsistence levels and the WB and the IMF are committed to further reducing the cost of labor? The operation of a credit system granting loans to a large group of students can only work if real wages are substantially increased above their present level. But the very purpose of SAP is to cut labor costs, so as to make African workers more competitive on the international labor market. This implies that real wages are not expected to rise for a long time, if ever, *considering that every other debtor nation in the Third World—from Asia to Latin America—is being told by the World Bank and the IMF that they have to cut their workers' wages in order to attract foreign investment.*

In an environment where the pauperization of the overwhelming majority of the population is and will continue to be "sound economics," it can be easily anticipated that only the wealthy will qualify for credit, with the consequence of a decline in the growth of university enrollment and an inegalitarian restructuring of the student body. WB's rhetoric notwithstanding, we must assume that these are the real goals of its recommendations.

Another major contradiction between the WB's policy and vision is the neglected structural link between higher and primary education. In a standard educational system, primary and secondary school teachers are supplied by the tertiary level, and adequate ratios between these levels must be maintained if the system is to reproduce itself. If the student-teacher ratio at the primary level is to be kept constant and the number of primary students is to increase by 5% a year, and if 5% of primary school teachers leave every year (due to retirement, sickness, or alternative employment) then the rate of yearly influx from the tertiary level must be 10%. A mathematical simulation, using standard figures found in Africa, shows that tertiary enrollment rates of 1% cannot even keep a semblance of pace. In effect, by advising the reduction of funding for higher education, the WB is subverting its own alleged objective: The expansion and improvement of primary education.

Rarely, however, does the WB admit that the actual results of its intervention in African education belie the reassurances that crowd the pages of its reports. Indeed, the WB rarely admits to any error or takes responsibility for the pernicious consequences of its policies, and not in the educational field alone. Occasionally, it might state that "there appears to be a causal link between adjustment and education" (E&A: iii), but it remains determinedly agnostic as to the positive or negative impact of such link. The following tables will show, however, that "adjustment" had already begun to have an impact on African education by 1986.

IAL countries (intensely adjusting) had received three or more Structural Adjustment Loans, or two SALS by 1989, with lending starting in or before 1985 (13 cases of which, out of 25, were African). NAL countries (non-adjusting) did not receive major SALS between 1980 and 1987 (10 cases of which, out of 31, are African).

Table 1: Per capita education expenditures.

	1980	**1986**
IAL	81.2	73.2
NAL	48.7	90.8

Table 2 : Primary enrollment rates (%).

	1980	1986
IAL	94.2	90.1
NAL	86.0	91.1

Tables 1 and 2 show that, early in the debt crisis, the countries that cooperated most with the WB and IMF severely cut their education budgets. This was a move that had an obvious negative effect on the most vulnerable sector: the primary schools. Yet, Noss insists: "the implications for changes in financing for education quality and equity are unclear" (E&A: ii-iv). The World Bank hopes, he adds, "[that] by giving the social impact of adjustment programs earlier and more serious attention, the worst impact of adjustment can be reduced [and] the need to restructure the public budget under adjustment is an opportunity for governments to evaluate social programs" (E&A : 5). But this reassurance verges on the cynical, considering that Africa's enrollment rates at all educational levels are the lowest among all the underdeveloped regions of the world, as Table 3 indicates for 1987:

Table 3 : Enrollment rates.

	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Sub-Saharan Africa	68	17	1
East Asia	125	45	5
South Asia	89	35	4.4*
M. East and N. Africa	97	57	12
Latin American & Caribbean	108	49	17

*as of 1980.
WB, *World Development Report, 1990: Poverty* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1990).

Noss' argument amounts to saying that in a region where daily caloric intake per person has fallen from 1800 to 1500 a government has the opportunity to ensure that food is more equitably distributed and is more nutritious. Where educational possibilities are already extremely limited, as in Africa, the "hopes" and "opportunities" that Noss appeals to are ludicrous.

Noss complains about the poor quality of statistics for education and the limited possibility of disaggregating them. But in a number of cases, like Ghana, the results of World Bank interventions are clear. Ghana became the WB's prize experimental subject in West Africa, receiving more SALs between 1983 and 1990, including two Educational Sector Loans totaling $84.5 million, than any other African country. The result was that public spending per student and real public spending remained at less than half their 1975 levels throughout most of the 1980s, while enrollment rates declined from 1983 to 1987 (the last year when data were available). SAP did not increase education expenditures, but *it did decrease primary school enrollment rates*, invalidating the World Bank's main axiom that the defunding of tertiary education is the lifeline to primary education.

Motivations

Why has the World Bank advised such a questionable education policy in the face of its theoretical incoherence and empirical failures?

And why does it ask African nations to flirt with the destruction of their educational systems?

One important reason is its perception concerning the weakness and bankruptcy of the African state. World Bank researchers, academic sociologists, and economists are convinced that the post-colonial state in Africa, although seemingly autocratic and centralized, is in reality quite weak, as proven by its inability to guarantee economic profitability and its tendency to overspending and overemploying. Africa's military dictators, one-party states, and "strong men" may be loyal to European and U.S. capital, but they have not forced labor costs down enough to satisfy foreign investors, nor have they secured a proper environment for foreign investments. Thus the current wisdom is that the less the African state is in charge of the management of African economies and educational systems the better. SAP places multinational agencies (WB, the IMF, and at one point, in the case of Liberia, even the U.S. government) in the saddle. The new theoretical interest in "civil society" and the appeal to the need of "capturing the grassroots," at least on a rhetorical level, are the product of this development. (We say "rhetori-

cal" because there has been no serious attempt to consult the Africans who are most directly affected by WB planning. For example, though the authors of FCSG claim that "ordinary people should participate more in designing and implementing development programs" (p.1), no ordinary folk were involved in the preparation of a book that deals with their future. Indeed, if the grassroots were to be heard, they might say what many ordinary Nigerians said of the IMF and WB's SAP : "It is a death pill!")

There is a direct connection between the WB's evaluation of the post-colonial African state and its policies towards African education. The main role of the post-colonial university was to provide the personnel for the state bureaucracy, which previously had been staffed mostly by Europeans. The often abrupt departure of the colonial personnel and the inadequacy of the educational system in the colonial period made the creation of national universities essential to the reproduction of the African state. But, today, both that state form and the apparatus of its reproduction are in question. SAP demands that the state personnel be drastically cut and not just at the lowest level. As a consequence, social science and humanities graduates, who in the past would have found employment in various bureaucratic departments of the state, are now facing an epochal period of unemployment. Thus, from the WB's viewpoint, the financing of universities in Africa, whose output is doomed to obsolescence, is a major economic and political mistake.

Another crucial reason for the WB's hostility to African universities is that students and faculty have often been the sharpest critics of WB schemes and opponents of their implementation. The WB paints this opposition as a self-serving effort by an elite to preserve its privileged position in the midst of a desperate social crisis. But this evaluation is misleading. Students and faculty unions are frequently the main organized opposition to neocolonialism and historically have been able to articulate general social demands. Indeed, anyone familiar with the political culture of African campuses cannot help but admire the courage and tenacity many students have shown in opposing dictatorial regimes and economic policies violating national and continental sovereignty. Unfortunately, it is likely for this very reason that the WB does not see any advantage to be gained from investing in African university students and

teachers and has always remained silent whenever a government has unleashed its violence against them to repress resistance to SAP. We can notice here that, while imposing on African governments the stiffest social spending cuts, neither the WB nor the IMF have ever begrudged lavish spending for crowd-control gear or for other imports functional to the modernization of the means of repression.

Could it be that the resistance of many African students and teachers to the WB's definition of knowledge is the reason for the Bank's assessment of African academic education as qualitatively "poor" and its suggestion that hardly any knowledge is being produced in Africa? How to explain otherwise a statement such as the following, that is by no means atypical in Bank-funded educational reports on Africa?

> [U]nfortunately, given the present state of higher education in Africa, the continent is unable to prepare itself to take advantage of the expanding frontiers of knowledge. (FCSG: 18)

The World Bank and Academic Freedom

African students and intellectuals have not resigned themselves, however, to the dependent status assigned to them by the WB in the production of knowledge. The African campuses today are battlegrounds for the definition of knowledge and a test of the WB's ability to impose its will on one of the most sophisticated and combative social groups on the African continent. Paradoxically, its success must rely on the African state, whose police it has helped to strengthen in the "SAP decade."

The WB is not a helpless bystander in the face of governmental violations of academic freedom in Africa, much as it would like to play this role. The Bank has a tremendous clout with African governments. It has convinced them to restructure their economies from top to bottom; it controls the only money practically being invested in Africa; it is the gatekeeper to any deal any company or country may make with Africans. Arguably, it could have inserted human rights clauses among its conditionalities, particularly at a time when it is fond of being on record as a supporter of political "democratization" and "grassroots participation" to development. But it has

not done so. On the contrary, it has allowed a steep rise in defense spending by African states in the 1980s, and has not changed its policy even when confronted with the bloodshed the implementation of SAP has caused in and out of the campuses.

In its report on *Academic Freedom and Human Rights in Africa* (AFHRA) (1991), Africa Watch has powerfully described the confrontations between students and security forces anti-SAP protests have led to on some African campuses. The most evident case is that of Nigeria, where in May 1989 dozens of students were killed in the course of demonstrations against SAP. Other students were killed and hundreds were arrested in 1990 for protesting against the conditionalities of a $120 million WB Sectorial Educational Loan to "rationalize" the universities. As Africa Watch reports :

> The announcement of the loan set off widespread protest by students, faculty and staff who saw the loan as an extension of the hated Structural Adjustment program and a ploy by Western governments to take over the universities. Protesters decried the conditions of the loan, which included cut backs in staff and courses, the phasing out of some departments and an increase in fees. (AFHRA: 47)

Even governments that have publicly committed themselves to expanding the space for academic freedom, once they have embraced SAP, have not been able to escape the logic of repression. President Museveni of Uganda gave a very supportive speech at a conference devoted to academic freedom in Africa in November 1990. But, on December 10 of the same year, security forces killed two students at Makerere University when students peacefully protested the cutting of their paper allowances. Instances could be multiplied; for, increasingly, *the main role of the African state is to provide the repressive force necessary for the application of SAP.*

As AFHRA reports, many students' demonstrations have targeted state corruption (Zimbabwe), authoritarianism (Zaire, Togo, Liberia), and the arrests of intellectuals critical of the ruling party (Sudan, Somalia). However, political criticism and economic demands invariably merge in the contemporary African climate of crisis. A good example of political/economic interpenetration are the recent events in Zambia, the country whose university system the

WB's Michael Kelly criticized so severely. A campaign began in May 1990 when university students protested the killing of as many as 350 students at Lubumbashi university in Zaire.

The protest was peaceful and there were no killings or arrests, but:

> One month later, at the end of June, protests erupted across Zambia in response to the government doubling of the price of corn-meal, a staple of the population's diet. In Lusaka, students played a prominent role in the protest and demanded that President Kenneth Kaunda establish a multi-party system and resign. On June 25, police opened fire on student demonstrators. According to witnesses, during the protest at the University, the police fired live ammunitions as well as tear gas canisters into a crowd of several hundred. One student was shot and four others were wounded. (AFHRA:145)

The AFHRA shows the full range of the struggles African university students and teachers have taken on in the 1980s. In introducing the report, Africa Watch Director Rakiya Omaar chastizes the North American academic community for not having given support to these struggles and having remained largely unconcerned or ignorant of the violations of their colleagues' rights.

She reminds us that :

> Long overdue, public expression of concern by academics can do much to embarrass or to promote a constructive response by a government which has killed a student, detained a colleague or closed down a university for political reasons. Elsewhere in our work, we have urged those whose circumstances have given them a free voice to defend themselves. African academics and specialists whose colleagues languish in filthy prisons, without access to a doctor, a lawyer or to their loved ones, can not afford to keep quiet. (AFHRA:7-8)

We join Africa Watch in this appeal. Let us add that an important way in which we can help our African colleagues is to stress the connection between their condition and the activities of the World

Bank. Not only is the World Bank often the prime mover or *deus absconditus* with respect to the repression of academicians and students. It is currently the grand master in the reorganization of African campuses. Moreover, the World Bank, like the IMF, operates right in our own midst, being financed by U.S. tax dollars, and staffed by academic colleagues. Thus, it is arguable that we have a special responsibility to inform ourselves about its operations, particularly when they affect students, colleagues, and the future of academic institutions. And we have a responsibility to make our voice heard if we stand convinced that the "rationalization" of African academe risks destroying for millions of Africans and for years to come the possibility of schooling at all levels.

* From *CAFA Newsletter* N.2, Fall 1991.

The Recolonization of African Education*

Silvia Federici

The economic and political recolonization of the African continent by means of IMF/World Bank-imposed devaluations, structural adjustment programs, and the transference of economic and political decision making into the hands of international agencies operating on behalf of the old and new world powers is by now a well-known fact.

Less known, however, are the extent and the means by which Africa is being *intellectually recolonized*. This means that conditions are being created whereby African academics cannot produce any intellectual work, much less be present in the world market of ideas, except at the service and under the control of the international agencies. Through targeted aid, these agencies determine what can be studied, written, and voiced in the continent.

The means by which this *intellectual recolonization of Africa* is carried on are many and subject to regional variations, but their essential features are the same. The basic mechanism whereby African intellectual production is being recolonized is the *demonetarization* of the continent, which, by reducing wages to their paper values, makes it impossible for African intellectual workers to survive. Exemplary of this situation are the material conditions presently in effect at the University of Dar es Salaam, where *the average academic wage now provides at best for three days of subsistence* and even the most minimal material conditions of intel-

lectual production (pens, paper, books) are beyond the reach of the majority of faculty and students. As a result, thousands of African teachers have been forced to either migrate to America or Europe, abandon their jobs in search of alternatives to "academic starvation," or reduce their teaching to the bare minimum to "free" their time for bartering, marketing, or any other activity enabling them to "keep body and soul together."

The second path to the destruction of the autonomy of African intellectual production is the *systematic defunding of African academic institutions. This is instrumental to their takeover by international agencies, who can thus organize and reshape Africa's academic life for their own purposes.*

The main method of defunding African academic institutions has been the cutting of all subsidies to education which the IMF/ World Bank have imposed on African governments as part of their conditionalities for new loans or debt-payment rescheduling. Such cuts have had multiple effects :

(a) *the escalation of the cost of education,* as measured by the cost of students' accomodations, feeding, books and transport. It is quite common today for African students, be they in Nigeria or Tanzania, to pile up seven to a room barely sufficing for two; to go to school week after week with one meal a day (and a small one at that) in their bellies; to study without books, photocopying machines, and note pads; while having to trek, often considerable distances, to get to their classes, since even the cost of a minibus is today too much for them.

b) *the dramatic deterioration of the educational infrastructure.* In the average African university today even chalk or white-out are hard to come by. Students and teachers, moreover, while preparing for exams or writing papers, have constantly to contend with blackouts (due to unkept power generators), broken ventilators, overflowing toilets, deteriorating buildings and, of course, the chronic lack of paper, typing machines, books, and journals. Indeed, as Nigerian newspapers often put it, studying (and increasingly teaching) is done with tears now in Africa.

c) *The forced dependence of African academicians and academic institutions on foreign agencies and foreign individual donors to provide economic help to "keep things running."* A recent newsletter of the University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly describes the consequences and implications of such academic dependency which a faculty member defines as academic life "under the link":

- Most academic research is being performed *on commission* for foreign institutions, agencies, or individuals, who thus determine and control its content and gain credit for it.
- Much time and energy has to be devoted to develop such international "links," since they are the only avenue to getting books, journals, and technology.
- New hierarchies and divisions are emerging in the academic institutions between the "lucky" departments or faculty members who have access to foreign "donors" and those who do not.
- *In a context of pervasive academic financial drought, foreign agencies (e.g., the Rockefeller Foudation) are presently taking over the infrastructural facilities of African universities, by organizing courses which they fund and devise, while the normal curriculum courses are condemned to slow asphixiation and marginalization.*

Finally, the control of African academic and intellectual life by "first world" agencies is directly established through *the loans the World Bank is giving to African Governments for the purpose of "education reform."* While the "infrastructural takeover" (of teachers and buildings) mentioned above is the academic equivalent of a "debt-for-equity swap," these World Bank loans extend to the educational system the principles of the SAP (Structural Adjustment Program). What educational reform or "rationalization" (as it is usually labelled) amounts to can be seen both from the case of Ghana—one of the first countries "bold enough" in the perspective of the World Bank to bite the bullet and bring "reason" to its school system—and from the conditionalities for the education-reform loan that Nigeria just signed with World Bank.

"Reason" for the World Bank means massive layoffs (50% in the present Nigerian case) of academic and non-academic staff, the allocation of specific monies for the hiring of expatriate teachers,

the closures of academic institutions not financially viable, and—most importantly—a stiff increase of academic fees which will surely decimate the student population. If this recipe for academic "excellence" and productivity prevails once again, as in the colonial days, education in Africa will be the privilege of a tiny affluent elite, with the bulk of the African youth destined for decades to serve as manual laborers at the lowest wages national and international capital can impose on them. *It is a fallacy, in fact, to suppose that the de-funding and retrenchment operated at the higher academic levels is functional to a better redistribution of educational resources, which would ultimately benefit and upgrade the masses, as the present rhetoric of international agencies would want us to believe.* The opposite is the case, as witnessed by the fact that wherever Structural Adjustment Programs have been carried on free primary education, one of the conquests of post-colonial Africa, has been abolished, and the fees for all secondary education programs have escalated beyond the reach of the majority.

Further, the systematic reduction of African wages—that are considered far too high by international capitalist standards—is at the very heart of every policy reform, adjustment, and rationalization imposed on the African people and the main goal of the present pauperization of the continent.

In this context, the virtual take-over of African education by international agencies and its restructuring into a costly commodity reserved only to the happy few has a triple purpose: to devalue African life and labor, to lower social expectations, and (last but not least) to curtail any independent, oppositional thinking. Muzzling critical academic expression is all the more necessary at a time when Africa is undergoing the most concerted plunder by international powers since the heyday of colonialism.

Throughout Africa students and academics have been and are organizing against the demise of their school systems and their countries' economies, and they are paying a great price for their activities. In Nigeria, for example, student organizations have been banned, demonstrations have been repressed in the most violent ways, and many teachers have been detained simply for voicing their opposition to government policies, not to mention that "academic rationalization" is abundantly used to "flush out" the "bad eggs" from the schools.

These facts unfortunately are hardly known to North American academicians, except for a small cluster of Africanists and the growing number of African teachers who, as a result of the present "brain drain," are joining our faculties. Thus little so far has been done to help our African colleagues and African students. *This has to change.* American academics have often been quite vocal in condemning violations of academic/intellectual freedoms when these occurred in socialist countries. It is to be hoped that they will not remain silent when, under the banner of a free market economy, Africa's intellectual life is being destroyed or enslaved.

There is much that we can do here:

(1) educate ourselves on the situation of African teachers and students and propagate this information;
(2) refuse to become scabs, by refusing to take positions in African universities undergoing the "rationalization" process ("rationalization" invariably calls for the massive expulsion of many of our African colleagues from their own countries' educational institutions);
(3) expose in every possible circumstance (e.g., in academic conferences) the World Bank's and the IMF's plan for African education and Africa's future in general;
(4) provide material support for African teachers and students, so that they can continue to carry on their activity in conditions of genuine intellectual autonomy.

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Booker T. Washington in Africa: Between Education and (Re)Colonization*

Ousseina Alidou

Introduction

The name Booker T. Washington is employed here in a dual sense. First, it refers to the person and his ideas, especially on the question of "Black" education. The central issues here are the curriculum that Washington adopted for the education of the Black people, who had been subjected to enslavement and later to the reactionary effects of the Jim Crow laws[1] as applied in the context of colonialism and apartheid. Among his ideas on the goals of education—which included moral uplifting and character building, self-reliance and black capitalism—of central concern to this paper is the greater value Washington placed on vocational and industrial education relative to "mere book learning." Washington and his supporters intended to give students "such practical knowledge of some industry together with the spirit of industry, thrift, and economy, that they would be sure of knowing how to make a living after they had left us. We wanted to teach them to study actual things instead of mere books alone" (1965:96).

The name of Booker T. Washington is also a metaphor for an educational "philosophy" that transcends the person and his place and time. Washington and his ideas have not been invoked in the construction of educational policies in Africa since the heyday of British colonialism. Nevertheless, his philosophy has continued to

manifest itself, in one form or another, to the present day. In this era of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), it is assuming a monumental importance, as it plays a major role in the restructuring of educational development in Africa—a fact that has serious consequences for the people of the continent.

The Washingtonian tendency in the World Bank educational agenda concerns not only Africa but the "Third World" in general. In this essay, however, I only focus on what is often called "francophone" Africa.

WASHINGTON, COLONIALISM, AND NATIONALISM

During the colonial era, Booker T. Washington's educational philosophy appealed to many African nationalists. Dube from South Africa, Koinange from Kenya, and Azikiwe from Nigeria, all looked to it as an educational model that could liberate blacks from the European colonialists who controlled African education and economic resources. As Duignan and Gann observe:

> Washington's work had considerable influence, not only in the United States, but also in colonial Africa (for example, he influenced James Aggrey of Achimota College in the Gold Coast, now Ghana, and John L. Dube of the Ohlange Institute in Natal in important ways). Many English-speaking reformers became certain that his work in America could be adapted to what they regarded as the needs of Africa.... (1984: 269)

But, as Michael West points out, it was mainly the possibility for blacks to establish their own independent educational programs that attracted many African nationalists to Washington's educational model (West 1992: 380). In their view, this educational model promoted the principle of self-reliance that was considered crucial in the struggle against colonial rule. The industrial education component of Washington's philosophy, on the other hand, was of little concern to many African nationalists, who were primarily preoccupied with finding alternatives to European colonial control of the African educational system (West 1992: 380-381).

To some African nationalists, in fact, Washington simply symbolized Black liberation (albeit through education), and they were not even aware of the fundamental differences between him and W.E.B. DuBois. This confusion is evident in the letter that Harry Thuku, one of the first Kenyan nationalist leaders, wrote to Washington asking him

> ...if a Booker T. Washington or a DuBois can be spared for founding a Tuskegee in the African world for the bold mission of uplifting the hopeless, hapless, struggling 3,000,000 nude native souls from deep ignorance, abject poverty and grinding oppression of the white settlers of the colony of Kenya. (Quoted in Anderson 1970:133)

Clearly, the nationalists saw Washington differently, depending on their situation, and tended to highlight those aspects of his ideas that best suited their individual circumstances and needs, in the context of the struggle against colonial subjugation.

By contrast, Washington's idea of vocational education had a special appeal, both for racist and capitalist reasons, for the British colonialists in their colonies, for white settlers in Southern Africa, and for various imperialist agencies in Africa. Functionaries of British colonialism, in countries like Ghana, Southern Rhodesia, and (British) Cameroon tried, at one time or another, to present Washington and aspects of his philosophy as the best pedagogical model and the one worthy of emulation by all colonial subjects.

A good example of this interplay between the image of Washington and the colonial educational agenda is the ten-part series on Booker T. Washington's life—seemingly based on his *Up From Slavery*—that was published in a Kiswahili journal intended for local school teachers. These articles, which appeared under the title "Mtu Mweusi Mtukufu" (the Honorable Black Man), were authored by G.B. Johnson, a leading educational administrator of the British colonial government in Zanzibar. What is more significant is that the series appeared at a time when the colonial government had just launched the Rural Middle School, whose curriculum was disproportionately vocational in substance. According to L.A.C. Buchanan, the editor of the journal's issue that carried the first of the Booker T. Washington Kiswahili series, the students at this school,

> ...watafundishwa Elimu ya Shamba (Rural Science), Elimu ya Ulimwengu (Physics), Usaramalla, kazi za mkono za namna nyingi, miongoni mwao ni kujenga majumba, kuandika picha, kupima shamba....Inatumainiwa ya kuwa watoto watakaohitimu katika skuli hii wataweza kuistawisha sana nchi hii. (Johnson 1935:1)
>
> ...will be instructed in rural science, physics, carpentry, a variety of vocational subjects, including masonry, craftsmanship, surveying....It is expected that graduates from this school, will be well placed to build this nation in a very fundamental way.

In one of his series, Johnson made explicit the link between the achievements of Washington's Tuskegee model of education and the educational mission of colonial officers in Africa:

> Hivi sasa kule Amerika wapo maelfu ya watu weusi walio wakulima ambao wanaweza kupata mavuno zaidi kuliko walivyoweza kupata wazee wao katika wao wanakumbuka deni wanalodaiwa na Ashington na Tuskegee. Ikiwa hatuwasaidii wanafunzi wetu kufanya vitu bora kuliko walivyokuwa wakifanya katika siku za nyuma tutakuwa hatutumizi kazi zetu vizuri. (139)
>
> At present in America there are thousands of black farmers whose agricultural yields surpass that of the entire farming life of their parents, and some of them remember the debt they owe to Washington and to Tuskegee. If we do not assist our students to produce better things than they used to in the past, we shall not have adequately fulfilled our mission.

In the area of African "economic progress," therefore, the British government in Zanzibar was beginning to privilege vocational education over liberal arts education. And the image of Booker T. Washington as "the honorable Black man" was being upheld to legitimize the idea that vocational and rural education were the most suited for African development, at both the personal and national levels.

The racist dimension of this educational policy arose from the assumption that Africans, as members of an inferior race, lacked

the intellectual capacity to grasp any kind of knowledge that involved critical thinking and abstract thought. In reality, this ideology masked the fact that the entire colonial enterprise depended on the exploitation of African labor and mineral resources, and that vocational education was considered necessary from the viewpoint of British capitalist/imperial interests, because it was expected to produce skilled laborers. In line with this goal, British colonial functionaries sought the advice of both Washington and other African leaders inspired by his educational philosophy, as e.g. James Aggrey of Ghana, concerning the design of educational policies for the Africans under their rule.

One further reason why British colonialists and Southern African white settlers felt very comfortable with promoting and implementing Washington's educational philosophy in Africa was the fact that it did not seek to challenge the political *status quo* and white domination. Washington's idea of social evolution, with regard to the development of Black people, in particular, played right into the hands of the colonialists, who could now offer yet another philosophical justification in support of their racialist educational institutions and curricula. The colonialists had now found a convenient formula that allowed them to be racist in their educational policies without seeming to be so. In essence, then, the African nationalist agenda and the European colonialist agenda both agreed with Washington's prescriptions.

The Washingtonianism of the World Bank and IMF

Almost a century after the development of Washington's philosophy, we can observe certain parallels between the British colonialists' educational policies in Africa in the early 1900s and current World Bank's and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) vocational education programs in Africa. It can be said, in fact, that what Washington's industrial philosophy meant to British colonialists is, in a sense, the parallel of what the philosophy of "capacity building," in vogue today, means to the World Bank and IMF as the agents of international capital.

In *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, Martin Carnoy (1974) presents an exceptionally insightful critique of the dependency relations between the United States and Third World countries. He

shows how the terms of imperialist cooperation were defined at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, and examines the history of American foreign policy, and the instruments of its implementation in Latin America, particularly in the educational field.

Carnoy's analysis equally well applies to the educational systems in contemporary Africa, serving to explain their collapse and the current plans for reconstructing them on the basis of vocational education. The agencies promoting these policies—the World Bank, the IMF and the United States Information Agency (USIA)—are the same ones that promote U.S. interests in Latin America. This similarity strongly suggests that the reform of African higher education is just a continuation of post-World War II American capitalist "development programs."

In tracing the origin of American Educational policy in the Third World, Carnoy highlights in particular the roles of the World Bank and other imperialist agencies, which are the same that today are in the forefront of educational reform and the promotion of vocational education. Carnoy writes that while the educational assistance provided by these organizations has ostensibly been designed to promote economic growth, its real aim is:

> to build institutions that complement a capitalist organization of production, an economic organization that channels a high percentage of increment of output into the hands of a relatively few people and that accepts and requires foreign investment....(Carnoy 1974: 311)

With regard to the World Bank's "African Capacity Building Initiative" (ACBI), George Caffentzis demystifies its meaning and shows its devastating effects on various grounds (Caffentzis 1994). He points out the ambiguity of the term "capacity," in relation to its products and systems of knowledge; its implicit devaluation of the African intellect; the initiative's promotion of Africa's dependence on foreign agencies and "donors"; its failure to recognize that the collapse of the African university system is itself a direct consequence of the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs. The "African Capacity Building Initiative," in other words, "is an explicit statement [that] the World Bank intends to dominate the development of academic institutions for the foreseeable future."

(Caffentzis 1994:19). Caffentzis adds that "the attempt to justify this domination under the rubric of training Africa to be 'capable,' is as questionable as the Church's justification for burning academic heretics under the rubric of 'salvation'" (ibid.).

From Francophonie to U.S. Hegemony

American ideology is firmly based on a policy of hegemonic expansion and the quest for ever-larger markets. Until the late 1980s, the United States and its allies feared the encroachment of Soviet communism into their spheres of influence. Military assistance and military intervention, emanating from both camps of the Cold War belligerents, were the prevalent policy (Culverson 1989). As for humanitarian assistance, Africa's—especially "francophone" Africa's—socio-economic problems were not a major concern for the World Bank, IMF, USIA, and the other American intervention agencies. The former French colonies were considered the responsibility of France, a crucial member of the capitalist block, that was certainly capable of repressing, in its zones of influence, any and all communist insurgencies, either through direct military action or through the control of crucial socio-economic sectors such as education, health, mining, and agriculture. During the Cold War, no parcel of American aid to former French colonies was ever directed to redressing the inadequacies of the inherited system of higher education, which was based on the "Francophone" ideology.

Francophonie, as Djité (1990, 1993) points out, is an ideology and an imperialist mechanism for perpetuating and administering the terms of cooperation between France and its former African colonies. Until the late 1970s, *francophonie* was defined as a vehicle for the defense and promotion of the French language and culture in all regions under French influence. The primary objective during this period was to reassert, in a somewhat subtle fashion, the French colonialist "civilizing mission" and assimilation policy, for people deemed vastly inferior to France's "haute culture" (Bokamba and Tlou 1980; Bokamba 1984; Hutchison 1994). At independence, therefore, the Africans inherited a system of education that was at variance with their own needs and realities.

Faced with the inappropriateness and inadequacies of the French educational model, African political leaders and educators from many

former French colonies met on several occasions to attempt to restructure the curricula, so that graduates might be more capable of contending with the grim socio-economic realities specific to each country. Yet these aspirations always encountered a stiff French resistance. Key areas of cooperation between France and its former colonies were suspended (Hutchison 1994). For example, the French halted shipments of teaching materials, subsidies to education, medical supplies and technology, and other subsidies that had been promised in various diplomatic and economic agreements. The result has been the continuation of the *francophonie* hold on African nations

In higher education especially, *francophonie* continues to exert itself through the cooperation of various cultural, technological, and scientific institutions, like the *Agence Culturelle et Technique de Cooperation* (ACCT) and the French National Center For Scientific Research or *Centre National de Recherche Scientifique* (CNRS). These organizations dictate the content of university programs and the process of accrediting diplomas *(Conseil Africain et Malgache de l'Enseignement Supérieur organe de la francophonie qui se charge de la reconnaisance des diplomes et la promotion des chercheurs-enseignants*). They control publishing houses, interfere with teacher training and promotion, prescribe to national governments the mechanisms for assessing the growth of universities, and set research agendas. This unconscionable interference has solidified the state control over the universities, a long-standing characteristic of the French educational system, thereby compromising the exercise of academic freedom. Through the 1970s, the ultimate purpose of these policies was to ensure France's trade monopolies in its former African colonies (Djité 1993).

During this period of patently unequal relations between France and Africa, the United States, the United Nations, and other entities putatively concerned with the rights of sovereign peoples voiced not the slightest objection. This silence can be attributed to France's status as an indispensable Western ally in the Cold War. The control France was able to exercise over its former colonies was of great benefit to the United States, whose overarching interest was to extinguish any communist "subversion" in Africa.

The end of the Cold War, however, has precipitated a new equation in Franco-American relations. The United States now finds

itself in the unprecedented position of expanding the "capitalist empire" almost unilaterally. "Democracy" and "efficiency" are the catchwords of the "New World Order," with "Universal Westernization" as the primary concept. As Carnoy suggested:

> The United States uses assistance for education now, as the British and French used assistance in the nineteenth century (and in the present), to expand that education which is complementary to keeping order in the "empire" and which subsidizes the expansion of capitalist enterprise, particularly (for U.S. assistance) American-based multinational corporations and financial institutions. With U.S. hegemony, expansion and reforms of formal schooling become means of promoting U.S. concepts of an efficient and democratic society. (Carnoy 1974: 310)

Creating direct capitalist links for American businesses in the "Third World" can now take precedence over strategic and military concerns that required the collaboration of European allies.

In this new global capitalist agenda, the role of African education has been particularly important, with the World Bank and IMF serving as the key agents of its control. Under the guise of "capacity building," the World Bank and IMF insist on implementing an educational reform program that places great emphasis on vocational education. Implicit in this program is the assumption that Africa should not think for itself, and that the intellectual guidance normally associated with university graduates will be provided by Western experts. As Caffentzis (1994:18) aptly puts it:

> The ACBI (African Capacity Building Initiative) does not present an accurate picture of policy debate in Africa. On the contrary, it devalues Africans as producers of knowledge; it denies their ability to autonomously achieve mastery of basic cognitive skills; and it calls for foreign agencies to take into their hands the restructuring of African education, in violation of any autonomy rights. ACBI thus represents a violation of political-intellectual sovereignty, and the right to self-determination. It means that, if the planners of the ACBI have their way, Africans will only be allowed to learn what promotes the agenda of foreign

> capital, with no concession made to their right to self determination.

The capacity that the World Bank intends to build in Africa, therefore, seems to preclude intellectual capacity. In the realm of intellectual production, the World Bank's Washingtonianism only serves to push Africa deeper into a state of dependence on the West.

Conclusion: Education and Resistance

In addition to its economic and intellectual agenda, however, Washingtonianism in education had also certain political implications. In both the colonial and the post-colonial periods, education in Africa was partly designed to serve the interests of "western" imperialism. In both cases, however, education—liberal education in particular—had the unforeseen effect of generating a critical consciousness and political resistance. And in both instances, the growth of this political consciousness resulted in attempted educational reforms by those in power.

In the colonial dispensation, for example, liberal arts education was sometimes explicitly blamed for the rise of anti-colonial nationalism. The agents of imperialism, in some British colonies, adopted Washington's model of education in the hope that:

> an "industrial" as opposed to a "literary" education, besides having a utilitarian value in an underdeveloped colonial economy, would provide an antidote to colonial nationalism. [Thomas Jesse] Jones, for example, believed that there was a direct relationship between an exaggerated emphasis on liberal education and anti-colonial education in India, and warned that this mistake should be avoided in Africa. (West 1992: 383-384)

It was perhaps in the attempt of subverting the nationalist momentum in Africa—as Michael West suggests—that Africans were sponsored to Tuskegee and other "politically safe schools in the South" by imperialist agencies (West 1992: 384).

What was explicitly expressed with regard to Washingtonianism in the colonial era can only be indirectly inferred from the World

Bank's "African Capacity Building Initiative" in the post-colonial era. There is no doubt that the African university has been the most persistent locus of struggles against both imperialism and tyranny. The *Newsletter of the Committee for Academic Freedom* (No. 10, Spring 1996), for example, has compiled a comprehensive chronology of African university struggles that clearly demonstrates the anti-imperialist substance of the students' movement in Africa. As the editors indicate in the introduction to the chronology:

> In country after country, demonstration after demonstration, in slogans, flyers and position papers, the African student movement has shown a remarkable homogeneity..."NO to Structural Adjustment, to corrupt leaders, and to the recolonization of Africa" are slogans that have unified African students in the SAP era to a degree unprecedented since the anti-colonial struggle. (CAFA 1996: 8)

Against this background, then, one must ask if the World Bank's initiative to reform African education under the guise of "capacity building" is not in fact intended partly to undermine the students' movement in Africa. Will future generations of African students maintain an imperialist stance to the same degree as their predecessors under the proposed World Bank education reforms? This is a question that only time can answer. Perhaps, the reform process itself will precipitate new and unforeseen contradictions which, far from killing the anti-imperialist resistance of the students' movement, will give it an additional boost. This is certainly an outcome to be hoped for, as Africa continues with its quest for solutions to its problems and ways of determining its own politico-economic destiny.

* From *CAFA Newsletter*, N. 13, Fall 1997.

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NOTES

1. Jim Crow Laws are laws that were re-enacted by Southern white supremacists after the Civil War in order to undo or undermine the civil rights achievements of people of color that had been made the law of the land by the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the United States Constitution.

Francophonie, World Bank, and the Collapse of the Francophone Africa Educational System*

Ousseina Alidou

Francophonie and Africa, the so-called Francophone

In the aftermath of the independence of African countries, France could not tolerate the idea of losing territories and resources that were vital for its internal survival. Thus, it designed a more vicious but subtle policy in the name of *francophonie* that tightened more than ever before its political and economic control over the so-called francophone countries. The philosophical foundation of *francophonie* is the use of French as the major linguistic medium and the means by which France has achieved intellectual and cultural control and created economic dependency between her and the African countries (Bokamba and Tlou 1980; Bokamba 1984). In the name of technical assistance, France, through the terms of *francophonie*, controls even diplomatic cooperation between francophone African countries and their non-francophone partners.

Thus, the *francophonie* effect has several consequences for the educational system in Africa. First is its lack of adaptation to the real development needs of the countries. This emanates from the fact that its operational system lies on a backward system inherited from the old metropole which still persists in dictating to Africans what their school curricula and administration ought to be at all educational levels, from primary school to university. Agence Culturelle de Cooperation Technique (ACCT) represents the cul-

tural and technical agency of *francophonie,* that controls the implementation of reforms and the design of the school curriculum in Africa (Hutchison 1994; Alidou 1995). Within this context, the francophone African countries become the dumping market for French school manuals and technology that the French educational system itself has judged inadequate for learning and rejected for its own schools. One wonders what makes a bad manual in France good for Africa, especially if one has to consider the fact that the access to French universities by African graduates depends on whether they can compete with their French colleagues of the same level.

Another dimension of France's imperialist cooperation with the francophone countries as far as education is concerned is the flow to Africa of unqualified French educational experts whose mission is to train African educators—often more knowledgeable than the experts!—in how to use the useless materials dumped there. Thus, francophone Africa becomes the employment market for these unqualified experts who cannot be absorbed by a saturated and competitive employment market in France. The sad aspect of this cooperation is that the maintenance of these useless French expatriates is at the expense of the poor African countries which have to pay their salaries according to the scale dictated by the cost of living in France. Thus, in contrast to their African colleagues, who live a totally unenviable life, French expatriates come to have a standard of living far superior to the one they can afford in France. The maintenance of these communities of French expatriates in Africa, in the name of technical assistance to education, forces the francophone African countries to look for loans from agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at interest rates that are beyond the repayment capacity of these countries. The burden of this unnecessary foreign debt is what is weighing on many francophone African countries and this will continue for generations to come.

