

A SOCIALIST LABEL FOR BOURGEOIS THINKING

Sol Dubula

*A critical examination of the Kenya
sessional paper on 'African Socialism'.*

ALMOST EVERY INDEPENDENT African state has, in one form or another, declared itself officially to be aiming at socialism. Such an attitude is understandable, in the light of the demonstrable superiority of socialist over capitalist methods in the task of overcoming the legacy of centuries of colonialist oppression and to build a society free from exploitation. This apparent unanimity should not, however, blind us to very wide differences of interpretation as to what 'socialism' actually is. The long years of imperialist domination, repression and censorship have inhibited in most African countries the development of a seasoned working class movement with experience of the theory and practice of socialism. Unfortunately the social-democratic movements in the imperialist countries have to some extent succeeded in imposing on the young labour movements in many former colonies, their false conceptions of socialism which have never worked in their own countries.

One must welcome the proclamation of socialism as the official aim of the Government of Kenya, but much of the weakness of that Government's sessional paper *African Socialism and its Application of Planning to Kenya* stems from an incorrect characterization of western capitalism, and appears to have been influenced by many of the false theories of the British brand of social-democracy: the Labour Party. It is not difficult to deduce, in the preparation of this document, the influence of Minister Tom Mboya, who admitted:

When I talk of Socialist attitudes, those of us who have grown up under the intellectual climate of the Western world will no doubt be thinking of Socialism of the Western type. (*Transition*, March 1963.)

We know that 'socialism of the western type' has its origin in a labour movement which was prevailed upon to betray its historic role precisely because of its share in the spoils of colonial countries, including Kenya. It is 'socialism' of the same type which today is still continuing to hold back independence for many millions and which is a willing partner with its own capitalist class and that of the United States in the enslavement of millions of other people in South Africa, Vietnam, Dominican Republic and many other places. Those of us in Africa who have grown up under its intellectual climate must more than others question the premises of a 'socialism' which whenever it gained power demonstrated that it was subordinated to imperialist monopoly capitalism, and as capable as any other imperialist current of holding an iron grip on Kenya and other colonial possessions. British Social Democracy long ago severed its historic connections with true internationalism and socialism.

The pervasive influence of social democratic and other trends of bourgeois thinking lead to many contradictions in the sessional paper, and undermine the value of many of the true and valuable things it has to say.

VALID AND IMPORTANT POINTS

At the outset the paper develops many important and valid points. It makes clear that under colonialism the people of Kenya had no voice in the government and that the economy was run for the benefit of non-Africans. It recognizes that the progress required cannot be too easily achieved and that there must be a 'concerted, carefully planned attack on poverty, disease and the lack of education in order to achieve social justice, human dignity and economic welfare for all.' It then goes on to state that the 'major economic mobilization and reorganization of resources that these transitions imply cannot be realized without planning, direction, control and co-operation'.

There can be no quarrel with this nor indeed with some of the specific proposals put forward to help overcome Kenya's colonial legacy. At the same time many of the theoretical formulations and specific proposals require critical reappraisal because they lead in some instances to an approach which will in the end defeat any attempt to put Kenya on the socialist path. This is particularly evident in the first part of the paper which aims to give general definitions of African socialism, comments on the validity of Marxist theory and generally deals with the character of both modern capitalism and communism. Certainly in so far as the paper

tends to state general propositions which have a bearing on the nature of the state, the character of the class struggle, the connection between democracy and socialism, etc., many of the anti-socialist concepts of Social Democracy are in evidence.

In the very opening sentence in the chapter which deals with the 'objectives of Societies', it is stated that:

The ultimate objectives of all societies are remarkably similar and have a universal character suggesting that present conflicts need not be enduring. These objectives typically include:

- i. political equality,
- ii. social justice,
- iii. human dignity including freedom of conscience,
- iv. freedom from want, disease and exploitation,
- v. equal opportunities and
- vi. high and growing per capita incomes equitably distributed.

