

THE STATE OF GUINEA-BISSAU:  
African Socialism or Socialism in Africa?



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THE STATE OF GUINEA-BISSAU  
African Socialism or Socialism in Africa?

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## Introduction

A number of diplomats and aid administrators in Guinea-Bissau are sceptical towards the new government. This scepticism is usually based on experience of or notions on bureaucratic complications and inefficiency, wrong investments, dependence on foreign aid, the big cars of the leaders, "irrational" cultural manifestations like violence movies, etc. Emotionally and intellectually these sceptics have accepted that "socialism" in Africa will fail once more. The state will develop into an élitist state government, state capitalism or African Socialism - depending on the terminology one uses.

In an analysis of Mali, Meillassoux very clearly formulates the radical Africanists' conception of the form of élitist rule, which has been termed "African socialism":

"This (the creation of a nationalised economic sector) was done under the label of 'socialism', which provided them with a convenient ideology to bring the economy under control, supposedly of course on behalf of the entire population. 'Socialism' permitted them to put the bureaucracy into the position of a managerial board of a kind of State corporation" (1970:106).

After a brief survey of the present situation of Guinea-Bissau and the development strategy of the PAIGC, I shall attempt to discuss whether the state of Guinea-Bissau under the leadership of the PAIGC will become a new example of "African socialism", or whether the tendency is rather towards the creation of a genuine socialist society on African ground. This attempt demands a more profound treatment of the analytical content of the concept of socialism.

## The Present Situation of Guinea-Bissau and the Development Strategy of the PAIGC

Guinea-Bissau became independent in 1974 after more than 10 years of liberation war. The final take-over took place after the anti-fascist coup in Portugal in 1974. The new rulers in Lisbon withdrew the colonial army from Guinea-Bissau in September 1974. Before the withdrawal of the Portuguese, the PAIGC (The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde), which led the liberation war and which today

constitutes the actual centre of power in the country, had gained control over two-thirds of the territory with half of the population. The liberation army, which numbered 5-10,000 men (and women), was never sufficiently strong to take the towns and the protected villages that had been established around the larger towns. To attempt a direct attack on the towns, which were defended by a Portuguese army numbering 40.000 men, would have been a suicidal strategy. However, the PAIGC also considered the construction of the new society in the liberated areas its most important task.

The central features of the new social structures were the Village Committees, the People's Court, the People's Stores, the health clinics and the schools. A Village Committee elected at a general meeting consists of five members of which at least two should be women. Each of the five had their different responsibilities like agricultural production, security and local defence, supplies to the army, education and health, and civil administration. The People's Stores were an alternative to the big Portuguese trading companies which had been the major exploiting institution in Guinea-Bissau. In these stores the peasants could obtain necessary goods like cloth, salt, oil, and soap in exchange for their basic product, rice. A People's Court consists of three members of which one is usually is a woman. They can judge in civilian disputes and in cases of minor crimes, not punishable by imprisonment. These courts constitute a rupture with the colonial past both in the sense that the judges are popularly elected and in the sense that the cases are treated in partial accordance with customary law.

There is no doubt that the people supported PAIGC in the struggle against the Portuguese. The liberation war had not been possible without this support. However, this does not mean that the building of the new society in the independent nation will become an automatic and harmonious process. The country has inherited many economic and social problems from the Portuguese era, and if the modernization and development that the party is aiming at is to be accomplished without external help, drastic socio-cultural changes will be necessary.

Guinea-Bissau is a very small country (36.000 sq. km.) with a population of around 800.000. Of these around 100.000 were refugees in the neighbouring countries during the war and 300.000 lived in the towns and protected villages. A major part of this population maintained life in different 'service' functions for the colonial administration and the Portuguese army. This implies that a significant part of the population did not participate in the productive economy. It is a clear indication of the structural imbalance in the country's economy that exports (groundnuts, palm-oil, fish and lumber) in 1975 and 1976 only covered 16% and 15% of the imports, respectively. In this period, Swedish aid alone was greater than the total value of exports (Rudebeck 1977:22-4). With the purpose of changing this dependence and financing public services (education, health etc.) and an improved standard of living the party has emphasized economic growth.

A high growth rate could perhaps be created within a neo-colonial structure of development, implying export oriented production as the determining element in the economy. In the case of Guinea-Bissau this could possibly be effected through an intensification of the production of groundnuts and lumber, the creation of a tourist industry, and perhaps an exploitation of the bauxite reserves in the southern part of the country. This would also imply that the party open up completely for foreign capital. The effect on the class structure of such a growth within an extraverted economy - both within a liberal and within a state-bureaucratic social model - would no doubt be the formation of an élite exploiting the population through low prices on export and foodcrops and through a system of migrant labour.

The PAIGC has not chosen this strategy but instead is emphasizing a self-centred development, based on an increase of production within agriculture. To understand this choice one should know that at the time of independence the country had nearly no industry except for some small sawmills, an oil mill and West Africa's most modern brewery built to supply the Portuguese army. This also implies that the social appropriation of the surplus necessary to finance the state apparatus and

new investments could not be based on industry. That the basis of the development strategy is a production increase within agriculture does not mean that the country should only grow crops for local consumption. Some export is necessary to finance import of fuel and machinery. The party is also aiming at an industrial development, which should make it possible both to supply the population with simple consumer goods like tools, cloth, cooking oil and soap, and to increase the value of exports by processing agricultural products. This production, of course, implies a certain technical and economic "dependence" on the development of the world market. However, according to the PAIGC this will not necessarily lead to a totally dependent export economy and a neo-colonial class structure if security in a nationally produced and controlled surplus can be developed. This surplus can only be produced by the peasants. It is in this sense that the production increase within agriculture is the basis and the determining element in the development strategy.