The African Reform and the Reaction of Francophonie

In an attempt to limit the damage of French control over the African educational system, the francophone African countries, inspired by the educational reform of Anglophone countries such as Tanzania and Nigeria, opted in the late '70s to revise their curriculum ac-

cording to their developmental needs. Some dimensions of these reforms are the introduction of African languages as media and subjects of instruction and the reshaping of school manuals in ways to reflect African socio-cultural realities. At the higher educational level, the effort resulted in the opening of departments of linguistics, agronomy, and of medical schools, which train graduates locally by focusing on national imperatives while at the same time promoting academic rigor that keeps them competitive at the international level.

This reform, undertaken in many francophone African countries inevitably resulted in the laying off of the French educational expatriates, whose mission was in conflict with the new educational trend in Africa, and the creation of more job opportunities for African academics at a more affordable cost for their countries. This African initiative was considered as an affront to France cooperation and the French reaction has not taken long to sabotage its positive results (Hutchison 1994).

In the 1980s France decided to cut its supply of educational equipment and materials (which are very crucial for Africa's local publishing companies) with the aim of crippling their accomplishments. France has continued to limit the supply of materials to vital sectors such as health and agriculture as a condition for restoring the educational system established under the terms of *francophonie*, thus securing the market for French educational products, language, and the employment of French experts.

Francophonie, World Bank, IMF, and their Allies in Francophone Africa

The success of the French sabotage efforts in Francophone Africa once more witnessed the return of western experts from France, this time with the complicity of the World Bank and IMF whose goal was first to invalidate the achievements of the internal reforms undertaken by Africans themselves, and then impose their model of "reform."

The new educational reform proposed by the World Bank and IMF insists that Africa should promote vocational training because it lacks both intellectual and technological capacity to sustain higher education. In other words, what Africa needs are carpenters, agri-

cultural agents, and nurses, not engineers, agronomists, and doctors. The latter category should be supplied to Africa by the West in the form of international bilateral or multilateral cooperation through institutions like the World Bank and IMF, that are supposedly better suited to identify the local African needs.

This racist and simplistic view of what type of education Africa ought to have is articulated by Christian Vandrendriessche, the French cultural attaché in the Central African Republic who writes: "One could desire access to scientific knowledge for everybody in this planet. The educational manuals would then be more or less standardized. However, this is not desirable merely because if the world were only made up of pedagogy experts and doctors, it would lose its identity. One must by all means preserve its diversity and its inequality levels. This [diversity] is also a form of wealth. Personally, I do not believe that everybody should have access to the same education....The reform in Africa? One must make a distinction between African specificity and even national particularity and the need to open up to the world" (*AfriquEducation*,1995:29-30). In other words, educational underdevelopment is to be considered a worthy form of cultural diversity!

All over Africa this racist, unpopular, and exploitative reform recommended by the World Bank, the IMF and their allies faces the resistance of African educators, students at all levels, and informed citizens in the form of strikes and violent confrontations with African leaders who are puppets of these vessels of western imperialism. In francophone Africa, the crisis is made worse by the devaluation of the CFA franc, a development which, according to the terms of the independence agreement between France and its colonies, was never supposed to occur! In addition to this unforeseen devaluation, the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs are forcing Francophone African countries to reduce the salary of the civil servants and to cut off student stipends, thus worsening the students' living conditions which were already unbearable. The irony is that the dependency of the francophone African students emanated from an administrative system inherited from the French, which prohibits full-time students from earning a living even when the government cannot provide their stipends.

These western institutions are thus pursuing a well calculated strategy whose main purpose is to bring down Africa to the limit of

its resilience and create the conditions for modelling the continent according to their imperialist agenda. This international conspiracy against the African educational system is already noticeable in the fact that the World Bank is dealing with French and French Canadian publishing companies for the supply of manuals and other educational materials intended for francophone African schools, while ignoring local African publishers. It is precisely this western monopoly in the production and publication of African educational manuals that a Togolese publisher tries to call the attention of both African governments and their bilateral and multilateral partners to, in the following words: "I am sorry to point out that World Bank policy of advertisement does not favor local African publishers. It sets conditions for the offering of contracts that cannot be met by local publishers who are limited in their capacities and cannot compete with western companies. I am not aware of the Canadian (Quebec) government's initiative to consolidate African countries publishing capacities. With regard to France, I have not seen an undertaking for strengthening the publishing capacities of the South. I do not believe it is in the interest of French publishers to help develop African publishers. In countries like Cameroon, 90% of the publishing market is controlled by French publishers" (*AfriquEducation* 1995: 24). The same view was stressed by a publisher from Ivory Cost in the same interview: "I must say that we are hostile to the World Bank advertisement policy because it does not intend to help national publishers. We don't have any relationship with the World Bank. Having said this, it must be the responsibility of each country to determine its own priorities even if the World Bank is the loans provider. It gives loans, but it should not dictate what the publishing structures should be. In fact, its wish is to see African publishing companies destabilized" (*AfriquEducation* 13, 1995: 24-25).

The questions that one ought to ask are: Why should the World Bank deal with French or French Canadian publishers such as Lavalin, Servedit, Haitier, and Edicef instead of African publishers, if its intent is really to revitalize African development? Isn't it counter-productive for poor countries, such as Niger, Togo, and Benin, which cannot even guarantee basic living conditions for their teachers and students, to undertake the purchasing of textbooks from western publishers who in deal in hard currency and impose high

prices while the local publishers can offer better deals and provide job opportunities to many unemployed young people? Whom does the cooperation between African countries and France, World Bank and IMF benefit the most?

The promotion of vocational training at the expense of highter education is merely a pretext for western institutions to restore their old control in Africa, and create a rationale for the return of western experts to implement their reform agenda.

Bringing the educational system to a halt, by means of students' and teachers' strikes is one way in which Africans are resisting this contemporary attack on their survival by western imperialism. For example, from 1987 to 1988, the University of Dakar was closed for a full academic year. In 1992, the University of Gabon experienced the same fate. In the Niger Republic, since 1989, the educational system has been in a state of chaos. This has been the way the educational constituency has shown its protest against the governments' intent to implement France's, the World Bank's, and the IMF's reform policy. The same pattern holds for most francophone African countries, where the crisis is continuing to intensify because of the general economic collapse caused by Structural Adjustment Programs and the return of dictatorial regimes.

*From *CAFA Newsletter*, N. 11, Fall 1996.

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The World Bank, the Language Question and the Future of African Education*

Alamin Mazrui

This article is concerned with the question of language as the medium of instruction in African education, and with the World Bank's position on this matter. Where does the Bank stand on the contest that pits English, and (secondarily) the other European languages inherited from the colonial tradition, against the more indigenous African languages competing with it as mediums of instruction in African schools?

The process of colonial education had the effect of marginalizing African languages in favor of Euro-languages, thus creating an imperialist linguistic configuration that served to legitimize and reproduce the unequal division of power and resources between the speakers of Euro-languages and the speakers of African languages. The overwhelming majority of post-colonial African governments thus inherited educational systems with Euro-languages as the predominant media of instruction. To date, there is only a tiny minority of sub-Saharan African nations, like Somalia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and the Sudan, that have succeeded in extending instruction in African languages beyond the lower primary levels; and even in these anomalous cases, post-primary education has remained the exclusive preserve of Euro-languages.

This linguistic situation that was bequeathed to the African educational system by colonial rule, has prompted two kinds of re-

sponses over the years. There is, first, the functionalist response which stresses the inevitability and even usefulness of English, suggesting that, because of its global status, because of its wealth of publications, because of its "affinity" with the inherited school system, English is the natural choice as the medium of African education. As soon as Kenya became independent in 1963, for example, the Ominde Commission—set up to advise the government on educational policies —recommended that English be used as a medium of instruction starting from first grade, on the grounds that it would facilitate learning in all subjects, partly by avoiding a presumed difficult transition from the "vernaculars," and partly because of the language's own "intrinsic" resourcefulness (Republic of Kenya, 1964: 60). The report of this commission thus strengthened the already growing support for the introduction of English, as the preferred medium of instruction, at an earlier stage of the educational process than the one that had been chosen by the British themselves. The Kenyan government, then, is a prime example of a regime that has continued to be influenced by a functionalist ideology concerning the place of English in African education.

On the other extreme there is the nationalist response which advocates the (re)centering of African languages in African educational instruction. This school of thought has been influenced principally by the views of the United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), about the use of the so-called vernacular languages in education. Since the 1950s, it has been UNESCO's position that (a) the "vernaculars" are superior to Euro-languages from the point of view of the development of cognitive skills in a child's early education; (b) "vernaculars" can promote linguistic skills that facilitate, rather than inhibit, the acquisition of the imperial language at a later stage of the educational process (UNESCO, 1953:47-49).

This controversy about which linguistic medium of instruction provides the child the best learning facility has led to several experimental projects, both in Africa and elsewhere, especially in the "Third World." The results of some of these experiments have seemingly vindicated the functionalists, while others, the nationalists. In Africa, for example, there was the 1968 Iganga experiment in Uganda, that was based on the teaching of geography, and concluded in favor of English as the medium of instruction. The Six Year Primary

(Experimental) Project at Ile-Ife (Nigeria), that was launched in 1970, on the other hand arrived at the opposite conclusion: that instruction in a first language greatly facilitates learning (Ayo Bamgbose 1991: 76-77). These conflicting experimental results do not necessarily demonstrate that one approach is as good as the other and may reflect the ideological biases of the experimenters. But these uncertainties, concerning the effects of a chosen medium of instruction, are not reflected, as we shall see, in the World Bank's position on the matter.

The imperial language that is the focus of much of our discussion is the English language, partly because it is the most global of all imperial languages. In the words of David Crystal:

> English is used as an official or semi-official language in over 60 countries, and has a prominent place in 20 other. It is either dominant, or well established, in all six continents. It is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, medicine, diplomacy, sports, international competitions, pop music and advertising. Over two-thirds of the world's scientists write in English. Three quarters of the world's mail is written in English. Of all the information in the world's electronic retrieval systems 80% is stored in English. English radio programmes are received by over 150 million in 120 countries. Over 50 million children study English as an additional language at primary level: over 80 million study it at secondary level (These figures exclude China). (1987: 358)

In addition to its global status, the focus on English is also justified by the fact that the World Bank (like its sister institution, the International Monetary Fund), is located in, and is under the control of, the largest (geographically and demographically) English-speaking country in the world, the United States of America. And, not surprisingly, there is evidence, that it suffers from an Anglo-linguistic bias in its attempts to determine the destiny of the world.

The World Bank and the Question of Instructional Media

On the surface of things, the World Bank has generally identified itself with the more nationalist school of thought, that encourages the use of African "mother tongues" as media of instruction at least in the lower levels of elementary education. In spite of the rhetorical commitment of several African governments to the promotion of African languages as instructional media, the World Bank has compiled data demonstrating that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the imperial languages—English, French and especially Portuguese —continue to be predominant, from the earliest phases of the educational process, almost throughout the continent. And, by all indicators, these Euro-languages are becoming increasingly consolidated in the African educational process, as in other domains of African society. The present direction in Africa, then, is towards a maximum convergence between Euro-languages and secular education, and, conversely, towards a maximum divergence between Afro-ethnic languages and the school. This is a picture that obviously portends a gloomy future for the "development" of African languages, and explains to some extent, the persistent calls by some nationalists for policies assisting the (re)centering of African languages in education and in the lives of the African people.

Like many functionalists, who argue that English in Africa and in the "Third World," has become vital in its own right, in spite of its colonial roots, the World Bank too recognizes that fluency in the imperial languages "may help promote political stability and build national unity as well as serve economic purposes." Unlike the functionalists, however, the World Bank tries to project an image of sensitivity to the pedagogic advantages of using the tongues that are more familiar to the average African pupil, as media of instruction. It notes that "Current research suggests that... the acquisition both of oral fluency and of literacy in a second language is most successful when there is a strong foundation in the first language..." (World Bank 1988: 44)

Against this backdrop, the World Bank claims that the most effective educational approach is one that begins instruction in a local language and switches to the second language—almost invariably the European tongue of colonial origins—at a later stage. "With

this approach," we are told, "children are able to acquire basic literacy, learn the fundamentals in various subjects and adjust to the school and its demands before they confront the task of learning a new language" (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991: 167).

In a more recent World Bank publication on strategies and priorities for education, the pedagogic merits of instruction in a language that is most familiar to the child are expressed once again. "Learning is more effective," it is claimed, "if instruction in the first several grades is in the child's native language. This approach allows for mastery of the first language and promotes the cognitive development needed for learning a second language" (World Bank, 1995: 79). Clearly, then, the World Bank's view seems to conform to the linguistic position that has always been espoused by UNESCO, with regard to the preferable medium of instruction, and has continued to influence African pedagogists and language nationalists to this day.

The World Bank, however, accepts an even more radical proposition. Not only does instruction in a student's first language enhance learning and the development of basic cognitive skills, instruction in a less familiar, second or foreign, language is actually detrimental to the educational progress of the child. "Children who speak a language other than the language of instruction [which here refers to the European languages] confront a substantial barrier to learning. In the crucial, early grades when children are trying to acquire basic literacy as well as adjust to the demands of the school setting, not speaking the language of instruction can make the difference between succeeding and failing in school, between remaining in school and dropping out" (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991:153). In view of the serious consequences for the educational future of African children arising from instruction in a "foreign" linguistic medium, finding ways of centering African languages in education should be a high priority for any institution claiming to have the educational welfare of the continent at heart.

However, in spite of its proclaimed conviction about the pedagogic and educational value of "mother-tongue" instruction, the World Bank claims that it cannot impose an educational language policy on African countries. Each country, we are told, must be free to determine which language policy is best commensurate with its own unique political, economic, cultural and linguistic pe-

culiarities. This same institution that has been coercing African governments into overhauling their educational structures virtually overnight, suddenly becomes mindful of the national sovereignty of these countries, and of their right to linguistic self-determination. Thus, it well understands "that there are many instances when early immersion—that is, instruction in the European languages, in an all European language environment, from day one of schooling—is more appropriate than instruction in local languages, and that such immersion may be the only pragmatic option available to a nation" (Lockheed and Verspoor 1991: 167).

With this seemingly democratic (albeit patronizing) posture, the World Bank's real position on the question of the linguistic medium of instruction becomes transparent. Behind the mask, a view transpires that encourages the consolidation of the imperial languages both in Africa and generally the "Third World," and favors education in the local languages, in the earlier years of schooling, merely as a means of facilitating the students' acquisition of the imperial language at a later stage. This may explain why the World Bank never raises the possibility of using African languages beyond the first few years of elementary school. UNESCO has indeed campaigned for a shift to local languages in the earlier years of a child's education; but it has also recommended, on educational grounds "that the use of the mother tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible"(1953: 47). Still the World Bank does not seem to regard the linguistic Africanization of all primary education and beyond as a worthwhile effort. Its publication on strategies for stabilizing and revitalizing the universities, for example, makes absolutely no mention of the place of language at the tertiary level of African education (Saint 1993).

The World Bank's structural adjustment prescriptions with regard to African education further betrays its Euro-linguistic agenda. The shortage of instructional materials in local African languages is, in many instances, as widespread today as it was in the 1950s, when UNESCO carried out its survey on "vernacular" instruction. According to the UNESCO document:

> One of the most important and difficult problems connected with the use of vernacular languages in education is that of providing reading materials. It will often hap-

> pen that even a language which is quite capable of being used as a medium of instruction will be almost entirely without books or other materials. The difficulty is... above all to find the money. (UNESCO, 1953: 50-51)

At least in the initial stages, then, establishing the conditions for sustainable instruction in the local languages—which, in the quoted World Bank's opinion, is crucial to the uninterrupted educational progress of a child requires substantial government investments in the generation of educational resources. Yet, the World Bank's prescriptions continue to place heavy emphasis on the reduction of government subsidies in education, which are indispensable to the promotion of instruction in the local languages. In effect, then, the self-proclaimed democratic World Bank, that supposedly allows African nations the freedom to choose their instructional media, accords them no choice at all. For, under the World Bank-IMF structural adjustment programs, the only path open to African nations is the adoption of the imperial languages from the very outset of a child's education.

The World Bank's structural adjustment programs are also contributing to consolidate the use of the imperial languages in education in a different demographic sense. In its attempts to justify its pressure on African governments to cut down educational expenses and to force students to assume part of the cost of higher education, the World Bank has sometimes argued that the majority of students can afford to pay for their education, because they come from fairly affluent backgrounds. Subsidies to public universities, in particular, are considered an inefficient educational investment, and a regressive social spending because supposedly university students are disproportionately from the upper end of the scale of income distribution (World Bank 1994: 3).

In absolute terms, however, World Bank figures show unequivocally that the majority of students in Africa (an average of about 60%) come from the ranks of the peasantry, workers and petty-traders, who are not likely to have the means to meet the increasing cost of university education. The natural outcome of the tuition fees increase, then, is the increase in drop-out rates among students from poorer families. In Kenya's Moi and Egerton Universities, for example, with their combined population of about 6000 students, over

2000 students were deregistered in early May of 1996 because of the non-payment of fees and tuition *(Daily Nation,* Nairobi, 5/4/1996:18). Thus, the net effect of the World Bank's structural adjustment programs in education is to transform the African university into a "white collar" institution, as far as the background of the student body.

This population shift in African universities has definite linguistic consequences. The imperial languages in Africa have their strongest demographic base among the children of white collar families. In some African cities English is increasingly becoming the tongue with which middle and upper class children feel most comfortable in virtually all conversational situations and domains. As Mohamed Abdulaziz has observed with regard to Kenya, there is a growing "number of high cost, private and international schools, where many of the teachers are expatriate native speakers of English. Children who go to these expensive schools come from rich, western educated elite families, normally with both wife and husband possessing high competence in the English language. The children live in exclusive and expensive multinational suburbs where the primary language of the playground, shopping centres, schools, places of entertainment, churches and hospitals is English." (Abdulaziz, 1991: 397).

In essence, then, the exclusionary effect that the World Bank prescriptions will have on the children of the lower classes, will further consolidate the use of the imperial languages in African education.

The World Bank's linguistic Eurocentrism in the educational arena is further demonstrated by its views on the educational achievements of Tanzania. Outside "Arabophone" Africa, Tanzania is one of the few African countries that, after 1967, managed to completely replace the imperial language, English, with a widely spoken indigenous lingua franca, Kiswahili, in all the seven years of elementary education, while English continued to be maintained as a school subject. It was further envisioned that a time would come when Kiswahili would be the sole medium of instruction from the earliest to the latest stages of education. In a 1982 report of the Presidential Commission on Education that was set up by the then president of the country, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, it was recommended that the teaching of both English and Kiswahili be strengthened, while the

use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction be extended to post-primary education. In the words of the report:

> In order that the nation be able to develop its culture and ease the understanding of most of the populace at the different stages of education that...plans be made to enable all schools and colleges in the country to teach all subjects in Kiswahili beginning with Form I in January 1985 and the University beginning 1992. (Quoted by Roy-Campbell, 1992:178)

By all indications, however, this pressure for linguistic change in favor of Kiswahili in the Tanzanian school system was brought to an abrupt end after the country capitulated to the IMF and its draconian conditionalities, which forced it to reduce its subsidies in education and other social spheres. Prior to this, "donors had accepted certain conditions put forth by the Tanzanian government, especially with respect to its autonomy in the area of educational planning... [But] by the beginning of the 1980s the Tanzanian government had embarked on intense negotiations with international donor agencies, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The negotiations were driven by food shortages resulting from drought, and severe problems with financial resources to purchase petroleum products and other inputs needed for the maintenance of its economic sector" (Roy-Campbell, 1992:171).

This was a blow to Tanzania's ability to determine its educational destiny. Nonetheless, the country has continued to use Kiswahili as its main medium of instruction in public schools and even in those colleges that train primary school teachers.

The World Bank, however, is not comfortable with the Tanzanian model. In a comparative analysis of high school performance in Kenya and Tanzania, it casts doubt on the prudence of Tanzania's educational language policy. It suggests that Tanzania's high school education is qualitatively inferior to that of Kenya, and that this educational inferiority can in part be attributed to the exclusive emphasis on Kiswahili as a medium of instruction at the primary level. In the words of a World Bank document on education in sub-Saharan Africa:

> The Tanzanian system also greatly emphasized the use of Swahili at the primary level, which may have made it more difficult for students to learn in English in secondary school. Research indicates that for any given combination of inputs of individual ability and years of secondary schooling in the two countries, cognitive output (as measured by scores on academic achievement tests) are substantially higher in Kenya than in Tanzania. (World Bank, 1988: 56)

The basis of this cross-county comparison and the conclusions drawn from it are, of course, of questionable merit on purely methodological grounds. But aside from this, we are suddenly asked to believe that, empirically speaking, basic educational instruction in a more familiar indigenous language is not, after all, the academic asset that it was claimed to be by some educational theorists, but is instead a cognitive liability. The Kenyan model, which uses English from the very first years of primary school, and sometimes as early as the kindergarten, to the complete exclusion of more indigenous languages, is now upheld as the more effective instructional arrangement.

From the above examples, then, it is clear that the World Bank is speaking from both sides of its mouth. It is engaged in an exercise of deception, as it gives the impression of being philosophically in sympathy with educational instruction in local languages, but in practice pursues pro-imperial language policies. Indeed, it is no coincidence that, soon after Tanzania had submitted to the clutches of the World Bank and the IMF in the 1980s, the British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) moved, in full force, to launch the multi-million dollars English Language Teaching Support Project in 1987.

Virtually throughout Africa, there have been alarm bells about declining academic standards. Yet, neither the World Bank-IMF pair nor the British Overseas Development Agency have even questioned the wisdom of educational instruction in European languages. On the contrary, in the one country, Tanzania, that has dared to challenge the hegemony of the imperial language, by replacing it with Kiswahili in the primary school, its educational language policy has been quickly singled out by the World Bank as the culprit for its

supposedly poor academic standards. The double standard here is evident; and, behind it, we may glimpse the World Bank's hidden agenda for linguistic Eurocentrism in African education.

Language, Education and Development

What could be the motives for the World Bank's camouflaged advocacy of European language instruction in Africa? The World Bank and the IMF have become the principal organizations through which the capitalist "West" seeks to control the destiny of the rest of the world. In this respect, the establishment and reconstitution of structural inequalities (in institutional set-ups and financial allocations) and cultural inequalities (including attitudes, pedagogic principles, etc.), between the imperial European languages and other languages (Phillipson 1992: 47) become indispensable strategies towards that attempted control. The question, then, is how a specific language policy—overt or covert—comes to serve as an instrument of imperialist control.

Some nationalists have sought to explain linguistic imperialism in deterministic terms. In conformity with the ideas of Benjamin Lee Whorf (Whorf, 1987), they have sometimes argued that there is a culturally-bound "tyranny of language," such that the semantic structure of one's language, as well as the linguistic habits it fosters, determine one's perception of the social world. While Whorf was interested in explaining the cognitive impact of language on its native speakers, the nationalists have made a cross-cultural leap, claiming that the world view inherent in any particular language can be transposed to speakers of other unrelated languages. When western countries and institutions seek to impose their languages on Africa, therefore, the quasi-Whorfian interpretation of the African nationalists is that "the West" intends to imbue the collective mental universe of the African people with a European world view. This perspective, however, is not wholly tenable. As I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere, it is inadequate for explaining the imperialist role of European languages in Africa (Mazrui, 1995).

A different perspective on the place of language in imperialist control focuses on its economic imperatives, both from the labor and the market viewpoints. In this perspective, the World Bank's language "policy," as far as educational instruction in Africa is con-

cerned, can be seen as part of a wider economic agenda intended to meet the labor requirements of foreign capital. Here the language question goes hand-in-hand with the World Bank's recommended replacement of African university education with regional polytechnics charged with the production of graduates endowed with the practical skills needed by African economies (World Bank 1991). Expectedly, European languages will continue to be the media of instruction in these institutions, and the development of technical and vocational Euro-linguistic skills will be an essential part of this labor policy.

The labor needs of foreign capital in several African countries usually operate at three interdependent levels. They include: (a) workers qualified for unskilled or semi-technical jobs in light manufacturing and assembly plants; (b) technical maintenance workers and workers for other "support" services for foreign and other businesses (e.g. hotels); (c) middle management operatives, mainly for corporations investing in Africa. May the World Bank's approach to the question of the language of instruction in Africa have something to do with the reproduction of this labor hierarchy?

Let us remember the World Bank's document quoted earlier, which claims that using an instructional language alien to the student "can make the difference between succeeding and failing, between remaining in school and dropping out." If this claim is true, then, poor performance and high drop out rates, resulting from the adoption of a Euro-language as the educational medium of instruction, is likely to be a feature of lower class children. They are the ones—not the children of the rich—who are least familiar with the European languages of instruction. And they are the ones who will have been conditioned to make up the "modernized" unskilled and semi-skillied labor pool. The children of upper class families, whose familiarity with the European languages is much greater, may be expected, on the other hand, to end up in the universities and, eventually, in managerial positions. The Euro-linguistic provisions in educational instruction can be seen, therefore, as part of a wider capitalist design. In essence, the World Bank's recommendations for the language of instruction in African schools, demonstrates its continued preference for Euro-languages which create and maintain social divisions serving an economy dominated primarily by

foreign economic interests and, secondarily, by a small aspiring African bourgeoisie

The market motive of the World Bank's Euro-linguistic bias, on the other hand, has more to do with the role of the English language as a medium of global capitalism. Antonio Gramsci once argued that a universal language can only emerge organically and spontaneously from the ranks of "the people," and that such a development is possible only under conditions created by socialist internationalism. In Gramsci' s words:

> The socialists are struggling for the creation of the economic and political conditions necessary to install collectivism and the international. When the international is formed, it is possible that the increase of contacts between the people, the methodical and regular integration of large masses of workers, will slowly bring about a reciprocal adjustment between the Ayro-European languages and will probably extend them throughout the world because of the influence the new civilization will exert. (1985: 30)

But, Gramsci's Eurocentrism notwithstanding, it was the forces of international capitalism, rather than those of international socialism which provided the unprecedented impetus for the globalization of European languages, and especially of the English language.

If international capitalism helped the fortunes of English, however, the consolidation of that capitalism on a global scale has now, to a certain extent, become dependent on that language. According to Naysmith, the role of English in the (re)production of global inequalities has a lot to do with the central place it has increasingly assumed as the language of international capitalism (1987: 3). Within this international context, the capitalist center has virtually been serving as the "proprietor" and the periphery as its "laborer" and "consumer." And it is the English language which allows the proprietor nations of the center to have contact with each and every consumer nation in the periphery in a way that leads to the increasing consolidation of the global capitalist market. As leading institutional representatives of international capitalism, the World Bank and the IMF naturally have a vested interest in this interplay between linguistics and economics.

Finally, imperialist control can also be approached from the point of view of language, not as a reservoir of culturally-bound world views, but as an instrument of communication of ideas. The global hegemony of the English language, in particular, facilitates World Bank-IMF attempts to force Africa, for example, into a state of intellectual dependence on "the West." Quoting a publication of the Nigerian Civil Liberties Organization, George Caffentzis has noted that:

> SAPs often require the hiring of foreign experts as part of the conditionalities attached to IMF-WB loans. For example, a $120 million loan to the Nigerian university system puts the control over the importation of books and journals as well as of expatriate staff in the hands of the Bank and its agents—hence foreign agents must be used to determine the very imports to be paid for by loans. (1994: 17)

Had the medium of instruction in Nigeria been Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba, this degree of control of the country's academic and intellectual orientation by the World Bank and the IMF would certainly have been much more difficult.

To take another example, a World Bank loan to the Central African Republic (CAR), supposedly intended to improve the quality and accessibility of elementary education, came with a package of conditions requiring the nation to import its textbooks (and even French language charts) directly from France and Canada. This draconian move was justified on the grounds that printing in these western countries is cheaper than in CAR, making their publications more affordable to the average African child (Ilymbound, 1995: 4). It has been estimated that, due to similar World Bank linkages and projects, over 80% of school books in "Francophone" Africa are now produced directly in France (Nnana, 1995:17). In this process, the World Bank has not only empowered "the West" to further control the intellectual destiny of African children, but it has also continued to weaken and even destroy Africa's infrastructural facilities, beginning with its publishing houses, needed for the local production and distribution of knowledge. In terms of sheer cost effectiveness, French and Canadian publishers would have found it

far more difficult to participate in this World Bank agenda, had the language of instruction in CAR been one of the local languages instead of French.

The European languages in which Africans are taught, therefore, are important sources of intellectual control. They aid the World Bank's attempt to allow Africans to learn only what promotes the agenda of international capitalism. The hidden push for English, in particular, can be seen as part of a right-wing agenda, intended to bring the world nearer to the "end of history," and to ensure the final victory of capitalism on a global scale. Partly because of this Euro-linguistic policy, intellectual self-determination in Africa has become more difficult. And for the time-being, the prospects of a genuine intellectual revolution in Africa may depend in no small measure on a genuine educational revolution that involves, at the same time, a widespread use of African languages as media of instruction.

Elsewhere I have had occasion to argue that while Euro-languages have historically been carriers of imperialist discourse, they can and sometimes have been transmuted to serve as instruments of resistance against imperialist discourse (Mazrui, 1993). Similar sentiments have been expressed by Alastair Pennycook:

> English is not only a structural reproducer of global inequalities, but also produces inequality by creating subject positions that contribute to their subjectification. But it is also at this point that possibilities for resistance present themselves in alternative readings of Rudyard Kipling, post-colonial struggles in English, and the formation of counter-discourses. (1995: 53)

Against this backdrop of the malleability of English, Pennycook calls on all applied linguists and English teachers around the world to "become political actors engaged in a critical pedagogical project to use English to oppose the dominant discourses of 'the West,' and to help the articulation of counter-discourses in English" (1995: 55).

But to use English to create counter-discourses and counter-ideologies does not necessarily amount to undermining the language's role in the consolidation of the global capitalist market, and in the stratification of labor for the benefit of international capital. Nor

does it reduce dependency on "the West" in the educational sphere. Furthermore, *counter-discourse is not the same thing as independent discourse.* Counter-discourse is often a reactive process to the terms of discourse established by the "other." The African quest for intellectual independence must be based on independent terms of reference capable of guiding the continent towards a more organic path. Under the present global configuration of power relations, the English language is not likely to allow Africans the politico-economic space for this kind of intellectual independence. African languages may fare better, for the very act of (re)centering them sets in motion new dynamics that may provide some room for intellectual maneuver, at least in the short run. But the struggle to (re)center these languages naturally demands our engagement in a wider struggle—against imperialism, against organizations such as the World Bank and IMF and what they represent—to create a new world order.

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The Economic Roots of the Repression of Academic Freedom in Africa*

Silvia Federici

Despite the publicity that in recent years has been given to the disastrous state of African education following the application of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) to the education sector, it is far from being recognized that SAP is today the major threat to academic freedom in Africa. This, however, is the thesis of my paper. I will support it by arguing that:

• The adoption of SAP has *de facto* transferred the management of the educational system, as well as every other major aspect of African economic life, into the hands of international agencies—especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Thus not only the harsh measures by which SAPs are applied will not generate any outcry in international circles (despite their seeming commitment to the democratization of African institutions), but today African students and teachers find themselves in opposition to a power far more imposing than that of the African states combined and are more than ever in need of international support.

• SAP has generated so much conflict on university campuses because it is the vehicle for the dismantling of Africa's education sys-

tem. It is a means by which Africans are denied the right to education, in conformity with a strategy that wants Africans to participate in the world economy only as providers of cheap labor, and to be unable to exercise their right to self-determination.

My thesis stands in sharp contrast to the position promoted by the World Bank and propagated by much of the press in the United States and Europe, which either ignores the responsibility of SAP for the present deterioration of academic freedom in Africa or presents the economic liberalization which SAP entails as being in contradiction with the abuses perpetrated by the governments that have adopted this program (Meldrum 1991:64). My thesis is also in contrast to the now current theory that the deterioration of academic freedom in Africa mostly stems from the autocratic nature of the African state, the conflictual relation between state and "civil society," and from the state direct control of academic institutions (Mac Gregor 1992 :40).

This theory is misleading on many grounds. First because it appeals to cultural factors (the alleged lack of democratic traditions in Africa) at the expense of economic policies, which play a much larger role in promoting the state's political behavior. Further, it ignores that the African state is no longer the main player in the academic as well as in the economic scene. Last but not least, it fails to acknowledge that behind the so-called relation between "the state and civil society" is the reproduction of labor, which is the process we have to examine in order to understand why the introduction of economic liberalization in academia has been accompanied by the escalation of repression.

As is well known, the IMF/World Bank-inspired SAPs demand that the state cease subsidizing higher (and to a lesser extent secondary) education and therefore cease pursuing the task it had taken on at independence, when the expansion of education was demanded by all the social forces as a crucial condition for social and economic progress (Carnoy and Samoff 1990). This policy has now come under attack by world agencies, in numerous reports, as essentially faulty and in need of massive retrenchment. Yet, it must be admitted that in the performance of this task the African state scored its major achievement. For in the space of a few decades, with a tempo some have defined as unprecedented (Jahoda, 1968:161), de-

spite the difficulties the African economies faced, it created a mass education system, assuring Africans a presence on the international intellectual scene in every field. Quantitatively and qualitatively the African educational system undoubtedly fell short of expectations and by the end of the 1980s the participation of Africans in higher education remained one of the lowest in the world (UNDP, 1992:155). However, by the 1970s the gap was beginning to shrink, as Africa had the fastest growing rate of investment in education worldwide; and if the expansion rate that characterized the post-independence years had continued, Africans could have entered the 21st century in a position not too disadvantageous compared to that of other students in the rest of the planet.

An equally important development was the growing political force of student organizations. By the 1970s they increasingly joined with other popular organizations (e.g., the labor unions), to demand from the state more accountability, a more equitable distribution of national resources and grass-roots participation, and better educational services (e.g., in Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya). Why then does the World Bank so totally reject the educational results of the post-colonial period and where does it locate the "failures"?

We cannot answer these questions remaining purely within the educational sphere, for the implementation of World Bank-inspired SAPs in the education sector is not an *ad hoc* measure devised to ride out a period of crisis, nor a tool for efficiently boosting the impact of the current system, as the rhetoric that surrounds it would have us believe. Rather, SAP adjusts academia to the prospected manpower needs of African economies, in a context where the latter are being demoted to the lowest echelon of the international division of labor. One reason for this demotion is undoubtedly the profit crisis of the 1970s, when investments in Africa scored the lowest rate of returns worldwide, and the belief that no significant improvement in the productivity of African labor will materialize, short of a full reorganization of the process of social reproduction: land-tenure rights, family relations, child-raising practices, and fertility rates (World Bank 1989; Lesthaeghe 1989). As the obstacles to a higher return on investments appear imposing, a consensus has developed in international business circles that Africa has entered a period of historic retrenchment, whose end is nowhere in sight, given the present competition for capital among many, similarly "adjusted"

regions of the globe, and the ease with which foreign investors can now move across countries and continents.

It is in this context that the provision of SAP for higher education must be evaluated. SAP is shaped by the conviction that, for a period whose temporal contours remain undefined, few Africans will be in need of a university degree; for as long as an environment more congenial to the needs of investment is not generated, Africa must remain a region from which wealth is exported, and with the wealth also the manpower it could have employed. This program, however, cannot be implemented without the destruction of the higher education system and the power which the campuses represent. This is a major objective of SAP.

SAP, in fact, is putting an end not only to free education, but to higher education as such, thus representing—from a human capital perspective—a key step towards the devaluation of African labor.

That the objective of SAP is to drastically downsize the African higher education system has often been indirectly admitted. World Bank reports have repeatedly stressed that Africa's higher education system suffers from "excessive demand" and is "over-extended," a claim which signals what Caffentzis has defined as a "will to academic exterminism" (*CAFA Newsletter* 2). For in a continent where, on an average, only 0.8% of the population has access to a tertiary degree, where the participation in higher education is the lowest in the world, and only 80 academic institutions are in existence (barely twice the number of the universities in New York State), any cut inflicted on the academic system is a sentence to extinction (UNDP, World Bank 1986, 1988, 1989).

Officially, however, SAP is justified as a means to provide a more equitable and efficient allocation of resources. For the World Bank argues that too many funds have been allocated to the universities, diverting precious resources away from the bolstering of primary education, and that the new measures will not affect enrollment, since mechanisms are in place (loans and credit schemes) ensuring that students, by mobilizing private resources, can continue to finance their studies. We are told, moreover, that introducing "cost sharing" and "user's fees" will allow for a better student selection, since making students responsible for the financing of their studies will guarantee that only those genuinely capable and motivated will pursue a university degree.

Such arguments, however, presume a prosperous population, which has available untapped financial resources, not a continent, such as Africa today, where even the most basic necessities—adequate food, housing, transport, and health care—are out of the reach of the majority. This disregard for the financial state of the African population appears all the more peculiar, since, in the studies the World Bank has made in recent years, a doomsday economic scenario is evoked, picturing Africa as a continent of "diminishing resources," frozen in a state of chronic poverty, where the first mandate of education policy is not to raise excessive expectations (World Bank 1989). But if the economic situation in Africa points to a prolonged regime of austerity, such as to preclude the state from disbursing the funds needed to guarantee that knowledge is not a privilege but a right, how will the population acquire the same funds? How will a population that is de-monetarized and can barely feed itself find the resources to pay for university tuition, accommodations, food, transport, educational materials, or qualify for bank loans? Such has been the pauperization of the majority of Africans that even in the elementary school which have remained free or have introduced relatively modest fees, (c200 in Ghana- one day of work at the minimum wage) (Kraus 1991: 31) enrollment has dropped. In Ghana (the IMF's and World Bank's "success story") enrollment has dropped for the first time since independence (Noss 1991: 40), indicating that many parents find it difficult even to meet its cost, or have lost hope that an elementary school diploma may be of any use.

These considerations suggest that the rhetoric of efficiency and improvement by which SAP is promoted hides the reality of educational retrenchment; and that the proposed alternative financing mechanisms are actually tools for the phasing out of unwanted students and academic staff. Other factors confirm that the demise of higher education is at the core of the SAP's agenda. First is the collapse of academic institutions in the aftermath of its adoption. This phenomenon is by now too familiar to Africanists to need rehearsing—we all have seen or heard of the collapsing buildings, overcrowded hostel rooms, the lack of educational materials, the frozen-below-subsistence faculty wages, the unprecedented brain drain. What needs to be stressed, however, is that these processes bring about a devaluation of African institutions and their academic

personnel, that will have irreparable consequences for their ability to function and their international prestige. That universities are to be marginalized as centers of learning or, in many countries, allowed to die of economic asphyxiation is further demonstrated by the World Bank's "African Capacity Building Initiative," which proposes the formation of regional centers, under the direct sponsorship and control of external donors, to perform that task of preparing state personnel, which in the past was the role of academia (World Bank 1991). The function of these centers is to "capture the elite," that is, to train a cadre of technocrats—economists and policy analysts—identified with the goals of international capital, and thus capable of acting as a transmission belt between the circle of international finance and power and the African state. The graduates from the Capacity Building institutions will have to make sure that Africans do not have a free hand in the shaping of their societies, but enter the new century politically and economically recolonized.

