CHAPTER V

Africa's Contribution to the Capitalist Development of Europe—The Colonial Period

- Expatriation of African Surplus under Colonialism
- The Strengthening of the Technological and Military Aspects of Capitalism

> The colonies have been created for the metropole by the metropole.
>
> —French saying

> Sales operations in the United States and management of the fourteen (Unilever) plants are directed from Lever House on New York's fashionable Park Avenue. You look at this tall, striking, glass-and-steel structure and you wonder how many hours of underpaid black labour and how many thousands of tons of underpriced palm oil and peanuts and cocoa it cost to build it.
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> —W. Alpheus Hunton

Expatriation of African Surplus under Colonialism

Capital and African Wage Labor

Colonial Africa fell within that part of the international capitalist economy from which surplus was drawn to feed the metropolitan sector. As seen earlier, exploitation of land and labor is essential for human social advance, but only on the assumption that the product is made available within the area where the exploitation takes place. Colonialism was not merely a system of exploitation, but one whose essential purpose was to repatriate the profits to the so-called mother country. From an African viewpoint, that amounted to consistent expatriation of surplus produced by African labor out of African resources. It meant the development of Europe as part of the same dialectical process in which Africa was underdeveloped.

By any standards, labor was cheap in Africa, and the amount of surplus extracted from the African laborer was great. The employer under colonialism paid an extremely small wage—a wage usually insufficient to keep the worker physically alive—and, therefore, he had to grow food to survive. This applied in particular to farm labor of the plantation type, to work in mines, and to certain forms of urban employment. At the time of the imposition of European colonial rule, Africans were able to gain a livelihood from the land. Many retained some contact with the land in the years ahead, and they worked away from their *shambas* in order to pay taxes or because they were forced to do so. After feudalism in Europe had ended, the worker had absolutely no means of sustenance other than through the sale of his labor to capitalists. Therefore, to some extent the employer was responsible for insuring the physical survival of the worker by giving him a "living wage." In Africa, this was not the case. Europeans offered the lowest possible wages and relied on legislation backed by force to do the rest.

There were several reasons why the African worker was more crudely exploited than his European counterpart in the present century. Firstly, the alien colonial state had a monopoly of political power, after crushing all opposition by superior armed force. Secondly, the African working class was small, very dispersed, and very unstable owing to migratory practices. Thirdly, while capitalism was willing to exploit all workers everywhere, European capitalists in Africa had additional racial justifications for dealing unjustly with the African worker. The racist theory that the black man was inferior led to the conclusion that he deserved lower wages; and interestingly enough, the light-skinned Arab and Berber populations of North Africa were treated as "blacks" by the white racist French. The combination of the above factors in turn made it extremely difficult for African workers to organize themselves. It is only the organization and resoluteness of the working class which protects it from the natural tendency of the capitalist to exploit to the utmost. That is why in all colonial territories, when African workers realized the necessity for trade union solidarity, numerous obstacles were placed in their paths by the colonial regimes.

Wages paid to workers in Europe and North America were much higher than wages paid to African workers in comparable categories. The Nigerian coal miner at Enugu earned one shilling per day for working underground and nine pence per day for jobs on the surface. Such a miserable wage would be beyond the comprehension of a Scottish or German coal miner, who could virtually earn in an hour what the Enugu miner was paid for a six-day week. The same disparity existed with port workers. The records of the large American shipping company, Farrell Lines, show that in 1955, of the total amount spent on loading and discharging cargo moving between Africa and America, five-sixths went to American workers and one-sixth to Africans. Yet, it was the same amount of cargo loaded and unloaded at both ends. The wages paid to the American stevedore and the European coal miners were still such as to insure that the capitalists made a profit. The point here is merely to illustrate how much greater was the rate of exploitation of African workers.

When discrepancies such as the above were pointed out during the colonial period and subsequently, those who justified colonialism were quick to reply that the standard and cost of living was higher in capitalist countries. The fact is that the higher standard was made possible by the exploitation of colonies, and there was no justification for keeping African living standards so depressed in an age where better was possible and in a situation where a higher standard was possible because of the work output of Africans themselves. The kind of living standard supportable by African labor within the continent is readily illustrated by the salaries and the life-style of the whites inside Africa.

Colonial governments discriminated against the employment of Africans in senior categories; and, whenever it happened that a white and a black filled the same post, the white man was sure to be paid considerably more. This was true at all levels, ranging from civil service posts to mine workers. African salaried workers in the British colonies of Gold Coast and Nigeria were better off than their brothers in many other parts of the continent, but they were restricted to the "junior staff" level in the civil service. In the period before the last world war, European civil servants in the Gold Coast received an average of 40 pounds per month, with quarters and other privileges. Africans got an average salary of 4 pounds. There were instances where one European in an establishment earned as much as his twenty-five African assistants put together. Outside the civil service, Africans obtained work in building projects, in mines, and as domestics—all low-paying jobs. It was exploitation without responsibility and without redress. In 1934, forty-one Africans were killed in a gold mine disaster in the Gold Coast, and the capitalist company offered only 3 pounds to the dependents of each of these men as compensation.