Thus the peasants have to produce more to solve the immediate problems of survival and to create a surplus which can assure a continued development of production. But how does one get the peasants to produce more?

At this point it is necessary to say a few things about the social systems of the groups in Guinea-Bissau (for a more extended discussion see Aaby 1978). On the basis of Amilcar Cabral's "Brief Analysis of the Social Structure in Guinea-Bissau" one can discern two different traditional types of reproductive structure: "In the rural areas we have found it necessary to distinguish between two distinct-groups: on the one hand, the group we consider semi-feudal, represented by the Fulas, and, on the other hand, the group which we consider, so to speak, without any defined form of state organization, represented by the Balantes" (Cabral 1969:46).

The difference between the semi-feudal and the egalitarian groups, as the stateless are also called, was important during the liberation war where the cooperation between the semi-feudal chiefs and the Portuguese made it extremely difficult to mobilize the population in certain areas. The egalitarian groups,

like Balante, supported PAIGC from the outset of the struggle. In the semi-feudal areas, which were the central region for the production of groundnuts, the Portuguese exploitation was effected through the control of the local chiefs over the peasants. In relation to the egalitarian groups, Portuguese colonialism had a more undisguised character as it exploited them through taxation and forced labour.

The backward character of Portuguese colonialism meant that the exploitation had maintained its quality as a relation based on force. The economic exploitation had not been incorporated in the system of social reproduction as a structural dependency. Only to a very small extent had material needs been created which necessitated a participation in the money economy through labour-migration or production of cash-crops. Based on my own experiences among the Balante, cloth seems to be the most essential commodity they buy. Both the social and the economic reproduction have remained very 'traditional'. This 'lack' of structural dependence is at least characteristic of the Balante. The sources give no indication of the social consequences of the Portuguese colonialism for the hierarchic or semi-feudal groups. It is unclear to which extent there has been the creation of differences of wealth based on control over cattle and land and whether traditional tributes and labour services have been maintained. It is usually stated that the hierarchic systems broke down as a consequence of colonialism even though some of the former rulers could preserve their social position through cooperation with the Portuguese. It is likely that certain differences based on the unequal access to cattle have been created but hardly with regard to land, which is usually considered sufficient. It is also possible that certain traditional payments to the former rulers are preserved through a religious legitimation. However, in spite of this, class relations are hardly any longer the dominant feature of social reproduction in the former semi-feudal areas, because PAIGC has eliminated the physical power which used to maintain the system. It is, therefore, reasonable to presume today that for both the egalitarian and the semi-feudal groups the family is, as the primary production and consumption unit, the dominant instance in social reproduction.

The lack of integration leaves relatively small means for manipulating the peasants to produce more. An increase in taxation or a rise in the prices of commodities the peasants consume with the aim of getting the peasants to produce more would probably lead to a reduced consumption and a strengthened potential conflict between the peasants and the national sector. PAIGC has not been tempted to follow any of these routes. It has, on the contrary, doubled the price paid for rice and groundnuts which are the peasants' most essential products. This has created goodwill for the party among the peasants. Because of the large profits appropriated by the Portuguese companies it is still possible for the State to secure a relatively large revenue (60%) on this trade even though it has increased the producer's price by 100%.

But in itself the price increase is not the solution to the economic and structural problems. It will probably lead to an intensified production with the purpose of securing appreciated goods like cloth, knives, sugar, kerosine and cooking oil. But as these goods have become relatively less expensive the increase in production may not reach the level otherwise expected. And one thing is certain, the increase in prices does not automatically produce a structure of investments which secures the continuous development of production which is necessary for the development plans.

Balante, of which I have direct knowledge from a brief stay, may in ethnographic terms be described as a gerontocratic, segmentary, patrilineal clan system. In the ultimate sense land belongs to lineage and clan as it cannot be sold and the control over it depends on the ability of the community to defend it. So if some households die out or leave the land passes over to some other members of the lineage. But usufruct is possessed and inherited individually among the men. However, the question of ownership and control over land is hardly of fundamental strategic importance as there seems to be sufficient land. Even though there exists cooperation in the construction of dikes against the saltish tide, which spoils the rice fields, the yield of the individual households is fundamentally dependent on its own labour input and not on a redistribution within the patrilineage. Therefore, the biggest

families with many wives and children are the ones that produce most. The old men have more wives. By making the right family policy, i.e. securing more wives, and by controlling the labour of the household members the old men are able to obtain a greater production. The surplus is invested in cattle which are individually owned. The old men have therefore more cattle. Cattle are, of course, a security in bad years, but also the desired form of wealth. Cattle are sacrificed to the family ancestors, and when a rich old man dies many cattle and pigs are slaughtered. The social patterns of accumulation and prestige of the Balante are in this way organized around the procuring of wives and cattle. It is a stable low-productive male dominated society because no surplus is invested in the development of productive forces. To the extent that a population increase is taking place the result is not a structural transformation of the economy but rather a demographic expansion, which has also been documented for the Balante during the colonial period.

The old men control the social and economic reproduction as a consequence of their control over marriages and the necessary social knowledge of the kinship system and the relation to the ancestors. Access to the necessary social knowledge is controlled through a very elaborate system of age classes which implies that a man does not attain the final status as an 'old man' until he is in his 40's.

The doubling of prices for rice and groundnuts does not change the fact that the old men obtain a greater production and more social power by investing in family policy rather than in technological innovations. Seen from a national point of view such a pattern of investments is, of course, unacceptable because it impedes a continuous improvement of the productive structure. At the same time it keeps a major part of the population, women and younger men, as dependent individuals without a dynamic potential.