Already the replacement of Africans with expatriate personnel is visible in every sphere of life (including the military, as we see in Somalia). While thousands of intellectuals have been forced to migrate abroad, and transfer the investment made in their education to the institutions of the industrialized countries, Africa, according to UNDP, is now receiving more advice per-capita than any continent: "the IMF, multilateral financial institutions, UN system of agencies, and bilateral donors are deeply involved in the formulation of [its] economic policy" (UNDP 1992: 40).

In this context we can understand why SAP must come accompanied by so much repression. For SAP cannot be implemented unless the power of African students and teachers, beginning with their power to enforce a better education and be participants in the shaping of their societies, is undermined. This must be stressed in the face of the now frequent claim that the economic liberalization that SAP demands sparks the winds of democracy, and opens the space for "popular participation" (Bratton 1989). In reality, not only was SAP adopted without a process of academic or popular consultation, but its application has involved the persecution and muzzling of one of the most important political forces in Africa. In response to stiff protest, student and faculty unions have been outlawed, thousands of students have been rusticated, scores, together with members of the faculty, have been jailed, universities have been

closed for prolonged periods of time; and everywhere, in the aftermath of SAP, the state has centralized its power and extended its direct control over the university system (for Ghana see Kraus 1991:35). An outstanding example of this process is the Zimbabwean government legislation of 1991 that gave authority to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe to expel students and to fire faculty without due process and appeal (students boycotted classes to protest the new laws in June 1991). But, as Andrew Meldrum has pointed out: "The extension of state control over the university of Zimbabwe is not an isolated incident in Africa; in fact it is part of a pattern that is all too familiar throughout the continent" (Meldrum 1991: 64).

The violations of academic rights carried on in the implementation of SAP are not the only examples of academic rights abuses in Africa; yet in many ways they are the most worrisome. For as long as SAP is the future of African education and economic policy, any process of democratization, in and out of academia, is bound to remain a formal exercise. No academic or political rights are possible without social rights. Today there is a great interest among world agencies in keeping these spheres separate and making people believe that human rights can be made available even in countries where social rights (i.e., the rights to adequate food, health, and education) are virtually non-existent. As the UNDP Report of 1992 puts it, "Countries do not have to censor the press or torture prisoners just because they are poor," which would mean that no government has to jail or rusticate students because it can no longer subsidize their studies (UNDP 1992: 29). This, however, presumes that the new generations of Africans will accept their marginalization, that they will accept being turned into cultural illiterates (from the point of view of international standards) without protesting; and it overlooks the fact that denial of formal education is a denial of a human right and of academic freedom.

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The World Bank's African Capacity Building Initiative: A Critique*

George Caffentzis

Introduction

The Africa Capacity Building Initiative (ACBI) was launched in 1991 by the World Bank (WB) in cooperation with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme in order to create a cadre of *African* policy analysts and development managers that would be trained *explicitly* by the WB and its allies. Its formation is a clear sign that the WB is unhappy with the last generation of intellectuals produced by the African university system and is actively trying to foster an alternative.

The ACBI involves a substantial investment of both personnel and money on the WB's part. It includes a number of organs: (1) the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACB Foundation), consisting of a Board of Governors, an Executive Board of Directors, and a small Secretariat; (2) an ACB Fund which will finance the ACBI administrative structure (the ACB Foundation) and provide grants for specific initiatives (the Fund has an anticipated start-up account of US$100 million). In other words, this is the first major *non-loan* granting of funds by the WB for higher educational purposes in Africa for some time. Consequently, it should be studied carefully by all those involved in analyzing the crisis of the African university

system as a paradigm of the post-Structural Adjustment system envisioned by the WB.

However, the ACBI has received little attention by the Africanist community and African scholars. Indeed, some of those who do mention it at all see it as a positive sign that the World Bank (WB) is not, after all, disinterested in the future of education in Africa. Yet few initiatives are so disparaging of the work of our African colleagues and more in need of a challenge. This article is an attempt to begin this challenge by critically examining the document the WB staffers Dunstan M. Wai and Gerard T. Rice wrote to introduce and justify the initiative, "The African Capacity Building Initiative: Toward Improved Policy Analysis and Development Management in Sub-Saharan Africa,"[WB] and assess the potential impact of the WB's plans for ACBI on academic freedom in Africa in the near future.

(N. B.: "*ACBI*" will refer to the document and "ACBI" to the actual initiative throughout this essay.)

The Document

The *ACBI* is an explicit argument for the World Bank and foreign donors to take over Africa's higher education, and replace African universities with specialized regional institutes sponsored, financed, and managed to their specifications.

This recommendation is justified with the claim that no serious socio-economic knowledge is presently being produced in Africa, or can be produced without the sustained intervention, direction and guidance provided by foreign agencies. Indeed, WB Vice President, Edward V.K. Jaycox begins his Foreword to the document by claiming:

> Many different approaches have been taken to the development challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa. These approaches have all failed to support on a sustainable basis one essential dimension: indigenous African capacities-skills, knowledge, and institutions....Despite the achievements in education and training in Africa in the past 30 years, most countries still do not have a critical mass of top-flight policy analysts and managers who can help pi-

> lot their economies through the storms and turbulence that must be faced daily. (WB 1991: iii)

The reason for this failure is traced in part to the dismal conditions to be found in African universities. The authors of *ACBI* note that "Africa has produced first class institutions of higher education...that in the 1960s were supplying both trained human resources and, on occasion, objective policy analysis to governments." But they conclude that "there is now a crisis of quality in African universities" due to the lack of investment in the universities and the increase in the growth of the student body. They lament, for example, the sad case of Makerere University which "throughout the 1960s...played an important part in training Africa's first generation of post-independence leadership." Now, however, its "golden age is over," given "inadequate staff salaries, a decrepit library, neglect of campus public utilities (telephone, water, electricity, sewers)...[which] led to widespread faculty flight and a staggering decline in the quality of educational experience at the university" (WB 1991: 11).

However, no attempt is made by *ACBI*'s authors to acknowledge that these dismal conditions are the product of the WB's own recommendations and loan conditionalities. They note that the economic crisis of the 1980s has led to budget cuts throughout the public sector, "resulting in serious shortages of funds for research, training, institution-building and education in general" (WB 1991: 11). But these conditions are treated as facts of nature, whose source is so self-evident that it is not even worthy of discussion. Consequently, in an ironic twist, the authors of the report can even affect a posture of concern, even though the WB itself was the source of the "poorly formulated and misconceived economic policies" that led to the crisis and to the strategy of austerity that has caused the university system's debacle.

This picture of an African *cul-de-sac*—where the very means to get out of the crisis (wise analysis and management) are undermined by the methods employed to overcome it (structural adjustment programs)—suggests that some psychological flaw is at work. For the document states in no uncertain terms that after decades of university education even the basic capacities needed for socio-economic knowledge are lacking, and the African continent suffers from a critical shortage of such elementary cognitive skills as the ability

to analyze, synthesize, predict the consequences of policy decisions, react to a changing socio-economic environment, and so forth.(WB, 1991: 6)

What does this preposterous claim mean? What are the skills the continent so direly needs, and refuses to learn? As the document unfolds, we learn that the knowledge the Bank finds missing (and the only one it considers worthy of being considered) is the technocratic knowledge possessed by neoliberal economists and policy analysts. This is the knowledge pursued in the plan for African "capacity building." This phrase has been carefully chosen to appear to be precise, objective, and positive. But on reflection, the WB's notion of "capacity building" turns out to be vague, politically charged, and aimed at subverting any efforts by Africans to maintain their intellectual autonomy.

First consider "capacity." It is an ambiguous term, since it has a precise economic meaning—the limit rate of material production of a given system of machines and workforce when operated at "peak" activity levels—which, however, is syncretized with broad epistemic and legal connotations. *Epistemically*, the term "capacity" refers to the ability of an individual to comprehend and apply a system of knowledge, while *legally* it refers to the state of an individual who possesses a sufficient understanding to comprehend the nature, extent, and meaning of his or her obligations or contracts.

All these uses of "capacity" at first sight seem positive, e.g., who would want to be declared *non compos mentis*, i.e., be judged as not having legal capacity by a court of law? But the effective use of this ambiguous term depends upon the products, systems of knowledge, and contract either implicitly or explicitly specified. Thus the capacities of a given factory to produce biological weapons or to produce an AIDS vaccine can be different quantitatively and morally. Similarly, a Nazi officer's capacity to recognize his/her contractual obligation to gas Jewish children must be contrasted to his/her capacity to recognize other contractual obligations. Any use of "capacity" that does not aim to confuse must always be qualified with the question, "Capacity for what?"

Consequently, "capacity building" is very problematic, even though at first sight it too appears to be precise, objective, and positive, as in the following recent effort to define the word for a developmentalist audience:

> The creation of a national infrastructure—ports, roads, telecommunications—and trained manpower; the equipping of an individual with skills or a factory or other productive institution with a skilled workforce and other productive assets, technology, etc. (Welsh and Butorin 1990)

But this definition of "capacity building" is ambiguous since it operates on different ontological levels—the person, the "productive institution," and the nation—and it has different meanings at each of these levels. Moreover, some of the key terms in the definition like "trained," "skills," "productive," and "skilled" are nothing but free variables waiting for answers to questions like "What skills?" or "Training for what?" or "Productive of what?" Even the apparently empirically rich specification of capacity building on the national level is problematic, for terms like "port," "road," "telecommunications," and "trained" are functional and they only have meaning when their intended operational results are clarified.

This analysis of the phrase "capacity building" should make it clear that any enterprise dubbed "capacity building" is an ambiguous one that poses a multiplicity of questions. The authors of *ACBI* and the WB are not very scrupulous about the ambiguities and questions the phrase entails simply because they assume that they have all the answers. For the capacities necessary to introduce structural adjustment programs into African societies are the only capacities they are interested in. That is why the authors are very comfortable with the most basic (scandalous) implication of *ACBI*: most Africans, however highly educated, politically sophisticated, and morally sensitive, have no capacity, i.e., the bulk of African academics and intellectuals are not interested in learning how to apply the WB's SAPs. The authors are even more satisfied with the corollary: after a generation of unprecedented development of a formally autonomous African university system, African intellectuals must be retrained, re-skilled, and have their capacity re-built by the directives of the WB. Finally, they are unembarassed about their implicit conclusion: if any African intellectual refuses to undergo the process of "capacity building" *a la* WB, they will either be forced to flee Africa or be increasingly blocked from access to the international flow of information, knowledge, and debate which the WB and other funding agencies are increasingly monopolizing.

The *ACBI* authors are so confident about their implications, corollaries, and conclusions because these are based on a self-fulfilling prophesy: as more and more African countries are forced into accepting Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) to qualify for loans from the WB, the demand for the type of knowledge the World Bank wants to build will inevitably increase. As the authors note:

> At this juncture, with many African countries engaged in major policy reform programs, the environment for investment in policy analysis and management capacity in Africa may well be more favorable than at any time since independence. As more African countries begin and intensify these reform programs, the demand for trained policy analysts and managers will grow. (WB, 1991:17)

However, in the opening pages no attempt is made to clarify this point. Instead, we find such a *blanket indictment* of Africans' present "capacity" that one may suspect that Africans are mentally deficient. *ACBI* is built on a self-serving confusion between knowledge and power. Thus, instead of seeing the critique of SAPs produced by grassroots organizations in the 1980s as a prime example of policy analysis and management which *ACBI*'s authors happen to disagree with, the WB's agents simply choose to ignore it. (It is a measure of the weakening of the African nationalist ideology of the 1960s that a document like *ACBI* could be produced without a major outcry, and that Africans like Dustin Wai, could be involved in its production without being afraid of ostracism.)

The *ACBI*'s authors further confirm the impression of Africans' intellectual deficiency when they inform the reader that Africans are blessed with a greater number of foreign "technical assistants"—"from senior policy analysts, managers and business executives to technicians and teachers"—than any other region of the world. We are told that there are some 100,000 expatriates working in Africa in the early 1990s and the costs of "overall technical assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa increased 50 percent between 1984 to 1987 and is currently estimated at over $4 billion a year," or about $7 per capita (WB 1991:5, 12). These facts reinforce the image of a helpless and hopeless Africa as well as the image of an Africa resistant

not only to development but to modern culture *tout court.* Thus they duplicate, on an intellectual level, the litanies about "laggardly Africa" and "can Africa fail to learn?" which have become mainstays of economic analysis in the business press.

The cause for the rapid increase of "technical assistance" in the 1980s is again not analyzed. Why, after a generation of educational progress, can't Africans start to reduce their need for foreign experts? Are the demands of modern social life too much for African intellectuals? Two obvious points should be noted on this matter. First, following the introduction of SAPs in the 1980s there has been a substantial brain drain as African intellectuals have been driven from the continent by a combination of direct political repression and indirect economic coercion. The WB's partner in the ACBI, the UN Development Programme, has noted in its *Human Development Report 1992*:

> Africa has been hit particularly hard [by the loss of skilled workers]. By 1987, nearly one-third of its skilled people had moved to Europe. Sudan lost a high proportion of professional workers: 17% of doctors and dentists, 20% of university teaching staff, 30% of engineers and 45% of surveyors in 1978....In Ghana, 60% of doctors trained in the early 1980s are now abroad—leaving critical shortages in the health service. And Africa as a whole is estimated to have lost up to 60,000 middle and high-level managers between 1985 and 1990. (UNDP, 1992:56-57)

Second, the SAPs often require the hiring of foreign experts as part of the conditionalities attached to the IMF-WB loans. For example, the $120-million loan to the Nigerian University system puts the control over the importation of books and journals as well as expatriate staff in the hands of the Bank and its agents (hence foreign experts must be used to determine the very imports to be paid for by the loans). Moreover, the conditions of the loan *require* that 10% of the loan be used for topping off the salaries of expatriate teachers. (CLO 1990:3) Thus, again, the very situation the World Bank laments and sees as necessitating the ACBI (i.e. the presence of expatriate experts) has been caused by the World Bank itself.

These dilemmas seem not to interest the authors of *ACBI*. Rather, they remind us that much effort has already been spent in the at-

tempt to educate the "laggardly" continent, but despite this effort the results have been quite "disappointing" and more is needed. Hence, the "need" for foreign agencies to coordinate a sort of remedial program, to transplant into Africa those seeds of knowledge that apparently cannot be counted on to spontaneously grow out of its indigenous soil.

The document outlines a vast range of initiatives the bank and foreign donors are planning to take in coming years in furtherance of this project. As we have seen, foreign experts and donors of all types are already present in Africa, controlling through various mechanisms what Africans can study. But the World Bank complains about the lack of coordination among them:

> While the many positive contributions by individual donors to capacity building in Africa should be noted, the lack of an overall, consistent and coherent strategy in this area may have contributed to Africa's current capacity shortfall. For example, donor assistance often includes, and sometimes is specifically tied to, foreign consultants who are meant to transfer technical skills to African managers and institutions....But frequent lack of coordination has overburdened African institutions and available skilled manpower, and too often aid agencies have undermined the capacity of core ministries by setting up their own project management units. (WB, 1991: 12)

ACBI proposes to replace the many independent donor initiatives with an organized body—a sort of capitalist Comintern for Africa—which will have multiple tasks. First, to review the present educational system and decide what can be saved and what instead must be eliminated; second, to build and manage regional institutes or learning centers, consolidating or replacing the defunct universities and departments; to supervise the training and preparation of a technocratic elite, capable of interiorizing the priorities of international capital, and of functioning as a transmission belt between the centers of world politics and economics and the African governments. Not surprisingly, the authors of *ACBI* entitle their concluding section, "Building African cadres of excellence."

Control over such training and grooming will be guaranteed by the fact that the learning centers (or institutes) will be financed and

staffed by people the World Bank selects—preferably of African descent, so as to promote the illusion that the knowledge acquired is an indigenous product, and make policy making more acceptable and sustainable in the long run.

The ACBI, in a nutshell, comes with a tool-box designed by the Washington think-tanks of the Reagan-Bush era. It includes all the skills neoliberal economists need to have, adapted to the peculiar indigenous African requirements (with debt-repayment leading the list). It is only from this perspective that the Bank can confidently declare that no serious socio-economic knowledge exists today in Africa, for what is of no use to it *by definition* does not or should not exist. Today's World Bank staffers, like the Stalinists of old, refuse to admit the existence of what they cannot control. This is evident when the *ACBI* authors' claim that: "Too often in Africa critical public policy issues are inadequately analyzed."

The reason, we are told, is that policy analysis requires an informed debate concerning policy choices among many different interest groups (trade unions, chambers of commerce, and professional organizations), academic institutions, and non-governmental grassroots organizations, but no such debate is to be found in Africa (WB, 1991:7 and Box 1.2).

This image of a continent without a highly developed public discourse is a total myth, however, worse yet, any traveler to African campuses in the 1970s and 1980s must take the WB's statement as disingenuous at best, if not as openly cynical, considering that if political and economic policy debate has been toned down, it is because of the repression African governments have exercised in order to implement the SAPs the WB has imposed. Indeed, one of the finest examples of the type of public debate *ACBI* claims to support was the Nigerian nationwide debate in 1985 on whether the government should take an IMF loan or not. This debate was launched by the newly installed President Babangida, and went on for months in the universities, trade unions, grassroots organizations, and business councils. All the pros and cons of the loan and SAP were discussed, argued over, and assessed. Eventually, the anti-IMF, anti-SAP view won the day only to be overruled by Babangida, who imposed an even more austere SAP than the one the IMF was asking for. Since then, Babangida's government has repressed the very sort of discourse the World Bank claims it wants by its harass-

ment of critics in the academy, the professions, the trade unions and even, at times, business. However, the World Bank has continually praised Babangida for his steadfast adherence to the very SAP and loan policy that the nation has refused, and has said nothing about his (and his successor Abacha's) unrelenting efforts to intimidate those who continue the public debate on the SAP.

The *ACBI* does not present an accurate picture of policy debate in Africa. On the contrary, it devalues Africans as producers of knowledge; it denies their ability to achieve autonomously mastery of basic cognitive skills; and it calls for foreign agencies to take into their hands the restructuring of African education, in violation of any autonomy rights. In sum, ACBI represents a violation of political-intellectual sovereignty. For if the planners of the ACBI have their way, Africans will only be allowed to learn what promotes the agenda of foreign capital, with no concession made to their right to self-determination.

ACBI and Academic Freedom in Africa

Since the publication of *ACBI*, the ACB-Fund has found a headquarter in Harare (in 1992) and it has begun its work. This paper, however, will *not* discuss the ACBI's *actual* impact on academic freedom in Africa because the ACBI's track record is too short and the ACBI is part of a larger WB program aimed at restructuring the African university system which is still in the process of formulation (Saint 1992). Instead, in this concluding section, I will look at the intended impact of the initiative on African universities.

As mentioned, the purpose of the ACBI is: "to build, over the long term, a critical mass of professional African policy analysts and economic managers who will be able to better manage the development process, and to ensure the more effective utilization of already trained African analysts and managers" (WB, 1991:5). In itself, this project does not violate academic freedom in Africa. But the intended methods of its implementation do. For beside disseminating the gospel of "capacity building," the ACBI intends to monopolize the distribution of funds going to the African university systems from *all* sources, and to block the funding from *any* source or institution that does not subscribe to the WB's plan for African "development." The ACBI will only financially support individuals

and institutions with a "commitment" to "utilize effectively policy, analytic and management skills," i.e., it will dispense its monotheistic grace only if the supplicant is properly attuned to the economic-theological nuances of the day. For example, ACBI's plan is to select a number of African universities and research centers as ACBI "national centers" which are to get the benefit not only of World Bank investment but also of the funds of other potential donors the ACBI will "coordinate." But how is this selection to take place?

> The ACBI Secretariat will develop the criteria of selection. Such criteria will almost certainly include degree of autonomy, sound financial control, and solid track record. It would also be ensured that the institutions selected for ACBI support will have incentive structures adequate to attract the highest-quality professionals. Most important, the national government concerned would have to demonstrate clearly its commitment to sound policy analysis and willingness to involve national institutions in the policy process.(WB, 1991:19)

In other words, those universities and nations that do not accept the ideology of SAP will be ineligible for educational funding not only by the World Bank but also (if the ACBI's "coordination" effort succeeds) by any other "donor." *Thus the ACBI will act with respect to "knowledge-capital" (i.e., investments necessary for the production of knowledge) in the same way as the WB/IMF acts with respect to financial capital*. For, the novel aspect of the contemporary system of lending to Third World countries is the role the WB/IMF play as international arbiters of "loan-ability," and centralized censors who restrict the flow of money-capital only to those recipients who do their bidding. The ACBI has been designed to do for African universities and research centers what its parent organization, the WB, does for governments as a whole, viz., to make its approval the *sine qua non* condition of funding from any international source.

This intention definitely violates, though in a novel way, one of the most important conditions of academic freedom: individual and institutional autonomy from state control of knowledge production and dissemination. The development of scholarly and pedagogical

autonomy from the state has been central to the development of the notion of academic freedom. It has been a persistent, though fluctuating, presence from the university strikes against local communes in the middle ages to the latest student demonstrations against the stationing of police on campuses in Africa (CAFA #3 and #5). Surely a state that premised its funding of a research program on the acceptability of certain state-sponsored conclusions, and forbid any supplementary funding from other sources would be considered a violator of academic freedom. The WB's intention in creating the ACBI is to do exactly that.

"But," someone might reply, "the WB is not a state and consequently cannot violate the academic freedom of individuals or universities in the way a state can." True, the WB is a supra-national economic and political body. But supra-national state institutions *can* violate academic freedom even more effectively than nation states, as some reflection of the past behavior of the closest European version of a supra-national state, the Catholic Church of the medieval period, should easily confirm. Indeed, the struggle for academic freedom against the Catholic Church was, if anything, a much more difficult and dangerous struggle than that waged against nation states.

In effect, the *ACBI* is an explicit statement that the WB intends to dominate the development of academic institutions in Africa for the foreseeable future. It attempts to justify this domination under the rubric of training Africans to be "capable." But this claim is as questionable as the Church's justification for burning academic heretics under the rubric of "salvation."

* From *CAFA Newsletter*, N. 6, Spring 1994.

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On the Future of the African University*

Silvia Federici

As the predicament of the African education system continues to be a topic of debate among policy managers and africanist academics, a new approach is developing that further contributes to obfuscating the real issues and legitimizing the policies of the World Bank, under the guise (once again) of placing African education on a more egalitarian basis. Exemplary is a recent commentary by Jerker Carlsson, titled "The Future of the African University," published in *News from Nordiska Afrikainstitutet* 1/96 (pp.5-6).

Carlsson's commentary develops first according to a now predictable format. First, he notices that the "dismal performance of African economies over the last 10 years has had an impact on higher education....and the universities in particular." Carlsson does not make any mention of the function of international economic and political planning, and specifically of World Bank and IMF politics in this context, but simply argues that "the fiscal crisis of the African state has made it less and less capable of providing the necessary financing for the day-to-day running of the universities," so that "the most important external source of funds is aid." He then proceeds with the charge, now popular in World Bank circles, concerning the lack of management capacity and low productivity of the university system. He concludes by outlining what he defines as the proposed alternatives—which turn out to be quite selectively chosen and oblivious to the demands put forward in the course of

more than a decade of anti-structural adjustment struggles by students and teachers in Africa.

What are the alternatives proposed to put the African universities back on their feet? Carlsson mentions three : (1) prioritizing, (2) regional cooperation, and (3) phasing out the university as "an institution that is perhaps outdated" (sic). He then adds his own perspective on the matter. The crux of the problem, it seems, is the relation between the African university and "society." The African taxpayers—Carlsson says—want more for their money; the university has to make a contribution to society. So far, however, the university has not defined its goals or been able to develop its activities and strategies in conformity with social needs, being predominantly structured on a foreign, European model bent on modernizing Africa and therefore uninterested in traditional knowledge. Conclusion: unless the university re-orients its mission, there is no reason why any government should contribute to finance institutions that are "inefficient, irrelevant and isolationist." This, we are told, was the agreement reached by the Association of African Universities at its last meeting in Lesotho—an agreement Carlsson undoubtedly approves.

Here then we come full circle, with the cuts being justified, but this time in the name of promoting the relevance of higher education to social needs.

But what are these "social needs"? The needs of African business and foreign investors, whose main objective is to make African workers as cheap as possible on a glutted international labor market? Or are they the needs of the African people, who are struggling to have land of their own and access to their own natural resources —and first of all are demanding not to be exploited and virtually deprived of any means of survival by the World Bank, the oil companies, and other business ventures, as the fierce struggles of the Ogoni people in Nigeria have amply demonstrated?

And what does it mean to state, as Carlsson does, that "the initiative [in the re-orientation of priorities] must, however, largely come from the universities themselves"? Who makes up the universities? The teachers? The students? If that is the case, they have demonstrated plenty of initiative, as the pages of CAFA have documented over the years, in opposing government policies and foreign dictates concerning what function the university should serve and

the political direction of their countries. Why does Carlsson fail to even mention their demands?

Furthermore, is it not disingenuous to demand that the university take the initiative in the reshaping of the future of African education without acknowledging first the powerful international forces that stand in the way? Doesn't a minimum of honesty require that we admit that for the African university to achieve relevance for the majority of African people, nothing will suffice short of a social revolution—and that this, in turn, can only succeed if it can rely on an international mobilization of the type that developed around the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa?

Can relevance be achieved in education, at any level, unless such questions are settled, and not in theory alone, as who controls the economies of Africa? In whose benefit African resources are to be deployed? How can Africa disentangle itself from a global economy that amounts in fact to global exploitation by a few international corporations of the wealth of most people on this planet?

Finally, why is it assumed that higher education in Europe or the US or even Japan—as Carlsson surprisingly suggests—is more relevant to people's needs than it is in Africa? Is it because it is more attuned to business needs and generates less conflict, given the position Europeans, North Americans, and Japanese occupy in the international division of labor? (We leave aside South America, as any daily news program would testify to an ongoing conflictuality on most South American campuses, certainly indicating that social relevance is not been addressed there either).

The reality is that universities, like every other institution—in and out of Africa—have been and continue to be shaped by the powers that are now hegemonic on the international scene. But, at the same time, they are also battlefields where the reorientation of economic and political as well academic goals are being renegotiated and redefined. This is particularly true today, in the face of the new international drive towards a further commercialization of knowledge.

What distinguishes the situation of African universities is the especially negative evaluation of their function in international business circles, due to the belief that African labor has so far failed to satisfy the requirements of what business defines as "a congenial investment environment." Thus, the consensus among some World

Bank circles that the African university is "outdated," and the new lipservice attention being paid to "traditional knowledge"—which, like traditional medicine, from the World Bank viewpoint, has the advantage of coming at no cost.

Any discussion of the "social relevance" of the African university is bound to be mystifying unless it reckons with the forces that are now hovering over its future, and it specifies the social tasks which education must accomplish. Certainly, appeals, such as Carlsson makes, to a relevance that is never defined in terms of its goals, are useless and only serve to blame the victims. As for the restoration of African "traditional knowledge," the first step in this direction should be to demand that the World Bank and the IMF stop interfering with African education, since we can all agree that the World Bank is not part of any African tradition.

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The New African Student Movement

Silvia Federici

> "What meaning does independence have for you?" It was asked of students who were citizens of countries who had recently obtained independence. "Independence very simply is life itself," said a student from Gabon. "It is....the fulfillment of a nation; the free expression of its being," said one from Upper Volta. And "liberty to wish to live, liberty to wish to die," said a Cameroonian. (Quoted in Hanna and Hanna, 1975)
>
> Independence is meaningless and will elude us if it is not linked to our right to free education. (President of the National Union of Ghanaian Students)

Why Student Struggles in Africa?

It can be easily agreed that if we want to understand Africa's contemporary political reality, we must start from the struggles that people are making, for they express the tendencies operating in the social body, the existing possibilities, the proposed or imagined alternatives to the status quo. It is in this spirit that I look at the struggles that, over the last decade, African students have made, particularly in the universities, against the program of structural adjustment that has been imposed by the World Bank since the mid 1980s on their countries' economies and educational systems.[1] My purpose in doing so is first to demonstrate the existence of a new pan-African student movement, continuous in its political aspira-

tions with the student activism that developed in the context of the anti-colonial struggle, and yet more radical in its challenge to the established political order.

Little is known about this movement in North America and Europe, where, in the collective imagination, student activism remains associated with countries like France, the U.S., or China. Both the media and scholarly journals have generally ignored this topic. Between 1987 and the present, for instance, the *Journal of Modern African Studies* has published only one essay on African students, despite its frequent coverage of the social impact of structural adjustment[2]; as for the *African Studies Review,* between 1991 and 1996, it has touched upon it only twice, once in the context of a recollection of Ngugi wa Thiongo's student days at Makerere in the 1950s, and another time in an analysis of intergenerational conflict in Cote d'Ivoire.[3] This contrasts with the situation in the 1970s, when the place of African students in the continent's political economy, and their contribution to development were frequently an object of study for U.S. political scientists and sociologists. Whether this diminished interest is a reflection of the changed institutional approach that prescribes a lesser political and economic role for African students than might have been expected two decades ago is a matter of speculation. It is worthwhile, however, to mention a number of assumptions, shared by African political theorists, that similarly de-emphasize African students' political potential.

I refer to the tendency, wide-spread among African intellectuals, to question the contribution that students can make to liberation struggles and to accentuate the obstacles standing in the way of their becoming effective agents of political change: namely, the transitory nature of their organizing, their lack of roots in any productive activity, their elite status, their proneness to opportunism and corporatism. Exemplary of this approach is a recent article by Bathily, Diouf, and Mbodj (1995) on the student movement in Senegal, which concludes that students cannot be trusted as political subjects, even though they may score significant moral and political victories, as Senegalese students did, in their confrontation with the government, in the 1980s. According to the authors,

> [t]he intention of students to be involved in the life of their nation...does not take into account the fact that they are

> only in a transition, over which they have no control because they have no impact on the socio-economic stakes. So instead of being actors/initiators of this change, they have turned into mere artifacts of this evolution.... (ibid.)

Such an assessment may be a healthy reaction to earlier accounts, rooted in the colonial era, that pictured students unproblematically as a revolutionary vanguard, and their countries' "natural leaders."[4] But the danger in following the opposite course is that of underestimating not only the novelty of the present African student movement, but also the importance of the ongoing struggles over African education and against Structural Adjustment, both from the viewpoint of Africa's future and the international liberation struggles.

In this context, a further objective of this article is to show that (a) while still a numerical minority, African students have undergone a process of proletarization, in the wake of Structural Adjustment, that places their concerns and struggles on a continuum with those of other workers; (b) African student struggles against SAP are an essential part of the resistance to the World Bank's takeover of African resources and decision-making, a process which some have likened to an attempted recolonization, and (c) African student struggles are also an integral part of the international movement against the escalating cost of education, that is putting schooling, almost at any level, out of reach for the majority of the people worldwide.

I conclude that the struggles of African students must be given more attention and support than they have received so far not only by grassroots activists, but also by academics and students in North America. This applies, in particular, to those who are concerned with the ongoing "structural adjustment" of our own educational institutions, and with the propagation of "African knowledge," that is, the knowledge produced on the African continent, whose existence and circulation are, in good measure, dependent upon the success of struggles such as those which African students are fighting.

African Students' Activism in the Colonial and the Post-colonial Period

Political activism has a long tradition among African students, dating back to the colonial period when their mobilization contributed to the creation of an anti-colonial consciousness, at home and abroad. Exemplary is the case of the West African Student Union (WASU), formed in London in 1925, which became a training ground for Nigerian nationalists (Segal 1962:230; Hanna and Hanna 1975: 52; Ayu 1986). WASU denounced colonial racism, the practice of forced labor, the expropriation of communal lands, and the transfer of the surplus from Africa to the metropoles. On the occasion of the London Conference of 1941, it formulated a program that remains a model for decolonization today. Inspired by the international anti-colonial struggle, WASU (among other things) called for the return of expropriated lands, for the abolition of monoculture and export crops and the development of local food production (Ayu 1986). It also called for a society free from class divisions, and for mass education at all stages, arguing that "mass education is the preparation of public opinion to appreciate current social changes" (Ayu, 1986: 70-71).

WASU was not a unique case. Student activism is part of the anti-colonial struggle in every African country—Ivory Coast, Guinea, Algeria, Rhodesia—and can certainly be credited with having contributed to the growth of the anti-colonial movement. Student organizations were often the first political force to demand independence and chastize their leaders when they would seem ready to compromise on this question.[5] Nevertheless, in the 1940s and 1950s, student activism was a restricted phenomenon. Africa had only a handful of secondary schools and universities (Hanna 1975: 6-7)[6]; thus those who made it to a college were an absolute minority, who in most cases had to study abroad, often spending many years away from their countries.

Their physical distance from the struggles at home was compounded by the economic and social distance that speaking the master's language, enjoying a relative affluence, and going to school (instead of performing manual labor) introduced between them and their compatriots. Most important, student activism was often the response of an educated elite to its marginalization within the colo-

nial system, and it occurred in a context in which the leading sectors of international capital were preparing to come to terms with the end of colonialism and looked at formally educated Africans as the future rulers. Consequently, student activists and student organizations did not face the repression that workers and trade unions experienced, nor did they directly challenge the international power structure.

In the postcolonial period as well—that is in the 1960s and 1970s— many factors contributed to limit the scope of African student struggles. The most important is the unique relation that the achievement of independence created between students and the state. For on the one side, the African states were vitally dependent on students to fill the empty spaces left by departing expatriates, and saw the expansion of higher education as a key condition for economic development. Thus, everywhere, the African national state upheld education as a means of personal and national advancement, making of it the cement of a new "social contract." As for the students, in addition to benefiting from the opportunities this situation opened to them, they were reluctant to criticize governments that had often emerged from a process of struggle, that were still besieged by the ex-colonial powers, that had limited means to carry out the needed reforms and, as it were, were still "in the making." Thousands enthusiastically responded, when asked to leave their classes and go to build roads, in the early days after independence.[7]

The fact that university education was conceived as a port of entry into the state administration and as the pillar of national development further strengthened the students' identification with the goals of the national state, and shaped their sense of identity and their relation with other social groups. Being a university student in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s meant to have a strong sense of one's self-importance; it also meant a life of guaranteed upward mobility and employment and the enjoyment of benefits from which the majority of Africans were excluded. All these factors discouraged oppositional politics,[8] and tended to instill elitist attitudes that, on several occasions, saw students defending their privileges against governments bent on democratizing education.[9]

Student activism, however, did not cease after independence and often played a crucial role in preventing the new African governments from capitulating to foreign interests. In Nigeria, for instance,

student opposition was largely responsible for the cancellation of the Anglo-Nigerian Defense Pact of 1960 that was "designed to maintain Britain's strategic military interests and preserve Nigeria as a market for the British defense industry" (Ayu 1986: 80; Hanna 1975: 2). In Ivory Coast, students protested Houphouet-Boigny's decision to invite Indo-chinese rubber plantation owners to be resettled in the country (Zolberg 1975: 114-115) and his support of France's policy in Algeria. Anti-imperialist mobilization by African students, in this period, included demonstrations against the killing of Lumumba and the massacre at Sharpeville; against Portuguese violence in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau; against the Smith regime in Rhodesia; and against the testing of atomic bombs in the Sahara desert by France (Ayu 1986: 80-81).

As W. J. Hanna and J. L. Hanna have pointed out, "[a]s the countries of particular student groups achieved independence, attention often turned to the issue of majority rule in those territories dominated by a white minority, and to neo-colonialism in the countries of independent Black and North Africa" (1975: 53). Another issue that preoccupied African students after independence was "educational reform," above all the questions of Africanization and student participation in the administration of the university. By the late sixties, in Zaire, Senegal, and Ethiopia, this was leading students into an open confrontation with the state that took a heavy toll in terms of the number of students killed and arrested (Hanna, Hanna, and Sauer, 1975:72-78).

Rarely, however, did students challenge the state's legitimacy (except when it openly usurped its powers[10], challenge the state's definition of national development, or address the economic issues that were of concern to most workers.[11] From all these viewpoints, the new student movement that has developed in the 1980s, in response to structural adjustment, represents a radical departure. This is not to say that African students today do not draw inspiration from the struggles of their predecessors. In some countries, like Nigeria, the history of past struggles is so much a part of the students' sense of identity and imagination that, until recently at least, on all the campuses, students have commemorated the killing of 14 students, in April 1978, during the Obasanjo regime, with a special "Solidarity Day," in which they participate in rallies and other activities evocative of the circumstances surrounding the killings.

African Students and Structural Adjustment

The main difference between the new student movement and those that have preceded it concerns its changed class character, as determined by the status of university students as a social group, and their future economic and political destination. On both counts, it is clear that African students have been proletarianized.

First, by the early 1980s, the majority of university students was still drawn from the lower classes,[12] and often came from very poor families.[13] According to World Bank statistics, by 1986, 39% of the parents of African university students were farmers, and 21% were manual workers and traders, which makes the African university student body the one with the smallest percentage of white-collar parents (40%) in the world (World Bank 1986: 62). This means that African university students have a direct experience of the conditions in which the bulk of the African population lives, and identify with its problems. Moreover, in the wake of structural adjustment, their own situation has dramatically deteriorated,[14] due to the removal of tuition grants, the increased cost of studying, as well as the collapse of the standard of living in their communities. As is well-known, the great majority of African students today have no money for food, books, accommodations, transport; they eat one meal a day (in Nigeria they call it "0-1-0, without," meaning zero breakfast, lunch without any meat, and zero supper); they sleep in overcrowded hostels, where rooms fit for two now host up to 15 people, taking turns on the floor; some even sleep in the classrooms; they work in dilapidated buildings, that are constantly subject to power and water shortages and where toilets are non-existent; they have no educational materials, and they study with teachers who go to school when they can because they are too busy trying to survive (which they cannot do on a professor's salary sufficient, at best, to feed a family for a week).[15]

In addition, for the first time since independence, college students know that what awaits them at graduation is most likely unemployment, or perhaps a job as a taxi driver. They know that the days when students could look at a university diploma with the certainty that it would gain them financial security and possibly a role in their country's political life are gone, as demonstrated by the

large number of those who, even with a degree, decide to emigrate to countries where all they can hope for is a blue collar job.

And this is not a conjunctural but a structural situation. For the World Bank's structural adjustment program, to which practically every African government has subscribed,[16] calls for a drastic reduction of higher education and the cut of all state subsidies to both the students and the universities. As George Caffentzis points out, "[t]his reduction (of the higher education system) is promoted in the name of higher efficiency and a more egalitarian distribution of educational resources. Yet, the evidence provided and the guidelines prescribed raise serious doubts that these are the actual concerns. More likely, the World Bank's attempt to cut higher education stems from its bleak view of Africa's economic future, and its belief that African workers are destined for a long time to remain unskilled laborers" (Caffentzis 1992: 2).