Different societies attach different weights and priorities to these objectives but it is largely in the political and economic means for achieving these ends that societies differ.

In the light of the historical evidence and the experience of contemporary life, how can it be said that these are the objectives of feudalism, of capitalism, of slavery, of imperialism? Each one of these societies pursued the one undeviating objective and that was to maintain the dominance of a special type of property relationship for the benefit of a tiny minority. Where, except in a truly socialist society, is it the objective to distribute income equitably and to abolish exploitation, etc?

This unhappy formulation is not an isolated semantic blunder. It is the first salvo in an attempt to show that the direction of society and its institutions can be determined by something other than its basic class structure. What this other thing is, is never really clearly stated except in the form of a bald claim that traditional African democracy and a background of 'mutual social responsibility' will somehow act as a 'hedge' against the exercise of disproportionate political power by economic groups. Let us not be dazzled by emotive words.

The African is equipped in the same way as any other human being, neither inferior nor superior, neither worse nor better and subject to the same laws of history as the rest of the human race. We have over and over again witnessed in Africa and elsewhere that the traditions of our forefathers (which had roots in a special economic relationship) succumb only too easily when confronted by new economic forms. No amount of invocation of heritage and tradition will make an African capitalist any less competent

in squeezing as much profit as he can out of the exploitation of his fellow men and using his economic powers for the advantage of his class.

The approach to the state which rejects the fundamental role played by economic classes is not new. It long ago gained currency in circles which were frightened by the impact of Marx's brilliant historical analysis and the uncovering by him of the objective laws of historical development. Just as the ruling class often relates a grievance and a conflict only to the presence of an 'agitator', so they speak of the class struggle as if it would disappear if Marx and his followers would only stop talking about it.

But Marx did not invent the class struggle. He proved beyond doubt that it is the motive force of history.

IS MARXISM OUTDATED?

The weight of historical evidence of the primary nature of class conflict is so great that the more sophisticated apologists for capitalism seldom deny its existence completely. But they either minimize its importance generally or, more specifically, attempt to distort contemporary life by suggesting that in advanced capitalist states there is a harmony of class interests. They maintain that the class struggle which reared its ugly head during the Industrial Revolution no longer has any relevance.

Thus, they go on, in modern Capitalism there is basically no longer any impediment to achieving all the objectives which are in any case 'common to all societies', without (and here's the rub) any basic change in class relationship and state structure.

This denial of the true character of class struggle and its reality in contemporary capitalist society unfortunately finds a place in the paper. For example paragraph 36 which is headed 'class problem' starts off:

The sharp class divisions that *once* existed in Europe have no place in African Socialism. [My italics—S.D.]

It is equally unfortunate that the crude and time-honoured slander that communism, as opposed to capitalism, does not ensure equal political rights finds a place in a document which claims a socialist inspiration.

Thus African Socialism differs politically from Communism because it ensures every mature citizen equal political rights (paragraph 10).

This sort of approach of which we should be wary because it is diligently taught to every student of politics in the universities of imperialism, is coupled with another questionable proposition.

Marxian Socialism and laissez-faire Capitalism *are both* theoretical economic organizations *designed to ensure the use of resources for the benefit of society* (paragraph 21) [My italics—S.D.].

Can there be much doubt that the design of what is called laissez-faire capitalism was the very opposite of what is claimed above? To equate the two, as is done so often in the paper, is to fall into the trap set by capitalist ideologists that the choice of economic organization is a matter of taste rather than the determining factor of the sort of life which the majority of the people will live.

We must question too the doctrine which is repeated in the paper that, whilst Marx's criticism of the workings of the capitalist society of his day had some validity, it is now almost a museum piece.

Marx's criticism of the society of his time was a valid one . . . (paragraph 19) . . . the Industrial Revolution quickly led to the social protest of which Marx was a part and this in turn resulted in sweeping political and economic changes as the systems of the world adapted to the new state of technological change. *Political democracy was achieved; private property rights were diluted; the State accepted increasing responsibilities for social services, planning, guidance and control; taxes were made progressive to distribute benefits more widely. Capitalism did not evolve into Marxian Socialism, as Marx predicted, but was indeed modified in a direction that Marx might well have approved* (paragraph 21). [My italics—S.D.]