The long-term goal of PAIGC is to substitute a cooperative/collective of independent and equal individuals for the patriarchal extended family. The first step is to get the peasants to

produce more both to cover the material needs of the state and to provide capital for the modernization of agriculture. According to the party, the structural changes may start by the peasants forming buying cooperatives to secure seeds, fertilizers, tools etc. When this results in an increased production it should be time to establish sales cooperatives. When income increases there should be a basis for the formation of producer cooperatives which communally invest in a more efficient technology (Rudebeck 1977:72).

If PAIGC's development strategy is to succeed many things have to be changed within the traditional culture and social structure. To mention only a few examples, polygamy must disappear, gerontocracy must be abolished and the 'excessive' use of time on funerals and death-feasts must be reallocated to more productive use.

PAIGC does not hide the fact that such a change is necessary. However, it has chosen not to intervene with force and prohibitions against these cultural and structural phenomena. Its intention is, on the contrary, to create these changes through an ideological and political mobilization. The two most important mechanisms of this policy are the schooling system, which is intended to give the young new values and a consciousness of the country's situation and the strategy of the party, and the popular meetings and Village Committees, which the party tries to make the responsible and dynamic institutions on the local level in towns and villages.

### Socialism

One might expect 'scientific socialism' to have a scientific conception of socialism with which to evaluate the development strategy of Guinea-Bissau. However, this is hardly the case. One of the main problems with the concept of socialism is that it contains elements which refer both to a determinate social form and to a development tendency. Thus socialism, on the one hand, refers to structural features of a social formation which has revolutionized the capitalistic mode of production, e.g. socialization of the means of production (abolishment of private property), the dictatorship of the proletariat against

the remnants of the former exploiting classes, economic planning and the absence of exploitation and production of surplus value. On the other hand, the concept also contains elements of a development tendency or objective, social equality and economic development, whose relevance is not confined to post-capitalistic societies. Arrighi and Saul's characterization may be taken as an example of this identification of socialism with a development tendency:

"The motor for a drive toward socialism is generally to be found in a conviction that man's creative potential can only be fully realized in a society which transcends the cultural centrality of "possessive individualism" and in which a signal measure of economic and social equality, the precondition for genuine political democracy, is guaranteed. In the best of socialist intellectual work, however, socialists have been equally interested in economic development and in the full release of the potential for growth of the productive forces in a society" (1973:11).

There have been and probably still are certain tendencies within the Marxist tradition which consider the two aspects of the concept of socialism to be identical in practice. This conception is based on the belief that socialism is only attainable through an anti-capitalistic revolution because only capitalism is able to develop the forces of production and free the individuals from the restrictions of the traditional social relations. However, many Third World politicians have with their different programs of 'Arab socialism', 'African socialism' and 'Indian socialism', shifted the focus of the concept of socialism away from the problem of characterization towards the issue of the development tendency. In this way, they have professed the belief that the capitalistic phase is not absolutely necessary. Most of the radical researchers dealing with the Third World have likewise made this shift of focus even though they have often accused the politicians of only using the concept rhetorically as a cover for narrow class interests, as Meillasoux did in the introductory quote (cf. also Sweezy 1976:8). In the perspective which emphasizes the development tendency, and which also constitutes the point of departure in the following, socialism can be the objective of both an anti-feudal, anti-colonial and anti-bureaucratic struggle and revolution in the periphery of capitalism.

But even if there is a general agreement about the shift in the focus of the concept this does not remove the analytic problem of determining the structural features which are necessary and sufficient conditions of a socialist development. A consequence of the shift is that the evaluation of whether it is a socialist development or not must take its point of departure in specific historical and material conditions and not in a set of general principles connected with the post-capitalist society. In spite of this, the discussion of socialism in Africa (and presumably in other continents as well) and the critique of certain states for being capitalist or state capitalist rather than socialist is often based on such general principles, historically derived from the anti-capitalist struggle in Western Europe.

In the following, I shall attempt to evaluate the possible relevance of some of these general political and economic principles as conditions of a socialist strategy. Then departing from Arrighi and Saul's (1973) determination of requirements of development in Africa I shall discuss some of the characteristics that are emphasized from a conception of socialism as a development strategy. The discussion will be related to the example of Guinea-Bissau.

### General Principles

The political principles which it is necessary to discuss, are 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' and 'the violent revolution'. The necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat has, for instance, been argued by Said Salum in a critique of the Tanzanian state:

"We say that for the success of national democratic revolution what is necessary is a proletarian party led by proletarian ideology. And there is no question of having an academic debate on whether TANU is or is not such a party. TANU is a party controlled by, and serving the interests of, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie" (1977:56).

O'Brien also insists on 'proletarian leadership' as a necessity in an analysis of the revolution in Guinea-Bissau:

"The dilemma facing the PAIGC... as it began the struggle for national independence thus became how to fight and win a social

revolution without a (developed) working class; or, put more precisely, how to provide their struggle with proletarian leadership in the absence of a proletariat" (1977:2).

However, one should broaden the concept of 'proletariat' so much that it loses any content and becomes purely rhetorical if the principles of 'proletarian leadership' and 'proletarian dictatorship' should be relevant in an African context, where the major part of the population are peasants. The use of the concept in this connection is confusing and may create illusions. To illustrate these illusions one might quote Eduardo Mondlane:

"Both the agitation of the intellectuals and the strikes of the urban labour force were doomed to failure, because in both cases it was the action only of a tiny isolated group ... A nationalist movement without firm roots in the country-side could never hope to succeed" (1969:116).