Caffentzis is referring here to the fact that SAP in Africa pins the hopes for economic "recovery" (the rhetoric of "development" has now been discarded) on the continent's ability to attract foreign investment and its "comparative advantage" in the global market and, accordingly, demands the boosting of agricultural exports and the cheapening of African labor. SAP also transfers crucial aspects of economic planning and decision making into the hands of international bodies, donors, "cartels," and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Thus, in more than one way, it cuts the need for a formally educated work-force and for civil servants prepared to fill the different branches of the public sector which, in fact, has been drastically downsized.[17] In other words, SAP is a reversal of the policies pursued or promised by the African national states at independence, when "reconstruction" represented a commitment to build an autonomous road to development and to improve the conditions of the African population.

This means that the prospects for higher education in Africa today are bleak, both in the short term and in the long run. The present trends point to the development of a two-tier system, where the majority of students will be destined to receive devalued degrees, from institutions that, for all practical purposes, are allowed to "fall apart," while a minority is groomed—through subventions by foreign "donors"—to provide a small body of technocrats, attuned to the needs of foreign investors. As much is prescribed by

the World Bank's Africa Capacity Building Initiative (World Bank, 1991; Caffentzis, 1994).[18]

What follows is that, far from being esteemed as future members of the African intelligentsia and the state, and being called upon to contribute to their countries' development, African university students today are seen as largely irrelevant to their countries' economic life, or are even considered an economic deficit from the viewpoint of a cost-benefit analysis of education. In other words, they are being totally devalorized, politically and economically. This situation, inevitably, has had a deep impact on their lives, their sense of identity, and their politics.

Thus, African students today are different as political subjects from their peers in the period before and after independence. Not only has their loss of status, their devaluation, brought them closer to the concerns of other social groups—trade unions, market women, human rights groups, civil servants—with whom they frequently join in protest. Their struggles, even when they are in defense of their living conditions and the right to education, articulate a more general social interest, as they connect with the resistance to structural adjustment (that mobilizes every sector of the African proletariat) and with opposition to the restoration of a colonial division of labor (that again condemns Africans to be the "hands" for decisions that others are making). Thus, in many ways, the battle that students are fighting—even when they are confronting the state on "bread and butter" issues such as housing, food, book and transport allowances—is a continuation of the battle for African self-determination. But today it is a battle that brings them directly in conflict with the international power structure, as represented by the World Bank, the IMF, and the panoply of agencies through which the ex-colonial powers and the U.S. are trying to assert their rights to Africa's resources. For the very existence of a growing body of students—determined to have a voice in the decisions taken by their governments, and opposed to their sale of national assets—is an obstacle to the takeover that is presently being carried on by transnational agencies and companies in the name of "adjustment" or "free trade," and "intellectual property rights."[19]

Not surprisingly, African students are experiencing today the same type of repression that in the past was reserved for those whom

Fanon described as the "wretched of the earth," those who were fighting to get back their land, and they often engage in forms of struggles and tactics (riots, road blocks, burning of buildings) that are the means of protest of the disenfranchised. Moreover, while in the past (with few exceptions) the African students' protest was usually episodic, today in many countries it has become endemic, continuing year after year despite the frequent shutdowns of the universities, in what appears as a protracted warfare (see chapter on "Chronology" below).

A New Pan-African Student Movement

It is this broader political challenge, combined with the commonality of student demands and the identity of the forces that students are confronting, that enable us to look at the present phase of student activism not as a set of separate struggles but as one pan-African student movement.

It is a movement that has no coordination across national borders and, nevertheless, is remarkably unified in its motives and objectives.[20] As stated in a recent Newsletter of the Committee For Academic Freedom in Africa (No. 10, Spring 1996), "No to tuition fees," "No to starving while studying," "No to cuts in books, stationary, transport allowances," "No to SAP, and the recolonization of Africa" are slogans that have appeared on every campus from Lusaka to Cairo in the 1980s and 1990s, providing the deepest bond among students who are often seen as irremediably divided on ethnic and religious ground (p.8).

Student struggles against SAP and its consequences for education have varied in correspondence with the different ways in which the programs have been implemented. As Tables B and C show, in francophone Africa, student anti-SAP activism escalated after January 1994, when the CFA (*communaute financiere africaine*) franc was devalued and the full impact of adjustment was felt (see Table B). However, already by 1989, 90% of strikes and boycotts on African campuses were called to protest the introduction of tuition fees, the delays in the payments of grants and allowances, and the poor conditions of housing, food, and the means of instruction. Protests have also been organized in support of teachers and workers' strikes, to obtain the release of jailed comrades or their reinstate-

ment when expelled from school, to demand the removal of the police or the army from campus premises and the unbanning of student unions, to denounce the lack of employment prospects after graduation, and the authoritarianism of the state and the university administration.[21]

In several countries, moreover, the mobilization around student welfare has expanded into a broader political confrontation. In Zimbabwe, the frustration of the students over the government's plans to increase their fees sparked off, in 1989, a wave of demonstrations against the government's corruption and revolutionary pretenses (Cheater 1991); in Ghana, student protest against the cutbacks in the funding for education has strengthened the opposition to Jerry Rawlings (Yeebo 1991; Kraus, 1991); in Sudan, it has merged with the struggle against the Islamicization of education (Leatherbee and Osman 1993; Abdelhadi Al-Zubeir 1995). In no country has students' resistance to structural adjustment been more organized and defiant than in Nigeria, where, since the late 1980s, almost every year it has escalated into a national crisis (Jega, 1994; Mustapha 1996; CAFA 1996). It is worth remembering here that Nigerian students began paying the price of "adjustment" even before the program was introduced in the country. For there is good reason to believe that the motive behind the infamous "ABU massacre" that occurred at the Ahmadu Bello University (Zaria) on May 23, 1986, was the preempting of student opposition to an agreement with the World Bank and the IMF. On that day, a week after representatives of the World Bank had arrived in the country to finalize the SAP agreement, anti-riot policemen surprisingly attacked the campus of Ahmadu Bello University, in response to a peaceful demonstration, unleashing what the media described as an orgy of violence (ASUU 1986; *Newswatch* 6.9.86; Agan 1986). By the end of the day, more than 30 students had been killed, scores had been wounded, and the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) had been banned, a clear indication that the Babangida government would not tolerate any dissent on such a sensitive issue. Nigerian students, however, have not been distracted by this horrendous show of force. Despite government repression, and the passing of two decrees in 1989 (Decrees 47 and 49) curtailing unionism in tertiary schools and prohibiting students from demonstrating (Bako 1994: 160), they have continued to mobilize, under the leadership of NANS,

joining with workers, market women, and human rights organizations, in a broad campaign against the government and SAP.

In 1988, for instance, students joined workers in a nationwide protest against the rise of gasoline prices. In 1989, in Benin, Lagos, Ibadan, and other cities, they took to the streets in what have become known as the anti-SAP riots (Mustapha 1996; *Newswatch* 6.12.89), joined by unemployed youth, motorists, market women, and other proletarians, with whom they built barricades, blocking the traffic for several hours. In Benin City, on this occasion, the students liberated 809 prisoners from jail; then they took food from the jail's pantry and brought it to the nearby Central Hospital to feed the patients (*Newswatch* 6.12.89: 18). In 1990, the students were out again, all over the country, to protest a World Bank loan, presumably designed to revamp higher education, which they accused of undermining Nigeria's intellectual independence and commercializing university education (*Liberty* 1990; Bako, 1994: 165-167). In particular, the students rejected the loan's conditionalities that included :

> a freeze on recruitment of all categories of staff, mandatory staff retrenchment, the introduction of fees...the procurement of 60% of equipment from manufacturers approved by the World Bank, the scrutinization of all curricula by the World Bank, and the mandatory importation of expatriate staff, whose salaries were too heavily topped. (Bako, 1994:166-167)

In 1991, undaunted by the repression unleashed against its members, NANS launched a nine-points ultimatum to Babangida, again demanding that SAP be eliminated and campus conditions improved. When the government failed to respond, it organized a nationwide boycott of classes, in the course of which several students were killed and many more were arrested (*African Guardian* 1.14.91; CLO, "A Massive Crackdown"). In 1992, they joined the "Babangida Must Go" campaign, as part of a coalition against the failed transition to civilian rule and the electoral sham, again demonstrating their capacity to connect their struggles to a broader political interest. In the same year, students came out in support of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike, on some cam-

puses organizing defense groups to prevent the police from breaking the strike. Again, students were in the forefront of the protest against the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the other Ogoni leaders in 1995, declaring President Abacha *persona non grata* on their campuses.

Nigerian students have not been alone. Resistance to SAP, to dictatorial rule, and to the defunding of higher education have been woven together in campus protest in practically every African country, contributing to stall unpopular measures, as was the case in Senegal. On several campuses (e.g., in Tanzania and Nigeria) the anti-SAP protest has also brought students and teachers together, undermining one of the main taboos of campus life.

One of the positive results of the students' struggles is that they have helped demystify the campaign for "democratization," "popular participation," and "human rights" that has been launched by the U.N. as part of its rationalization of the African state. Like other forms of popular protest, that of the students has demonstrated that no democracy is possible where people are denied the basic means of survival and the possibility of being autonomous producers of knowledge.

How threatening the challenge of students activism is to the economic planning and the institutional arrangements prevailing in Africa today can be measured by the ferocity with which student protests have been and are being repressed. It is no exaggeration to say that most African governments, in the 1980s and 1990s, have treated university students as if they were their countries' enemies and that campuses have been turned into war zones.

As in China, students have been ritually denounced as hooligans and a selfish lot, intent on preserving their privileges at the expense of the general well-being, and their protests have been treated accordingly, as a problem of law and order. Consequently, in almost every country, student organizations have been banned and forced underground. Hundreds of students have been killed, many more have been savagely beaten, maimed, raped in the course of demonstrations or commando-style police raids on campuses and student hostels—a frequent occurrence in African universities over the last decade. Thousands have been arrested, some detained for long periods and subjected to many forms of torture and other degrading treatment—as in the case of Ivory Coast where arrested

students were forced to lie down and stare at the sun or lick the blood from the wounds of other students (Degni-Segui 1996:71-73). Thousands again have been expelled from all schools, and all have suffered from the constant closing-off of the campuses that at times stretches for almost a year. To this we must add the growing militarization of the universities. Police intervention and even the occupation of the campuses by security forces are becoming a matter-of-fact in many institutions and so is the presence of intelligence officers and police informers in the classrooms.

Since the early 1990s, one aspect of the repression of student activism has been the appearance on the campuses of "secret cults" (Nigeria) and "self-defense groups" (Cameroon) (Ouendi 1996:123-124). These are gangs of students heavily armed, and clearly enjoying the connivance of the campus police, who operate as vigilante groups with regard to student activists, breaking up meetings, harassing student leaders, and terrorizing the student population (*Newswatch* 3.12.90; CDHR and CLO 1991).

It is important here to underline that never has the attack on African students been denounced by international agencies like the World Bank or the United Nations, not even when state repression reached levels of unspeakable ferocity, as in the case of the punitive expedition conducted by the Zairian authorities, in the night of March 1990, against the students of Lubumbashi University (see "Chronology of African Univeristy Students' Struggle"), where more than 150 were brutally murdered. The World Bank, it seems, is all too aware that SAP cannot be applied to the schools without destroying many students' lives and violating academic freedom, in the same way as it cannot be applied to the economic life of any country without destroying the livelihood of its workers. This is why it should not be surprising that its support for many of Africa's dictatorial regimes and their use of a "strong hand" in dealing with students has never wavered.

The Student Movement as a Movement Fighting to Expand Access to Higher Education

It is against this background that we should rethink the claim that African student struggles, even at present, have elitist and corporatist goals and only reflect the interests of a minority bent on preserv-

ing its privileges at the expense of the general well-being. This argument has, for years now, been routinely used by the World Bank and the African governments, in order justify their policy of cuts and repression. The evidence, however, is against it.

Not only (it is worthwhile remembering) do university students in many African countries often come from very poor families; even *prima facie* it is hard to identify as members of an elite young people who risk going to jail or being killed in order to obtain a book or a transport allowance; who sleep ten in a room, taking turns on the floor, because they cannot afford to pay the accommodation fees; or who go to class without food in their stomachs, eating only one meal a day, as is happening today in nearly every country of Africa.

Moreover, when students struggle to defend education as "an inalienable right," they are fighting not in defense of a privilege or a corporatist interest, but against it. For the downsizing of the higher education system, and the introduction of "cost-sharing" schemes as demanded by structural adjustment, are guaranteed to limit the entry to the universities to an elite as during the colonial period. It was precisely to democratize university education and to allow for recruitment on the basis of merit alone that African leaders like Nyerere (in 1965) abolished school fees (Barkan 1975 :13). Thus, those who chastize the student resistance to the cuts in university funds and student allowances as a sign of elitism are hypocritical, for there is no question that, in the absence of subsidies, only a minority of students coming from affluent families (or selected according to "donors'" specifications) will be able to continue their studies. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the African students struggle against the adjustment of the universities goes to the core of the question of "self-determination." It challenges the World Bank's right to establish what the continent's educational needs must be, to decide what should qualify as education, and to destroy educational systems that, for all their limits, represent an immense achievement and important national assets, that all Africans have paid and sacrificed for. This is not to say that African university student bodies and organizations do not need to become more egalitarian. Being impoverished and often brutalized makes it possible for African university students to develop a class consciousness and rethink social change from the viewpoint of those at the bottom. But this is not a guaranteed or automatic process. In addition, stu-

dent activism in Africa is still predominantly a male affair, as demonstrated by the low presence of women in student organizations, particularly in decision-making positions, and by the students unions' demands, which rarely acknowledge that on campus as well women are subject to unique forms of pressure and discrimination.

This, undoubtedly, is one of the main obstacles the African student movement must overcome if it is to grow. For the battle for education is not going to be won unless those who fight it are committed to eliminate, rather than create or reproduce, social hierarchies. From this viewpoint, there can also be no doubt that the future of the African student movement is closely tied to its ability to articulate an alternative vision of education to the one that was promoted in the post-independence period, in the context of the politics of "national reconstruction" and "development."

This, however, does not diminish the importance of the present student struggles against SAP and for the right to education. For the campuses, no less than the factories, are places where students come together and socialize, where ethnic or religious divisions can be overcome, where information is gathered, processed, and circulated; where an understanding of the implications of national and international policies can be facilitated. Thus, if the universities are allowed to collapse and if only those who are economically privileged have access to them, it will become even more difficult for Africans to make autonomous decisions concerning their educational systems, not to mention other political and economic issues. One wonders, for instance, whether a Nyerere would be "allowed," today, by the World Bank to make Swahili the means of instruction in university education.

The struggles of African students against SAP appear even more essential considering that the same policies which they are fighting against are simultaneously being imposed on students practically all over the globe and, in response, an international student movement is growing against the escalating cost of tuition fees, against school budget cuts, and against the growing commercialization of knowledge. In other words, the condition of African students does not represent an exception. One could not speak today, as J. Barkan did in 1975, of an "African pattern" differentiating African university students' behavior from that of their peers in Europe or the United States, presumably motivated by a higher degree of politi-

cal idealism (pp. 128-130). A comparison of student protest internationally, over the last decade, would show that the struggle of African students is on a continuum with that of students in Latin America, Asia, Australia, as well as Europe and the U.S.; that, indeed, we can speak today of an international student movement, and that African students are paying by far the heaviest cost for the effort this movement is making to reverse the corporate agenda by which education is being reshaped worldwide.

This implies that there is also a direct connection between the African student struggles and the struggles of students and teachers on our own campuses. This has not been generally recognized, however. Thus, those who have been concerned with African students, and have protested when they have been expelled, picked up by the police, detained, tortured, or when universities have been closed down have been and still are, primarily, the human rights organizations. Few are the occasions in which North American teachers and activists have made their voices heard in their defense. Year after year, as African universities have collapsed and turned into war zones, the academic world in North America has been silent. Selectively, African universities have become the destination of American study-abroad programs; but to this day few American students and teachers have any idea of the reality of "college life" in most of the continent or, if they do, consider it necessary to take a strong position against it.

It is to be hoped that this will change. It is time that North American academics recognize that we too are implicated in the condition of African universities, and not only as contributing taxpayers to the World Bank and IMF budgets. Although North American colleges may fare better in a word completely subsumed to a market logic, we still face a tremendous loss if we accept the high costs at which education must be purchased and the international hierarchies that are being built upon it.

NOTES

1. Structural Adjustment, both as a general economic program and in its specific application to higher education, is a household name for students of international politics and economics and the object of a vast literature. I will only mention here the studies that are more directly concerned with the restructuring of university education and African student struggles in the 1980s and 1990s: Kraus 1991; Caffentzis 1992, 1994, 1995.
2. See (Daddieh 1988).
3. See (Sicherman 1995) and (Toungara 1995).
4. This attitudes is satirized in *The Future Leaders* a novel by Mwangi Ruheni (Heinemann 1973) quoted by Carol Sicherman (1995: 31). Writes Sicherman: "The 1958 Makerere commencement orator in Ruheni's novel *The Future Leaders* praises the graduates in a premonitory fashion, calling them 'the future leaders of this country,' on whom depend 'the hopes of the peoples of the great territories of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganika'....Not long after, the narrator dismisses the speech: "How can they all be the future leaders? And who will do the work?"
5. Guineans and Ivorian students, for instance, were openly critical of Sekou Toure's and Houphouet Boigny's ready acceptance of the *loi cadre*, passed in June 1956, which established territorial autonomy in the territories of French West and Equatorial Africa. "[Sekou Toure's] willingness to cooperate with France was regarded as a betrayal of African nationalism by the more radical of the African intellighentsia, and he was attacked, from time to time, in the pages of the *Etudiant d'Afrique Noire*, the organ of the Federation of Students from Black Africa in France" (Segal 1963:311).
6. "Only after the Second World War ended were universities established in many parts of Africa" (Hanna 1975:7). A University College was established at Ibadan in 1948, the University of Dakar was founded in 1950, the University of the Gold Coast (now University of Ghana) in 1948; the University of Libya was established in 1955 (ibid.). There were no universities in Portuguese Africa until the early 1960s (Duffy 1963:176-177).
7. I rely for this information in part on conversations I had in Paris in 1962 and 1963 with African students from countries (such as Morocco) which had recently achieved independence.
8. This has been over-stressed by J. Barkan in his 1975 study of university students in Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana. On the basis of interviews he conducted on these countries' university campuses, Barkan

concluded that African students were reluctant to take risks, still had too many opportunities to be able to afford the political idealism displayed by students in Europe or the U.S. in the 1960s, and that little originality in economic or political life could be expected of them.

9. The most famous case, in this context, is the crisis that developed at the university of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in October 1966, when students confronted President Nyerere on the question of their participation in the National Service, a move which convinced Nyerere that university education was becoming a means of class differentiation. It was in response to this confrontation that he introduced his *Education for Self-Reliance* program (Barkan 1975:13-20; Morrison 1976:237ff.). Similar confrontations also occurred in Ghana, between Nkruma and the faculty and students of the University of Ghana at Legon (Barkan 1975:22), and in Mozambique, where in 1967 Euardo Mondlane "issued a White Paper critical of those students who sought 'special privileges'" (de Braganca and Wallerstein 1982:102-103, 107-114).
10. An example here is the mobilization of the Ghanaian students in 1977 against the Acheampong regime (Yeebo 1991:108).
11. An exception to this tendency was the contribution by Nigerian students to the formation, in the late 1970s, of the Anti-Poverty Movement that became one of the rallying points for the democratic struggle in the last period of the Gowon regime. At the peak of the movement, around 1976, leftwing students joined with peasant organizations in the South West of the country, and some went to live in rural areas to do agitational work in farming communities (From an unpublished manuscript by Edwin Madunagu, on the history of Nigeria from the colonial period to the present). Two years later, in Nigeria, there was the first confrontation between students and the Obasanjo government about the cost of higher education, culminating in the "Ali Must Go" movement that took off after 11 students were killed in April, during clashes with the police in Lagos and Zaria.
12. Compare with the statistics gathered by J. Barkan in the mid- 1970s, that placed the percentage of students coming from a peasant background at 37% in Ghana, 54% in Tanzania, 50% in Uganda (Barkan 1975: 28). In his study, Barkan detected a tendency in the educational systems towards the emergence of a self-perpetuating educated class, more pronounced in a country like Ghana where the educational system had been in existence for more than a century (ibid.). However, the continuous expansion of university education

through the early 1980s has guaranteed that the majority of students continue to come from the lower classes.

13. It is interesting, in this context, to read the extensive acknowledgments by which graduating Nigerian university students preface their dissertations to thank those who have made their degree possible. For they help dispel the myth that students are a privileged elite, as they demonstrate that very often an entire community has to come together and pool its resources for a student to be able to enter the university gates. It is also significant that in Nigeria, the language of communication among university students, outside the classrooms, is not English but pidgin, the language of West Africa's urban proletariat.
14. On the students' deteriorating standards of living, see above all *CAFA Newsletter*, No. 10, Spring 1996 and Codesria 1995.
15. See ibid. and, among others: Attahiru Jega (1994); (Hirji 1999).
16. The main exception being South Africa, where apartheid has functioned with regard to the African population as a form of structural adjustment.
17. It is significant in this context that, at a meeting in Harare with African Vice-Chancellors in 1986, the World Bank representative went as far as suggesting that Africa has no need for universities. He was forced, however, to soften his position in front of the resistance and outrage expressed by the African VCs.
18. On the implications of the World Bank's "Africa Capacity Building Initiative," see G. Caffentzis (1994).
19. See, among others, G. Caffentzis (in this volume).
20. There is, however, a remarkable circulation of experiences across borders, due to the high circulation of African students from country to country.
21. *Committee For Academic Freedom, Newsletter* No. 5.

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TABLE A. Statistical Analysis of the Chronology of African University Student Struggles 1985-1995

A. Recorded incidents

Nigeria	14
Kenya	10
Sudan	10
Benin	7
Zimbabwe	6
Cote d'Ivoire	5
Ghana	5
Tunisia	5
Cameroon	4
Congo	4
Mali	4
Niger	4
Zaire	4
Burkina Faso	3
Madagascar	3
Senegal	3
Uganda	3
Zambia	3
Botswana	2
Chad	2
Gabon	2
Malawi	2
Togo	2
Algeria	1
Comoros	1
Ethiopia	1
Guinea	1
Liberia	1
Mozambique	1
Sierra Leone	1
Tanzania	1

*Table A. It shows that in many countries student struggle is not a sporadic affair. Year after year, the Nigerian, Kenyan, Sudanese, Beninoise, Zimbabwean and Ghanaian students have been involved in struggles.

TABLE B. FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES BEFORE AND DURING STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT 1993-1994

Incidents 1985-1992	Incidents 1993-1994
12	23

C. Peak Years of Struggle:

Year	Number of incidents
1985	6
1986	5
1987	10
1988	6
1989	11
1990	11
1991	15
1992	15
1993	16
1994	22
1995	5

Table B shows that student struggles are mostly related to the impact of structural adjustment. Francophone countries were protected against the full impact of SAPs until the CFA zone was intact. Only when the CFA fell apart on January 1, 1994, the consequences of neoliberal politics in education became fully apparent.

Part II

African Students' and Teachers' Struggles Against Structural Adjustment and for Academic Freedom

Chronology of African University Students' Struggles: 1985-1998

Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis

Introduction

The following is a chronology of the struggles that African students have waged, in the period between 1985 and 1998, in response to the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) their countries and academic institutions have adopted. It is a testimony to the fact that SAP is one of the main causes of violations of academic rights in Africa and a sign of the cost African students are prepared to pay in defense of the right to study, which is the very basis of academic freedom. The hundreds of dead students, the thousands arrested and tortured, the many more who have demonstrated and gone on strike in the face of violent repression between 1985 and 1998, teach us that the struggle for access to knowledge is not *passé* in Africa.

In country after country, demonstration after demonstration, in its slogans, flyers, and position papers the African student movement has shown a remarkable homogeneity of demands. "NO to starving and studying," "NO to tuition fees," "NO to cuts in books and stationary," "NO to the elimination of grants and allowances," "NO to Structural Adjustment, to corrupt leaders, and to the recolonization of Africa" are slogans that have unified African students in the SAP era to a degree unprecedented since the anti-colonial struggle. Some would have us see these demands as merely

economic ignitors of the campaign for multiparty democracy, which university students have led in many countries, including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Togo, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Zaire, and Zambia (Bratton and Van De Walle 1992: 31-32). They would have us believe that the African students' protest aims exclusively at "political" objectives such as civil liberties and the end of arbitrary rule.

But the following Chronology shows that any dichotomy between "political" and "economic" objectives is untenable, and that for democracy to prevail in Africa, no less than elsewhere, more is needed than the end of one-party rule. Indeed, the struggle to increase grants, allowances, and access to education is not only a fight for personal entitlements, but is a precondition for the survival of the educational system and the possibility of any democratic process. For thousands of Africans it marks the difference between not only remaining in the university or being forced out of it, but remaining in Africa or having to emigrate, having some hope for the future or being deprived of any prospect.

This Chronology also belies the picture of the average African university students as elitist, self-centered, and privileged. That the students marching through this Chronology often die in a demonstration fighting for an extra meal or some reams of paper or are willing to take to the streets in support of striking workers well indicates that the majority of them are not the cushioned children of the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" nor are they indifferent to the "general interest." This is not surprising. As the World Bank itself has acknowledged, by 1980, 60% of the parents of African university students were farmers, manual workers, or traders, which makes the African university student body the one with the smallest percentage of "white collar" parents in the world (World Bank 1986: 62). This Chronology also confirms what we deduce from the acknowledgments section of many university dissertations, where graduating students thank dozens of people, sometimes entire villages, for the material and spiritual support they received through their school years: the education of African students is much more the result of a collective endeavor than the dispensation of a rich parent.

Similarly this Chronology belies the image the World Bank has portrayed of the African campuses as places where no education is taking place (World Bank 1989; Saint 1992). While nobody can

deny that Africa students have been deprived of the most basic educational materials in the wake of SAP, any reader of this chronology must conclude that much social knowledge is being produced on these campuses. There is much about the global power structure and distribution of wealth that a student learns when s/he must risk death, and take on no less than the World Bank and IMF in order to obtain even the most modest forms of support enabling them to continue their studies.

The following is an expanded and updated version of a "Chronology of Student Struggles" published in *CAFA Newsletter 10 (1996)*.

Abbreviations of sources

AR	*Africa Report*
AF&HRA	Africa Watch, *Academic Freedom and Human Rights in Africa*. (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1991).
AC	*African Concord*
AG	*African Guardian*
ARB	*Africa Research Bulletin* (Social and Political Series)
AW	*News from Africa Watch*
CAFA	*Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa Newsletter*
CHE	*Chronicle of Higher Education*
CDHR	Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (Nigeria), 1991 Annual Report
CIAF	Committee for International Academic Freedom
IPS	Inter Press Service
Mf	*Mozambiquefile*
NW	*Newswatch* (Nigeria)
NYT	*The New York Times*
THES	*Times Higher Education Supplement*
UDASA	*The University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Association Newsletter*
WA	*West Africa*

CHRONOLOGY

1985

Feb. 10 **Kenya. Nairobi University.**
Students boycotted classes starting from Feb. 5 to protest against the unjustified decision by the academic authorities to expel three student leaders and deprive five others of their scholarships. The police fired tear gas to disperse the more than 2000 students who had gathered at an outdoor prayer meeting. At least one student was arrested, thirty were hospitalized and one died. Nairobi University was closed on Feb. 12. (ARB, 3/1; CAFA#4)

Feb. 17 **Sudan. Khartoum University.**
Students supporting President Nimeiri clashed with student opponents on campus. The University was closed for an indefinite period. (ARB, 3/1)

Feb. 26 **Tunisia. University of Tunisia. Faculty of Economic Sciences at Tunis**
Twenty-five students began a hunger strike to demand the reinstitution of the June exams session which had been canceled following a series of strikes and class boycotts. (ARB, 3/1)

March 11 **Zaire. Mbanza Ngungu University. Mbuji Mai University.**
University students criticized the cuts in the higher education budget adopted by the government in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and in compliance with the Structural Adjustment Program. Mobuto announced that he was considering privatizing some higher education institutions. At Mbandaka, in Equator province, the students demonstrated violently against the security forces at the funeral of one of their number whom they believed to have been killed by the authorities. (ARB, 4/15)

June 6-7 **Nigeria. University of Port Harcourt.**
Police invaded the university's campus on the evening of June 6 to break up a secret meeting of the banned National Association of Nigerian Students, that was to discuss the government's plan to

introduce tuition fees. The next morning police broke into the student dorms, dragging students out and beating them with rifle butts. The students resisted the assault and more than 400 were arrested. (CAFA Archive)

Nov. 11 Congo. Brazzaville.
Secondary school students demonstrated to protest the government's decision to hold a competition for students graduating from secondary school and wishing to qualify for a grant for university education. The planned competition was part of the government's austerity effort. According to witnesses the army shot blanks into the air while some pupils were ransacking cars and shops. (ARB, 12/15)

1986

Jan. 2-3 Tunis. University of Tunis.
Students struck to commemorate the anniversary of the bloody riots of Jan. 3, 1984, which erupted in response to the government's decision to double the price of bread.(ARB, 2/1)

May Nigeria. Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria.
About twenty students and bystanders at ABU were massacred by security forces after staging peaceful protests over university and government policies. More students were killed in the ensuing days at the Kaduna Polytechnic, the University of Benin and the University of Lagos. (CAFA#3)

Feb. 28-March 13 Kenya. Kenyatta University.
Students began to boycott classes after it was announced that teachers' salaries throughout the nation would not be increased. Many students moved out of the campus and blocked the main highway to central Kenya. A bonfire was made and motorists who attempted to pass where pelted with stones. The university was closed indefinitely and the students were ordered off campus. (ARB, 4/1; THES 4/4/86)

June 9 **Kenya. Egerton College.**
1,400 agriculture students refused to sit for exams in solidarity with seven students who had been arrested on incitement charges. The administration closed the institution for two weeks and barred 25 students from returning. When the college reopened, the rest of the students refused to attend classes in solidarity with their colleagues. Egerton's authorities caved in and allowed the suspended students back. (THES, 8/8/86)

Dec. 9 **Madagascar. National University of Madagascar.**
About 200 students staged a demonstration in the city center to protest a reform imposing stricter limits on the number of times students could resit their exams. (ARB, 2/1/87)

1987

Jan. 22 **Senegal. University of Dakar.**
Students boycotted lectures for a twenty four-hour period and refused to pay the entry fee to the university refectory to protest the deteriorating standards in the food and lodgings and the delay in the payment of their grants. Student demonstrators and police clashed on campus. Several people were wounded and dozens of demonstrators were arrested. The campus crisis continued until Feb. 24, when the government and student representatives reached an agreement. The government agreed to withdraw the police from the campus, to make provisions for the payment of the grants, and to pay both for the injured students' medical costs and for the repair of any damaged property. (ARB, 2/15)

Jan. 28 **Sierra Leone. Fourah Bay College. Njala University College.**
The two universities and the teacher training college of Sierra Leone were closed after a three-weeks students' strike called to demand an increase in the meal subsidy to match rising prices. The students demanded that their food allowance of 11 leones a day (about 30 cents) be at least doubled, claiming that it could not cover three meals. The students told the government that they refused "to starve and study." But the government responded that it was being forced

to cut public expenditure as part of an IMF-sanctioned economic adjustment program and that their education was a privilege rather than a right. The government also accused the students of carrying out violent acts. On Jan. 29 demonstrators ran through the streets of Freetown, Bo and Kenema, destroying, burning, and pillaging public buildings and private houses (mostly belonging to the Lebanese colony). The police arrested ten students in Bo. As news of their arrests spread through the Bo township, other students came out and threatened to attack the police station where their colleagues were being held if the latter were not released. The police, unarmed, released the students. (ARB, 3/15; AR, March-April; AC, Jan. 25-31, 1989)

Feb. 2 **Madagascar. National University of Madagascar.** Students and security forces clashed. The students were protesting measures prohibiting them from repeating years passed by the government of President Didier Ratsiraka. In response to the government's slogan "Bad students, here is the door," the striking students wrote on their banners, "Bad leaders, here is the door." After a week of clashes, three people had died, several were wounded, and about ten were arrested. (ARB, 3/15)

March 6 **Ghana. University of Cape Coast. University of Ghana. University of Science and Technology in Kumasi.**

Students demonstrated against the government decision to withdraw food subsidies in university tertiary institutions. The measure was adopted as part of a planned educational reform, inspired by the IMF and World Bank, intended to place higher education on a cost-sharing basis. The demonstration climaxed a week of mourning, during which students wore red wrist-bands. The demonstrators said that their food rations should be doubled and that education was "their inalienable right" and they placed posters in strategic positions stating, "Education for every Ghanaian." They also addressed the human rights situation in the country, demanding an end to detentions without trial and the economic recovery program. The president of the National Union of Ghanaian Students stated that "independence is meaningless and will elude us if it is not linked to our right to free education." (ARB, 4/1; AC, 4/9/87; WA, 4/9)

April-May **Madagascar. University of Madagascar, Antananarivo.**

Less than 25% of enrolled students turned up for classes on April 27 in protest against the detention of some of their colleagues. On April 29 about a dozen students were arrested for attempting to block the return to classes. On May 7, security forces had arrested Aime Francis, a top student leader, claiming that he was wearing an automatic pistol. (ARB, 6/15)

May 8 **Ghana. University of Ghana, Legon.**

The government ordered the closure of the university after the students refused to follow the Secretary for Education's advice and return to class. The students had boycotted classes in support of the former National Union of Ghana Students' Secretary Kakraba Cromwell. He was being held by the security agencies for his suspected involvement in drug trafficking. (ARB, 6/15)

June **Kenya. Egerton University College.**

140 students were suspended indefinitely for picketing and boycotting lectures. The protest took place last month when students marched from their campus located at Njoro to nearby Nakuru town, the provincial capital, to complain to the government authorities about assessment methods. (THES, 7/10)

Nov. 12-19 **Sudan. University of Khartoum.**

Students began the occupation of university buildings on Nov. 12 and the administration closed the university on Nov. 19. The students' discontent exploded with street violence followed by arrests. Anger was directed at a steep devaluation and at hefty price rises, imposed after agreements with the IMF and World Bank for an economic adjustment program. About 15,000 demonstrators marched through Khartoum in October denouncing the IMF. (THES, 12/4)

Nov. 15 **Kenya. Nairobi University.**

Students and police clashed after seven newly-elected student union leaders were arrested on the night of Nov. 14. Students were clubbed and tear-gassed and four foreign journalists were kicked, punched, and beaten with rifle butts. On the next day the Nairobi University

Students' Organization was banned and the university closed. Since 1970 the university has been closed 17 times. (CAFA#4)

1988

Jan. **Senegal. Dakar University**

Students began a year-long campaign protesting the lack of housing and classroom space as well as poor feeding conditions. The Diouf government eventually committed CFA 2 billion to rehabilitate the secondary school and university infrastructure, and CFA 10 million to build five new university hostels, a 3,000 seat cafeteria, and pay an increase in the monthly student allowance. (WA, 1/16)

Feb. **Sudan. University of Khartoum.**

"The president of the student union...warned that students will demonstrate...if the university imposes tuition or phases out free room and board....He commented after university officials in the Sudan reacted positively to suggestions in a World Bank policy report that at least some financial responsibility for higher education in African countries should be shifted to students and parents." (CHE, 2/10/88)

April **Nigeria. 33 Institutions of the Nigerian University System**

Nigerian students demonstrated throughout the country against the fuel price increase demanded by the IMF-inspired Structural Adjustment Plan. Riots and confrontations with the police spread across most of the nation's campuses. Inspector-General of Police Gambo described the protests as "premeditated and executed in a most professional manner." (WA, 5/2/88, 1/16/89)

June **Ghana. University of Ghana and Cape Coast.**

Students demanded a threefold rise in the daily feeding allowance of 51 cedis and boycotted examinations to oppose the government's intention of abolishing the allowance. The university authorities had concluded that the students required 250 cedis a day. However, the government, having signed an agreement with the World Bank, pressed ahead with the cut and in December 1988 announced a new

loans and scholarships scheme as the first step in ending free higher education. (WA, 1/16/89)

Aug. 20 Liberia. University of Liberia.
Authorities suspended classes and ordered all students to leave the campus after the students refused to obey a presidential order to halt political activities at all educational institutions around the nation. (ARB, 9/15)

Sept. 28 Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.
Riot police used clubs, tear-gas, and rubber bullets to block a demonstration organized by the University of Zimbabwe and Harare Polytechnic Student Representative Councils to protest the government's failure to follow its own socialist principles. Riot police blocked students trying to march into downtown Harare wearing t-shirts declaring "national looters must go" and "Capitalism, Corruption NO." Nearly 500 students were briefly arrested during the demonstration. Most were quickly released, but at least 15 faced charges under a law used by the Ian Smith government to suppress black protest. (ACAS #30)

1989

Jan. 9 Benin. University of Cotonou.
Students began a strike to protest the non-payment of their grants for several months and the government's intention to stop paying them altogether in 1989 as part of an IMF/World Bank structural adjustment program. The government threatened to dismiss all the students who would not return to work on Jan. 23, but the campus was deserted in response. (ARB, 2/15)

Jan. 18 China. Hehai University, Nanking.
The Nanking branch of the General Union of African Students in China urged the removal of all 1,500 African students, claiming that African students face chronic racial discrimination and police brutality in the country. They also claimed that the Chinese authorities orchestrated the incident at Nanking's Hehai University cam-

pus on Christmas Eve, which led to fighting between Chinese and black students and to four days of demonstrations against the Africans. (ARB, 2/15)

Jan. 23 **Botswana. University of Botswana.**
The university was closed after a four-day boycott by students demanding higher grants and better conditions. They also protested the government's demand that they sign a declaration prohibiting them from striking. (ARB, 2/15])

Feb. 24 **Zaire. Kinshasa National Pedagogical Institute and University of Lubumbashi.**
An undetermined number of university students, amounting possibly to several dozens, were killed in Kinshasa and at the National University of Zaire in Lubumbashi. The violence started in Kinshasa after 1000 students demonstrated against higher bus fares. At least five students were killed and hundreds were injured by the President 's elite guard. The protest then spread to the Lubumbashi University where students marching in support of those in Kinshasa clashed with the police. (CHE 3.29.; ARB, 3/1; UDASA)

April 6 **Benin. University of Cotonou.**
A teachers' strike began throughout the country. The teachers demanded the payment of four months' salary arrears, the withdrawal of the 50% reduction in their salaries (introduced following an agreement between Benin and the IMF), the unconditional liberation of all teachers, pupils, and students held during the strike and the reintegration of 401 teachers dismissed in March for striking. Cotonou University was paralyzed for six months by striking students demanding several months arrears in grant payments. (ARB, 8/15)