What an idyllic picture of the capitalist world! Indeed, one can almost say, a model to be followed. Are we really talking of the same capitalist world when we start claiming for it the attainment of political democracy (for the Negroes?), the dilution of property rights, etc? It is many years after Marx's death that monopoly capitalism came to full flower and created private economic empires of undreamt of power and proportions. It is also long after Marx's time that this same system gave birth to fascism, two world wars and an intensification of colonial exploitation in Kenya and throughout Africa and Asia. Can we accept that the basic direction of modern capitalism is one that 'Marx might well have approved'?

Of course, for the working class in the imperialist countries, the capitalism of today is not the same as the capitalism of 100 years ago. At much cost, organized labour succeeded in wringing some major and some minor concessions from its ruling classes. But particularly we in Africa must never overlook the historic truth that many of the concessions made by western capitalism to its own working class could be afforded without a traumatic effect on

its basic structure precisely because of the very real advantages of imperialist accumulation.

Paul A. Baran in *The Political Economy of Growth* puts it well when he says:

Large resources are being devoted to an extensive campaign of remoulding the history of capitalism . . . the historically minded members of the economics profession seek to prove that by relying on the forces of the free market and of private initiative, economic development was achieved in the past without excessive sacrifices—with the obvious moral that this method still represents the most commendable avenue to economic progress. Little mention, if any, is accorded by these historians to the role that the exploitation of the now under-developed countries has played in the development of Western Capitalism; little attention, if any, is given to the fact that the colonial and dependent countries today have no recourse to such sources of the primary accumulation of capital.

'PEOPLE'S CAPITALISM'?

It may be true that—as a result of permitting workers in the metropolitan countries certain privileges made possible by super-exploitation in the colonies—the imperialist bourgeoisie have been able to mitigate some of the worst features of capitalism as it was in Marx's time. But to say this does not mean that the built-in inequity and exploitation of capitalism have been abolished, or that the system itself has undergone a fundamental change. Yet that is what the drafter of the Kenya paper seems to be claiming when he implies that the change from individual private ownership to joint stock companies has in some way made capitalism more equitable. Paragraph 47 tells us that:

The Company form of business organization is a departure from the direct individual ownership typical in Marx's day. By permitting many to contribute capital, a company can operate large economic collections of assets while their ownership remains diffused.

This approval of the 'Company form of business organization' is (in paragraph 45) bracketed with 'State ownership, co-operatives and partnerships' as part of the techniques of African socialism to achieve 'diffusion of ownership'. It is a matter for regret that this discredited doctrine of 'people's capitalism' with its false claim that public shareholding erases the evils of the capitalist economy should have found a place in this document.

In fact, both in Marx's day (as he himself demonstrated) and now, the growth of corporate bodies, enabling the richest and most powerful capitalists to mobilize the savings of the public to advance their own special interests, facilitated the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. It enabled the banks and other financiers

to merge with industrial capitalists, and paved the way for the growth of giant monopolies controlling branches of the national economy, and to international cartels.

We Africans, in particular, are hardly likely to be impressed by the alleged superior virtues of the 'Company form of business organization' when we remember that it was the great capitalist Companies such as the British South Africa Company, the British East Africa Company and many others which paved the way to the conquest and colonization of Kenya and most of Africa and Asia.

It is also quite unreal for socialists to think seriously that capitalism has become broader based and more 'democratic' at the very time when the big monopolies are eating up all the small and medium sized concerns, where take-overs and mergers are commonplace events in all advanced capitalist countries. The extent of monopoly domination in the United States is notorious, and of Britain in the middle 1950's J. H. Westergaard has written in his article 'The Withering Away of Class—A Contemporary Myth' (*Towards Socialism*):

Two-fifths of all private property was estimated to be in the hands of only one per cent of the adult population, and four-fifths in the hands of only ten per cent.