PAIGC learned the same lesson from the Pidjuguitti massacre in 1959, when the Portuguese killed 60 workers during a strike by dockers and sailors. It became clear that the party would have to engage in an armed struggle and mobilize the peasants (cf. Ferreira 1973:53).

Mondlane (1969:116) emphasized that it was the very failures which led to the clarification of the right strategy. However, considering how many revolutionary parties have had to learn the lesson by themselves<sup>2</sup>, one might wonder whether it is a necessary social law of development or rather the result of some illusions within the Marxist tradition: "We had some knowledge of other experiences and we knew that a struggle of the kind we hoped to lead - and win - had to be led by the working class; we looked for the working class in Guinea and did not find it" (Cabral 1969:54). Anyhow, it can only lead to illusions to misname the social relations as O'Brien does when he talks about 'proletarian leadership' in a society with hardly any working class. To be meaningful the notion must imply that the leadership has a working class background or that its ideology is proletarian in outlook. Like the leadership of most other revolutionary parties the one of PAIGC also stems from the petty bourgeoisie. Cabral argued that in the colonial situation it was the petty bourgeoisie which had a revolutionary potential even though he wished it could be

different (1969:57). To call the ideology of the party 'proletarian' can only hide that the development problems of the present society are caused by and should be solved in a revolutionary relation with the traditional agrarian structures, which determine the material basis of the society.

As became apparent from the short reference above to PAIGC's development strategy there is no doubt that its ideology is revolutionary in relation to the present forms of production. What is relevant in the principle of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' is the necessity of having a revolutionary party (with members from the peasantry, the working class and the petty bourgeoisie) which is able to control and eliminate the former exploiting classes through the state apparatus (cf. Sweezy 1976:9-10).

This formulation also questions the principle of an armed struggle or a violent revolution as a necessary pre-condition of a socialist development tendency. From a socialist perspective, the decisive thing that the take-over should accomplish is control over the state as this implies the possibility of eliminating the exploiting classes. The armed struggle is sometimes considered a necessity because it is believed that it is only through the liberation war that leaders and masses can attain the degree of mobilization which is necessary to maintain the socialist line. The war of liberation has, of course, created some unique conditions for educating people, for changing their political consciousness and for breaking the traditional structures. However, to a large extent the motive behind the movements of liberation has been anti-colonial rather than revolutionary. Thus, Cabral emphasized very clearly that the peasantry in Guinea-Bissau was not a revolutionary group. Furthermore, as usually only a minor part of the population has directly or indirectly taken part in the liberation war the greatest revolutionary social and ideological changes remain to be made. (In the case of Guinea-Bissau hardly more than 300.000 have lived for any period in the liberated areas). Socialist development therefore depends more on the ability to create a revolutionary dynamic during peace than on the length of the armed struggle.

In those areas of Africa where the political de-colonization has been accomplished an armed liberation struggle is hardly foreseeable if it is correct that the peasantry has only an anti-colonial and not a revolutionary potential. However, the lack of conditions of a liberation war will probably not impede political groups with a socialist objective from attempting to seize power and to transform society with the hope of bringing it out of the neo-colonial cul-de-sac. In this perspective, Basil Davidson's (1975) description of the development in Somalia is particularly interesting because it emphasizes how the military after a coup has tried to create a situation of political mobilization similar to the one which has characterized the development in the former Portuguese colonies. The important thing is therefore not whether the political take-over is violent or not, but whether it creates the change in the political structure which is necessary for achieving a socialist economic and political development.

The general economic features commonly associated with a socialist economy are the socialization of the means of production and the abolishment of exploitation and production of surplus value. As will become apparent, these principles have a limited validity or significance in an African context.

A total socialization (nationalization) of the means of production and the distributive sector is hardly an absolute necessity and definitely not a sufficient precondition for socialist development in an African context. The state of Guinea-Bissau has nationalized land, the largest Portuguese trading companies, the Portuguese bank, and those construction and real-estate companies and minor factories that have been left by their previous owners.

There is probably no reason to see the lack of a total nationalization of capital in industrial production and distribution as a deviation from a socialist course. There is no doubt that the state wants to abolish private national capital and to reconstruct the firms as state or cooperative enterprises. But in some cases the state refrains from nationalization because it lacks capital and expertise. The very small national capital

in the industrial sector is controlled by the state through fixed wages and in several cases it has also contributed capital and therefore participates in the administration (The relationship to international capital is discussed later). Whether the control becomes real depends partly on the ability of the state to create an efficient administration, which is difficult because of the lack of educated people, and partly on the success of the general economic policy. If the economic development is too slow the state might be forced to give concessions to private capital in the hope of obtaining immediate increases of production.

The distribution sector is mainly owned by the state through the People's Stores and the nationalized Portuguese trading companies. The rest of this sector is controlled partly through a system of fixed prices and partly through the People's Stores' monopoly on import of the major consumer goods. In other African countries with socialist orientations nationalization of the distribution sector has caused bureaucratization, inefficiency, waste of resources and has contributed to the development of élites (cf. Amin 1969 on Congo-B., Meillassoux 1970 on Mali, Arrighi and Saul 1973 on Ghana and Guinea). Seen from this perspective, it might in fact contain a good deal of socialist sense, although it does not follow the manual in socialism, that the Minister of Trade, Armando Ramos, in an interview stressed that the party (for the time being?) had no intention of nationalizing the rest of the distribution sector. The party controls the profits of the sector and the private sector might serve as a challenge to increased efficiency.

The nationalization of land is, of course, important because it means that the state is free to establish new enterprises and because it represents a future possibility of control in case a pressure on land should emerge. But nationalization does not give control over the tendency and the size of agricultural production. This control is contained in the mode of reproduction of the local communities and this cannot be nationalized.