May 26-31 **Nigeria. Universities of Lagos, Ibadan, Benin.**
Beginning at the University of Benin on May 26, university students across Nigeria demonstrated against the IMF/World Bank-inspired structural adjustment policies adopted by the government. The demonstrations often left the campuses and led to confrontations with the security forces. At least six people were killed in

Lagos, after the police, some on helicopters, fired on the students. The government was forced to concede a welfare program called a "SAP Relief Package," the establishment of a mass transit scheme, the People's Bank, and a review of the minimum wage. (CHE 6.7.89; ARB, 6/15; NW, 6/12)

July 5 **Benin. University of Cotonu.**
Students went on strike for almost six months, demanding several months arrears in grant payments. This was concomitant with a nationwide teachers strike that began on April 5. The teachers demanded the payment of four months' salary arrears and the withdrawal of the 50% reduction in their salaries introduced following an agreement between Benin's government and the IMF. (ARB; 6/15)

October **Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.**
The university was closed for three weeks after students protested against the government's performance in the previous year, "which has been marked by corruption in high places and unhappiness in the urban areas over an inflationary economy and rising unemployment. The Police raided the campus to break up a seminar called by the students to discuss corruption within the Government." (NYT, 11/16/89) "The campus disorder has led to the indefinite closure of one of Africa's most successful and prestigious universities." (ACAS #30)

Oct. 30 **Uganda. Makerere University.**
Students began boycotting classes in protest of a government decision in August to withdraw allowances for books, travel, and other expenses. The government closed the university on Nov. 10. (ARB, 11/15)

Nov. **Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.**
The University temporarily reopened but the newly elected president of the suspended student government said the students would oppose the new law that gave the government draconian powers over the university. (THES, 11/20)

1990

Jan. 11-14 **Algeria. The Higher School for Technical Education (ENSET). The Universities of Bab-Ezzouar, Tizi-Ouzou, Setif, and M'Sila. Tiaret Veterinary Institute.**

Students all over the country demonstrated against a reduction in their grants, and for an improvement in the quality of university education and better access to employment at the end of their studies. About 50 people were injured in a clash between ENSET students and the police. Meanwhile in Tiaret a student was hospitalized after clashes with Islamicists opposed to the presence of a woman in the training room of the national judo team. (ARB, 2/15)

Feb. 9 **Niger. University of Niamey.**

Students boycott classes protesting the reductions in educational funding mandated by the SAP negotiated by the government with the IMF and World Bank. During the course of a peaceful demonstration the police fired on demonstrators killing 3 (according to official police sources) or 14 (according to student leaders). Many others were wounded. (Ibrahim and Niandou Souley 1996)

Feb. 20 **Tunisia. Technical College of Tunis. Nabeul University. Faculties in Sfaz, Sousse, Kairouan, and Gabes.**

Students connected to the Tunisian General Union of Students (UGTE) occupied buildings and faculties throughout the country to demand the abolition of police stations on campus premises and the reintegration of four UGTE members expelled from the university. (ARB, 3/1)

March-May **Nigeria. University Campuses Throughout the Nation.**

Students and faculty began to protest nationwide in March against the government's decision to accept a $120 million university restructuring loan from the World Bank. They were especially critical of some of the conditions for the loan, for example, the provision requiring the closing of many departments and programs. They charged that this loan was a means by which U.S. and European

interests were "highjacking" the Nigerian university system. In April, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) gave the Babangida government a one month ultimatum to address the socio-political crisis faced by the nation. The military government responded with an armed assault on the campuses and the arrest of hundreds of NANS members. Hundreds of others were expelled from the university system. As the movement was gaining support, a military coup was staged on April 22 which, after initial successes, was crushed by forces loyal to Gen. Babangida. The government used the failed coup as a cover to intensify the repression of NANS. (CAFA#3; CDHR, 1991)

May 11 **Zaire. Massacre at the University of Lubumbashi.**

At least 52 students were killed by a "death commando" belonging to the military intelligence service who bayoneted some and cut the throats of others. Their bodies were burned in a mass grave. On the morning of May 11 the students had been demonstrating against President Mobuto Sese Seko, and had clashed with the police when they tried to march into Lubumbashi. According to a 1992 Report by the UN Commission on Human Rights, on that same night, the electric power to the campus was cut, then a death squad arrived on campus with a list of names; aided by informers, they tracked down the students, killed them with knives, bayonets, and iron bars, and then rampaged through the campus. "When targeted students could not be found, the attackers killed, beat and set afire occupants of neighboring rooms...leaving a trail of debris-pillaged and burned buildings, wounded and bleeding students, and dead bodies. A second raid was conducted just hours later...military and intelligence agents assaulted the campus, killed more students and removed the corpses by plane." In order to eliminate the evidence of the killings, dormitories, research facilities, and classrooms were destroyed. (CHE 3. 8. 92; AW, Volume 4, Issue 9)

June 25 **Zambia. University of Zambia, Lusaka.**

Students protested the doubling of the price of cornmeal, a staple in the population's diet. Police opened fire on student demonstrators, killing one and wounding four. (AR&HRA)

Sept. 5 Sudan. Khartoum University.
The university was closed after students began a strike. (ARB, 9/1])

Sept. 17 Kenya. Egerton University.
Boycotting students protested against the implementation of a new assessment method. They clashed with the riot police who used tear gas; at least seven students and one policeman were injured. (ARB, 9/30)

Nov. Sudan. Gezira University.
Students protested the summary dismissal of secularist or left-wing professors. 400 students were arrested. (AF&HRF)

Nov. 10 Swaziland. University of Swaziland, Kwaluseni.
Students demanded the reinstatement of a student leader and the improvement of the quality of food. The students presented a petition listing their demands and collected food in plastic garbage bags which they threw at the doors of the administration building. The police stormed the campus on Nov. 14 and wounded or injured 300 students, five seriously. (AF&HRA)

Nov. 23 Guinea. Conakry University.
Two students were killed and three others were wounded during clashes between striking students and the police, who used their weapons. The students had been on strike for over a month in protest against the loss of their grants and the poor quality of teaching. (ARB, 12/1)

Dec. 1 Uganda. Makerere University.
Students protested the cutting of stationery and travel allowances. The police fired into a crowd of protesting students, killing two. (AF&HRA)

1991

March 18 Zambia. University of Zambia, Lusaka.
Students were ordered to leave the campus by heavily armed paramilitary and riot police. Some students said that this closure was prompted by a planned strike by university teachers called to demand the reinstatement of the university press production manager, who had been suspended for publishing articles in support of multiparty democracy.(AF&HRA)

April 16 Benin. National University of Benin.
Students went on strike demanding the payment of all grant arrears and an improvement of their living and working conditions. One student was wounded in clashes with the security forces. The university was closed down on April 30. (ARB, 5/1)

April-May Tunisia. University of Tunisia, Tunis.
Police raided the university and clashed with Moslem students sticking up political posters. Students in turn attacked security posts on the campus. The main Islamic student Union, the UGTE, was banned at the end of March. (ARB, 6/1)

April 20 Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.
Students began a class boycott which lasted several weeks to protest the new University Amendment Bill which gave draconian powers to government officials over students and faculty. (CAFA#2)

May 17 Zaire. Technical Institute for Applied Sciences, Kinshasa.
Two students were reported killed and twenty others injured by the police. The Secretary of State for Education, Mme Issalu ("Mother Courage") was injured in the demonstration. (ARB, 6/1)

May 27-28 Nigeria. University of Jos. Yaba College of Technology (Lagos).
Students held a demonstration in Jos in support of National Association of Nigerian Students' (NANS) ultimatum to the government concerning the need to solve the economic crisis facing the nation. NANS demanded the reinstatement of students who had been sus-

pended at a number of campuses, the unbanning of student unions on several campuses, reforms in the university administration, and an increase in student bursary allowances. 13 students were arrested during the demonstration, facing charges of rioting, destruction of property, and arson. On the next day, the Yaba College student union came out publicly in support of the NANS ultimatum. In response, the Rector banned the student union. The union then called a demonstration in front of the Rector's house. Two students were killed by security forces during the demonstration. Hundreds of students were arrested throughout the country in the course of rallies called to protest the killings. Many of the arrested students were tortured. (CAFA#3; AG 6/24/91; AW, 10/91)

June 21 **Cote d'Ivoire. University of Cote d'Ivoire at Yopaugon.**

The government banned FESCI, the autonomous student union, after security forces interrupted a FESCI conference that was discussing allegations that four students had been killed by troops stationed on campus. (ARB, 7/1)

June 30 **Kenya. Moi University in Eldoret.**

Students began a protest against a revision of the loan scheme requiring them to pay fees in the coming academic year, thereby reducing their money allowances. One student was killed and several others were injured in clashes with riot police. The university was subsequently closed. (ARB, 7/15)

July-Aug. **Sudan. University of Khartoum.**

Students protested over the announced closure of their boarding houses and the cessation of free meals; official efforts to undermine the student union; and efforts to "Islamicize" the curriculum. Violent clashes left two students dead and many others injured by Security Forces. (Fund for Peace 1992)

Sept. 11 **Cote d'Ivoire. National University.**

A two-month strike of university teachers ended and the university reopened. The union went on strike after accusing the government of having violated academic freedom by attacking a university hostel and stationing troops on the campus. The government removed

the troops from the campus and lifted a ban on union meetings on university grounds. (ARB, 9/1-30)

October **Nigeria. Kaduna State.**
Secondary school students demonstrated against the high cost of WAEC examination fees and the introduction by the state government of a compulsory 450-Naira fee to buy its textbooks. The West African Examination Council explained that the rise of its exam fees was due to the hiking cost of printing question papers and freight charges. (AC 1/27)

October. **Sudan. University of Juba**
Twenty-two students were killed as they were trying to flee the city of Juba in the wake of a crackdown on student protest against the imposition of Arabic as the medium of academic instruction. Many other students were detained and schools were closed. (Hamad 1995: 86)

Nov. 9 **Botswana. University of Botswana.**
University students protested against the firing of at least 18,000 striking manual workers by the government. The workers were sacked after striking for two days for higher wages. (ARB, 12/1-31)

Dec. **Senegal. University of Dakar.**
Students began a two-month strike demanding better living and studying conditions. The strike ended on Feb. 12, 1992, after the government agreed to increase the University budget, to create 147 new teaching jobs, to increase the student's grants, to improve medical and transport services for the students, and to increase the number of classrooms. (ARB, 2/1-29/92)

1992

Jan. 25 **Comoros. National Institute of Higher Education (ENES).**
Students decided to boycott classes at ENES to protest the lack of resources, charging that it made it impossible for the school to function. Subsequently also high school and *lycee* students demonstrated,

in order to draw attention to the shortage of teachers, while the teachers themselves launched an indefinite strike following a government decision to eliminate their benefits. (ARB, 1/1-31)

Feb. 5 **Gabon. Omar Bongo University of Libreville and the Masuku University of Science and Technology.**

The government decided to close "until further notice" the two universities following protests by students who were demanding a three-month extension of their grants. (ARB, 2/1-28)

Feb. 13-18 **Cote d'Ivoire. Abidjan**

1,000 students gathered on Feb. 13 in the business center of Abidjan to protest the government's continuing support for General Robert Guei, after he was named in a government report as the "sole instigator" of a brutal raid on students at the University of Ivory Coast, Yopougon campus, on the night of May 17, 1991. The police attacked the demonstrators with tear gas, stun grenades, and truncheons, injuring at least 25 people. On February 18, some 20,000 people, including students, faculty, and supporters marched in Abidjan to demand the release from police custody of the student union leaders. More than 140 among the protesters were arrested. (CIAF letter)

Feb. 1-14 **Tanzania. University of Dar es Salaam.**

Students began a strike to demand the reinstatement of ten of their colleagues who had been expelled, and the scrapping of a cost-sharing scheme due to start in August. Under this scheme they would have had to pay for part of their tuition fees. Two hundred and forty engineering students were expelled during the strike. (ARB, 2/1-28; CAFA#3)

Feb. 29 **Togo. University of Togo, Lome.**

The government closed the university and banned all campus gatherings and meetings because of protests over student grants. (ARB, 2/1-18)

March 16 Benin. University of Benin in Abomey-Calavi.
Several hundred students, out of the 13,000 registered at the University, began a strike and demonstrated in front of the Education Ministry to protest against the non-payment of grants and the expulsion of four of their colleagues. In response to the strike, on March 17th, at dawn, numerous armed and helmeted gendarmes moved in at the Abomey-Calavi campus (20km from Cotonou). To protest the presence of the gendarmes on campus the students on March 17th boycotted the lectures (ARB, 3/1-31)

May Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.
After a meeting called to protest against the reduced value of grants, which inflation had shrunk to poverty levels, several thousand students attempted to march into Harare and to confront the government. Para-military riot squads sealed the campus exits and fired tear gas at the students, who retaliated by pelting them with stones. The rioting continued for two days and spread to Bulawayo, where the students clashed with the police. The students, incensed by the controversial, "non-socialist" World Bank program of economic reconstruction agreed to by Mugabe, mocked the government by singing re-worded songs from the guerrilla war of the 1970s. (THES, 5/15/92)

May 9-13 Nigeria. University of Ibadan and Lagos.
Students at Ibadan began to protest against the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program, which they accused of being responsible for the deterioration of campus facilities and education programs. A few days later, the students in Lagos also began to protest, this time against the doubling of the price of public transport. The police responded by shooting at the demonstrators, wounding at least five students. (CAFA#3; Appendix 1)

June Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.
The University of Zimbabwe expelled its 10,000 students and abolished the Students Representative Council following a month of class boycotts and sometimes violent demonstrations called to demand higher grants. The academic authorities decided that the students would have to leave the campus and reapply in order to be readmitted. They also made it clear that the time the students would

miss would not be taken into account for examinations. The students had demanded higher grants, saying a 25% increase had been swallowed by a jump in fees. *Southscan* commented that the government seemed to have won the latest round of its long war against the students at the University of Zimbabwe, but with poverty certain to increase under ESAP, the economic structural adjustment plan, the government could win only a temporary respite. (ARB, 6/1-30)

July 10 Niger.
Students occupied the mayor's office and the prefecture in N'Konni (400km east of Niamey) in order to protest the four-months delay in the payment of their grants. On the same day, Nigerien students studying in Nigeria invaded their embassy in Lagos and their consulate in Kano demanding that the government pay their registration fees at Nigerian universities, as originally promised. Niger students in Russia had already been occupying the Niger embassy in Moscow for a month, for the same reason. (ARB, 7/1-31)

July 14 Niger.
The Minister of National Education and Research, Mr. Boube Gado, and the Ministry's General Secretary, Mr. Chaibou Dan-Inna, were held hostage in their ministry in Niamey (Niger) on July 14th by a hundred students who demanded the payment of both their delayed grants and the registration fees for their colleagues studying at Nigerian Universities. Both officers were released on July 15th after the students were promised that their demands would be met. The student delegate who announced this said that the government had agreed to pay arrears in registration fees estimated at CFA 30 million, with priority being given to students in Nigeria. The Niger authorities also promised to send a mission to Nigeria to renew the education pact between the two countries, which had expired on December 31, 1991. (ARB, 7/1-30)

July Zambia. University of Zambia.
More than 1,000 students clashed with the police outside the campus in the course of a protest against the cuts of their book and meal allowances, which they wanted doubled. The students also protested the suspension of an official in the Agriculture Ministry who had

denounced that the "emergency" food, imported to alleviate the shortages arising from the drought, was rotten. The official had been accused of spreading "undue alarm." 16 students were arrested and many were beaten by the police in the course of the demonstration. (THES, 7/24/92)

August Nigeria
Students at several universities staged rallies in support of the striking teachers, after the government banned the teachers union on July 22, and told the teachers to evacuate their campus premises. The students pledged they would stand firmly behind the teachers and would defend them against government and police attacks. University of Ibadan students said they would form vigilantes to forestall any attempt by the government to arrest the teachers and declared classrooms a "no-go area" for students until the teachers' demands would be met. Similar initiatives and protests were organized by students at the University of Ogun, Lagos, Ahmadu Bello, Port Harcourt and Enugu. At the University of Benin the students unanimously resolved to "proscribe" the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC). (WA 8/10-16, AG 8/17)

August Russia. Embassy of Mali.
Protesting Mali students in Moscow took their ambassador and senior diplomats hostage for three days. The move was the latest step in an ongoing protest by students from 12 African states against subsistence-level grants. The students had been protesting, staging sit-ins, and in some cases fasting outside their embassies for nearly two months. (THES, 8/14)

August 26 Nigeria. The Polytechnic of Calabar.
The Polytechnic was shut indefinitely following rioting by students protesting the non-payment of the 1991-1992 bursaries. Two people, a student and a bystander, lost their lives in the riot, apparently victims of stray bullets after the police were called in. (WA 9/7-3)

1993

Jan. 20 **Burkino Faso. University of Burkino Faso, Ouagadougou.**

Several thousand students protested against the cut of university grants and demanded the payment of arrears. The next day the police occupied the campus to prevent further demonstrations. (ARB, 1/1-31)

Jan. 20-25 **Cameroon. University of Yaounde.**

The University of Yaounde remained shut down as President Biya signed a series of decrees, increasing university fees to CFA francs 50,000 per year. In response the students announced that they would embark on an indefinite strike action, as soon as the government would implement its "cost sharing plan." University lecturers were also planning a strike action if their salary arrears were not regularized. (ARB, 1/1-31)

Feb. **Mali. Katibougou Polytechnic Institute.**

Students at the polytechnic set ablaze both a campus building and the regional governor's residence in protests against a cut in their grants. (ARB, 2/1-28)

March 13 **Benin. University of Benin.**

Students at a general assembly decided to continue their strike (begun in early February) called to demand "greater justice in the distribution of grants." (ARB, 3/1-31)

March 15 **Mali. National School of Engineers.**

Several hundred students and pupils attacked the national radio station, the Communications Ministry, and the National School of Engineers in an ongoing campaign, begun on Oct. 1992, aimed at obtaining better working conditions and grants. (ARB, 3/1-31)

March 15 **Cote d'Ivoire. University of Abidjan at Adjame-Abobo**

Two-thirds of the 3,000 students registered at Adjame-Abobo, one of Abidjan's two universities, began a strike to demand a revision of their educational program and an improvement in their grant levels and housing conditions. They were demanding that all first-year students be given grants and places in university residences. Only medical and pharmaceutical students followed the strike, with chemistry, biology, and geology students continuing to attend classes. (ARB, 3/1-31)

March 23 **Ghana. University of Ghana, Legon.**

Students boycotted classes and demonstrated for an increase in student loans. Police invaded the campus and beat and shot several students. In the aftermath of the police occupation of the campus the university was closed. (ARB, 5/1-31)

April 9. **Mali. Bamako.**

President Konare announced the resignation of his government four days after an upsurge of violent demonstrations in Bamako by students and pupils who set fire to several public buildings, including the National Assembly. Through their actions the demonstrators had wanted to attack the "symbols" of the state, which they saw as responsible for their lack of prospects. One person had died and 45 had been wounded, including 20 from the security forces, in the April 5th incidents. (ARB, 4/1-20)

April 28-May 3. **Chad. N'Djamena and Algeria. Embassy of Chad.**

The Police used tear gas on April 28 to disperse a demonstration in N'Djamena by students calling for an increase in the size of their grants. On May 3, also Chadian students in Algiers took over the premises of the Chadian Embassy and held the ambassador hostage. The students were protesting the "failure of the Chadian authorities to satisfy their demands." (ARB, 5/1-31])

April 26-28 **Cameroon. University of Yaounde.**

As part of its cost-recovery program, the Cameroon government introduced a $200.00 fee on every university student. The university's

action was criticized by many as too taxing and too hastily implemented. "How can government suddenly ask us to pay fees for university students when they have just reduced our salaries and when farmers have not been paid for the last three seasons?" asked one parent. Authorities set April 30 as the deadline for payment. Those failing to pay will not be allowed to sit for midyear examinations in early May. The university authorities dismissed 18 students for involvement in radical activities including organizing opposition to the payment of the tuition fee. The expelled students have been banned from any Cameroonian university for life. (IPS, 4/28 & 29)

May 25. Ghana. The University of Ghana (Legon).
The university was closed indefinitely. The decision was taken after the police on May 23 stormed the student halls, beating up and wounding several students. The police had gone to disperse students demonstrations organized to demand an increase in student loans. (ARB May 1-31)

May 21-27 Mozambique. Eduardo Mondlane University
A number of students went on strike demanding that the university management increase their scholarship grants, improve transport to and from the university campus, reduce fees and improve the campus facilities and the quality of teaching. (Mf, June)

August. Sudan.
29 students were dismissed from the Al-Sharq and Wadi al-Nil universities for involvement in political activities on campus and violation of the ban on freedom of expression and association. Some of the students had rejected an order by the vice-chancellor demanding that they dismantle the *suhuf al-ha'ti*, the student handwritten wall newspapers. (Hamad 1995 :85)

November. Sudan
300 students were arrested following protests against the alleged vote-rigging by the New Islamic Front in the elections of the Khartoum University Students Union. (Hamad 1995: 85)

December 18. Chad.
The government closed the university and all schools until further notice. On December 20th, the Minister of Education said that the shutdown was caused by the students' and teachers' discontent and defiance of governmental authority. (ARB: Dec. 1-31)

1994

January. Cameroon.
73 secondary school teachers, who had been on strike since November 24, 1993, had their salaries suspended, starting from January 1994.

January 7 Niger.
Fifty students were arrested and forty were injured after clashing with the campus police, following a demonstration organized the day before to demand the payment of several months of grant arrears and the improvement of working conditions. The government decided to close the university for an indefinite period and to force the students to leave the campus.

On January 10, hundreds of secondary school students began a strike in solidarity with the university students and to demand five months of arrears of study allowances. There were also demonstrations in other parts of the country; the university student initiative also had the support of the union confederation USTN.

The school was reopened on January 17; and on January 19 there was a demonstration to demand the release of the Secretary General of the Niger School Union, who had been detained. (ARB, 1/1-31)

Feb. Cameroon.
73 secondary school teachers who had been on strike on a wage dispute since November 24 were dismissed. (ARB, 2/1-28)

Feb. 1. Mali.
Students went on strike to obtain higher grants. In response, President Konare ordered schools and colleges closed down and banned

pupils' meetings after students attacked the house of the Minister of Education. (ARB, 3/1-31)

March 1. Malawi.
More than 25,000 school and college teachers demanding better pay and working conditions went on strike throughout the country. (ARB, 3/1-31)

March 12. Nigeria. The University of Lagos
The University of Lagos was closed down after an effort by students to stop secret cult activity. (ARB, 3/1-31)

April 14 Congo. Marien N'Gouabi University
Students began an indefinite strike demanding payment of two of their nine months grant payment arrears. The government has run a competitive system for awards of grants for graduates going on to higher studies since 1985. (ARB 4/1-30)

April. Togo.
12,000 students staged a 72-hours warning strike starting on April 19th to demand the payment of three months arrears and demand an improvement in their studying and living conditions. (ARB, 4/1-30)

May 10 Uganda.
Students from Makerere University and The Institute of Teacher Education, Kyombo, were confronted by anti-riot police as they were holding a peaceful march along Kampala Road to protest the government introduction of a cost-sharing plan in the higher education institutes. The government had made available to students loans of sh 4.5 million per year, to be repaid after the students obtain employment; but the students objected that, given the general state of impoverishment in the country, it was unrealistic to hope that these loans may address the students' problems. (*The New Vision*, 4/13 and 4/17)

May 18. Niger.
There were violent clashes between students and police in Niamey. The students were demanding the payment of 20,000 CFA francs,

which they usually get at the beginning of the term. One demonstrator was injured. (ARB, 5/1-31)

June. Congo.
President Lissouba announced the cancellation of the academic year because of the ongoing protest by students who since April had been mobilizing to demand the payment of 15 months of grant arrears. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June 20. Cote d'Ivoire.
FESCI (The Federation of University and High School Students) agreed to suspend the strike it had called. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June. Gabon. University of Omar Bongo
After a day of violent student protest on June 14th, the government decided to close down the University of Omar Bongo in Libreville. The students had been on strike since May 26th calling for a rise in their grants following the CFA franc devaluation. On June 6th, the students held a demo on campus. On the 8th, the police intervened to break up groups of students who were erecting road blocks. On June 9th, the Minister of Education announced that to help the students the government would reduce the monthly rent for dormitory rooms by CFA 2,000 and would increase the grants by CFA 3,000 bringing them to CFA 66,000 per month. He added that the government could not afford further increases since the grant was part of a total package negotiated with the International Monetary Fund. (ARB 6/1-30)

June. Ghana.
Teachers throughout the country went on strike on June 1st to draw attention to their grievances. The Ghana Association of Teachers called for the payment of pensions on consolidated salaries in conformity with the Teachers' Pension Ordinance of 1955, and the re-establishment of the Ghana Education Service Council. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June 15. Kenya. Moi University
The main campus of Moi University was closed down. Students had gone on strike demanding the release of exams results. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June. Guinea.
In June trouble broke out during the final exams. Students were demanding the settlement of their grants and the repayment of school expenses; as the authorities refused, the student protest broke out, resulting in ten students being put under judicial inquiry for "inciting rebellion." (ARB 11/1-30)

July 5. Nigeria. Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.
Sixteen students were expelled and rusticated by the Polytechnic authorities for alleged misconduct following a peaceful protest in March to demand better academic and welfare conditions. (CDHR Newsletter, Sept. 1994)

July 12. Benin.
One student was injured during clashes between the police and 2,000 students trying to hold a general assembly at the Abomey Calavi campus. The students were demanding some clarification about the time tables of final exams. (ARB, 7/1-31)

Aug. 17-19. Nigeria. State University of Benin.
On August 17 students began a protest which was immediately answered by armed policemen firing tear-gas canisters, the arrest and beating of the student union president, and the fatal shooting of a student. Student protests continued the next day and the university authorities demanded that the students vacate the campus within hours. However, since the oil workers were on strike, most students could not leave. On August 19th a special squad of anti-riot policemen was drafted down from Abuja and proceeded to kill, rape and brutalize students that remained on campus. (CDHR Newsletter, Sept. 1994)

August 19. Nigeria. Edo State University (Ekpoma)
Four students were shot dead by a combined team of police, army, and special security agents during a demonstration in the course of

which the houses of Labor and Productivity Minister Ogbemudia, Chief Annenih, and Admiral Aikhomy were damaged because of their alleged anti-democratic stance. (CDHR Newsletter, Sept. 1994)

November 16. Burkina Faso
Students boycotted classes to protest about university conditions. (ARB 11/1-30)

November. Congo.
The academic year that usually starts in October was delayed because students and teachers demanded the payment of grants and salaries arrears before the start of classes (the teachers had not been paid salaries for 12 months). Meanwhile three civil servants unions called for an indefinite general strike that was to start on November 8th, but called it off after an agreement was reached with the government on civil servant pay.

On November 10th the student union called upon the 17,000 students of the University of Brazzaville to protest the government education policy. On the 11th the police in Brazzaville broke up a demonstration of about 100 students who demanded the payment of six months' grant arrears. (ARB, 11/1-30)

1995

May 17. Burkino Faso. University of Ouagadougou.
University students began a 48-hour strike to protest against the killing of two fifteen-year-old students during a demonstration on May 9. The demonstration was held to protest the teachers' refusal to hold exams as part of a pay-claim action. (ARB, 5/1-31)

August 1 Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe
Riot police fired tear gas at more than 1,000 student demonstrators. The demonstrators were demanding the lifting of the university's suspension of 16 student leaders, of the representatives of a workers' committee, and of a law lecturer. The confrontation was preceded by more than a month of student protests against alleged discrepancies in subsidy payments. The university had been closed for a week in early July after students clashed with riot police. (ARB, 8/1-31)

Sept. 11-12. Sudan.
For two days thousands of students held anti-government demonstrations in the capital and clashed with the police. The protests were sparked by the detention of three students earlier in the month and by protests against bread shortages and the government's Islamicizing program. Two were killed, seventeen were wounded, and hundreds were detained. (NYT, 9/13/95; ARB, 9/1-30)

Nov. Mali
Pupils and students throughout Mali instigated a school crisis by demanding the payment of their holiday grants and an improvement in school conditions. (ARB, 1/1-31, 1996)

Nov. 17 Kenya. Kenyatta University.
Kenyatta University was closed by the Vice-Chancellor, a few days after its opening, in response to student riots caused by dissatisfaction over food, loans, and accommodations. The students claimed that the Higher Education Loans Board was unfair and favored the rich in awarding the loans; they also complained that they were being crowded into small rooms, that food prices were too high and the food was of poor quality. "At the heart of the matter are the World Bank recommended policies which require substantial cost sharing in the provision of essential services such as education and health." (*The Weekly Review* [Kenya], 11/24/95)

Nov. 30 Nigeria. Obafemi Awolowo University
More than a thousand professors and students held a rally on November 10 to protest the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists. A few days before, the Communication Minister's visit to the campus was disrupted by teachers chanting slogans against the military regime and denouncing the killings of the nine activists. (International Freedom of Expression and Exchange Diary, January/February 1996)

1996

Jan. 4-15 Mali.
A student general strike was called after the arrest of student lead-

ers. It ended through the mediation of prominent members of society and after the freeing of the arrested students. (ARB, 1/1-31)

May 2-8 Cameroon. Yaounde University
Students began a week-long strike to demand improved working conditions and the abolition of recently imposed fees. On May 8, the Rector announced the abolition of the most unpopular measures. (ARB, 5/1-31)

June 11 Zaire. Institut superier de commerce
One hundred students clashed with police leaving a dozen students and eight policemen slightly injured. The students were demonstrating the beating of a student during an altercation with a police officer earlier in the day. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June 16 Cameroon. Yaounde University
200 students were arrested after the higher education minister banned four leaders of the May strike from the university for life. The protest movement continued in university campuses on Douala and at Tian in Western Province. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June 20 Nigeria. Kaduna Polytechnic
Six students and two policemen were killed in clashes. (ARB, 6/1-30)

December 17-18 Kenya. Kenyatta University and Egerton University
Three Kenyatta University students were shot dead by the police during a demonstration held to commemorate the killing of an Egerton University student on December 17. The students were "just marching inside the campus, waving leaves and twigs to signify peace, when the police opened fire," according to Maina Kariuki, a student leader. The demonstration that led up to the shootings was also held to protest against discriminatory distribution of education loans. (ARB, 12/1-31, 1996)

1997

Jan. 21 Cote D'Ivoire. University of Abidjan
The student union, FESCI, called a three day strike to protest the arrest of three of its members and the death of another student. Students clashed with the police on the evening of January 21, exchanging stones with bullets. Though banned, the FESCI had been leading a campaign for increased student accommodations and the payment of grants. (ARB, 1/1-31)

Jan. 28-Feb. 10 Burkina Faso. Ouagadougou University
The National Association of Burkinabe Students (ANEB) called a strike that lasted two weeks demanding the payment of CAFA 160,000 to non-grant receiving students. They also asked for a direct bus link to the campus and health care for all students. During the strike the government arrested four leaders of the ANEB and released them on Feb. 9. (ARB, 2/1-28)

February 23-24 Kenya. University of Nairobi
Hundreds of students at the University of Nairobi's Kikuyu campus (12 miles from Nairobi) and in the center of the city protested the killing of Solomon Muruli, a student leader in the protests against police brutality and deteriorating living conditions on campus. Muruli had identified a police officer who had kidnapped and tortured him in late 1996. He had received death threats and expressed fear for his life. On early February 23 he was burned to death by a fire caused by an explosion in his dormatory room. Waving tree branches students blocked the center of Nairobi chanting, "We are tired of being killed by police. We want Justice!"

March 11 Zambia. University of Zambia
The University of Zambia was closed after students demonstrated over the non-payment of allowances. (ARB, 3/1-31)

March 14, 17, and 20 Congo. Marien Ngouabi University
Students demonstrated on these three days to demand the payment of 16 months of scholarship arrears. All these demonstrations were dispersed by the police. (ARB, 3/1-31)

April 11 Cote D'Ivoire. University of Bouake
The University of Bouake was closed after a student strike demanding more scholarships. During the strike the administration building and the University Welfare Services Center were damaged. Administration and private cars were also set on fire. (ARB, 4/1-30)

Early September Cote D'Ivoire. University of Abidjan
The University of Abidjan had been the scene of student demonstrations and strikes from the beginning of the year. The demonstrations were called by FESCI demanding the payment of grant arrears and the reorganization of the academic year. The government ordered police barracks to be put on the Yopugon campus of the university in early September. (ARB, 9/1-30)

September 15 Central African Republic. University of Bangui
Students put up barricades in one of Bangui's central roads to demand the payment of six months of grant arrears and the release of their grade books which are essential to the continuation of their studies. These grade books were being held back by the workers of the state education department who also were demanding back pay. (ARB, 9/1-30)

October 18 Togo.
University students met with General Eyadema and submitted a series of demands which included the building of new lecture halls, the modernization of the library, the raising of student grants, the improvement of housing and transport conditions. (ARB 10/1-31)

1998

January 21 Lome, Togo.
Students at the "University of Benin" in Lome began a 72 hour strike in protest against the police's attempt to disperse a student demonstration about grants which led to the wounding of several students. The students claimed that the police had created "an atmosphere of fear and mistrust" on campus. The Education Ministry published a document criticizing the student strike and claiming

that the student grant was "neither a right, nor a salary." (ARB, 2/1-28)

Early March Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe
Students went on strike demanding a 253% increase in their living allowances to cover escalating costs. The stipend had been stuck at $ZW 700 per semester (about $43.75 U.S.) for the last two years, even as the minimum wage declined to $ZW 19.50 per day (about $1.22 U.S.). (*Infusion*, October 1998)

March 23 Kenya. University of Nairobi
The Police clashed with demonstrating students in central Nairobi. Using slingshots to keep the paramilitary and riot police off the campus, the students burned cars and smashed shop windows. The government closed the university in the afternoon. The action followed an advertisement in the *Daily Nation* which offered degrees in medicine for "privately sponsored students" with minimal educational requirements. Students claimed that the administration was selling off university places and denounced the recent scandal involving the sale of degree certificates. (ARB, 3/1-31)

May 4 Benin. Benin National University
Nigerien students took their ambassador hostage and demanded to receive their unpaid six month grant, and that the Nigerien government pay their enrollment fees due to the government of Benin. (ARB, 5/1-31)

May 11-12 Comoros
Students joined a broad civil servants' protest that brought the capital Moroni to a 48-hour stand still. (ARB, 5/1-31)

June 1-2 Zimbabwe. The University of Zimbabwe
On June 1 students sent a delegation to President Mugabe's office demanding a commission of inquiry into graft allegations against members of his administration an increase in student grants. On that same day, between 200 and 300 students protesting Mugabe's rule smashed shop windows in downtown Harare. On the next day, the University was closed following further student protests and

hundreds of riot police were deployed throughout the city. (ARB, 6/1-30)

June 12 Zimbabwe.
Police used tear gas to disperse over 2,500 students who blocked the Mutare-Harare highway to demand an increase in education loans and grants. Further demonstrations were held in Bulawayo, as the Mugabe government confronted the country's worse economic crisis since indepenence. (ARB, 6/1-30)

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Globalization and the Struggle for Education in the Niger Republic*

Ousseina Alidou

This paper presents a synoptic account of the impact of structural adjustment on education in the Niger Republic, after the government agreed, in the mid-1980s, under pressure by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other western funding agencies, to restructure its higher educational system according to what is known as the "globalization agenda."

The struggle for education in the Niger Republic is presently fueled by two major developments. First, there is the resistance of students, teachers, and researchers against the government's attempt to privatize the public high schools and the national university. These institutions have provided a liberal arts education and equal access to knowledge for all students, regardless of their socio-economic or political backgrounds. Teachers, researchers, and students are also rejecting the proposal presented by the ministry of higher education to transform the main national university into a teachers' training school (*ecole normale superieure*), in charge of graduating only middle-school and high-school teachers. They accuse this reform of ignoring the accomplishments of the national university and undermining its capacity to generate a significant body of scholars prepared to work in highly specialized fields of the arts and sciences.

The proposed restructuring of higher education also calls for increased governmental financial support to vocational schools, that are to be given precedence over university training in the arts and

sciences. Already, since the mid-1990s, the government has provided financial support to students voluntarily transferring from the university to the private vocational schools now proliferating in the capital city of Niamey. These private schools now offer technical and vocational training in such fields as accounting, computer programming, marketing, administration, and management. The promoters of this restructuring claim that polytechnic training provides "underdeveloped" countries like the Niger Republic with more qualified manpower and the technical and administrative skills demanded by the new global economy. University graduates with arts and sciences degrees are thus subject to discrimination in the new labor market, as it is assumed that their skills do not match the global economy's requirements.

It is argued that the new labor market does not need an "over-educated" personnel having no "practical" training. Thus, today, a high-school graduate with two years of training in vocational schools is more likely to be hired by local private companies and foreign NGOs than a university graduate with a Bachelor's or a Master's degree in the arts and sciences. (Since 1988, more than 90% of the Nigerien students who graduated from the national university or from foreign universities have joined the ranks of the unemployed). As a result, for the past ten years, the Niger Republic has witnessed numerous strikes by both high-school, sometimes even middle-school, and university students and teachers. In retaliation, the government has closed the high schools and the national university, and has persecuted students and teachers (*CAFA Newsletter* N. 10). Several sites on the national university campus have been named in memory of the comrades who were gunned down by military brutality during student protests from the mid 1980's to the present.

Since 1988, only the medical school and the school of agronomy have been able to function on a more or less regular basis, while the Faculty of Letters and Humanities, the Faculty of Economics and Law, and the Faculty of Sciences have been continually dysfunctional. The former two schools continue to operate only because, from the start, they have been structured in such a way that part of their students' training is carried out in France or neighboring African universities, technologically more equipped to accommodate the research that graduate students need to undertake to complete their educational programs. Students from these two faculties are

also more likely to receive financial support from the Nigerien government or from France, while students from other disciplines, categorized as 'less practical' and useful for the country's developmental needs (as recently identified by World Bank and IMF), are abandoned to themselves.

The crippling of the higher education system in the Niger Republic follows the pattern found in many other "developing" countries, and here too its goal is to create the conditions for the transformation of the world into a "marketplace." Thus, over time, upon advice by the World Bank and the IMF, subsequent Nigerien governments have begun to suspend students' stipends and the salaries of civil servants at all levels. Today, the withdrawal of stipends, salaries, and funds for university administration and research is the norm. There has also been an escalation in political persecution. To undermine students' and teachers' protest, mainly directed against the World Bank and IMF, the university campuses have been besieged by the police or the military, who have detained militant students and tortured them sometimes to the point of death. The government has also resorted to closing the campuses and forcing students to return to their homes, away from the capital city where the university is located, hoping to depoliticize and destroy the students' and teachers' unions.