Legal ownership of private corporate business is especially highly concentrated; four-fifths of all share capital being held by only one per cent of the adult population and nearly all the rest by nine or ten per cent.

Having laid this sort of theoretical framework which I believe is quite alien to socialism, it comes as no surprise that in many respects the discussion on the general direction which a future Kenya should take has very little in common with scientific socialism. The AFRICAN COMMUNIST has on more than one occasion commented on the theoretical dangers of attributing to socialism a mystical national or racial character. In this context the words of President Modiba Keita of Mali are almost prophetic:

We will not allow ourselves to be caught by the magic of words. Most of the States speak of African Socialism. Even Senghor speaks of African Socialism.

If we are not careful, the word 'socialism' will be emptied of its meaning and bourgeois systems . . . will be able to camouflage themselves under the sign of socialism.

Of course, socialism is not a dogma and the precise method of its application to different countries may vary, depending upon such factors as the tradition, history and background of a people as well as the level of the development of the economy and other

special features. All socialists in Africa are confronted with the task of adapting scientific socialism to the concrete realities of their own countries. Nor can it be claimed that there is one rigid continent-wide 'reality' which characterizes the whole of our continent. This oversimplification is revealed when one makes even a cursory comparison between, say, South Africa and Ethiopia.

There are many traditions, ideas and concepts of a dying order which, even after a change of power has come about, persist and act as a brake on the construction of the new society. In the same way, due to special historical circumstances (and Africa is, in this respect, not unique) culture patterns and traditional forms of social organization may create a *more* favourable atmosphere in which to proceed with the transformation to a higher form of society.

It is undeniable, for example, that the process of class formation is, in many parts of Africa, as yet an incomplete one. Whilst this factor does not by itself prevent the acceptance by a ruling bureaucracy of a more or less bourgeois approach to social organization, it does create a favourable opportunity for smoother advance towards socialism. The persistence of a special 'communal' approach towards ownership of such basic means of production as land (which, by the way, persisted only because capitalist class formation is incomplete) and the traditional social thought and practice which this engenders, is another favourable feature.

The application of scientific socialist thought to local conditions in a manner peculiarly suited to special factors which exist is not a dilution of Marxism. It is its strength. Just as the precise form in which capitalism makes its appearance will vary from country to country, depending on special historical factors, so the exact path which each country takes to socialism is not a carbon copy procedure. But though the application of socialist principles vary, the principles remain, and if they are abandoned in the name of historical exceptionalism, we are left with neither principles nor socialism. As Mr. Mboya himself observed in the article referred to above: there are certain universal 'basic tenets of socialism . . . and we are either Socialists by these basic principles or not at all'.

IS IT REALLY 'AFRICAN'?

Judged by this correct test, the 'African Socialist' envisaged in the Kenya paper has very little of real socialist content. In fact, one is left with very serious doubts as to whether it is really 'African' in the sense of being based on all that is best in our African traditions. Whatever its intentions, I fear that implementation of some

of the thinking in the paper would rather result in the state-aided growth of a form of capitalism which is truly alien to African societies as we have known them.

There is a great deal said in the paper about the role which vague and intangible concepts such as 'the tradition of political democracy' and the 'feelings of mutual responsibility' will play in preventing the universal law of history from asserting itself, (i.e., that in the final analysis a state is controlled by the class which owns its means of production). But when it comes to the tangible traditions of African society which are really inimical to the creation of a society based on the profit incentive and which make for a smoother advance towards socialism, these are rejected in favour of pro-capitalist forms. Witness, for example, the following argument for the encouragement of private land ownership.

There is some conflict of opinion with regard to the traditional attitude towards rights to land. Some allege that land was essentially communally or tribally owned: others claim that individual rights were the distinguishing feature. (Paragraph 29.)

What apparently emerges from this debate according to the paper is the 'single unifying principle . . . that land and other productive assets, no matter who owned or managed them, were expected to be used for the general welfare'.