This formulation raises the central question of what is the driving force behind an economic growth, i.e. the development of the forces of production. Apparently the radical analyses of African societies are marked by two diametrically opposed views. Some seem to imply that the forces of production have a 'natural' tendency to develop themselves.<sup>3</sup> Seen from this perspective the greatest problem is that the political leading groups of colonialists, imperialists or neo-colonialists appropriate the surplus, misdirect development and block economic growth. If the people had a natural tendency to develop the forces of production it would, of course, be essential to nationalize control over this development by taking over the means of production. In connection with a political take-over the most important problem is the character of the new leadership as it has the power of misdirecting or impeding development. On the other hand, some seem to imply that it is rather the people, or the traditional structures, which constitute the main problem. Amin (1964:43) emphasizes, in this way, that the traditional family must be crushed and individualism promoted to attain any real progress within agriculture. As became apparent in my description of the agrarian structures in Guinea-Bissau, there is no pattern of investment in the traditional reproduction which leads to a development of the forces of production. The development problems are, therefore, not solved by nationalizing the means of production, mainly land. It is essential that a radical rupture with the traditional structures' lack of productive reinvestment must be brought about if the forces of production are to develop continuously. This does not imply that it is only the people which are a problem. The leadership is always a problem. From the first notion the major problem of the leadership seems to be how the surplus is used. In accordance with the second perception I would rather argue that the essential problem is whether the leadership is able to create a dynamic relation with the people which stimulated it to produce a greater surplus and invest differently.

The last of the general principles which should be mentioned is the abolishment of exploitation and production of surplus value. In those societies where the state sets the conditions

and limits of accumulation and appropriates the major part itself, the abolishment of production of surplus value, understood as capitalist appropriation, is a truism and as such rather uninteresting. The notion of abolishment of exploitation is, however, more problematic. O'Brien, for instance, suggests that one of the preconditions of Guinea-Bissau's ability to evade a neo-colonial dependency is "the extent to which revolutionary social structures free of exploitation have been firmly implanted in the liberated areas" (1977:16). Objectively or materially exploitation can probably not be defined in other ways than as social appropriation of surplus product (labour) from the direct producers. But this implies that 'exploitation' is a social necessity for the maintenance of a controlling institution (the state) and economic growth. The mere existence of exploitation should therefore not be the basis of the analysis and the political criticism. This basis can only be the social consequences of different forms of appropriation and accumulation.

The reason that this needs to be emphasized is that the so-called state capitalist societies are often criticized for continuing the production of surplus value and of exploiting workers and peasants. Mafeje, for example, writes:

"insofar as the workers are required to produce increased surplus-value for the accelerated accumulation by the state and insofar as wage rises and consumption are subordinated to the requirements of accumulation, state capitalism operates within the law of value and perpetrates exploitation against the workers. Insofar as the state in agrarian economies relies for its 'socialist primitive accumulation' on appropriating surplus chiefly from sources lying outside the state economic system, it exploits the countryside" (1975:13).

I can agree with Mafeje in the sense that he does not consider state capitalism, as described above, as a deviation from a socialist development, but as an objectively necessary phase. But the emphasis on production of surplus value and exploitation in this connection is problematic because it implies that these conditions in themselves determine development, and it might easily provoke the idea that a social formation without exploitation is possible. This leads to a kind of utopian criticism where state capitalist societies are criticized for conditions which will necessarily also be found in societies

with a socialist development. For example, Salum criticizes Tanzania in the following way:

"The ideological justification of this policy (the so-called collectivization program) has been that it would facilitate provision of essential social services to the peasantry. But objectively, its effect has been to rationalize the appropriation of surplus by the state and to reinforce the export-oriented structure of the economy" (1977:52).

Salum may be correct in presuming that Tanzania is on 'a bad course', but this is not explained by this kind of analysis. It would indeed be a stupid socialist state which did not attempt to rationalize the appropriation of surplus product and to control (reinforce?) the relation to the world market.

To sum up, the abolishment of the production of surplus value is a truism in those societies where the state sets the conditions and limits of accumulation. However, if the requirement is formulated positively as the abolishment of exploitation a dangerous illusion is created. There is no economy, no society, without 'exploitation'. The essential thing is the consequences of the way in which the production, appropriation and accumulation of surplus product takes place. As these, of course, depend on the specific historical relations we are back to the material conditions in Africa, i.e. the specific features of a socialist development strategy in an African context.

### Socialism in Africa

In their article on "Socialism and Economic Development in Tropical Africa" Arrighi and Saul define three problem areas for a socialist development strategy:

"On the level of international economic and social system, one confronts the specter of international capitalism and a grave inequality of financial power, realities which, as will be shown, can be major constraints on general development. On the domestic scene, one faces the problem of the relationship between "town", the center of administration and of such industrialization as takes place, and "country", an interaction from which real development could spring but which all too often defines the split between unequal and unconnected spheres of a society falling short of genuine transformation. Finally, one has the problem of agricultural development itself in a rural sphere where inequalities can and do begin to emerge" (1973:12).

The article is rather searching with regard to exact proposals for a socialist development strategy in relationship to these problem areas. A disengagement from foreign capital is recommended because of the drain on surplus which is engendered by dependence on foreign capital and because of the unequal development which follows from the choice of technique and sectoral distribution of foreign capital (1973: 20-21).