This maneuver has nearly paralyzed higher education. Its disastrous effects are a far cry from the revitalization and "capacity building" suggested by the World Bank's structural adjustment slogans or by the concept of "globalization." What they amount to is the sacrifice of the future of the younger generations of Nigerien students who normally would be expected to make a major contribution to the production of knowledge in their country.

Since 1988, the Universite of Niamey, the main national university, has ceased to produce college graduates on a regular basis. The freezing of high school graduation examinations, by a governmental decision, allegedly in retaliation against students' protest, is in fact a means to check the growth of university enrollment. This strategy has generated a sense of despair, nationwide, among teenagers, who now turn to drugs, prostitution, and other self-destructive activities.

Short-term consultancy work, in projects designed by the World Bank and other western funding agencies operating in the country,

is now one of the few sources of income for many qualified teachers/researchers and college graduates struggling to make ends meet. The "donor" agencies determine the research projects, set the framework within which the results have to be processed, and provide the personnel for them. They mostly put their trust in the hands of foreign experts; in most cases, however, the "experts" lack a clear understanding of the local problems they are called on to solve and, in the end, have to be trained by the local teachers, researchers, and graduates who work under their supervision. This pattern well shows that the World Bank and IMF have a total disregard for local academics, and are not interested in cooperating with them to assess the actual needs of the university.

Recently, a German bilateral cooperation agency, the German Aid Agency, known in Niger as GTZ provided funds for a bilingual educational reform that is to promote the use of Nigerien languages both as subjects and as mediums of instruction in the school curriculum. This initiative may seem progressive by comparison with the educational programs supported by France, as it recognizes the importance of national languages in the curriculum. However, its insistence on making the project conditional upon negotiations with the *Agence de Cooperation Culturelle et Technique* (the French Cultural and Technical Cooperation Agency), rather than upon negotiations with the local institutions in charge of educational reform, indicates that ideologically GTZ has the same colonial, control-seeking agenda. The head of the GTZ project, who is supposed to be the mediator between the funding agency and the national institutions associated with the project, is not even an expert in language education or in linguistics. He does not understand any of the local languages; and speaks very little French in a country where French is the official language and the main medium of instruction in the educational system that the project is intended to restructure. Not surprisingly, most of the Nigeriens who were lucky enough to have an interview with the head of the GTZ project came out wondering how the interviewer could assess their qualifications, as the language barrier had prevented any meaningful discussion of the issues pertaining to the country's educational crisis. No one, however, can protest against this cultural/educational take over, since the government and the international funding agencies have managed to freeze the power of the teachers' and students' unions. Thus,

the project's directors are not accountable to any Nigerien educational institution, but respond only to financing institutions whose headquarters are in Europe or the U.S. These projects are usually launched for a period of three to five years and have no interest in creating some continuity from one to the next.

The offer of consultancy contracts is a strategy also used by "donor" agencies for setting researchers or graduates up against each other, as hundreds of qualified people are lining up to compete for only one or two positions. It is built upon much discrimination, as only people who have patronage in the expatriate community or have political influence in the government are informed about the available positions. Often priority is given to applicants who have had prior experience in working with institutions such as USAID, GTZ (German Aid Agency), World Bank, and IMF, which effectively eliminates the new Nigerien graduates seeking their first job opportunity.

While structural adjustment policies have disastrous consequences for the majority of Nigerien students, teachers, civil servants, and peasants, they greatly benefit the children of the elite, the foreign consultants heading the programs financed by the "donor" agencies, and the U.S. students who are enrolled in "study abroad" programs in Niger. For the past ten years, while Nigerien students have been deprived of their fundamental right to education, U.S. and French private schools have been catering to the educational needs of children of the expatriate communities who are working for the World Bank, the IMF, the embassies, as well as the country's elite's children. The latter also benefit from the fellowships accredited to the state as part of bilateral cooperation programs, that allow them to pursue university training in Europe or the U.S. after they have graduated from French and U.S. private high schools. This exacerbates the elitism created by the educational system inherited from the French colonial system.

At the university level, the U.S. Study Abroad Programs, presumably established to promote a sister-relationship with the national university, continue to operate without any concern for the plight of teachers and students in Niger or any solidarity with them. In fact, the closing of the national university has created favorable conditions for the Study Abroad Programs, which now have at their disposal the *de facto* laid-off local university teachers/researchers

as well as the Nigerien university students or graduates who are seeking some means of survival.

The Nigerien teachers/researchers are hired for meager salaries as instructors; the Nigerien students, instead, find temporary employment as tutors and security guides for their U.S. peers, who pursue their academic goals in the country. This arrangement naturally raises many questions. "What is the real nature of these 'exchange programs'?" "What is being really exchanged, and for whose benefit?" Officially, of course, the exchange is between the US universities and the national university. But, in reality, U.S. academics mainly deal with the government, with the NGOs funded by agencies like the World Bank, IMF, UNICEF, and with the foreign embassies, rather than with their local academic partners in Niger. Some of the US students enrolled in the Study Abroad Programs, who become interested in extending their stay in the country, can easily find positions as interns, or part-time workers, in "donors"-sponsored educational projects or find training positions sponsored and supervised by the same hegemonic institutions. Some of them gradually become the "foreign experts," and eventually supervise the same Nigerien part-time consultants who were their teachers during their first years in the country as exchange program students.

The globalization trend also affects the teachers, researchers, and graduates who are not lucky enough to have part-time contracts with donor agencies, NGOs, or U.S. Study Abroad Programs. These less fortunate Nigeriens end up working as taxi-drivers, small-scale neighborhood vendors, and private tutors for the children of the elite. Some of them, who have given up the struggle for education, go down the very same path that destroyed their academic aspirations and accomplishments as they join political parties that promote the government's line. Job opportunities open up for former teachers, researchers, and militant students who, after abandoning the struggle for education, find positions in key government administrative offices and, often, represent the government in negotiations with striking students' or teachers' unions.

To sum up, the "globalization" of education sponsored by the World Bank and the IMF is a destructive program, that deprives African students and academics of the basic right to acquire an academic training and contribute to various fields of knowledge,

rather than being simply servants of the "global marketplace." Thus, the students' and teachers/researchers' struggle for education in the Niger Republic, as in many developing countries, is, in essence, an effort to resist the reduction of higher education to a market-driven, "global" commodity, manufactured for the benefit of multinational financial agencies and multinational corporations. Such move, in fact, would promote elitism and a classist social model determining what category of people should have the right to higher education and which, instead, should be excluded from it, regardless of academic merit. As in many other African countries, in the Niger Republic as well, to break the vicious cycles whereby educational elitism is reproduced and education is commercialized is one of the main goals of this struggle.

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On the World Bank and Education in Senegal: An Interview with Babacar Diop*

Ousseina Alidou

Babacar Diop was Secretary General of the (Senegalese) Union of University Professors, (Syndicat Autonome de L'Enseignement Superieur, SAES), from 1985 to 1990. He is the President of the (Senegalese) Union of Teachers and Researchers. He is also President of the Senegalese Association for Literacy and Adult Education, and the chief editor of SOFAA, a bilingual newspaper in Wolof and Pulaar, two of Senegal's main national languages. He has studied and taught at the University of Dakar, now Cheik Anta Diop University, and is presently teaching at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva (New York). The interview was conducted in February 1997.

What has been the impact of the World Bank on the Senegalese Educational System?

Babacar Diop: In the mid 1980s, we were given by the World Bank a set of documents that advocated a reallocation of educational spending in favor of primary education. At the time, we had just formed the Higher Education Union (*Le Syndicat Autonome de l'Enseignement Superieur*—SAES). Thus, we reproduced these

documents in our newsletter, to draw the attention of our colleagues to the implications of their content.

We were aware that there were many distortions in the higher educational system. First, social costs were much higher than the expenses allocated for research and pedagogy. This was primarily the responsibility of the government and the university board, that never responded to the proposals advanced by SAES concerning how the university agenda could be restructured to create the conditions for savings. Further, the universities in Senegal had become the safe haven for corrupt members of the Socialist Party that is currently in power. Embezzlement of university resources and linkages between members of the faculty and the party were a trend.

Between 1988 and 1990, teachers and students came together to fight against the establishment and to protect their interests. 1988 was a terrible year, due to the fraudulent presidential election which led to a student uprising and the government's decision to close the universities. In 1989, university teachers went on a 70 day strike, which led to a substantial salary increase, and rose the public's awareness concerning the crisis of higher education. The university leadership was forced to call a general assembly meeting, that addressed the main points of concern in the concluding clauses of the state of the art Document on Education of 1981.

Then, in 1992, the World Bank released a document entitled "Revitalization of Higher Education in Senegal," followed by a media campaign. The document restated the old diagnosis but added new elements. It claimed that in order to introduce any positive reform, it was urgently necessary to crush the universities' unions. This led to a call for a national referendum that brought together teachers, researchers, students, informed citizens and members of government. The debate was very heated due to conflicting agendas, promoted by incompatible interest groups. Only one third of the clauses of the referendum were sanctioned by unanimous consensus.

It was the attempt by the government to force the implementation of the rejected clauses that provoked a teachers' and students' strike, which led to another unfortunate closing of the universities of Dakar and Saint Louis in 1994. The student unions were subsequently dismantled and restructured.

There are now special cabinets within the Ministry of Education that handle World Bank projects at all educational levels—from

primary to university. Whether at the Ministry level, or in any of its sub-branches, the World Bank's interference operates both at the formal and informal level (NGOs, communities, etc.) The World Bank is currently most interested in funding projects focusing on girls' and women's education. Aside from some insignificant contribution to the expansion of some building, the Bank has shown no interest in revitalizing higher education. In fact, some buildings were renovated without any consultation with university executives or representatives of SAES. At the time of my departure from Senegal there were some suggestions that the SAES offices be relocated within the confines of the Ministry of Higher Education.

The World Bank's revitalization project in Senegal was first felt at the level of primary and secondary schools. Many teachers who openly rejected its proposal, pointing out its contradictions, were instantly fired.

At the university level, due to the cuts in spending and the quick privatization of the dining services and shelters, the students have had to face enormous hardships. These problems were intensified by the late reopening of the campuses, after the October exams had begun. It penalized many students who relied on government stipends for their survival. Again this led to a teachers' protest.

While there are budgetary problems and the government is cutting research funding, there are at least three ministers in charge of education, and the administration has acquired "luxury" cars, without consultation with SAES. Moreover, the new regulations disqualify the junior faculty from applying for research funding. The situation is even worse in Ivory Coast, where the reduction of the junior faculty's salaries is most deplorable.

What impact has the World Bank's interference in the structuring of higher education had on academic freedom ?

B. D.: From the moment when the agreement between the government and the unions concerning the World Bank's proposal for the revitalization of higher education in Senegal was violated, the government invited the police and the military to besiege the university campuses. This has become the general pattern in many African countries.

In Senegal, the ministry of secondary education went even further in his attempt to crush teachers' and students' protest by replacing tenured teachers with part-time lecturers or volunteers trained on the spot. The unions are protesting this reactionary initiative, and are mobilizing their various branches within the Ministry of Secondary Education, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education. Their objective is to promote an agenda for academic reform, that will revalidate the fundamental function of the universities in Africa. SAES has also taken the recruitment of unqualified volunteers and part-time lecturers before the International Labor Office (ILO), where the matter is still pending. The government is very embarrassed, because it acknowledges that it is guilty of a fundamental violation of some of the UNESCO and the ILO's 1996 recommendations.

As for the World Bank, it gives the impression of being keen to listen to SAES; but in reality its main concern is to ensure, by all means, that African countries pay back their debts, regardless of the socio-economic constraints they are faced with.

Was the hiring of volunteers and part-time lecturers an innovation in Senegal?

B. D.: Previously, the universities had called upon part-time lecturers whenever there was a shortage, when, for instance, a faculty member went on a research leave, or in similar situations.

But in those cases, the universities scrutinized the applicants before hiring them, to make sure that they had the right qualifications. Now, with the government intervention and under World Bank's pressure, the universities are not consulted concerning who should be hired as a lecturer. The position of SAES is that we should respect these government imposed lecturers, because they too are victims of the same polices, whether they understand it or not. What SAES is protesting, however, is the invasion of the universities by unqualified teachers.

Is it true that the government gives priority to graduates from polytechnics over graduates from universities?

B. D.: People have been discussing for some time the fact that formal school training is not adequate for employment. We recognize that a good educational system must try its best to adapt to the demands of the job market. But this should not be the only priority for academic institutions. And in the case of Senegal, as in most African countries, there is no real educational policy outlining social priorities. This is the cause of the high unemployment among university graduates, from doctors to engineers. According to the government, university students are overqualified, from the viewpoint of the development areas for which experts are needed and the salaries these are likely to fetch them.

As for the polytechnics, what the government did, following the advice of the World Bank, was to merge the Polytechnic of Thies, located at about 70 kms from Dakar, with the University Institute of Technology in Dakar. The new institution—the Ecole Normale Superieure Universitaire Technologique (ENSUT)—now includes the departments of communication and library sciences as well as mining. This operation has caused the destabilization of the Department of Economics at the University, as all its research capacities have been reduced.

Has there been an increase in the number of vocational schools in Senegal?

B. D.: Yes, there has been a great proliferation of private vocational schools, with unchecked credentials. In general they focus on vocational training in marketing and business education for college level students. They are also beginning to establish international affiliations.

* From *CAFA Newsletter*, N.12, Spring 1997

SOUTH AFRICA:
BETWEEN REPRESSION AND "HOME-GROWN STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT"*

FRANCO BARCHIESI

ACADEMIC REPRESSION IN THE "DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION"

In the second half of 1997 two South African campuses were the target of repressive operations conducted by apparatuses of the state against students, workers and academic staff. In July a Presidential Commission of Inquiry into disturbances at the University of Durban-Westville (UDW) issued a report that recommended the expulsion from the campus of 12 students and staff, members either of the Combined Staff Association (COMSA) trade union or of the Student Representative Council (SRC). Subsequently, criminal charges were raised against them, ranging from intimidation to private violence. This was the culmination of a cycle of struggles for the transformation of the university that had begun in 1994. What initially was a mobilization for the democratization of structures of governance and the replacement of apartheid-style administration (UDW was designed as a segregated university for the Indian community), had evolved into a mass opposition to the privatization of services, the precarization of employment relations and outsourcing, under the "new" democratic dispensation. COMSA had grown during this period and was a unique case of unity in the struggle in South African universities. For it brought together 1,400 workers and academic staff on a campus with a workforce of 1,700.

The report by the Commission of Inquiry was issued after confidential documents had been leaked to the press which showed that the members of the Commission itself were directly pressured by the Ministry of Education to act against the twelve activists. The Court, however, endorsed only the less serious charges among those recommended by the Commission. The Court's action underlines the political nature of the Commission's recommendations. Nonetheless, the combined effect of criminal charges and banning orders have seriously disrupted COMSA's organization and operations on campus.

At the beginning of September a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of the Western Cape from the U.S., Aaron Amaral, was arrested in his classroom in front of his students by officials from the Cape Town office of the Department of Home Affairs, on allegations of being an illegal alien. The headquarters of the Department in Pretoria, however, denied any knowledge of the case. Amaral could hear during his interrogation two agents telling each other in Afrikaans that "this guy is a Marxist who wants to confuse our people" and that, as such, he had to be gotten rid of. Amaral is well known on campus for its activity in left-wing independent student organizations and for its outspoken criticism of the South African Student Congress (SASCO), aligned with the ruling party the African National Congress (ANC).

Amaral and three of the activists charged at UDW are also members of the editorial collective of the radical journal *Debate - Voices from the South African Left*, which has closely followed the above episodes (*Debate* 3, 1997). The cases of Amaral and of the "UDW 12" are particularly dramatic steps in a dynamics of intervention by state security forces inside the universities. This process seems to have accompanied the democratic transition in South Africa after the 1994 elections. Two notable examples were the continued presence during 1995 and 1996, at the campuses of the University of Venda, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits), of agents of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) whose function was to identify potentially "troublesome" students and lecturers, and the massive waves of expulsions and arrests of students and workers following the struggles at Wits and Vista University (Soweto) in 1994 and 1995. These repeated interventions by state security agencies, that mainly

affected individuals and organizations on the left of the ANC, were significantly taking place in a phase marked by the adoption of a neoliberal approach to education on the part of the government.

The Shift to Neoliberalism in South African Tertiary Education

The policies of the new democratic state with respect to tertiary education have been shaped by a stated necessity to find an uneasy compromise between potentially conflicting imperatives. On one side, students and academics have demanded the elimination of the inequalities inherited from the apartheid system, whose legacy are undemocratic and unaccountable governing bodies, a white-dominated student and staff composition in the "top" universities non-reflective of the country's demographic composition, a huge gap in resources between the historically "white" institutions and the previously discriminated "black" institutions, and a culture of teaching and learning promoting passive adherence to Eurocentrist notions of standards and "academic excellence."

On the other hand, the need to provide strategic skills and "human resources" for the reinsertion of the country into the world markets, and at the same time limit the economic burden this would imply for the state, has been declared a crucial priority by government policy planners (National Commission for Higher Education, 1996). In the pursuit of this goal, the universities themselves, also by virtue of the principle of academic "autonomy," are being asked to play a major role in the generation of their resources through "internal efficiency," rationalisation and synergies with the private sector. In fact, the bulk of public funding was to be shifted from generalized "core" subsidies (currently 85% of all state funding to universities) to "ad hoc" provisions of "performance related" funds, in accordance with the following goals: "improved operational efficiency," the provision of training needed to compete internationally, and only a "targeted" redress of the most serious inequalities. This also has justified, in the name of "the government's commitment to fiscal discipline" (Department of Education, 1997), a substantial cut in public funding for tertiary education, that has forced most institutions to adopt "rationalization plans" recommending higher student fees, the merger of departments, the closure of cost-ineffec-

tive structures, retrenchment of staff, privatization and outsourcing of services, whereby the closures of even whole universities is now considered "inevitable" (*Financial Mail*, 5/9/1997).

As for the degree of support that these policies receive inside the spectrum of ANC-aligned organizations, it is indicative that in a recent interview (*Mail & Guardian*, 24/10/1997) the General Secretary of the once-militant SASCO argues that public funding for social science departments should be subordinated to cost-efficiency considerations based on the priority of human resource development. On the other hand, the distinction between "black" and "white" institutions has been functional to a reduction in state funding for the latter, a step presented as a redistributive measure. These cuts ignore that, by now, the majority of first-year students registered in a "white" institution like Wits are actually black.

The similarities of the policies described here with the guidelines theorized by the World Bank (Saint, 1992) and implemented in most of the continent as part of structural adjustment packages are striking. The parallel can be extended to the deeply entrenched link between adjustment, restructuring and repression that has emerged all over the continent. On the other hand, it is not enough to show that the adoption of a neoliberal approach in tertiary education enables the state to have a repressive stance towards potential sources of disruption in the universities. For the struggles at the universities are one aspect of the broader political recomposition of an antagonistic response to neoliberalism. It is therefore important to locate the current trends of restructuring, resistance and repression in the South African universities inside the broader framework of neoliberal policy-making and social struggle in this country.

Homegrown Structural Adjustment

The largely yet to be written story of the right-wing shift to neoliberalism in South African tertiary education demonstrates that it is possible to analyze neoliberalism and resistance in this country as part of broad, continent-wide processes. This challenges a long-established view among African and South African scholars that considers this country as an "exceptional" case, relatively industrialized and over-polarized along the racial divide, therefore not easily explainable with the categories of dependence, underdevelop-

ment, state and class formation that are applied elsewhere in the continent (Mamdani 1996).

The neoliberal shift by the ANC in the first half of the 1990s shows a remarkable continuity in ideologies, strategies and policy choices between South Africa and "structurally adjusted" African countries. However, such homogeneity of outcomes is the product of substantially different processes, causes and determinants. In this regard a certain South African specificity is more apparent. In fact, South Africa has never been driven by the World Bank or the IMF to adopt structural adjustment programs or any similar policies.

The phrase "homegrown structural adjustment" (Bond 1997) explains the dynamics of neoliberalism in this country. This expression implies that, rather than the impersonal, "objective" necessity of transnational markets and institutions, it was the convergence of mainly internal factors that caused the right-wing shift in South Africa's macroeconomic policy. These factors point to the strategic advantage gained by capital in relation to social opposition, thanks to its monopolization of resources during the apartheid regime, and the pro-business stance adopted by the democratic state, in the name of "development," business confidence and international competitiveness. The nature of neoliberalism as a product of class antagonism and struggle is therefore emphasized in this case.

In fact, the main components of the "homegrown structural adjustment" are a low exposure to foreign debt, compared to a massive domestic public debt owned by large corporate investors and acting as a massive constraint for the expansion of public expenditure (Ashley, 1997); the rise of a new, technocratic, market-oriented and previously exiled leadership inside the ANC-led government, mainly around the likely future president Thabo Mbeki; the parallel marginalization of sectors of the leadership drawn from the militant internal opposition to apartheid.

A decisive contribution to the consolidation of this political scenario was given by two crucial processes. First, the establishment of "corporatist" policy-making and consultation structures which tie a powerful labor movement to the imperative of finding "social compacts" with capital and the state in a conflict-free economy conducive to foreign investment. Second, the rise of an albeit tiny black corporate industrial and financial sector that provides a powerful legitimizing tool for a monopolistic, highly finance-based capital-

ism characterized by an extreme concentration of ownership and control and by the total absence of meaningful welfare policies to address the inequalities inherited from the past.

The case of "homegrown structural adjustment" in South Africa shows us, therefore, how the strategies of resistance to neoliberalism in tertiary education cannot afford to neglect the continuing relevance of the state as an agent of "globalization" and of internal class composition in the promotion of liberalization, privatization, and economic restructuring. Opening up this terrain of analysis and contestation can greatly contribute to overcome the fatalism which follows from those views that regard the "objectivity" of global macroeconomic constraints as the main or only determinant.

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Nigerian Universities and Academic Staff Under Military Rule*

Attahiru Jega

The condition of African universities has recently attracted much attention not only from scholars but also from policy makers, including international aid agencies (Saint 1993). A devastating crisis has swept over the continent, profoundly affecting the universities and their academic communities. Even the World Bank, which in the mid-1980s claimed that Africa did not need universities, has acknowledged that "Africa's Universities face a crisis at a pivotal point in their development" (*World Bank News*, January 4, 1993:1). There has also been a growing concern with the crisis in the Nigerian university system. The universities are grossly underfunded, understaffed, overcrowded, and lacking in infrastructure and facilities. In addition, they have experienced many violations of due process, the suppression of academic freedom, and the restriction of academic autonomy.

This paper outlines the main features of the crisis in Nigerian universities, what caused it, why it has persisted, and how the academic world has responded to it. It focuses in particular on the impact of military rule on academic life. It argues that prolonged military rule, combined with economic crisis and structural adjustment, is the main problem faced by Nigerian Universities. Through the violation of academic freedom, the restriction of academic autonomy, underfunding, and other adverse policies, military rule in Nigeria has hindered the functioning of the universities, and has drastically

curtailed their contribution to positive national development. Confronted with marginalization and growing irrelevance, many academics have left the universities. However, those who have remained have gotten better organized under the platform of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), and tried to wrest concessions from the military-controlled state. They have also championed popular resistance to the World Bank and the IMF-inspired policies which have caused so much suffering for Nigerians.

A Short History of the Nigerian University System

The Nigerian university system began in 1948 with the establishment of the University College at Ibadan, as a College of the University of London. It became a full-fledged university in 1962, at the same time when three other universities were established. Since then, the Nigerian university system has grown phenomenally. There are today 37 universities of which one is exclusively for the military; 23 funded by the federal government, and 13 funded by state governments. They have a total student enrollment of about 300,000, with a staff strength of about 8,000. In a comparative perspective, Nigeria's enrollment figure represents more than half that of Africa South of the Sahara (542,000), while the number of its universities represents one third (*World Bank News*, January 14, 1993:2).

The initial impetus for the growth of the system in the 1970s was provided by the country's vast revenues from petroleum and associated products. But political considerations also came to play a significant role, leading to a great expansion of the university system in the absence, however, of any long-term planning (Jega, 1992).

The military has to a large extent, over the years, relied on the universities to maintain its rule. It has drawn its executive and administrative staff, at both the federal and state levels from the academic community. This was part of a process of co-optation necessary to legitimize the regime. The academics drawn into the corridors of power proved ineffective in checking the excesses of military rule. Many used access to the state for self-serving objectives. Academics in government either watched helplessly while their military mentors wrecked vital national values or actively connived in the process.

While using the university system as a fertile recruitment ground, the Nigerian military regimes also displayed intolerance and contempt for academic freedom and autonomy. They sought to control the system and in the process virtually destroyed it. The impact of military rule on the universities has been devastating. While the number of universities and students enrolled expanded rapidly, indeed spectacularly, especially since the 1970s, their capacity to make a positive contribution was seriously undermined. The universities have been allowed to decay, with antiquated, deteriorating, and overstretched facilities, while the lecturers have been demoralized by the policies of successive regimes.

First, the military has tried to establish its control over the universities through the appointment of cronies to Vice-Chancellor positions, in disregard of the university statutes. Consequently academic freedom and due process have been eroded, and a reign of terror and repression has become institutionalized on many campuses. Matters concerning appointments, promotions and discipline of staff have been single-handedly dealt with by Vice- Chancellors with no regard for due process. Many university administrators have become despots, acting, in the spirit of their military benefactors, like garrison commanders. They have demonstrated extreme insensitivity to the welfare of the students and staff, acting primarily in the interest of the military rulers and their sponsors outside the universities.

There are many reported cases of university resources for capital expenditure being squandered through inflated contracts and dubious projects approved by administrators blessed with military patronage. Vice-Chancellors have more or less surrendered the autonomy of the universities to the military authorities, and connived in flouting the university statutes by bending to ministerial directives or inviting the armed forces on campuses to prevent student demonstrations. In turn, the regimes have removed Vice-Chancellors as arbitrarily as they have imposed them on the academic communities. Thus, many Vice-Chancellors, to protect their positions, have opted to become more responsive to the requirements of the State, regardless of whether or not they violate academic statutes, than to those of the academic communities over which they preside. Academics and students go to court quite often to seek protection against violations of basic rights. Sometimes they win a reprieve,

but in most cases even the courts seem helpless in the face of executive lawlessness and military decrees annulling their jurisdictions.

The impact of military rule on the universities manifests itself also through chronic underfunding. Education in general, and the university system in particular have been systematically underfunded under successive regimes. The military regimes have presided over a situation in which there has been a systematic decline of public spending on education (as indeed, on all social services) while military spending has increased. From 1960 to 1990, military spending, as a percentage of GDP, rose by 1 percent, while that of education rose by only 0.2 percent (UNDP, 1993:39, 205). Worse still, the military has nurtured and entrenched a system in which most of what is purportedly spent on social services is actually stolen by state functionaries and their clients, as several panel reports have shown. With regard to education, for example, Abba and others have observed as follows: "what is ostensibly spent on education is not all used for education, but for the making of profits and super-profits for foreign business corporations and their Nigerian business and political partners and agents; and as commissions, fees, kick-backs, bribes and other legal and semi-legal and criminal earnings for those who control the very lucrative Nigerian education industry" (Abba 1985:117).

Funding of the university system reached its peak during the 1976-1977 academic year, with public spending allocations totaling about four thousand naira per student (equivalent to about five thousand US dollars according to 1975 exchange rates). From then on, it declined swiftly, down to barely four hundred and nine naira (about fifty dollars) during the 1989-1990 academic year. As a result, by 1992, the situation in the universities was chaotic, as reflected in the high teacher-student ratio (up to 1:200 in some courses), the lack of adequate laboratories and equipment, poorly stocked libraries, over-crowded classrooms and staff offices. It was also reflected in the low quality of the graduates produced by the system and in the brain-drain phenomenon.

Under-funding for the educational sector can best be understood in the context of the misplacement of national priorities by the military regimes. Critical to a proper definition of national priorities is the role assigned to the satisfaction of basic needs, especially education, by the state. In addition to being a basic need, education is a

tool for national development. An illiterate nation is doomed in this modern age. Yet, comparative data illustrates how low Nigeria ranks among nations in this regard. Despite its vast national resources, Nigeria ranks 142 out of 160 countries on the Human Development Index, with an HDI value score of 0.0246 (UNDP, 1993:14).

Nigeria ranks poorly on all indices of educational priorities, ranging from educational expenditure per pupil to educational expenditure as a percentage of the GNP to adult literacy rate. Also, as Kurain has noted, "Nigeria ranks 79th in educational expenditure per capita, and 114th in number of third level students per 1000 inhabitants" (Kurain, 1988: 951).

The misplacement of priorities in Nigeria is even more striking when placed in the context of other, less endowed, developing countries. For example, in 1990, Niger's and Mali's educational expenditure represented 3.1% and 3.3% of their respective GNP, while Nigeria lagged behind with 1.7%. Indeed, virtually every country in the world has significantly increased the proportion of his educational expenditure as a percentage of its GNP between 1960 and 1990, except Nigeria (Jega, 1994a). Significantly, Nigeria is reputed to have "the poorest records in anglophone Africa for educational innovation and commitment to educational excellence"(Kurain 1988:951).

The cumulative effect of decades of misplacement of priorities by the Nigerian State and the impact of the military is such that academia has faced a serious crisis of relevance. Underfunded, faced with inadequate facilities, overworked, academics have to struggle even just to survive, in a regime of structural adjustment. They have to battle with despotic Vice-Chancellors and they are also overwhelmed by the knowledge of the reckless abandonment with which those in power have vandalized social resources. Thus, they have had to choose between struggling to advance popular aspirations or doing nothing and becoming irrelevant.

Academia's Response to the Impact of Military Rule

Confronted with this crisis, Nigerian academics have seen the need for collective struggle against the state's misguided policies which, under structural adjustment, have increased people's suffering and deprivation. Determined to be relevant, academics have assumed

the role of a people's tribune, under the umbrella of their organization, the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU).They seem to have been activated and recharged politically by the economic hardships produced by the economic crisis and the adjustment process. Those who did not want to, or could not, escape the impact of the crisis by emigrating regrouped under ASUU to salvage themselves, the university system, and the nation.

ASUU was registered as a trade union in 1978, when the desire for greater social relevance compelled academics to change their hitherto conservative and timid association, the Nigerian Association of University Teachers (NAUT). ASUU emerged at a critical juncture, when Nigeria's oil boom was on the brink of bursting, and the rentier state was resorting to the use of force and other corporatist strategies to contain the increasingly restive population (Jega 1994).

In response to a growing culture of repression, amidst deteriorating socio-economic conditions, staff and student discontent grew and the atmosphere in the universities became charged and quite often rebellious. Beginning in 1978, when the military regime tried unsuccessfully to reintroduce school fees and other unpopular policies in the tertiary educational sector, the Nigerian university campuses "emerged as centers of vigorous protest and often violent confrontation against the authorities" (Kirk-Gree and Rimmer 1981:53). These protests and struggles intensified as military rule became entrenched, as the economic crisis deepened and as Nigeria experienced a stirring demand for democracy, from the mid-1980s onwards. It is in this context that the organizations of university teachers and students (notably ASUU and NANS, the National Association of Nigerian Students), came to assume a leading position in the struggles against military rule. In the absence of legal opposition politics, they advanced the popular cause, in addition to promoting their own demands relating to reforms in the university system (Beckman and Jega 1994). ASUU in particular became the forum through which academics responded to military rule and the economic crisis it has engendered.

The more the academic community resisted violations of academic freedom and university autonomy, and championed the democratization of academia and popular resistance to military authoritarianism, the greater the backlash from the regimes. The

harassment, however, merely intensified the resistance. Consequently, ASUU came to have running battles with successive military regimes and their appointed Vice-Chancellors. For example, its operations were repeatedly suppressed and recruitment of membership was restricted by military decrees. Union leaders were either coopted, bought over, harassed, intimidated, incarcerated without trial through so-called "preventive detention." Quite often, some of them were arbitrarily purged from the system. Many students and lecturers who were activists were either summarily dismissed or harassed in all sorts of ways for exercising their rights to academic freedom or that of freedom of association and organization on the campuses. For example, at the University of Calabar, one Vice-Chancellor arbitrarily dismissed 18 lecturers between 1977 and 1979 (ASUU 1981:3).The Obasanjo regime set up the Anya Commission on Academic Freedom and university autonomy with the objective of establishing a "Code of Conduct" for staff and students which was "to enable them to function in ways supportive of the system" (ASUU 1981:2). ASUU successfully resisted this move.

The worst period for the Nigerian universities and the academia was between 1985 and 1993, under the Babangida regime. The funding situation worsened. The regime perpetuated a culture of repression on the campuses, using its appointed Vice-Chancellors to deal with those opposed to its policies, the so-called extremists, especially when it sought to consolidate the IMF and World Bank- inspired Structural Adjustment Program. The conditions on campuses deteriorated. Staff and student unions were repeatedly proscribed and their leaders sacked and/or detained. At ABU (Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria) in the mid-1980s, expatriate staff had their contracts voided or arbitrarily terminated because of their political views. One of them was even deported because of his criticism of government policies. In the universities of Calabar, Zaria, Benin, Ife, Nsukka, and Maiduguri alone, the number of staff and students victimized on political grounds between 1985 and 1993 was close to five hundred (Jega 1994).

The Babangida regime used co-optation, intimidation, and harassment to contain mounting opposition from academia. It tried to use some "professors in government" to contain restive colleagues in the university system. When these attempts failed to make ASUU ineffectual, resort was made to divide-and-rule tactics, invoking re-

gional and religious loyalties to break union solidarity and weaken ASUU's unity and cohesion. These methods have proven very effective on the Nigerian political scene; but ASUU, although not immune to these influences, was relatively unscathed by religious bigotry, ethnic chauvinism, and regional loyalties. This added credibility to the union as a patriotic, organized interest group and it facilitated alliance with other progressive, pro-democracy forces seeking to end military rule and bring about a credible civilian democratic order.

In trying to act as a "People's Tribune," university lecturers, through their union, offered critiques of policies that they perceived to be detrimental to the welfare and well-being of the majority of Nigerians. For example, ASUU has issued several press releases and communiqués containing critiques of the Structural Adjustment Program, which has compounded the economic crisis and created immense socio-economic problems for ordinary Nigerians (ASUU 1987, 1993, 1994). The students have also pursued several strategies to oppose the military regime's "anti-people" policies, including organizing and leading anti-SAP riots in 1988 and 1989. Even the Committee of Vice-Chancellors universities responded to the economic crisis by organizing a national symposium on the matter (CVC 1987).

Through ASUU, the academics have tried to be relevant in the struggles for democracy. During the "political debate" launched by Babangida in 1987, which was supposed to pave the way for the transition to Civil Rule, ASUU issued a comprehensive statement analyzing the situation and making recommendations which, though ignored by the regime, were widely circulated. ASUU has also actively participated in broad national coalitions and alliances, seeking to promote genuine democracy in Nigeria. It has contributed to the Campaign for Democracy's popular mobilization that compelled General Babangida to "step aside" in August 1993. ASUU is also involved with the democratic struggles currently taking place in Nigeria. One of the major issues giving rise to ASUU's 1994 strike (beginning in August) is the detention of M.K.O. Abiola, widely believed to be the winner of the annulled June 12th elections. ASUU has demanded Abiola's release and the immediate return to democratic rule, in addition to putting forward specific demands relating to the university crisis.

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The Malawi Writers Group: Before and After Structural Adjustment Programs*

Lupenga Mphande

There is a wind of change sweeping across Africa today, a wind blowing with equal force as that wave which reached the continent in the early 1960s. Malawi has not been spared from that storm. As I write, the country is gripped in a violent uprising in which several people have been killed over the last few months. People are shouting in the streets: "We want change! We want change...!" They say they want a change from the past thirty years of one-man-rule to a more democratic government.

As far as I know, there is no definitive way of defining democracy. However, most people would agree upon the *conditions* that give rise to and sustain a democratic process, and these conditions fall into four categories:

•**Institutional Conditions**. These include the existence of parliament where peoples' representatives can debate and pass legislation, courts to institute redress when a wrong has been done to an individual or groups, an electoral machinery to elect the people who they want to govern them.

•**Sociological Conditions**. A society that is better integrated, especially vertically (between men and women, the young and the old

generation, etc.) is more likely to sustain a democratic process than a society that is not so well integrated.

•**Economic Conditions**. Extremely poor countries are less likely to encourage and sustain a democratic process.

•**Cultural Conditions**. This concerns the existence of a *political culture* developed and sustained by cultural groups, including drama and theatre groups, trade unions, church and religious organizations and the like.

These social and cultural formations play an important function as they shape a country's political culture, and the Malawi Writers Group belongs to this category. I maintain that it is groups such as the Malawi Writers Group and their members that have most contributed to advocating for a democratic culture in Malawi and creating a political environment where freedom of expression, thought, and association can thrive.

In this essay I examine the history of the Malawi Writers Group before and after the international money lending agencies, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), imposed the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) on Malawi in the early 1980s. Specifically, I want to look at the effects of the structural adjustment program on the Malawi Writers Group's objective of promoting a democratic culture in the country. I will first give a brief outline of the history of writing in Malawi, and the formation and basic objectives of the Malawi Writers Group. Then I will outline the history of the structural adjustment program in Malawi and its effects on the education system that had a direct bearing on the fate of the writers group.

Malawi has had a long tradition of a writing and reading culture that started with the advent of colonialism. The first group of writers was created by the Christian missionaries as part of their proselytization. As keen observers of human society, writers have occupied an important position in Malawi's history and in the establishment of its political culture and social institutions. Among the pioneer activists in the struggle against colonial rule were writers such as Clements Kadalie, who in 1916 founded the first trade union in South Africa, the Industrial and General Workers Union

(ICU), and in the following year started the first Black-owned newspaper in that country, *Muteteli wabasebenzi*. Kadalie was followed by the Reverend Charles Chigondo Chinula, a poet and novelist who published his first book, *Ulendo wa mukhirisitu,* in 1935, and in 1944 became president of the Nyasaland African Congress. Chinula was the first Malawian to challenge the European missionaries' right to condemn African culture in their proselytization and was later followed in his writing campaign by James Sangala and S. J. Nthara. Thus, apart from generating a writing and reading culture, these early Malawian writers also established a tradition of political resistance to colonialism, a tradition that was followed and sustained by a later generation of writers, such as the novelist John Gwengwe, novelist and poet David Rubadiri, and essayists Dunduzu Chisiza and Thandika Mkandawire, all of whom became prominent nationalists, offering stiff resistance to colonialism through their writing.

These writers, however, were weakened by the fact that they did not have a forum through which to organize their political resistance and protect their artistic and cultural interests as writers. Any hopes for building such resistance were dashed when many prominent writers were forcibly prevented, through detention, exile, or assassination, from further participation in the Malawi political process. Dunduzu Chisiza, Legson Kayira, and David Rubadiri are perhaps the best examples.