Then after hinting that this noble tradition accords with the latest developments in capitalist society (where the state's right to 'order the uses to which property will be put *is universally recognized and unquestioned*, [my italics—S.D.]) the paper goes on:

These African traditions cannot be carried over indiscriminately to a modern monetary economy. The need to develop and invest requires credit and a credit economy rests heavily on a system of land titles and registration. The ownership of land must therefore be made more definite.

This is not the only occasion in the paper that history is made to stand on its head. Property in land and in other productive assets in traditional African Society was made to serve the general welfare not because of 'a unifying principle' but the unifying principle emerged from the fact that land was in the last resort owned by the community as a whole. It may perhaps be that the traditional concepts of African society have been so eroded that, as in other parts of the world a period of individual ownership of part of the land is a necessary transition stage. Subject to strict control by a state which has embarked on the road to socialism, such a transition stage is not (as has been shown in a number of socialist countries) an insuperable obstacle to the construction of the new socialist society.

But in the paper the individual ownership of land will apparently be encouraged as a permanent feature of life and is said to be linked with the needs of a modern economy.

It should not be forgotten that behind the references to 'credit economy' and 'modern monetary economy' stands the reality of mortgages and bonds; of interest and foreclosures—the nightmare of all peasant masses wherever the capitalist credit economy has taken root. If special care is not taken this could become a money-lenders' charter.

The recommendation of the paper on the encouragement of private ownership of land accords with the proposals of the mission from the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development to Tanganyika in 1959-60. In the interest of 'development' it recommended the abolition of common ownership in land which should be divided amongst the peasants. But it also warned that this would lead to 'eventual concentration of ownership of land in the hands of those who have money to lend and the creation of a destitute landless class'. It must be in connection with such a thought that President Nyerere said 'we must reject individual ownership of land and go back to traditional African custom where one is entitled to such land if one uses it'.

True, there is reference in the section dealing with agriculture and land tenure to 'Co-operatives and Companies . . . where large-scale methods of production or marketing are needed'. There is also a recognition that there *may* be a need at some future stage to establish a working party to consider 'the need and practicability of establishing ceilings of individual ownership of property. . . .' But the main theme is clear. Over and over again the paper claims that individual ownership of land and other means of production is one of the corner-stones of 'African Socialism', though it does speak of the need for a residuary power of the state to ensure that all resources are used for the 'mutual interests of society and its members.' We must remember, however, that the creation of a class with a vested interest in private property leads to conflicting views as to what is 'in the mutual interest' of society. The American tycoon was not being facetious when he said, in reply to a query as to whether certain practices of the General Motors company were in the interests of the American people: 'What is good for General Motors is good for America.' Wherever the basis of the economy is private ownership of the means of production, the accepted philosophy of the owners is that their own enrichment is the highest moral law, even when their enrichment means the exploitation of the majority of their fellow-countrymen, to say nothing of the

enslavement of millions of human beings in 'the colonies'.

The bracketing of 'Co-operatives and Companies' is not, as might appear, to be some sort of concession to socialist thinking, for, as we have seen, one of the most serious errors of the paper concerns the true meaning of 'the company form of business organization' under capitalism.

Socialists would also very seriously question the role assigned to the state under socialism.

The state, therefore, has a continuing function to perform, not in subordinating the individual in society, but in enhancing the role of the individual in society. Individuals derive satisfaction not only from the goods they consume but also from those they accumulate. *If human dignity and freedom are to be preserved, provision must be made for both activities by the individual—consumption and accumulation.* (Paragraph 33.) [My italics—S.D.]

Does this sentiment spring from African tradition? It is neither African nor Socialist to spread the capitalist myth that personal accumulation of wealth is a law of God and nature, indispensable for the preservation of 'human dignity and freedom'. Both socialists and those inspired by healthy African traditional thought will be apprehensive that such an emphasis on individual enrichment will encourage selfishness and greed, and could be a rationalization of the very basis of capitalism—individual accumulation of profit, based on private ownership of the means of production. The question of ownership is of crucial significance.