These effects are undoubtedly the usual result of the way international capital is allowed to function, but they are not inherent to capital, that is only the value increase. Theoretically at least it should be possible to imagine that the state controls the conditions of investment (sector, technology etc.) in such a way that it provided an increased surplus product for both international capital and the state. A similar 'cooperation' with international capital might help to maintain the material foundation of the state and to relieve the lack of internal investment capital. The alternative to this strategy could easily be that the state would have to obtain more loans or increase the appropriation of surplus product from the peasants just to survive. The last cause would probably create an antagonism between the peasantry and the state apparatus and therefore impede the necessary structural transformations.

These remarks should be seen in relation to the discussion above on whether the main problem is the employment of the surplus or the creation of a greater surplus. Had there only been a fixed surplus any kind of 'cooperation' with international capital would, of course, be a failure because it would have transferred part of the surplus and turned it into surplus value for international capital. If the essential problem, however, is to create a greater surplus a certain cooperation may be defensible provided that it increases the surplus that the state can control, even though it will also contribute to the increase of surplus value of international capital. The analyses of the radical Africanists have had a tendency to determine the export oriented structure as the cause of all evils. This has created the illusion that the solution to the problems is to cut the country off from the world market, international capital and aid. Obichere writes

thus in an analysis of the reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau: "The most disturbing factor in the economic reconstruction of Guinea-Bissau is the fact that the leaders of the PAIGC have fallen into the trap of international assistance and financial aid" (1975:211). The consequence of not relying on external aid in Guinea-Bissau would be to 'bomb' the country back to the tribal level. If the state had to subsist on internal resources alone it would be forced to tax the peasants so heavily that a blocking of the transformations in the traditional structures would be inevitable. (And even this would probably not be possible as the value of loans and aid during recent years has been of the order of 10-15 times the value of the exports). If the transformation is to proceed in a peaceful manner, i.e. through ideological and political mobilization, it is necessary that the peasants feel that the increased production is worth the effort. This implies both that taxation should not be too hard, and that it should be recompensed through an improved social service, health clinics, schools, People's Stores etc. This balance can only be created if the country can secure external capital, aid and technology. In fact, there can be no development without a certain cooperation with the world market and/or 'social imperialist' powers.

Guinea-Bissau has no a priori plans for disengaging itself from foreign aid (and capital) as this can provide the capital which is needed to exploit the economic benefits of import substitution and refinement of export production. However, it remains an open question whether PAIGC can get other than aid organizations (which is of course also the preferred institution) to invest on its conditions which include state participation, reinvestment of surplus, adjustment to the sectorial investment plan of the state and to local technology.

With respect to the relation between town and country Arrighi and Saul stress that:

"Productive investment in the modern sector must be directed toward the creation of development stimuli in the traditional sector; that is, it must be directed to the expansion of those industries producing the capital and consumer goods most suited to the requirements of the traditional sector" (1973:21).

In this field, there is a clear accordance with the industrialization strategy of Guinea-Bissau, as can be seen from the following interview with the Minister of Industry, Filinto Vaz Martins:

"Previously rice was the most important import article. But because production has increased strongly it does not play such an important role any longer. The third largest group of commodities that are imported are clothes and cloth. But we shall try to do something about that. Cotton in itself is cheap, but the finished cloth is very expensive. We will start by building a factory (for which Norway has promised us money), that can weave cloth from imported thread. In two years time, we will build a factory that can spin thread from imported raw cotton. Later we hope the development of agriculture will enable us to produce the cotton we need. There are good possibilities for growing cotton in Guinea-Bissau. Originally the peasants grew some cotton, but the Portuguese forced them to grow ground-nuts instead. In this way we hope gradually to eliminate clothes and cloth from our imports.

Agricultural tools and iron for construction work have also been important import commodities. We shall try to change this first by building a small foundry that can utilize the scrap that was left by the Portuguese. We have 20.000 tons of scrap iron from, e.g. cars that were left over the whole country as a result of the war. We will produce quite simple, non-automatic agricultural tools. And when the scrap has been used up, we will import raw iron which is not so expensive. In this way we can get a local technical development, and we only need to import cheap raw materials".

The doubling of prices for the peasants' basic products, which was mentioned above, also fits into this development strategy, as it, in fact, involves a transfer of purchasing power from towns to villages.

With respect to the third area, i.e. the production increase within the traditional sector, there is no discrepancy. As described previously, it is clearly PAIGC's strategy to increase agricultural production. However, the problem is how this can take place. On this Arrighi and Saul remark:

"The second problem involved in raising the productivity of African peasants is that of ensuring the productive absorption of the surplus produced in the traditional sector. Here the question of rural transformation is more starkly posed, even if difficult to answer at the theoretical level. It will involve some calculations as to whether the transformation of traditional economies is best attained through the formation of an agrarian capitalist class or the gradual absorption of the individual peasant families into larger units (cooperatives, collectives, communes)" (1973:21).

It is presumably Amin (1964:43) who most clearly has formulated the thesis that even a progressive government has to break the traditional sector through a capitalist development. Arrighi and Saul give no indication of what should constitute the basis of their 'calculations'. PAIGC has no doubts. It is political and human. To solve the problem of growth by stimulating a capitalist development would mean to cut the party off from its base. As previously mentioned, the party is, therefore, attempting to transform the traditional structures through an ideological and political mobilization. This is a far cry from the ideology of African socialism about the socialist elements in the original village communities.

These historically specific economic conditions of socialist development strategy could perhaps be summarized in the following way: Cooperation with foreign capital and aid should be subordinated to the needs of internal accumulation. The internal accumulation must be based on a growth within agriculture, and industrialization must be adjusted to the needs of the agricultural sector. The growth in agricultural production should be based on a mobilized transformation in a cooperative/collective direction which results in a productivity-increasing pattern of reinvestment.