The potentiality of the writers' resistance against the prevailing forms of domination, tyranny, and cultural hegemony thus remained latent until the end of the 1960s, when the failures of the post-colonial state in Malawi became obvious and the necessity for the formation of a formal writers' organization began to take shape.

The Malawi Writers Group

Around May 1969, a group of University of Malawi students, then resident at the Maone Hostels in Limbe, next to Makheta shanty dwellings, started meeting irregularly as a discussion group to exchange each other's creative works, seek and provide constructive criticism, and talk about politics. Eventually other students joined, as did some faculty members, and the group was formally established at the Chichiri campus of the university by April 1970. Soon

after, it also attracted students from the other constituent colleges of the University of Malawi around the city of Blantyre: Soche Hill College of Education, The Mpemba School of Administration, and The Malawi Polytechnic. Members of the general public also joined, including school teachers and journalists. The meetings were conducted in a very democratic way, with the chairmanship rotating by popular vote every week, and the discussions were very lively as everybody had a right to speak. Four publications—*Expression, Expression Supplement, Soche Cider* and *Odi*—were started by the group as outlets for its creative work, and several polemical journals were started at the various constituent colleges of the University of Malawi. In 1971 *Mau,* an anthology of poems discussed at the meetings, was published by the group. Several of the members' works were also broadcast on the national radio and published in newspapers and literary journals abroad. A University Traveling Theatre company was also started by students and faculty to provide an outlet for plays written by the group members. Later on, some of them founded the Arts Association of Malawi that started organizing very successful Cultural Afternoons and cultural festivals in Blantyre and Lilongwe towns, where works by members of the MWG were launched, recited, or produced.

Although for the initial years the medium of interaction was English, eventually works in Chichewa, the national language, were also deliberated at the group's discussions. Thus, a vital critical tradition developed, alongside the reading and writing culture, that was later enhanced by a genre of popular literature, such as the novels of Aubrey Kalitera and the several popular magazines that mushroomed in the mid-1970s. In this way, the founding of the Malawi Writers Group had a profound effect on the students' life, particularly as regards students' involvement in politics and the media, while it also contributed to the intellectual development in the country. Given that Malawi was a one-party dictatorship, the group was viewed as the only viable alternative forum for political discussion in the country.

The establishment and development of the Malawi Writers Group over the years has taken place in the context of a hostile political environment. At the present time it has perhaps over four hundred members among university students, faculty, and the general public, but many old members of the group have moved into secondary

school teaching and public and private sector bureaucracies, where they have established numerous writer's cells, both in the rural and urban centers.

The Malawi Writers Group was firmly established with the objective of not only exercising its right to freedom of thought and expression, but also of struggling for the freedom and rights of all human kind, and this has brought the group members closer to the people. At its inception, the Malawi Writers Group was filling an important gap in the social and intellectual life of the Malawi society. This gap had become more visible after the death of Dunduzu Chisiza in 1962, and after many young militants in the early 1960s left the country for various reasons, and as a result, the intellectual life that had characterized their generation quickly disappeared. Those left behind, such as Cuthbert Khunga and, later, Felix Munthali and their colleagues, were silenced by detentions and other forms of harassment. But it was the silencing of the authentic trade unions in the country, in June 1962, the expulsion of the educated elite from the government in September 1964, and the expulsion of student leaders of the newly founded University of Malawi in 1966, that served as real catalysts for opening up spaces for student involvement in cultural and democratic movements as the voice of the voiceless.

From its inception, the Malawi Writers Group has worked hard to help generate within the country the type of political culture that can support a thriving democratic tradition, a task that is even more crucial today when the "wind of change" is sweeping across Africa. In many African countries there have been attempts at building institutions like human rights organizations, journalistic associations, trade unions, religious groups, and others; but in Malawi it is only the Malawi Writers Group that has had a sustained existence despite the brutal repression of its members and the governmental use of extra-judicial execution to deal with its opponents. *In fact, more than half of its founding members and affiliates have been detained at one time or another, or forced into exile.* Thus, an analysis of this group is extremely important if we are to understand how particular cultural institutions survive in hostile political environments, and how they are often undermined by the conditionalities imposed by money-lending agencies. Precisely because the latent political objective of these associations is to serve as a forum for

ıt, they often become the first victims of government
ı some cases, they are banned, in others the writers
ıpitulate" and render the associations inactive.
s founded, no event has had a greater impact on the
rs Group than the Structural Adjustment Program
alawi by the International Monterary Fund and the
nce 1980. It has affected not only the current politi-
ɔn in the country, but also the emerging democratic
ıbling political environment that the Malawi Writers
g hoped to promote. Of particular significance has
t on Malawi's education system and literacy rates—
he Structural Adjustment Program has a harder im-
iters Group's goal of creating an informed citizenry
ing and reading campaign. The conditionalities have
ɔact on the group's membership since the university
sional institutions are its main recruiting grounds.
utline a sample of the World Bank and IMF's condi-
ıow these have affected different sectors of the Malawi
;eneral, and the Malawi Writers Group in particular.

ɔ World Bank Conditionalities

30s, in response to the deteriorating economic situa-
i (and other African and developing countries), the
nd International Monetary Fund (IMF) forced the
ıment to liberalize the domestic market, reduce im-
s, let the international financial market determine the
of the Malawi Kwacha, and privatize state-owned
Malawi thus joined Ghana, Kenya, and Togo as the
ies that have sustained adjustment programs longer
ıd were once paraded by the Bretton Wood Institu-
s of success. Many international development agen-
ıational and bilateral donors also began to require, in
: assistance, policy changes which stressed greater
rket forces in allocating resources and reduced gov-
ɔl in the economy. This came to be known as the
ıstment Program, or SAP, and it was argued that its
n would re-establish equilibrium in the external ac-

counts, reduce government deficit, and control inflation while creating the conditions for resumed growth (World Bank 1986:1990).

Alexander Rutskoi, the ill-fated Russian vice-president, recently called the IMF "the free cheese in the mouse trap" (*Sunday Times*, September 24, 1993) with good reason. Many African countries have found themselves caught in that mouse trap, including Malawi. SAP has brought serious social and political dislocations for the people of Malawi, playing havoc with their basic standard of living. The deflationary nature of SAP, shown by cuts in government spending and the devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha, has resulted in depressed employment, the rise of the prices of essential goods, and the reduction in real incomes. It can thus be argued that structural adjustment in Malawi has not helped the poor but worsened their social and economic conditions, and the World Bank and IMF conditionalities have already antagonized many people both in the urban centers and in the countryside. These conditionalities have become unbearable, prompting a calculated church protest through the issuing of a Lent Pastoral Letter by the Catholic bishops that was very critical of Malawi's human rights violations. That letter started a political fire in the country. The university students went on strike in support of the bishops, and soon afterwards the textile, tea, tobacco, and Blantyre city workers broke a 30-year old ban and went on strike in May 1992 in which over forty people were killed by government forces. In August-September 1993 the whole country was paralyzed when hospital nurses and government civil servants also took strike action to protest low wages and declining standard of living, and soon after several factory workers at Tiny Rowlands' sugar factory in the Lower Shire were killed when the police fired on striking workers.

In the face of such opposition, the survival of the structural adjustment program in Malawi has depended more on the government's capacity to suppress those who have suffered from its effects and to restrict political participation than on its economic performance. Most of the social and political problems that Malawi is suffering now can thus be attributed to SAP and the ignorance of the international money-lending institutions of the basic social and economic conditions in the Malawi society. Political factors involving distribution of wealth and long-term development issues have not been fully considered. The main victims of SAP are mostly the urban

poor and the rural subsistence farmers and also those civic and social groups which tend to circulate the feelings of the people, giving them a voice.

The international money-lending bodies, such as the World Bank and IMF, usually blame failures in the implementation of their policies on such factors as the lack of commitment of African leaders to liberal economic policies; the lack of will of governments to implement those policies; the lack of government resistance to social pressure; and the low capacity of the governments to manage economic programs. Aside from the inefficient management of the economy and the unenthusiastic support of politicians for these unpopular but "economically sensible" SAP policies, their argument goes, the failure of the adjustment program is due to the opposition of social groups such as the Malawi Writers Group which are engaged in promoting their self-interest against "rational economic policies." Such arguments, however, fail to appreciate the gap between the conditionalities imposed by these international financial institutions and the needs of different social groups.

Impact of SAP Conditionalities on the Malawi Writers Group

In an attempt to keep the country "stable" for the implementation of the SAP conditionalities, the government of Malawi has attempted to stamp out social and intellectual groups in the country which are suspected of fomenting trouble. In this regard, the Malawi Writers Group has been one of the most victimized groups in the country, with several of its members arrested and harassed at one time or another, their activities restricted, their works censored, confiscated, and banned, and many of them eventually forced into exile. There has also been a systematic victimization of Tumbuka-speaking people from the north and other minority groups like the Yaos from the south-east, thereby threatening the very diversity of groups like the Malawi Writers Group. University lecturers, students, and journalists who form the core of the group's membership have systematically been harassed, deported, and detained without trial. The government has banned newspapers and books produced by Group members, and has trailed and assassinated members who were in exile. But the Malawi writers have historically stood fast in their

courageous task of using their pens to conscientize the audience about the political environment in which they live. Because of this repression there has developed a tradition of resistance by writers, a resistance which has now been taken up by other social groups like the trade unions.

The Malawi Writers Group has always supported the notion that democratic development should no longer be limited to occasional acts of formal voting, or even just the presence of multi-partyism, but should stress the continuous informal involvement in policy making at various levels of government, communities, cooperatives, unions, and culture. The group has supported the poor and vulnerable groups in society who have suffered most in the "trickle down" economics introduced by SAP. Under SAP the poor have grown poorer, particularly the young and women, because of cuts in government subsidies. The March 1993 Budget Session of the Malawi government voted for a total expenditure for the fiscal year 1993/94, of MK1,966 million, of which MK1,455 million was recurrent expenditure and MK511 million development expenditure. The corresponding figures for the 1992/93 fiscal year were MK2,365 million as total expenditure, of which MK1,897 million was recurrent expenditure and MK468 million was development expenditure. The 1993/94 voted total expenditure figure, therefore, reflected a 17% reduction over the corresponding 1992/93 figure. This reduction in expected total expenditure was to be achieved, to a large extent, by major cuts in recurrent expenditure of about 20%, most of it from social services since development expenditure was increased by 13% above the 1992/93 level. In fact the budget for primary education has been declining ever since SAP was introduced, dropping from 49% of the 1987/88 budget to 40% in 1991/92, while per student cost has increased by 16% in the same period.

The Structural Adjustment program in Malawi has also affected the Malawi Writers Group in other ways. As a parastatal institution, the University of Malawi received almost all its subvention from the government, but, since the introduction of SAP, government support has declined by 15%. Public schools have not yet been privatized, but the stipulation in the structural adjustment program is that the government should not engage in any economic ventures including publishing and distribution of school materials, and this has meant a rise in the prices of school supplies and text-

books, which has obstructed the Malawi Writers Group's objective of promoting a writing and reading culture. The restraints on wages have led to the retrenchment of public employees and a drying up of household funds available for sending kids to school. The removal of price controls and subsidies has led to the rise of prices of school supplies such as pencils, books, school uniforms, and this in turn has forced the raising of school fees in primary and secondary schools and the introduction of tuition at the university level for the first time. In primary schools, for example, the book-pupil ration is 1 to 5.

The minimum monthly wage for a laborer in Malawi is about 50 Malawi Kwacha (MK), and a trained primary school teacher earns about MK180 a month, according to the 1989 government figures. Yet tuition at the University of Malawi rose from MK100 a year in 1985 to about MK600 at present, which in 1991 made up 4.8% of the university's current expenditure. Public secondary school fees which were MK50 in 1972 are now MK450 a year, but fees for private secondary schools like Malamulo and Phwezi are MK860, and for Kamuzu Academy over a thousand Malawi Kwacha. The staff reduction program has adversely affected the economic conditions of the majority of lower level strata of civil servants, including laborers, charwomen, cooks, drivers, porters, stewards, sweepers and messengers, as well as store officers, clerical officers, and secretariat personnel. The SAP has led directly to the increase in tuition fees, thus putting education out of reach of the children of this lower class.

Girls have been affected for the worse by these structural adjustment effects because there is preference in Malawi for boys' education. This gender bias is also reflected in the university enrollment figures which show a slight decline in the female-to-male ratio (excluding the nursing school, which has always been almost all female), from 74 out of a total of 412 students, or 17.9%, in 1972, to 373 out of 2,089, 17.8% in 1990, although, according the 1987 Population Census figures, women are more than men in the overall population. This imbalance has resulted in an unequitable access to educational resources in the country.

These effects in turn have affected the recruitment and membership of the Malawi Writers Group since now it is largely urban male children from the middle class that can afford to go to univer-

sity. Before SAP only 3.5% of the student population reported that their parents had post-high school education (Myambo 1975), and thus about 96.5% of the university students came from an illiterate or barely literate rural background. The Malawi Writers Group membership reflected this general composition of the university student population. Today, however, it is mostly the business class and educated elite who are able to pay their children's school fees all the way to college, this being reflected in the current membership of the Malawi Writers Group. Today only 30% of the school-age children are enrolled in primary school and in the rural areas the number is much lower, where 48.8% are from urban areas and only 43.6% are from rural areas. Since the majority of the population is still rural and poor, the present Malawi Writers Group membership no longer reflects the structure of the society as a whole.

The rural economy has been made worse by SAP conditionalities. Supporters of SAP turned out to be misguided by an excessive faith in price incentives even though other factors affect the commodity market (e.g., tobacco prices have been going down because of health campaigns against smoking in the United States, the chief buyer of Malawi tobacco). In addition, optimistic estimates of export commodity prices and external capital inflows led to a misunderstanding of the balance of payments situation. Over-optimistic assessment of the overall price elasticity of agricultural products resulted in the failure of agricultural policy. Thus smallholders who depend on the sale of their crops to pay school fees for their children now find they can no longer afford to send their children to school. Since adjustment programs often generate an unequitable redistribution of resources, the very process of building a democratic political culture in Malawi has been impaired.

Inflation has increased the costs of education and publishing. The Malawi Kwacha was devalued twice in May 1992, by 15% each time. In February 1994 the Kwacha was floated against foreign currencies to boost exports, increasing the cost of living even further. Fuel prices have gone up within the last two months, from MK3.38 (about 35 cents) to MK3.80 (39 cents) a liter, an increase of 12.4%, inhibiting the work of the Malawi Writers Group such as the travelling theatre. Books and stationary have become so expensive that the main campus of the University of Malawi has had its book store closed because no student could afford to buy the items.

No other agency has come to supply students with books and stationary, and students now depend solely on the library for access to required texts and other instructional materials. Therefore the SAP conditionalities, by cutting the university budget have ushered in "university restructuring," the new euphemism for cuts to the library budget, to student welfare, accommodations, and the like. This has left the university too weak to resist financial dependence on the private sector which has serious implications for the curricula and academic freedom.

More than twenty newspapers mushroomed last year after the political "wind of change" finally reached Malawi and the country was forced to open up politically, but today most of these have ceased publication because the SAP conditionalities have pushed up the price of press-related imports. The papers which started with 20,000 copies had to cut their print-runs to between 6,000 and 10,000 as competition has grown for a limited reading public and the cost of production has gone up. In this era of political liberalization, printing has become a major headache for the independent press because the main web press capable of printing newspapers is owned by Blantyre Print and Packaging, itself owned by a prominent member of the Banda regime, who also owns the country's only daily newspaper, *Daily Times.* This has forced the independent press to turn to more costly and less efficient processes elsewhere—e.g., the old church printing presses.

As everywhere else in the world, import liberalization has not only cost jobs in the private sector, especially textile and industries vulnerable to foreign competition, but has also affected salary differentials in favor of higher officials. The salary gap in Malawi has increased in the last ten years, which means that the higher paid officials are more able to afford a balanced and healthier diet, and send their children to school (usually elite schools like the famed Kamuzu Academy). Rural workers are even worse off with the SAP because the real wages of agricultural and manufacturing workers are only a fraction of their 1975 levels. Lack of unionized labor has meant that workers have been unable to bargain even for a minimum wage, leaving the workers unprotected against inflation since the minimum wage was first set in 1966. Under SAP workers can no longer afford to send their children to school. It was therefore no accident that when the David Whitehead textile workers went on an

unauthorized strike in Blantyre in May 1992, demanding better pay and working conditions, university students from the Malawi Polytechnic were among the first people to join the strikers in solidarity. In summary, the group that has suffered most under SAP are laid-off workers and rural peasants, as public works programs, nutrition, literacy, educational facilities, water supplies, and health care all have been cut. This has had an adverse effect on the Malawi Writers Group.

There are many other aspects of SAP that have had an adverse effect on the indigenous efforts to promote a democratic culture in Malawi, in line with the Malawi Writers Group's aspirations. Again, as elsewhere in the world where SAP conditionalities have been imposed, the SAP was negotiated in a very undemocratic way. In the formulation of the adjustment program, the major decision makers were insulated from social and economic circumstances and popular concern. For fear of domestic opposition the negotiation process was highly secretive and bilateral, with no public discussion of the content, the terms, or conditionalities of the loans, despite the fact that they were likely to affect all aspects of peoples' lives. The masses were thus excluded from active participation in the discussion of economic issues which influence their daily life. Intellectuals were also isolated from policy making, and only a small number of senior government economists were involved in the negotiations. SAP policy, therefore, has been defined by a narrow circle of officials from state and international agencies. The lack of a more equitable and politically sustainable vision of structural adjustment is a consequence of the lack of broad participation in policy formulation. The Bretton Woods Institutions prefer conservative, authoritarian regimes such as that found in Malawi to support their programs and suppress opposition.

Another worrying factor inherent in the SAP conditionalities is the cultural adjustment that the international money-lending institutions impose on a country like Malawi. The IMF and the World Bank want to stamp out what they call indigenous "negative" cultures in the developing countries so as to promote individual initiative as opposed to the "inefficient" collective African culture, and develop "saving" habits. *Thus the IMF and World Bank now decide for Malawi what of her culture can be preserved and what has to be thrown away!* This places organizations like the Malawi Writers

Group in competition with the international lending institutions in the reformulation of the Malawian culture, but the indigenous organizations are no match in such a contest.

The result of all this has been an increased opposition to the government's economic policies by those most negatively affected by the Structural Adjustment Program. This opposition has crystallized into four distinct groups: students, workers, opposition political parties, and exiled groups. As pointed out earlier, university students were among the first to support the Catholic bishops' Lent Pastoral letter that was the real catalyst of the current wave of political protest in Malawi, and of the striking workers. Several students have been expelled, detained, beaten up, and tortured as a result of their political views. University cooks at Chancellor College, textile and city workers in Blantyre, tea estate workers in Mulanje and Thyolo, sugar cane workers in Nchalo, and tobacco processors in Lilongwe all downed their tools and went on strike beginning in May 1992, and several of them were killed by police fire in Blantyre and at Nchalo. The courage of the workers and students made it possible for underground pressure groups to come out as full-fledged political parties, and for the founding of more than twenty newspapers in a country where only one had existed for the past thirty years. Members of the Malawi Writers Group both inside the country and in exile have been instrumental in forging this solidarity with the workers, and in the formation of various political and human rights organizations which have created their own political space and forced the Malawi government to liberalize the political process.

The Structural Adjustment Program has in large measure undermined this process of the creation of a political culture by making it economically impossible for these organization to exist, recruit membership, and perform their functions. The conditionalities have led to an increase in the cost of school materials, thereby putting them out of reach for the average student. It has also led to the distortion of the membership of the group vis-a-vis the general population, and a decrease in the outlets, newspapers, and publishing facilities for the group's work. Almost all the original journals and magazines founded by the Malawi Writers Group have virtually ceased to exist because of the rising cost of production. Other publishing ventures, such as Manchichi Press set up by one mem-

ber of the group, are finding it hard to survive in the face of inflation and the rising prices of press-related imports. This has meant that works by members of the group cannot be published and disseminated easily. The press media have not been spared, as already pointed out above. In response to the student opposition to the country's economic policies, the government has resorted to more draconian measures to deal with the unrest. This has sometimes resulted in the dismissal and detention of members of the Malawi Writers Group, including those now teaching in rural secondary schools. The high fuel costs have made it impossible to take plays written by the group's members to the countryside, where sometimes they were used for developmental purposes.

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The State versus the Academic Unions in Postcolonial Kenya*

Alamin Mazrui and
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In November 1993, the faculty of Kenya's four public universities went on a strike that was not officially called off until September 1994, in protest against the government's decision not to register their proposed union, the University Academic Staff Union (UASU). Despite many precedents from a number of other African countries, the Moi government has treated the idea of an academic union as anathema to Kenya's body politic. Even after a long paralyzing strike he has refused to submit to internal and external calls, coming from the strikers, the opposition, and several academic and non-academic unions from other parts of the world, urging him to register UASU. Unprecedented in the history of Kenya's academia, this strike showed the extent to which academics had underestimated the government's capacity to withstand the pressure of their collective action (academics had no contingency plans in case the government decided to stop their salaries or evict them from government houses); it also demonstrated the government's resolve to prevent academics from organizing themselves into a trade union.

The question, then, is: Why has the Moi government been so uncompromisingly opposed to the idea of an academic union in Kenya? What factors and forces can explain this hostile reaction to the unionization of academics? If, under local and international pressure, the government changed the constitution of the country and

allowed for the registration of political parties whose objective was explicitly to remove the Moi-KANU government from power, why does the same government object to the registration of an academic union which has a much narrower economic agenda? Before we turn to these questions, it may be instructive to look at the history of UASU's registration in Kenya.

Historical Background

When the Registrar-General rejected the application for the registration of UASU in 1993, he insisted that there is no provision in the legislation (establishing national universities) for the formation of an academic union. What the Registrar-General did not mention, however, is that in 1972 the same Registrar's office had registered the University Academic Staff Union (UASU), a body founded to cater for the faculty members of Nairobi University, then the only public university in the country, and its constituent Kenyatta University College. Prior to 1972, the dons had a University Staff Association which was provided for under the University of Nairobi Act. The dons resisted this form of organization, however, because it was subject to administrative and political control by the university administration and the government. For this reason they took the initiative of registering UASU, whose main objective, in addition to improving the terms of the service, was to improve the relation between its members, the university council, and the students. Differences, however, began to emerge between UASU and the Moi government soon after it came to state power in August 1978. Among the disputed issues were UASU's demand for the reinstatement of Ngugi wa Thiong'o to his former professorial position at Nairobi University after his release from detention, UASU's condemnation of how the government and the university administration handled student unrest, its call for the improvement of their terms of service for the academics, its demonstration against apartheid in South Africa and the murder of Walter Rodney in Guyana. In response President Moi issued an unconstitutional order disbanding UASU; concomitantly in July 1980 he deregistered the Civil Servants Union (CSU) for reasons that are not clear, given that (unlike UASU) the CSU never had a confrontation with the government.

July 1980 was the last period in which Kenyan academics had a union. The revival of academic unionism in October 1992 was promoted by academics who had never had any political involvement, and who decided to strike only after the petition for the registration of UASU had been in limbo for one year, to then be finally denied. This decision sparked off a series of strikes on November 29, 1993, which ended without achieving any of the academics' objectives. As the academics continued the strikes, three other professional groups sought for the registration of their unions : the Civil Servants Union (CSU), which had suffered the same fate as UASU some twelve years earlier; the National Union of Teachers of Secondary Schools and Tertiary Institutions (NUTSSTI); and the Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists (KMPDU). These too were denied registration. Like UASU, members of the unregistered KMPDU also went on strike, from June to September 1994, to protest against the Registrar's decision, but the KMPDU strike too ended without any gain.

Against this historical background, how to explain the government's hostility towards academic unions? If UASU had a legal precedent, why did the government choose the path of non-registration? We suggest that this was partly a product of the prevailing conception of the state, the nature of trade unions as perceived by the state, and the government's view of which class in Kenya most threatens the status quo.

The State as Employer

As in many other nations of the "Third World," the state has been the largest single employer in post-colonial Kenya. Only recently, under the liberalization program of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has Kenya been forced to cut the size of its civil service through ministerial mergers, retrenchment, and the lowering of the retirement age.

The majority of university academics in Kenya are state employees. There are now a few private universities like the United States International University (USIU) and Daystar University, but even these are highly dependent on adjunct professors serving as full-time employees in Kenya's four public universities. These public universities are not only funded by the government and come

directly under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, but are headed by the President, who functions as their Chancellor, and thus appoints all the Vice-Chancellors of the executive heads, and the Vice-Chancellors of these institutions. Like most presidential appointments in Kenya, the instatement of Vice-Chancellors is more based upon political patronage than professional expertise.

But the problem arises not so much from the fact that the state acts as an employer, but from the government's conception of the state as an absolute power, having the right to control all those working for it; the right to be their only voice; and the right to demand complete allegiance from them (on the occasion of the first multiparty elections in 1992, circulars were distributed in government offices to remind civil servants of their expected allegiance to the KANU government in their work performance and voting behavior). From the government's viewpoint, then, the idea that any group of government employees may organize a trade union, to better bargain around the terms of service, is anathema. The assumption is that the state must remain unchallenged, and must be thought incapable of mismanagement, oversight, or miscalculation. It is on this basis that Daniel arap Moi declared that "his government was taking care of its employees well and they, therefore, did not need a union" when he banned UASU and CSU in 1980 (*Weekly Review*, January 21, 1994: 11).

An absolutist government is intolerant of challenge and dissent coming from any section of society; but it is likely to react with utmost intolerance when the challenge comes from its own employees, as it regards them as custodians of its interests rather than custodians of the public interest. This, perhaps, is why the Moi government proscribed and later refused to register not only a union of academics but also a union of civil servants.

The Union: Economics versus Politics

In its attempts to deny the dons their constitutional right of association the government has invoked not only legal excuses, but extra-legal arguments. One of the more prominent ones stems from its conception of what is a trade union. In its attempt to justify its decision not to register UASU, the government came to rely almost exclusively on a small group of pro-establishment academics who

argued that unions, by their very nature, exclude white-collar workers. Professor Mwanzi of Kenyatta University, now Executive Officer of the ruling party KANU, suggested that university academics are not fit for trade unions, that these are for people like mechanics, tailors, sugar plantation workers (*The Weekly Review*, January 21,1994 :8). And such arguments have continued to be proposed in government circles despite the fact that academic unions are the norm everywhere, in Africa, South America, and Europe, and have a precedent in Kenya as well.

The government fears unions because it sees them as political bodies. Accordingly, President Moi described the demand of medical practitioners for a union, as "a civil disobedience strategy orchestrated against the government by the political opposition" (*Daily Nation* , August 30, 1994). The alleged political character of the unions is what led successive Kenyan governments to impose severe restrictions on union activity. Under Kenyatta, the president had to ratify the appointment of the Secretary General of the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU). The Moi government has gone even further; it has virtually turned COTU into a wing of KANU. Ironically, in order to undermine the political potential of COTU, the government has brought it under its own political umbrella.

This conception of the trade union as a political body is a colonial legacy. British colonial officers and British settlers, for a certain period of time, did not believe that Africans were capable of looking at trade unions as non-political organizations. The recurrence of strikes that linked economic demands with the demand for self-rule was evidence, in their eyes, of the Africans' inability to distinguish between economics and politics. Settler employers in Kenya maintained, therefore, a strong stand against the registration of African trade unions.

An ordinance legalizing unions was passed by the Colonial legislative assembly in 1943. But it was done very grudgingly and only because its passage was a condition for the eligibility for development and welfare grants from the British Colonial Officer on which the settler community had become quite dependent. When independence was imminent, however, the British Labor Department established a program intended to promote "responsible," i.e., non-political trade unions. Nonetheless, trade unions in Kenya continued

to be a major political force campaigning for decolonization. It is the memory of this colonial history that has continued to haunt Kenya's leadership to the present and to motivate legal and extra-legal strategies for controlling trade unions.

If the Kenyan leadership regards trade unions as political in nature, why then has it allowed certain unions to operate, while proscribing others? We suggest that the government has allowed those unions to survive which it regards as politically controllable, while it has banned those which it regards as threatening to its rule. At present, it seems that the unions that have the maximum of oppositional potential, in the eyes of the government, are the professional middle-class unions.

Kenya is now engaged in its second liberation struggle, a struggle directed primarily against the autocratic rule that has characterized the three decades since independence. It is a struggle for "genuine" democracy, pluralism and more freedom. It is, in essence, a middle-class struggle. This, in great part, is the reason why Moi sees the professional unions of the middle-class as potentially the greatest source of opposition. Under Jomo Kenyatta virtually all the victims of the dreaded Preservation of Public Security Act, the law empowering the government to imprison a person, without charge or trial, for an indefinite period of time, were opposition politicians and people suspected to be involved with the Somali nationalist movement. The only member of the professional middle class detained then was Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Under arap Moi's rule, however, victims of the detention law have been largely members of the middle class (academics and university students, lawyers, journalists). For the Moi regime, it is the unions seeking to represent the members of the professional middle class that appear less likely to submit to political control. (The expansion of university education and the establishment of new universities in other Kenyan towns have made the problem of control over unionized academics appear even more formidable than ever before) This may be a further reason for the Moi government's persistent violation of the freedom of association in the case of teachers, civil servants, and medical practitioners.

Unions and the Washington Connection

By all indications, the Kenyan government has won this round of trade union dispute with the academics. However, there is no reason to believe that we have witnessed the end of this struggle. The fate of this saga may depend not only on the local forces, but on external ones as well. More prominent among the latter may be the Washington connection, whose legacy (again) extends back to the colonial period.

As we have seen, the colonial government always strove to keep the Kenyan unions depoliticized and it sharply separated economic and political objectives. It finally achieved this goal during the Emergency, when it effectively removed the militant leadership of the unions, including Makhan Singh, Chege Kibachia, and Fred Kubai.

This left Tom Mboya, head of the Kenya Federation of Labor (KFL) and later Minister of Labor in the post-independence government, as the most prominent trade union leader. Though Mboya was quite a moderate, according to some, even reactionary, his union did maintain a degree of political activism that was not insignificant, especially in the climate of intense repression unleashed to crush the "Mau Mau" and radical trade unionism.

Mboya and his KFL came, however, quickly under the patronage of the American AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations) and later the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICTFU). As Kenya was gradually heading towards independence, the AFL-CIO and ICTFU aided Mboya to pre-empt the spread of "Communism" in the Kenyan trade union movement. The Washington connection in Kenya's trade union history was established, therefore, at the peak of Kenya's first democratic struggle, the struggle against colonialism.

As Kenya is engaged in its second democratic struggle, the Washington connection is being reactivated, this time through the African American Labor Center, a trade union organization sponsored by the U.S. State Department. In May 1994, for instance, the Center took the initiative of contacting the leadership of the unregistered UASU and organized a three-day seminar at its expense, which included the cost of room and board in an expensive Nairobi hotel, the New Stanley Hotel, and a handsome honorarium for the partici-

pants. The general theme of the seminar was leadership and organization in "responsible unionism" i.e. one that would be unencumbered by politics.

At this juncture, U.S. involvement with Kenya's trade union movement is no longer motivated by the Cold War agenda, nor necessarily interested in propping up autocracy, as it has done so often in the past in many regions of the world (see Noam Chomsky, *Third World Fascism and the Washington Connection*). On the contrary, the U.S. government today postures as the champion of the Kenyan pro-democracy movement.

But as much as the U.S. establishment may not be immediately concerned that the trade union movement may contribute to the downfall of the Moi regime, it still does not want it to challenge the present neo-colonial arrangement. It is noteworthy that whereas both the U.S. government and the World Bank/IMF have postured as supporters and sometimes even as engineers of the pro-democracy movement, they have been conspicuously silent on the issue of the right of academics to have a professional union. Thus, the need to keep trade unions as apolitical as possible continues to feature in the U.S. trade union agenda for Africa.

Conclusions

As the government continues to undermine any possible unionization for academics, the need for such an organization is escalating. Kenyan academics need to be unionized, first because of the deterioration of *their terms of service* in the context of an economy that has been in decline for years. Academics in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, have suffered because of drastic economic changes precipitated in part by global factors, local economic shifts, and above all by I.M.F. conditionalities and structural adjustment programs. An instrument of professional solidarity and collective bargaining has become indispensable for the protection of the basic economic rights of the academics.

Second, *the conditions of work* have also been deteriorating. Oduor Ong'wen has described the educational infrastructure in Kenyan public universities as lamentable. The infrastructural decline includes the depletion of library resources, as the library now receives just about one percent of the total budget allocation, the

shortage of basic educational material like chalk and stationary, overcrowded classrooms, power blackouts, all, in Ong'wen's view, a product of the massive cuts in educational subsidies imposed on the government by the I.M.F. and the World Bank (*Sunday Nation*, June 26, 1994:7). These conditions are affecting the productivity of the academics and the quality of university education. This accelerating trend towards the academic and intellectual dispossession of Africa must be stopped and reversed. The empowerment of academics through unionization can be part of the strategy towards this end.

The deterioration of both the terms of service and the conditions of work have a bearing on the question of academic freedom. Unable to make ends meet and to carry on their work, Kenyan academics are increasingly seeking employment opportunities elsewhere or are turning to Western funding agencies, which often have their own agenda and their conditionalities for providing research support. These development are rapidly restricting the intellectual arena and creating a state of intellectual deprivation that is bound to limit academic choice and threaten academic freedom.

Academic freedom in Kenya, however, is also threatened by the general political environment. The move towards political pluralism provided some hope for the promotion of academic freedom. But as the popular as well as the institutionalized opposition continues to weaken, and as the regime of Daniel arap Moi continues to reconsolidate its power base, there are clear signs of mounting repression of basic freedoms. The Moi regime's sense of security and power and therefore its sense of the political space it has to repress has been expanded thanks to the backing it has received from the international community, in particular the I.M.F., the World Bank. and the EEC. In this context, an academic union capable of establishing an international network with other academic unions elsewhere can be a potential source of challenge to and resistance against the erosion of academic freedom.

* From *CAFA Newsletter*, N.8, Spring 1995.

Students' Rights and Academic Freedom in Kenya's Public Universities*

James Nduko

On November 23, 1997 the First National Students Conference was held in Nairobi. The outcome of this forum, the formation of KENASU, the Kenya National Students Union, will test in the coming months the government commitment to "democratization," while the conference itself was the launching pad for a future strong student movement in Kenya. This article places the Conference and the formation of KENASU in the context of the Kenyan students' long struggle for the right to organize.

A Short History of Student Organizing in Kenya

Institutions of higher learning in Kenya have had a long history of repression during both the Kenyatta and the Moi regimes. Kenyan students have been denied their most basic rights, including the freedom to organize. Attempts by students to organize have been brutally crushed by the government's security forces. Students engaged in lawful activism have been expelled or suspended from their institutions, arrested, detained, tortured and even murdered. No means have been spared to repress any move towards student government in Kenya.

In 1987, for instance, the Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) was banned; in 1992, the government refused to

lift the ban. In the same year, the National Union of Students of Kenya (NUSKE) was refused registration; in 1994, it was the turn of the Kenya University Students Organization (KUSO)—the reason given by the Registrar for his refusal was that the registration of KUSO would be harmful to the peace, stability, and security of the state.

Early in 1997, the students presented a lengthy memorandum to President Moi decrying the state of affairs at the institution of which he was Chancellor. Among the demands that the students put forward to the president was that his government recognize the principle of the autonomy of the university as an institution devoted not only to intellectual pursuit but also to critical, ideological formation. In the memorandum, the students demanded that the government respect and institutionalize the principle of academic freedom and decriminalize the students' and lecturers' efforts to organize and express ideas different from those of the establishment. The students were demanding that both they and their lecturers be allowed to form umbrella unions capable of rallying around issues affecting their lot. After the students read the memorandum and presented a copy of it to the president, he played down this demand, arguing that as a parent he was not surprised by it, but what the young people were asking was too much and could not be granted all at once.

At the same forum he retorted that he had no problems with the students and lecturers forming a union, but his worry was what they would do with these unions, and whether they would serve the national interest (whatever that may be!). To this day, no response has come from the president, despite his promise that he would look into the issues raised by the students.

Over the years, as the Kenyan government has made it clear that it cannot tolerate the emergence of umbrella unions, a new phenomenon in student organizing has emerged. This has been the formation of district-based student associations and college/faculty based organizations. While district-based organizations are student setups wholly dependent on political patronage for survival, college-based organizations are an archetype of the pseudo-student professional clubs that mushroom, plagued with operational constraints, in the hostile environment set by the academic authorities and the government, before they are allowed registration.

The existence of college / ethnically based associations has obviously limited the students' capacity to unite and constitute themselves into a strong umbrella organization capable of championing their values, visions, and aspirations as both citizens and students. The result has been the fragmentation of the student body into small professional or ethnically oriented parochial units of young scholars who have a narrow understanding of what they could to do with their intellectual potential.

As it now stands, the Kenyan university is not a citadel of critical thinking, but a factory mass-producing conformists who, even after graduation, will be safe for the maintenance of the *status quo*. The curriculum itself hardly allows for the development of a critical community holding debates on national policy or other key issues.

It is through continual interference and control that the government has succeeded in this policy of repression and denial of academic rights. Government control mechanisms, put in place to ensure that the university is constantly under close surveillance, include the following:

•The University Act, which is an Act of Parliament that arbitrarily makes the President of Kenya the chancellor of the public universities. Such legislation obviously makes the university susceptible to presidential whims and manipulation.

•The chancellor (President) has the express authority, established under the University Act, to appoint the vice-chancellors of the public universities, their deputies, college principals, and other senior university administrators, including the chairman of the University Council. Ineptness and a conspicuous lack of intellectual independence are, in this context, the norm. Little can be expected, as far as the defense of academic rights is concerned, of administrators who owe their position to the powers that be.

•The state's repression of the student movement, through the ban on umbrella student unions, the attack on existing organizations, the open as well as subtle intimidation of student leaders, and the infiltration of these organizations by police informers posing as genuine students.

•The state's denial of the university lecturers' right to organize, demonstrated by its refusal to register the University Academic Staff Union (UASU) in 1994. The dismissal from their teaching posi-

tions of lecturers crusading for this right, and the refusal of the courts to accord them justice, which shows to what extent the state is determined to stifle academic freedom.

•The victimization of student activists crusading for academic freedom through arbitrary suspensions, expulsions, unwarranted exam failures, police surveillance, the use of anonymous letters and telephone calls threatening their lives and even physical elimination.

•The state's repression of the students' right to free assembly, association, and peaceful protest resulting in many unwarranted closures of the universities, and the deaths of several students due to state police brutality.

•The deaths of vocal student leaders under mysterious circumstances and the failure of the judicial system to conduct effective investigations probing the causes of such deaths.

•The haunting of the university precincts by state security agents and police reservists, resulting in the spread of fear and despondency among the university community and its unwillingness to engage in critical discourse at any level.

•The state's establishment of police stations inside the universities' compounds and university campuses, an infringement upon the university's extraterritoriality.

•The attendance of management meetings and students disciplinary meetings by senior special branch and CD officers, automatically instituting the state's control over the decision-making structures at the university, even those of an academic nature.