Ownership of certain of the means of production is regarded as one of the pillars of African Socialism and will be a permanent feature of a future 'socialist' Kenya. In order to overcome the historically proven consequences of such private ownership the paper warns that 'under African Socialism the power to control resource use resides with the State but to imagine however, that the use of resources can only be controlled through their ownership is,' says the paper, 'an error of great magnitude'. (Paragraph 31.) It is in connection with the same thought that the paper proceeds to equate the accumulation of private wealth with human dignity and freedom.

The paper tends to regard a measure of Government involvement and control in the process of economic growth as if it were the same as socialism. Socialism is, of course, much much more than this. If, by encouraging the growth of a basically capitalist structure, you create an economically powerful minority, no amount of theory will prevent an exercise by it of a disproportionate political influence. Even in fascist South Africa and imperialist U.S.A. the governments

play a very vital role in economic planning and control. In South Africa the government owns the major portion of the steel industry, the communication system (including airways and railways), and is a dominant partner in many others. Can we, by any stretch of the imagination, regard either of these countries as even approximating to socialism?

THE BASIC SOCIALIST PRINCIPLE

The one universal basic principle of socialism which distinguishes it from capitalism is the social ownership of the means of production. No one suggests that an immediate general take-over of all economic activity by a state aiming for socialism is in all circumstances feasible or even desirable.

Thus, for example, many countries which have taken the socialist path, have found it necessary and advantageous to permit a limited area of private capitalist ownership, especially during the earlier period when, having taken over the key industries, the workers were acquiring the experience and building the productive forces to enable them to complete the process of building socialism. Thus, Lenin's 'New Economic Policy' in the U.S.S.R. in the twenties allowed a limited scope for private entrepreneurs in strictly limited areas of the economy; the People's Republic of China permits, in partnership with the state, the operation of private undertakings whose proprietors played a patriotic role in the liberation struggle. The South African Communist Party's programme does not envisage the immediate socialization of all the means of production. And Dr. Nkrumah in his well-known speech in 1964, recognized that socialism would be hampered by encouraging local capitalism, but acknowledged that during the present phase small entrepreneurs could achieve valuable economic initiatives.

But, in each of these cases the toleration of a private sector was regarded as a temporary necessity, and the eventual complete disappearance of the private sector correctly regarded as an essential for the achievement of socialism.

It is precisely here that the Kenya document parts company with accepted scientific socialist thought. The training of local 'entrepreneurs' (capitalists) and the rapid creation of an indigenous capitalist class is regarded as a *sine qua non* for the constructing of 'African Socialism'. What is more, the private sector is treated throughout as a vital cornerstone of a modern monetary economy. True, at one point (paragraph 41) the paper recognizes that the concentration of economic power in private hands carries with it 'the possible exercise of undue influence in political affairs and must

be watched closely'. But the problem is seen as one of containing the future big capitalists of Kenya, and as a complex one, because it is thought necessary to 'ensure that the steps taken do not inhibit the rapid accumulation of domestic savings' (for which read, 'private profit').

It is disturbing that there should be an acceptance of the capitalist notion that a country cannot be developed unless the private profit incentive is present. There is further a hint in the paper that to take too drastic steps against capitalists may prohibit 'methods of large-scale production where they are necessary for efficiency'. No theory need be invoked to prove the incorrectness of this claim. The economic strides made by China as compared to India has once again demonstrated that social ownership of the means of production is, in the long run, the only answer to the problems of underdeveloped countries. (It will be remembered that both countries achieved liberation at about the same time and, if anything India was at that point more developed.) And what of the Russian economic miracle?

There is, nevertheless, a recognition of the need to prevent limitless accumulation of wealth by private capitalists. Some curb will be achieved, according to the paper, by progressive income inheritance and capital gains taxes, and death duties. This will be the 'principal *long term technique* for controlling the rate of individual accumulation'. Even a superficial study of western capitalism shows this technique to be wholly ineffective. Yet the drafters of the paper appear to accept that

large individual accumulations of wealth in Western countries were largely achieved before progressive taxes were introduced. . . .
(Paragraph 42.)