At least at the intentional level there are no contradictions between these conditions and the development strategy of Guinea-Bissau. But presumably something similar could be said about the development plans of several other countries which have been accused of being more African socialist than truly socialist. In the following we shall see whether the political conditions make it possible to distinguish between the two forms of society. At this level there are two features which usually are emphasized: popular mobilization and the existence of a revolutionary party instead of a petty bourgeois bureaucratic élite.

Most researchers formulate mobilization of peasants and workers as a precondition for and a characteristic of socialist development (see e.g. Annerstedt and Gustavsson 1975; Davidson 1975; Rudebeck 1974; Saul 1974; Sweezy 1976). The existence of

mobilization as a sign of African socialism under the control of a bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie in countries like Mali (Meillassoux 1970), Ghana (Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966) and Tanzania (Salum 1977). But actually the concept is neither very clear nor suitable as the major distinguishing criterion. It emphasizes a voluntariness which is essential in relation to the objective of social equality which was an important part of our conception of socialism. But it is difficult to determine the necessary degree of mobilization. How many people should be mobilized? To a certain extent a passive acceptance might also suffice to make the system function.

Some degree of mobilization is a necessary condition of socialist development. But its existence is not a guarantee in itself that the development is maintained. This problem is reflected in the analyses of Tanzania, which was usually described as socialist in the period where the Ujamaa policy was voluntary, whereas it is often labelled state capitalist or just capitalist in the present phase, where the policy is enforced. The concept of 'mobilization', therefore, does not alone cover those aspects of the process of social reproduction which secure economic growth and increased equality.

Something similar could be said about the requirement of a 'revolutionary leadership', which has been formulated by the editors of RAPE, among others:

"Both the defence and consolidation of the hard-won national independence and the continuing unfolding of the revolution in the direction of socialism ... ultimately rests upon the leadership of the working class as expressed in its Marxist-Leninist ideology and as exercised by its vanguard organization" (RAPE 4:10).

The very clear distinction which is often drawn between a revolutionary leadership and a state bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie could easily create the illusion that revolutionary leaders do not work in offices and do not usually come from the petty bourgeoisie. They do. However, even disregarding these problems the distinction is hardly so clearcut. What seemed to be a revolutionary party may tomorrow turn out to be the organizational form of the bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie. If the 'revolutionary leadership' in spite of its socialist ideology

applies a wrong or inadequate policy the result would probably be an insufficient growth in the agricultural sector. To maintain the state the party would then be forced to increase the appropriation of surplus products from the peasantry. This would undoubtedly block the social transformation of the traditional sector, increase repression and strengthen bureaucratization of the party. The continued existence of the state would thus probably have to be based increasingly on foreign capital and aid, i.e. the pattern of reproduction which has been termed 'African socialism'. Should a similar development take place in Guinea-Bissau we shall probably see some analyses which, paraphrasing Cabral, assert that the petty bourgeois elements within the party did not commit suicide, but, on the contrary, used the socialist ideology to strengthen their own class positions, rationalize exploitation, reinforce cooperation with international capital etc.

Davidson (1976:101) indicates in the case of Somalia that the development has gone the other way from bureaucratic petty bourgeoisie to revolutionary leadership.

If development thus can go both ways the concepts lose their character of being structural features and become post-hoc determinations of success or failure. This is in fact, not strange. Irrespective of whether we term the leadership revolutionary or state bureaucratic it has the same functions in the process of social reproduction: control and eliminate the former exploiting classes based on private property, appropriate part of the direct producers surplus product and get them to accept it, extend social services, invest in agriculture and industry in a way which creates growth, develop a national consciousness and a modern culture etc.

The distinction between a revolutionary leadership and a petty bourgeois state bureaucracy, therefore, becomes either a subjective evaluation of whether the primary intentions of the leadership are to help the people or reinforce its own position, or a post-hoc determination of success or failure.

However, if none of the usual criteria are applicable to distinguish between African socialism and socialist development, it

raises the question of whether there are other structural features which allow one to make this distinction or whether it is, in fact, a fictitious one.

It has been a recurrent feature of the discussion above that some of the principles were necessary structural conditions, but that they neither individually nor together provided a guarantee for the maintenance of socialist development. As particularly the rate of appropriation and the pattern of investment will influence the future course by determining the relation of the direct producers to the state and the development in productivity, it should probably be features of the accumulation which condition a maintenance of the development tendency. Except for separating out those situations where the state apparatus over a longer term unproductively uses more than it appropriates, this perspective provides no possibility of distinguishing between African socialism and socialist development. The reason for this is that no precise pattern of bureaucratic consumption of rate of appropriation can be said a priori to block or maintain development. The essential thing is whether a significant part of the population finds the policy of the leadership acceptable and collaborates in the transformation of the present conditions or actively or passively works against it. But mutual understanding in the relationship between leaders and people is not exclusively dependent on general political or economic structural features.

The distinction between African socialism and socialist development cannot thus be drawn on a structural basis. They are not two different social forms, where the socialist ideology is correct in one case, whereas it is a cover for private (petty bourgeois) interests in the other. They are, rather, variations over the same structural form. The development tendency may be called socialist when it is a success in the sense that there is both economic growth and popular support. It is African socialism when the development is a failure in the sense that the transformative potential has been blocked either because there is no economic growth or because it can only be maintained through a repressive policy.

On this background it is hopefully clear that the determination of the leadership as being either revolutionary or petty bourgeois cannot be made a priori on the basis of features like how it came to power, its social historical background, its pattern of consumption or its variant of the socialist ideology. The revolutionary or 'petty bourgeois' character of the leadership is a question of whether the leadership is able to shift policy or maintains a course which favours itself when problems arise in political and economic development.