The political paranoia that has characterized the post-independence Kenyatta and Moi regimes, set the backdrop for the present state of repression in the public universities. Both regimes saw the universities as the cooking pot for the opposition to the *status quo*. Students and lecturers in the 1970s and early 1980s were seen as the forefront of criticism and opposition to the despotic one-party rule of KANU (Kenya African National Union). The university community was viewed as a community of nationalistic dissidents that needed to be curbed to suit the will and whims of KANU.

In this period, student politics moved away from welfare concerns to the more critical areas of national and foreign policy. Issues relating to governance and policy matters began to dominate

the university debates. At the University of Nairobi there emerged a strong student union, SONU, and the stage was set for a bitter showdown between ideologically oriented student activism and state brutality. Exemplary were the many student protests and the government crackdown of progressive students and lecturers carried out, in this period, under the guise of ridding the university of "Marxist elements." The period also saw the 1982 coup attempt, by the Air Force, during which university students came out in open support of the revolt. Many students from the University of Nairobi were killed on this occasion by loyalist government troops, many more were arrested, detained, some without trial, and sentenced to long jail terms. Many others were expelled and some forced to flee to exile.

The radical activities at the university alarmed the conservative regime of both Jomo Kenyatta and Moi and nothing was spared to ensure that the *status quo* would be preserved. This has set the condition for the repression of academic rights in Kenya, whose long-term effect has been the whittling away of the earlier spirit of independence that made of the Kenyan students the conscience of the nation and an important influence on its political life.

SAP and Academic Freedom

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the government introduced "cost-sharing" in its public institutions. This program was part of the implementation of the World Bank and IMF Structural Adjustment Program. The university was not spared, and it soon became clear that students too would be required to pay directly for their education. Prior to the introduction of this program, university students automatically received funds from the government to finance their studies. It was so automatic that, upon attaining admission at the final high school examinations, even students from poor backgrounds had the guarantee of being able to go to the university. Accommodations, food, and tuition fees were directly paid by the government to the university and a personal allowance was advanced to the students for their subsistence while in college.

The new policy stipulated that the students should be responsible for the financing of their education. It declared that government financing would no longer be automatic, and that needy stu-

dents would be required to apply for loans from a board set up by the Commission for Higher Education, the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB). Only deserving cases would be considered for loans awards.

This provision was worrisome, because the majority of students who make it to the university in Kenya come from poor backgrounds, and the new rule would make it impossible for them to continue their studies. There was obviously a concern for the criteria that would be used to ascertain whether an applicant student was really needy. Clearly, it was going to be impossible for many students to finance their university education.

The implementation of the World Bank/IMF policy for higher education sparked off many riots in all the state universities with students demanding the policy's immediate withdrawal, given its serious implications for the future of the country's university education. These riots saw a serious clash between the public universities' student body and the state police. The protests led to the closing of the public universities for periods ranging from nine months to over one year. Upon their being called back, the students were sent coercive forms that required them to either accept the new conditions and continue with their studies, or reject them and forfeit all chances at the institutions. There was a requirement that these bonds/ form be signed before a magistrate. Faced with these alternatives, and separated from each other in the isolation of their homes, the students had no choice but to sign a declaration stating that they were ready to adhere to the new requirements. The loan forms were subsequently sent to the district headquarters, from where the students were supposed to make applications and forward them to the HELB. The recalling of the students then followed the pattern of the *colonial divide-and-rule policy practiced in the British colonies*. The younger students were recalled before the more mature and critical groups. The semester system, that would have all the students begin the academic year together, was deliberately interfered with and a new, irregular system was put in place, with sections of the student body being made extremely busy with exams and assignments at the same time when other sections would be busy settling down for their new semesters. A new system emerged that ensured that different student groups would have irreconcilable concerns at any one particular time of the year or of their stay in col-

lege. This essentially curtailed any possibility the students would have to demand the withdrawal of the new policy.

The new set-up made it difficult for the students to mobilize around common issues. The stringent demands of the new loan scheme now served to further fragment the student body, rather than to unify it. Soon a stratification among students became evident, as the students who got more of the loan awards would have an easy lifestyle, while those who received less, or none at all, would lead a miserable life in the next door room. An unheard-of and unimaginable division between rich and poor students began to emerge, that could now be seen in the groupings that naturally formed. It became difficult for students to face their problems as a body rather than as individuals. While the beneficiaries of the new scheme found it satisfactory, those who suffered its effects were still motivated to protest against the unfairness and arbitrariness of the criteria used to give the awards. There was no common rallying point for these two groups and what resulted was a silent, intra-student-body resentment, rather than a joining of forces against a common enemy.

The majority of the students' focus shifted sharply from the tradition of research, study, criticism, and free socialization at the university, to a new situation where they would act as isolated individuals, with little confidence in themselves, and concerned primarily with their own survival. Food and accommodations became the big issues in the students' daily lives at the university. Soon, more time was spent by the students cooking in their rooms rather than interacting with colleagues after lectures to discuss and resolve common problems. More time was also spent now commuting from relatives' houses in city estates, than doing research work in the library. Long hours were to be spent pondering on where the next penny would come from for the next meal. Money was to be spent purchasing electrical cooking gadgets, green vegetables, maize meal, cooking fat, and salt for survival's sake, rather than to buy books, pens, and papers.

In this situation, desperation and frustration have descended on the university students in Kenya. Thus, it may take quite a prompting to resuscitate the student movement into what it was in the 1970s and 1980s. Confronted with such struggle to survive, the higher values of academic freedom, the extraterritoriality of the university, and the need to democratize the governance of these institutions are

only secondary concerns for the average university student today. Gripped by biting poverty and faced with a daily existential drama unfolding on the campus, today's students' main concern is to complete their degree and go away, no matter where to. The demand for survival is also turning many students into intellectual beggars, thanks to the district-based organizations that often arrange for hand-out-dishing forums for their members. With the emergence of a hand-out-culture, in fact, well-to-do politicians have taken over the district/ethnic-based associations as patrons, thus effectively stripping them of their authority.

In spite of these drawbacks, the Kenyan university still has the potential of providing a progressive ideological formation. Little, however, can be expected from a university that fears its student body. The main challenge facing a student movement in Kenya today is whether the students will fulfill their responsibility towards the country and fight repression and dictatorship at all levels. For a start, Kenyan students should strive to establish the principle of the autonomy of the university, making it illegal for the state to maintain a police post and have security forces within its precincts. They should also struggle to obtain a curriculum reform that would make eduction relevant to the Kenyan situation, and for a greater student participation in the university government, and a greater presence of students in all the university organs.

Lastly, students should not await for the government's approval in order to start organizing. The November 23rd First National Student Conference was an expression of this principle and perhaps the beginning of a new student movement.

* From *CAFA Newsletter*, N. 14, Spring 1998.

Interview with Salif Yonaba: Member of the Permanent Committee on Academic Freedom in Burkina Faso— April 4, 1995*

Silvia Federici

Dr. Salif Yonaba is a law professor at the University of Ouagadougou Law Faculty. He is currently an Associate Professor (Maitre de Conferences Agrege de Droit Public et de Science Politique). CAFA had the opportunity to meet him in New York on Monday, April 4, 1995, during his recent stay in the U.S. as a Visiting-Scholar-in-Residence at the George Washington University National Law Center. His visit was co-sponsored by the West African Research Association (WARA) in Senegal and the Fullbright Fellowship Program.

Can you introduce us to the University of Ouagadougou?

Salif Yonaba: Ouagadugou University is the only college in Burkina Faso; it originated in 1969 as a higher education center; then in 1974 the government decided to turn it into a university; but it is still fairly small. It has 9,000 students, about 250 teachers who are all considered civil servants, five Faculties (Humanities, Science, Health, Economics and Law), and four Institutes (Education, Training, Technology, Agriculture and Data Processing) all contributing to the University. We have also expatriate teachers, who come to

Burkina Faso under a "cooperation program" sponsored by Holland and France; they are recruited and paid by their governments, though eventually it will be the Burkinabe people who will have to pay for the loans underwriting the "covenant," as it is called.

Does the faculty have an input in the recruiting of foreign teachers?

S.Y.:No, academics have no say in who is hired. We know that every year there is a meeting in France where it is decided who is going to come; and we know that many foreigners are interested in coming, because Burkina Faso is a beautiful country and life is pleasant there; but this is all that we know.

We also have many foreign students from all over Africa. Many African universities are periodically shut down by the government, in response to student protests or teachers' strikes. Burkina Faso is considered one of the few universities that hold sessions regularly; as a result, we have students coming from Niger, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and even from Central African countries like Cameroon, Gabon, Chad, Zaire. Many students come because of political repression in their countries, most of them are refugees who have High Commission Refugee status.

What led to the formation of the Permanent Committee on Academic Freedom?

S.Y.: We too have had many problems, both with academic freedom and working conditions. Our freedom of speech has often been undermined. Students have been dismissed and denied their right to study as a result of strikes and anti-government demonstrations. In 1979, for instance, there was an important strike called by the students to demand better working conditions and to protest against the restrictions put on their freedom. (Students did not have freedom of association; they did not have the right to meet.) As a result of the strike many were dismissed, and the ban against them lasted for over five years.

Restrictions on academic freedom are not new in Burkina Faso. During the Sankara regime (1983-1987) freedom of speech was restricted; teachers who taught law, history, philosophy were al-

ways in danger of loosing their jobs or being denied promotion for holding "counter-revolutionary" ideas, or because they refused to be involved in politics. But recently we have seen two teachers killed. Prof. Sessouma Guillame was abducted from his house on December 23, 1989 and was never heard from again. There is speculation that he was a member of an opposition party during the "transitional regime." During this same period, another teacher, Prof. Ouedraoso Umarou Clement, who was an important political member of the regime when the first colleague was kidnapped, had a fall out with the regime and he too decided to join the opposition. He came out in favor of a National Conference before the elections that were to be held at the end of the transitional regime. But on December 9, 1991 he was killed in an accident, and on the same day a member of the law school, also working with the opposition, was badly injured in another accident.

It was at this point that we decided we had to address the issue of academic freedom and drive home the point that we should be able to be involved in politics without risking our lives.

Do you have a trade union in your university?

S.Y.: We have two main teacher unions and unions of administrative staff that are concerned with the question of academic freedom. It was these unions who decided to set up a committee for the defense of academic freedom consisting of four members. In March 1992 we had a small national seminar on academic freedom. It was not easy to organize it because the university authorities were very hostile. But people persisted and it was a success. Afterwards we decided to form a Permanent Committee, which is in the making. We hope this will help us to improve academic life. Now academic freedom is not respected. When there is a student strike, for instance, the university authorities call the police or the military to come on campus.

How much do poor working conditions influence academic freedom on your campus?

S.Y.: A lot. Basically it is very difficult for students to study. You have classes of 200 or 300 students, which have no microphones, so

many students cannot follow the class. And there are very few documents or books, in the library; scholarships are few. Fees so far are not very high; but given the high cost of living, many students cannot make it unless they have scholarships allowing them to buy food, books and other educational material.

Burkina Faso too has been "structurally adjusted." The World Bank believes that our country does not need a higher education system, that primary schools are enough. Students are no longer given scholarships as a result of the implementation of SAP. There is no longer any teachers' recruitment in the university; so all teachers are overworked and have no time left for research; and we are no longer given research leaves. Every two years teachers are supposed to be given leave money to go to France to do research for three months. The University gives them the travel ticket and a sum of money to cover their expenses. But now this money is so little that it is barely sufficient for a week, and certainly not enough to buy books. As a result, very few are able nowadays to go to do research and when they go they cannot afford to buy anything.

Monthly salaries are low; junior lecturers in particular have a difficult time making ends meet, and no teacher has money (particularly after the recent devaluation) to buy books. To give you an idea, a law book costs FCFA 20,000 (= FF 200, $ 45) but a beginning salary for a university teacher is FCFA 100,000 monthly. To put it in other terms, a bag of 50 kilos of rice costs 10,000 (unfortunately, we hear it is going to go up very soon), so a law book costs the same as two 50-kg bags of rice, and, with the large families we have, few teachers can choose one over the other.

For us life is very hard. Personally I have lived now for four years in a house without running water and electricity; this is because this is the only way that I can have my own house and this now is a necessity, because it is very difficult to find a house with our salaries and in Burkina Faso tenancy rules are not reliable, so you can easily find yourself put out of your apartment.

Is there much resistance against SAP?

Yes, students speak against it all the time, and so do the workers. In 1993, for instance, there were many strikes in Burkina Faso as well as in neighboring countries; our academic year was about to be

curtailed as a result of a strike initiated by our two teachers unions. Currently, a strike is going on on the campus of the University consisting in a refusal to organize final examinations so long as there is no change in working conditions. But so far nothing has changed. This is one reason perhaps why teachers can be co-opted.

A current danger to academic freedom is that more and more academicians are getting involved in politics, to become ministers or deputies. After they get involved in government they forget their colleagues and they put their interests before those of the university.

We also suffer from the fact that university authorities, the Rector included, are not elected but appointed. They too, after being appointed, cease acting as academics and begin behaving as political persons. They are more concerned with their political future than with academic affairs and, in fact, their acts in many cases jeopardize academic freedom. We are now fighting for a system where the main institutions and departments operate in a truly transparent way, rather than through the appointment system.

But having elections is not enough. We have had elections recently of associate deans for academic affairs, but the results were manipulated. Academics were asked to make a list of candidates, so those who were interested in getting involved were asked to agree on a list. This encourages the formation of cliques. Moreover, people were given money to vote a certain way; and some administrative staff were threatened with dismissal if they did not vote for a certain list. We need to change this; we need to continue to fight, to do consciousness-raising, because people today are so preoccupied with day-to-day survival that it is difficult for them to organize to stop violations of academic rights.

We know that everywhere it is women who pay the heaviest price for adjustment and repression of academic freedom. What is the situation of women at Ouagadougou University?

Let me say first that there are several female teachers at the university. The ratio is still low, however; generally it is 5 to 1, although in some faculties it is much lower; in law there is one female teacher; in economics, none. There are also many female students on campus. There are female students in many faculties, particularly in the humanities, but even in law they are 50%. Still most women do not

go for higher education. Parents want to marry the girls quickly, because it is still a stigma for a woman to remain without a husband.

Now with SAP it is harder for women than for men to pursue their studies. For instance, it is women who go to the market and have to care for the housework and the preparation of food, and this is where the day-to-day effects of SAP are felt most. At the same time, women are becoming more aware of their human rights and are not willing to tolerate any longer harassment from men. They are demanding equal treatment and, as a result, relations between women and men are becoming more equal. There has definitely been an improvement in male-female relations, thanks, in great part, to the dynamic activity of our local national NGO, the Burkinabe Movement For The Defense of Human Rights (MBDHP) that was created on February 19th, 1989.

* From *CAFA Newsletter*, N.9, Fall 1995.

On the Current State of the Student Movement in the Niger Republic

An Interview with Moctar Al Haji Hima. Niamey, December 5, 1998*

Ousseina Alidou

Moctor Al Haji Hima is the former President of the Nigerien Students Union.

The Nigerien Student Movement from 1974 to 1998. A Historical Background

The Nigerien student movement has gone through different phases in recent years, because it was banned during the military government of General Kountche' and only recently has been able to regain its initiative, even though it was never completely destroyed and continued to operate underground.

It is a broad movement and I want to first dispel the idea that it is an ethnically-oriented movement as some have claimed. In the period from 1974 to 1983, the leadership, that is, the Executive Committee and the Directing Committee of the UENUN (*Union Des Etudiants Nigerien de l'Universite' de Niamey*), was predominantly Hausa, but within it there were also comrades coming from

other ethnic groups. Those who stress the ethnic elements, and keep asking "to what ethnic group does so and so belong?" are people interested in promoting divisions within the student movement. They try to convince some groups that they are being marginalized. It is true that between 1974 and 1983, the majority of the leadership was Hausa, but even among the Hausa there is a great diversity. There is uniformity as far as the language is concerned, but not as far the culture is concerned. You have the Hausa from Dosso (South-West), from Tahoua (North-West), Hausa from Doutchi (South-West), Hausa from Maradi (East), and Zinder (East).

Also at the level of the USN (*Union Des Scolaires Nigerien*), the ethnic element is not important; it is not a factor in the choice of the leadership. The USN relies on a set of principles, on certain texts, on its statutes and its internal regulations. It operates on the basis of democratic centralism. The leaders must come from the grassroots and must have learnt everything bit by bit; they also must know the statutes well and have assumed all the responsibilities to aspire one day to become part of the Directing Committee (CD). In addition, they must have a good political formation. You must have a socialist perspective to become a leader in the student movement, particularly if you want to have a position of responsibility like being on the Directing Committee. The line has softened but the comrades are asked to conform to the guidelines of the organization, which is anti-imperialist and therefore can only be on the left. This is the ideological direction of the movement.

If you come from the grassroots as far as your ideological formation, if you master the principles of the organization, that is, if you support all the anti-imperialist principles, you can aspire to become a general delegate for a supporting commission that is in an office, a high-school, or a university. At the university there are debate commissions, sport commissions, etc. If you have been tested this way, if you have shown that you are capable of defending the interests of everybody, and that you respect the texts of the organization, you can aspire one day to become a member of the Executive Committee. And if you have been a good member of the Executive Committee and have demonstrated that you can defend the interests of all the students, again in conformity with the texts of the organization, your section can propose you as a candidate to become part of the Directing Committee, which is the leading struc-

ture of the organization. The CD administers the affairs of the organization, not only at the national level, but at the international level as well. It supervises the affairs of all Nigerien students wherever they are, whether they study at home or abroad. This is what the comrades take into account. Are you a good militant? Are you well-prepared ideologically and politically? Are you a comrade capable of defending everybody and respecting the principles of the organization? The other factors are of no interest for the student movement because it is truly a mass organization.

Certainly the USN has always had regional structures as well. This is because of the activities it carries on during the vacation period. Usually, it functions full-time, twelve months a year, because the CD reorients its activities during the vacation period. When the students return to the rural areas, the comrades too return to their villages, to help their parents or to set up other activities. What's happening is that by returning to their regions, the students realize what has taken place in the life of the countryside during the nine months when they were absent, and can make an assessment of the evolution of the population during the year, which then serves to make a more complete and reliable analysis of the national situation. People examine how the international situation has affected the conditions of people in the country and then examine the national life in all its dimensions. It's not just the problems of students that are examined, but also the problems of the peasants. How do they manage to survive? Has there been improvement or regression in their conditions? How has the national situation affected the life of the organization? The problems have to be identified to be corrected.

The CD relies on the work of the vacation structures to make this type of analysis. These vacation-structures are created in April and function from April to October, when the people involved participate at the gatherings of the general councils of the congress, where they present their reports region by region, so that an assessment of the real national situation can be made. The vacation-structures, then, are a positive thing and they are not organized on ethnic bases. The comrades are chosen to go to this or that region and they volunteer to organize activities for the vacations; there is no connection with the regional or ethnic origin of the comrades involved.

There is another aspect to this question. Between 1983 and 1987 the Nigerien student movement suffered a serious setback under the dictatorship of General Kountche' who dissolved its organization after killing a number of its members and deporting others. The result was a state of paralysis, because the student movement no longer had an organization, since the only organizations that the regime allowed were cultural or regional ones. But our comrades could not remain unorganized for too long and they utilized these channels. People regrouped for cultural activities around the library commissions or the regional associations that always organize activities for the vacations. It was through these work-cadres that the students were able to address national questions again. At the university level, the regional associations were the only ones that could meet because trying to organize was very risky, and when they did try the comrades were systematically persecuted, they were taken by the police and deported, or were sent before time to do the civic service. But they could organize at the regional level, because the authorities allowed it. So, there were consultations and people tried to start activities even if they did not have the means to defend themselves. But people knew that the regional discussion did not necessarily include only people from the region.

Under the cover of regional associations, then, the student movement strove to overcome the constraints imposed by the dictatorship, but without pushing too far, because it was not possible to organize political activities like before. What they could organize were cultural activities, and educational and literacy programs to be carried on during the vacation period. There were also fundraising activities to help comrades in difficulty or to finance the activities for the vacations. When students came back they always gave a report of their activities and this would give people an idea about the national situation to such a point that when the student movement revived in 1987 there was no discontinuity, with respect to an understanding of the national situation.

In 1987, when the Nigerien students regained the initiative, they were able to force the Kountche' government, at the end of its regime, to accept the existence of their structures in their old organizational form, as Union of Nigerien Students (*Union Des Scolaires Nigeriens*, USN), this time with a CD inside the University of Niamey, which was the CD of the UENUN (*Union Des Etudiants*

Nigerien) at the University of Niamey. When the movement was revived, in April of 1987, there was no rupture with the past, because the reports produced by the vacations-structures served to analyze what had occurred during the 1983 to 1987 period.

At that time, it was agreed that it was necessary to define a program. The most active sections of the USN—those of the students from Niamey, from Cotonou (Benin), from Lome (Togo), from Abidjan (Ivory Coast), from Dakar (Senegal), and from France—gathered, then, during the vacations, around the UENUN at the University of Niamey, to discuss what could be done to get the government to recognize the organization, so that the latter could regain its credibility and its means of intervention, which in the past had made of it the only counter-weight in front of different dictatorships. It was also the only movement organized at the national level.

There were two types of schemes. The first proposed that the university students meet alone and leave high-schools and elementary schools students independent, free to have their own organization. Another scheme proposed that the old form of the USN be kept. There were periods of reflection that took place during the vacations. In any case the mandate was to launch a vast movement which would in the end prevail over the military government and, therefore, over military dictatorship which continued even after the death of the first dictator Kountche' and his replacement Ali Chaiboou.

It was necessary between 1983 and 1990 to find the means to launch a movement that could prevail over the military regime and create the conditions for democracy. These were the questions from which people started in 1987. At this time, the decision was made to give equal representation at the regional level; and there was a need, therefore, for comrades who knew the regional situations well in order to boost the mobilization campaigns. Thus, the comrades were regrouped according to their regional origins and they were put in the position of being able go on a mission at any time of the year without this costing anything to the organization. They could keep in contact easily with their younger brothers who had remained in the regions. Thus, it was much easier for them to go and mobilize the comrades fast, if it was necessary, the more so since the militants of the USN continued to be persecuted. This is why it was considered necessary to strengthen the regional struc-

tures, and give them a precise mandate. This decision was not made because the comrades regrouped instinctively according to their ethnic origin. They regrouped because they had a precise mandate which they executed at the level of the different regions. I think that any democracy must recognize the ties people have to a particular locality, otherwise they would not be able to elect their mayors and deputies. It was a democratic and political regionalism in full respect of the texts of the organization, in the country, in the high schools, and regional colleges. This is what happened in 1989.

At the end of 1991, as the student unions were recognized, it was decided that the mandate of the vacation-structures was finished and they were dissolved. At the level of the University of Niamey, they had no longer had a permanent existence. But now the CD has decided that the vacation-structures should exist in conformity with the way things were before the regional structures were imposed, and that they should again function from April to October, when they would deposit their reports. These structures work under the guidance of the USN, which manages the activities of the high-school students, and the CD, whose directives are transmitted through the different executive committees.

From 1994 and 1997, with the change that took place at the national level, there was a political defeat because the politicians of the Third Republic have managed to infiltrate the student unions. They realized that in Niger only the student union represented concretely a force and that they could not have continued their bad politics unless they managed to weaken the student unions. Thus, they infiltrated the unions from a political viewpoint and used many tricks, including the ethnic card, to divide the students. As a consequence, the Central Union (Central Syndacal), which since 1960, and despite all the dictatorships which there have been since independence, had been able to survive and remain united until now, today is divided. On one side there is the USTN and on the other there is the National Confederation of Nigerien Workers (Confederation National Des Travailleurs Nigeriens, CNTN). The USN is not yet divided, but the politicians have decided not to recognize it any longer, despite the decision by the National Conference which recognized the organization. They have dissolved again (the USN) and today it is functioning underground.

Because of the infiltration and the fact that the comrades have been weakened, there has been a resurgence of ethnic feelings.

What happens at the national level always has immediate consequences at the level of high school students. In the case of university students ethnicity is there, but not in a way that is open and can be exposed because the comrades know that any concession to ethnocentrism prevents you from having any leadership role in the organization. The fact is that the organization does not tolerate that people who are active in the regional political formations have a position of responsibility in the organization.

There are no representatives of political parties in the organization, because it is a mass organization that must preserve harmony among its members. If the commission for the "tea-debates" tries to plan a debate on the political configuration of Niger, clearly the comrades can discuss their political views. If, during the occasion they want to make their political affiliations known, they can do so, because this is OK in the context of an intellectual discussion.

People can present their views and defend their belonging to a particular political formation, or defend a particular political party with regard to its social program or to compare it to another party.

But they cannot hold a position in a party and a position of leadership in the student union.

Let us look now at the international level. What does the USN think of the IMF?

Moctar Al Haji Hima: (Sarcastic pause). Oh, it is an old story because obviously any serious left organization, above all an anti-imperialist organization, must oppose the international financial institutions operating in the present political order. If you have an anti-imperialist perspective you don't want financial capital to come in the country and impose its will and continue to exploit with impunity the population. This is why the USN, in taking a position, always analysis the overall situation in view of this perspective. In recent times, we have witnessed the collapse of state socialism internationally; but the question for us is whether this means to legitimate the exploitation of people and of the Third World by financial capital. As an anti-imperialist organization, the USN refuses the idea that international financial capital can come to our countries

and impose their views and demands on our people as if our people were not able to organize themselves and define for themselves a development scheme, in agreement with their needs rather than with the needs of the imperialists.

What has been the impact of the intervention of the World Bank and IMF on the structure of education in Niger?

M.H: With the signing of the first SAP program, in the period from 1982 to 1987, there was a very restrictive educational politics because the state was asked to concern itself only with elementary education and privatize completely tertiary education, from the high-schools to the universities. There has been no increase in the budget for these two school levels. The USN had to rebel against this plan, which did not take into any account the real situation of the country. In Niger the rate of scolarization is about 28%, and it has not substantially improved since 1960. If we consider the number of persons who have had a tertiary education and those in particular who have a university diploma, and then we ask the state to disengage at this level, what we are really doing is sacrificing all the technical and professional formation in the country. They just want people to learn basic reading and writing. But what is the use of learning to read and write for six years, if afterwards people do not have any use for it.? People don't realize in Niger that already now those in the rural areas who don't pass the exam to enter a college or do not get into a college because their parents are poor, have to return to farming and a few years later they have become illiterate again. There is plenty of second degree illiterates in Niger. What is going to happen if Nigeriens cannot rely on the state after the first six years of education? What is this leading up to? It is people with financial means who are now in charge of the implementation of these programs; because they have the money and their children are never here in Niger; from the time they begin the second cycle they leave Niger to go to study abroad since their parents have the means. These are the only ones who will have the benefit of a higher education. Another type of oligarchy is going to be created and these will be the people who are going to lead the country. The masses will be at their mercy.

These are the contradictions the World Bank does not seem to acknowledge. But we should not have any illusions, because the World Bank is a bank and, like every bank, all it cares for is the profitability of its investments. The World Bank is guided by a politics of usury. This is why it does not care whether people get an education. When we talk about schooling we should always ask what it is for. What are the objectives? For instance, if people go to school and they are asked to learn a foreign language we should ask why, what is it for? What are people going to do with it after they have learned it? It is important to know at the very beginning what are our concrete goals. We support a formal education, literacy, an education that is technical as well as cultural and, above all, an education that is democratic. But the World Bank is not interested in all this, again because it is guided by the politics of usury. We want a democratic school, not one reserved for privileged people.

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The World Bank, Privatization, and the Fate of Education in Senegal*

Ousseina Alidou

Interview with Dr. Gorgui Deng from the English Department of the University of Dakar. (Dr. Deng is presently a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Ohio State University in the Department of African-American and African Studies)

Dr. Gorgui Deng, can you tell us how Structural Adjustment and privatization have affected higher education in Senegal?

Dr. Gorgui Deng: We often hear that the changes that SAP has introduced have created a "new Senegalese University," but this reform is not what the Senegalese people had expected. The "new University" enrolls a limited number of students and possibly a limited number of teachers, and marks the end of public education. From independence till approximately 1980, the years of President Senghor's government, the Senegalese University was open to everybody. If you had a baccalaureate degree, you were entailed to enroll, and the students were coming from every part of the country and from every social group and class. Students from poor families and rich families met there, because enrollment depended on your social background as well as your academic achievements. The resources of the students' families were also taken into account for

admission. The university was open to everybody; it was truly a "public university."

However, since 1980-1981, a new trend has been in place, under pressure by the World Bank and IMF which have instructed the local authorities to limit the number of students that are admitted and the number of teachers too. Their argument was that the country could not develop if so much money was invested in education. (Senegal apparently is one of the countries that spend the greatest part of the national budget on education). The idea is that selection will guarantee excellence. Thus, today, no attempt is made to ensure the participation of students from different family backgrounds. Students now do not have the same opportunities they had in the past, because the students who have affluent parents can afford to go to private schools, while students coming from poor families cannot afford it. So, now, access to education varies depending on one's social class.

Why should going to a private school make a difference?

Gorgui Deng. You are privileged if you go to a private school because private schools have more resources. We are told that they are run better because they are run on a profit basis and teachers are dismissed if they do not do well their job; in reality, most of them have not attended any teachers training schools or college. So, normally, these schools are not better than the public ones, and the inspectors do not properly supervise them.

***Who sponsors the private schools? How are they created? And is this a conspiracy to kill public education*?**

Gorgui Deng: Ten years ago it was very difficult to open a private school; but today it is very easy. Once you have been a teacher in a public school you are given the opportunity to open a private school. You just need to come with your proposal and you can get loan from a bank or possibly can be helped by the government and then you can open your school.

Conspiracy is a strong word, but—without admitting it—the government is really seeking to kill public education. I am convinced that the government wants to get rid of education and lay it

in the hands of the private sector. This means that, in the future, education will not be available to everybody. Most likely it will be a privilege of the rich and people from the poor suburbs or the rural areas will no longer have access to it. There will be a big gap between the rich and the poor not only as far as living conditions are concerned but also with regard to education. Maybe I am too pessimistic; but even if public education survives, its quality will be abysmally poor compared to that in the private sector.

What is the main difference between public and private schools?

Gorgui Deng: If you go to a private school you can study from October until the end of the academic year in July, and then you can sit for your exams and probably you have a better chance to pass them than students who come from the public schools. Here there are many strikes and, as I said, the teachers are not very committed to teaching because they have to teach in the schools where they are officially posted by the government, and then they also have to teach in the private schools and they spend most of their time there. So the problem of "excellence" is a serious one. Those who are from the private schools have more opportunities to show their "excellence" because they are given more opportunities to learn.

As a teacher how are you affected by these inequalities?

Gorgui Deng: If you ask a question in a classroom and receive good answers, you are always inclined to think that the student comes from a private school, and most of the time they do. It is a shame. Now you have to be rich to benefit from education.

Let's talk about "decentralization" which presumably breeds "excellence," and "admission rights" to the university. What is your understanding of these concepts that the World Bank and the IMF keep pushing on African governments and Ministers of education? How do they work in Senegal?

Gorgui Deng: "Decentralization" means the shifting of decision-making from the ministry of education to the different university

departments. Before the intervention of the World Bank and IMF, the assignments of the students to different departments used to be determined by the ministry of education. Now a limit has been set on the number of students going to the university, and the decision to assign students to different departments is being made by the teachers. They decide presumably on the basis of the grades the students have received until the time of examination. So from the beginning of the academic year the battle begins. They have a limited number of seats for each department and each college, and my understanding is that the figures really come from the World Bank and the IMF and they (the university) have to abide by the quota. In the English Department we receive a quota. We received approximately 1000 to 1050 applications and we are just told not to admit more than 400 to 500. So, you see if you receive those applications you have got to select the best ones among the lot and naturally the students who have had access to better schools [Q. "or have more connections?] are privileged.

Does it mean that even if you pass the examination and have the passing grade point average 10 or 11 or 12 out of 20, you can be rejected, because you did not have any regular schooling and there is no seat left for you?

Gorgui Deng: Yes, those who have received a better education in the private schools have a better chance to grab the seats, while those from public schools are rejected.

An objective of the World Bank's adjustment and globalization agenda is the privatization of education, so that now you have a sudden boom of private schools, including polytechnic schools within the public universities. Is this happening in Senegal? I heard, for instance, that there is a plan to create a private institute of management and economics that will compete with the Department of Economics within the same public university. How will these outfits operate?

Gorgui Deng: The way I understand it is that there are some teachers who are in the same field, in this case economics, who get together and set up an institute within their college. I don't know how

to explain it, but that is how it is. The argument is that the university has not been able to provide proper services for the public and the private sectors outside the university, they have not created the proper expertise, and the teachers who know they have this expertise make the connection possible. So, outside people come informally and contact the teachers for the kind of assistance they need, for the teacher's expertise they want, and they pay for it.

Is it a private dealing? A private training?

Gorgui Deng: It is private. They offer private training and people pay for that.

Can a student who is not a associated with a private company, but is enrolled in the university's Department of Economics attend the training offered by the institute within this Department?

Gorgui Deng: Only if you can pay for it yourself.

And yet this institute is within the public university?

Gorgui Deng: It is in the public university and the money earned goes into the pocket of the teachers.

Isn't this a form of privatization?

Gorgui Deng: Yes. It is the same thing that is going on in the high schools where privatization is evident. There are hundreds of private schools in the districts in Dakar, even in the poor districts. This has been encouraged by the government. They are private schools created with their own management. But here they use the university premises, they offer private training and the teachers get paid directly, because the university has not created "after teaching activities" for the teachers. It is a case of mismanagement.

So, the institute is operating within the public university and benefiting from public investments, but is not accepting the regular university students. This is not mismanagement, it is a question of unequal access to public entitlements. If I am a taxpayer and

this is an institution that receives my tax money, why is it that my children cannot have access to public education through that very institute whose creation is partly due to my tax-money? If my child does not want to go through the general training, but would like to attend the institute, why couldn't s/he, since the institute is part of the public university?

Gorgui Deng: I think it is a problem of mismanagement because the university authorities have to devise a new system to enable the teachers to serve outside their teaching hours...

Don't the teachers have the option to operate outside the university hours as private consultants? Isn't that possible in Senegal? And isn't there something problematic in the use of public structures to run private activities ?

Gorgui Deng: Well, we do have inside the university students who are sent by private companies—in addition to the regular students. They use the expertise of the teachers for two, three years and then become accountants or whatever else they want. This needs to be organized; the money that students from the private sector pay can even sustain the university.

Is there a students' or a teachers' union that deals with these unfair policies? Are there people addressing these issues? Are teachers all members of the teachers' union?

Gorgui Deng. Most of them are, but I don't know the position of the teachers' union on this issue. What I can say is that, yes, it is a problem. Activities are carried out by teachers within the university and the money does not enter the account of the university. It goes into the pockets of the teachers.

There is also the added problem that you are recruited into a department, you teach there, and receive a salary for that. Apart from the fact that now you use the premises of the university for private teaching, it is bad for your regular students because the time you should allocate to them is used now for your private activities.

But what is the union saying? Is your union a real union in the traditional sense of the word?

Gorgui Deng: Are you criticizing our union?

No! No criticism! I just want to understand what type of union you have. Is it a union that is just concerned with the salaries of the teachers, or a union that is also committed to teaching and learning and the protection of the university's integrity regardless of ....

Gorgui Deng: [laughs...] I mean they are committed to teaching and learning, but survival is also important....

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Conclusion:
Globalization and Academic Ethics

Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis,
& Ousseina Alidou

From 1991 to the present, the field of protest against the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) has significantly widened. A new anti-SAP and anti-debt Internationale—of which the African students movement is part—has grown, its power being expressed in countless anti-SAP and anti-debt rebellions in the cities and the bush of Africa, South America and Asia.

Over this period, CAFA has joined the 50 Years Is Enough Campaign (a coalition of hundreds of organizations centered in the US directed at ending structural adjustment), and has built ties with the Jubilee 2000, an international umbrella group aiming at the cancellation of Third World external debt.

However, the main task that remains open for us is the mobilization of the academic community in North America, so that it places its considerable resources to the defense of the right to study of African students and students across the world.

This is especially important at a time when our campuses are becoming more globally conscious and international studies, study abroad programs, international cultural exchanges are becoming a must.

In this context, we would like to close this book with a warning and a proposal. The warning is that in our attempt to foster a multicultural, world-conscious education, we may contribute to the

repression of academic freedom and the right to study in the Third World, unless we critically reflect on the objectives and potential consequences of our programs. Consider the following trends:

1. The internationalization of the curriculum and academic activities is often conceived within a framework of global economic competition that turns multicultural awareness into a means of neo-colonial exploitation rather than a means of understanding and valorizing other people's histories and struggles.

2. In some African countries where universities have been shut down, the idle facilities are often used by international study abroad programs, benefiting from the cheap cost of studies in these countries. Study abroad program directors often hire at low wages laid off teachers and former students as helpers/facilitators.

3. U.S. teachers and college administrators are being financed by USAID to intervene in several Third World and former socialist countries to (a) set up private universities; (b) restructure entire departments, schools, programs, curricula. In other words, U.S. academics are being presently employed by the U.S. government to carry on cultural/educational work abroad that suits its economic, political, and ideological objectives.

Considering the above developments, we believe that the time has come for U.S. academics to show our colleagues in Africa and other third world regions the same solidarity that would be expected of us by colleagues on our own campuses. This is the goal of our closing proposal: the adoption by North American academicians working in Africa of the following "University Teachers' Code of Ethics for Global Education in Africa."

In our view, this is a crucial step to promote international solidarity among teachers and students across borders, and we urge you to circulate it among colleagues in the institutions where you work, at conferences, and among other academics who, like us are committed to campaigning against the recolonization of the African educational systems and what we have defined as the "enclosure of knowledge" in all its forms.

University Teachers' Draft Code of Ethics for Global Education in Africa

We are university teachers and we publicly declare our adherence to the following principles of academic ethics in our work in Africa:

• we will never, under any circumstance, work (as researchers, with a study abroad program, or in any other capacity) in an African university where students or the faculty are on strike, or which has been shut down by students' or teachers' strikes and/or protests against police repression and structural adjustment cut backs.

• we will never take a position at or cooperate with the World Bank, the IMF, USAID, or any other organization whose policies expropriate Africans from the means for the production and distribution of knowledge and devalue the African people's contribution to world culture.

• we will never take advantage of the immiseration in which African colleagues and students have been reduced, and appropriate the educational facilities and resources from which African colleagues and students have been *de facto* excluded because of their lack of means. Knowledge acquired under such conditions would be antagonistic to the spirit of multiculturalism and scholarly solidarity.

• we will consult with colleagues and activists in the countries where we carry on research, so as to ensure that our research answers the needs of the people it studies, and is shaped with the cooperation of people whose lives will be affected by it, rather than being dictated by funding agencies' agendas.

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