One wonders how such a statement comes to be adopted in the face of the annual rocketing of the profits (after taxation-progressive or not) of the big capitalist giants in every capitalist country in the world including Britain.

The paper recognizes that, given an economy based on private ownership and profit, there are severe limitations to the ways in which the state can prevent the accumulation of private wealth.

'Extreme tax rates may simply force capital abroad where rates are lower,' (paragraph 43) and again, 'The tax structure will not however be made prohibitive or confiscatory. Reasonable levels of profits, property accumulations . . . are necessary and desirable if a high rate of growth is to be achieved and enjoyed.' (Paragraph 97.)

CLASS PROBLEMS AND NATIONALIZATION

The paper states that: 'No class problem arose in the traditional African society and none exists today in Africa'. There is some truth in this observation, although the situation in Nigeria and a number of other African countries must lead to serious doubts as to the continuing validity of such a generalization. But what of the future? Having outlined proposals some of which at least are designed to foster the growth of an indigenous capitalist class, the paper nevertheless maintains:

The class problem in Africa is therefore largely one of prevention, in particular to plan development so as to prevent the emergence of antagonistic classes. (Paragraph 36.)

If this was the intention of the drafter of the paper, he has, to say the least, not succeeded. On the contrary, the proposals must result in the emergence of antagonistic classes in Kenya. Only nationalization could prevent a clash between the interests of the owners of industry and those whose labour they exploit, and no doubts are left in the readers' minds regarding the paper's attitude to this question. The section on nationalization is introduced by stating:

The Constitution and the KANU Manifesto make it clear that African Socialism in Kenya does not imply a commitment to indiscriminate nationalization. These documents do commit the Government to prompt payment of full compensation whenever nationalization is used. (Paragraph 73.)

We then read a procession of arguments which tend to lead to the conclusion that large scale nationalization will be harmful to the Kenyan economy. Having unfortunately committed itself to the bourgeois outlook that the social ownership of the means of production interferes in some mysterious fashion with the prospects of development, the paper makes it crystal clear that nationalization will only take place as a last resort in specified circumstances such as:

- (i) When the assets in private hands threaten the security or undermine the integrity of the nation; or
- (ii) when productive resources are being wasted; or
- (iii) when the operation of an industry by private concerns has a serious detrimental effect on the public interest *and*
- (iv) when other less costly means of control are not available or are not effective. (Paragraph 75.)

Whatever other checks and balances are introduced there is no doubt, if the principles of the paper are implemented, the new bourgeoisie which will arise will play an important part in deciding

whether any of the above vague and generalized circumstances have arisen in any industry such as to warrant nationalization.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

In contrast to this marked tenderness shown throughout towards capitalist elements is the tough line taken towards the working people, and in the first place towards the trade union movement. If the workers owned the means of production, their co-operation would naturally be forthcoming to develop them to the utmost. But where there is private ownership and exploitation the first need of the workers is naturally to enjoy trade union rights to protect them against exploitation and to achieve better wages and working conditions. The paper is surprisingly silent on such needs, and talks of 'discipline' and attacks strikes as if it were drawn up by true-blue British Tories instead of African radicals.

The first responsibility of the unions must be to develop a skilled, disciplined and responsible labour force. The nation's welfare and that of the workers depend much more on hard, productive work than on strikes and walk-outs. Unions must concern themselves with training programmes, apprentice programmes and workers' discipline and productivity. . . . Strikes cost the nation output, the workers wages, the companies profits and the government taxes. Wages in excess of those warranted by productivity increase the unemployment, encourage the substitution of capital for labour, and lead to bankruptcies. (Paragraphs 127 and 128.)

Compulsory arbitration is then promised as well as an undertaking that 'The Government will also ensure that workers are not exploited.' (Paragraph 129.)