In this perspective, there are good reasons to question the central importance that 'class analysis' has had in most of the radical African research. In those societies, where the leadership has a socialist ideology, it is a poor explanation to insist that the reason it went wrong was the petty bourgeois character of the political leadership. When Meillassoux and Salum, among others, explain certain economic control measures as a result of the state bureaucratic leadership, it is easily overlooked that a revolutionary leadership would be interested in undertaking the same measures. The explanation may appear reasonable because it is proposed after it has become clear that the transformative potential is blocked. The features used to identify the petty bourgeois class character of the leadership, e.g. social historical back-ground, appropriation from the producers, differences in consumption patterns between leadership and people, political repression, will all to a certain extent also be valid of a revolutionary leadership and its policy. The cause of success or failure is thus not to be found in the class character of the leadership but rather in the adequacy of its policy in relation to the maintenance of a transformative dynamic, which creates both economic growth and popular support. Revolutionary or petty bourgeois are qualitative determinations of the form of leadership and not different class positions.

### Conclusion

If nothing else, the present exposition has hopefully made it clear that there does not exist a scientific conception of socialism which specifies the necessary and sufficient condition

of a socialist development, and which makes it possible to determine the result of Guinea-Bissau's present development strategy.

Certain qualitative and structural features of the economic and socio-political process of reproduction have been emphasized as necessary conditions if the development is to attain a socialist tendency in the African situation. The most important of these features are: (1) The state must be in the hands of a revolutionary party which can control and eliminate the former exploiting classes. (2) An expansion of production and in the longer run an increased productivity within the agricultural sector is necessary. (3) In the beginning, industrialization must aim at creating a dynamic interplay with agricultural production. (4) A cooperation with foreign aid and capital must be controlled by the state and subordinated to the needs of internal accumulation and technological development, (5) The transformation of the social structure of the present societies should take place through an active mobilization or at least through a passive acceptance.

As became clear in the description above of the present situation and development strategy of Guinea-Bissau there are no discrepancies between these conditions and the necessary features of a socialist development tendency. I will not reject completely the position of the diplomats and aid administrators. But this is not because the basis of their evaluation is relevant. It is not. Whether or not socialism is achieved does not depend on single social manifestations like bad investments, bureaucratic complications, or the consumption of the leaders. But present developments may show their criticisms to be justified. The reason for this is that the conditions mentioned above only indicate a possibility that the socialist perspective is maintained. Both internal developments in the party, which bring it into antagonism with the people, as well as general economic problems, because growth is not proceeding fast enough, might lead to a blocking of the agricultural sector and a cementing of the bureaucratic group. Should this happen the leadership would probably be forced to base the continued existence of the society on internal repression, foreign capital and aid, i.e. African socialism.

To evaluate the development tendency at any given moment it is necessary to determine the tendency in production, consumption and accumulation and in the relationship between people and party. The economic part of a similar analysis of Guinea-Bissau is precluded at the present time because the necessary information does not exist. But even if it had been possible a negative or positive evaluation does not necessarily imply failure or success in the future. The analysis can only determine what should be changed or maintained to keep a socialist tendency. It is not possible to determine analytically whether these changes or maintenances will take place. That depends on the continued political and ideological struggle. This also implies that the analysis becomes politically strategic rather than mechanically predicting.

The failure of 'African socialism' gave rise to a theoretical discussion which impelled radical researchers on Africa to rely more upon the Marxist tradition. However, this approach did not take place in connection with the creation of an alternative political movement; it had rather the character of a process of disillusionment. It is probably not fortuitous that one of the most important books on this theoretical development was called "Ghana: End of an Illusion" (Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966). This analytical process has, of course, unveiled a number of illusions about the socialist content of nationalization, planning, state direction etc. However, the analyses have also contributed to the creation of new illusions as have been indicated several times in this paper.

Amin has written: "there is no socialism in misery" (1964:46). If this was true Guinea-Bissau could, of course, not be described as socialist either now or in a foreseeable future. However, there is no reason to accept the implicit message of Amin's position, that socialism is a social form which corresponds (mechanically) to a certain development of the forces of production. The best in the concept of socialism, namely the idea of economic growth based on popular support, is not a social form, but a development tendency. This development tendency has as its necessary material precondition a social form, state capitalist if you like, which is characterized by the

attempt of the state apparatus to control and eliminate forms of appropriation based on private property. But this determination of the concept of socialism also makes it clear that the social formation, which is the necessary precondition, may be characterized by stagnation or economic growth based on repression, i.e. those features which have been determined as typical of 'African socialism'.

## NOTES

1. The translation of this article has been financed by the Danish Social Science Research Council. The information on which the description of Guinea-Bissau is based was collected in collaboration with J. Bukh, F. Crone, and J.E. Torp during a visit in February-March 1976 (Bukh et al. 1977). The collection of information took place in partial collaboration with B. Ekelöf and L. Rudebeck (1976-1977).

2. Caldwell describes somewhat similar experiences from China in the following way:

"Mao himself started work among the urban proletariat, but his own experience led him to perceive more and more clearly that the revolutionary force in China was the peasantry. This he may have had to obscure, for tactical reasons, in some of his writings, but it was abundantly clear in his practice, and, increasingly as he established his undisputed leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, in its practice as well" (1970:59-60).

3. Cf. Sweezy (1976:11). Cabral was rather close to this point of view in his most general theoretical article, "The Weapon of Theory" (1969).

4. Arrighi and Saul (1973:22) indicate some uncertainty with respect to this set of problems because of the negative secondary effects on the class structure resulting from a capitalist development in agriculture. Saul (1974:58) has later expressed himself clearly in favour of the mobilization line.

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