It is worrying that there is no reference in the section on Trade Unions which suggests that they will have the responsibility and the right to engage in the struggle for higher wages. The principle, referred to earlier that accumulation is necessary in order to preserve 'human dignity and freedom', if it has validity, must surely apply to the workers as well as the bosses. In the case of the workers the struggle to get a bigger and bigger share of the capitalist profit (made out of the labour of the workers) is treated almost as if it were an unpatriotic activity. But then, of course, we are assured that as against the capitalists' right to make a 'fair profit' and to go in for 'reasonable accumulation', the government will ensure that 'minimum wages are reasonable'. This sort of platitude however well intentioned seldom, if ever, operates in favour of the working class even though it is repeated often by the ruling class of every capitalist country.

The paper does recognize that 'foreign ownership and manage-

ment of productive assets could mean that economic decisions in Kenya might be dominated by foreign rather than domestic considerations'. It however makes the point that foreign investors should be prepared to accept 'the spirit of mutual responsibility' by employing Africans at all levels (including managerial staff when qualified persons can be found) and *by making shares in the company available to Africans who wish to buy them.* (Paragraph 38.)

The above reference to the dangers of foreign private investment is the only reference to the ever present menace throughout Africa (Kenya included) of neo-colonialism. And let us never forget, neo-colonialism is always prepared to make its shares available to local capitalists 'who wish to buy them'. In this way it creates a local compradore group with a vested interest in perpetuating this new type of imperialism. It is for this reason that Dr. Nkrumah in his speech of March 11th, 1964, announced a prohibition against Ghanaians purchasing shares in foreign-owned enterprises.

The paper under review says that, now independence has been achieved, foreigners can only have a political voice by 'enlisting the support of Kenya citizens'. This way of thinking is fraught with grave danger to the future of Kenya's independence. If some wealthy Kenya citizens are allowed to become partners in the fruits of foreign private investment, will not they tend to become a reactionary fifth column in the service of alien imperialism?

Foreign capital investment may well be necessary for rapid development in many parts of Africa, including Kenya. And provided that no strings are attached, and suitable safeguards provided, there is no reason why capital should not be sought even from imperialist countries. But something more tangible than the 'spirit' referred to, and less dangerous than the encouragement of individual local participation, is needed to safeguard a country's sovereignty and independence against the all too patent designs of neo-colonialism. State participation, on a basis which ensures that the country and its people, and not merely rapacious foreign shareholders, should be the beneficiaries, appears to be the right answer.

SOCIALISM NOT WON ON PAPER

I think African patriots should be frank with one another, and so I have concentrated mainly on what I consider to be serious defects in the 'African Socialism' paper. That does not mean that it does not have its positive aspects.

The search for a form of society which draws on the best of African traditions and is yet adaptable to rapidly changing circum-

stances, and ensures national independence (paragraph 7) is certainly to be applauded. So, too, is much of the serious thinking that went into the treatment of many concrete problems such as education, training of skilled manpower, conservation of natural resources and other important problems.

One would have found far less to quarrel with in this paper had it not gone beyond these matters to be so dogmatic, incorrect and Western-orientated in dealing with so vitally important a question as African socialism. If the paper had come straight out to advocate and argue in favour of the capitalist road for Africa (and that is what, in fact, it does) it would have been more honest and less irritating to deal with.

However, one should not imagine that such a use of a socialist label for bourgeois thinking will in practice prevent or even delay Kenya from taking the socialist road.

As everywhere in the world, the winning of socialism in Africa depends not on high-sounding declarations of intent, not on papers, but on determined struggle by the masses of labouring people, the workers and peasants, who can never be persuaded that their interest lies in nourishing a group of privileged parasites, native and foreign, to appropriate the fruits of their labour.

Our knowledge of the militant tradition and patriotism of the working people of Kenya, who wrested their freedom in many years of armed struggle against the imperialists, fills us with confidence that they will complete the struggle for independence and the liberation of their country by advancing to a truly socialist Kenya, in line with the universally-valid truths disclosed by Marx and Lenin.