Where European settlers were found in considerable numbers, the wage differential was readily perceived. In North Africa, the wages of Moroccans and Algerians were from 16 percent to 25 percent those of Europeans. In East Africa, the position was much worse, notably in Kenya and Tanganyika. A comparison with white settler earnings and standards brings out by sharp contrast how incredibly low African wages were. While Lord Delamere controlled 100,000 acres of Kenya's land, the Kenyan had to carry a *kipande* pass in his own country to beg for a wage of 15 or 20 shillings per month. The absolute limit of brutal exploitation was found in the southern parts of the continent; and in Southern Rhodesia, for example, agricultural laborers rarely received more than 15 shillings per month. Workers in mines got a little more if they were semi-skilled, but they also had more intolerable working conditions. Unskilled laborers in the mines of Northern Rhodesia often got as little as 7 shillings per month. A truck driver on the famous copper belt was in a semi-skilled grade. In one mine, Europeans performed that job for 30 pounds per month, while in another, Africans did it for 3 pounds per month.

In all colonial territories, wages were reduced during the period of crisis which shook the capitalist world during the 1930s, and they were not restored or increased until after the last capitalist world war. In Southern Rhodesia in 1949, Africans employed in municipal areas were awarded minimum wages from 35 to 75 shillings per month. That was a considerable improvement over previous years, but white workers (on the job for 8 hours per day compared to the Africans' 10 or 14 hours) received a minimum wage of 20 shillings *per day* plus free quarters and other benefits.

The Rhodesians offered a miniature version of South Africa's apartheid system, which oppressed the largest industrial working class on the continent. In the Union of South Africa, African laborers worked deep underground, under inhuman conditions which would not have been tolerated by miners in Europe. Consequently, black South African workers recovered gold from deposits which elsewhere would be regarded as noncommercial. And yet it is the white section of the working class which received whatever benefits were available in terms of wages and salaries. Officials have admitted that the mining companies could pay whites higher than miners in any other part of the world because of the superprofits made by paying black workers a mere pittance.*

In the final analysis, the shareholders of the mining companies were the ones who benefited most of all. They remained in Europe and North America and collected fabulous dividends every year from the gold, diamonds, manganese, uranium, etc., which were brought out of the South African subsoil by African labor. For years, the capitalist press itself praised Southern Africa as an investment outlet returning superprofits on capital invested. From the very beginning of the Scramble for Africa, huge fortunes were made from gold and diamonds in Southern Africa by people like Cecil Rhodes. In the present century, both the investment and the outflow of surplus have increased. Investment was mainly concentrated in mining and finance where the profits were greatest. In the mid-1950s, British investments in South Africa were estimated at 860 million pounds and yielded a stable profit of 15 percent, or 129 million pounds every year. Most mining companies had returns well above that average. De Beers Consolidated Mines made a profit that was both phenomenal and consistently high—between $26 million and $29 million throughout the 1950s.

The complex of Southern African mining concerns operated not just in South Africa itself, but also in South-West Africa, Angola, Mozambique,

* As is well known, those conditions still operate. However, this chapter presents matters in the past tense to picture the colonial epoch.

Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia, and the Congo. Congo was consistently a source of immense wealth for Europe, because from the time of colonization until 1906, King Leopold II of Belgium made at least $20 million from rubber and ivory. The period of mineral exploitation started quite early, and then gained momentum after political control passed from King Leopold to the Belgium state in 1908. Total foreign capital inflow into the Congo between 1887 and 1953 was estimated by the Belgians to have been 5,700 million pounds. The value of the outflow in the same period was said to have been 4,300 million pounds, exclusive of profits retained within the Congo. As was true everywhere else on the continent, the expatriation of surplus from Congo increased as the colonial period wore on. In the five years preceding independence the net outflow of capital from Congo to Belgium reached massive proportions. Most of the expatriation of surplus was handled by a major European finance monopoly, the *Société Générale.* The *Société Générale* had as its most important subsidiary the *Union Minière de Haute-Katanga,* which has monopolized Congolese copper production since 1889 (when it was known as the *Compagnie de Katanga*): *Union Minière* has been known to make a profit of 27 million pounds in a single year.

It is no wonder that of the total wealth produced in Congo in any given year during the colonial period, more than one-third went out in the form of profits for big business and salaries for their expatriate staffs. But the comparable figure for Northern Rhodesia under the British was one-half. In Katanga, *Union Minière* at least had a reputation for leaving some of the profits behind in the form of things like housing and maternity services for African workers. The Rhodesian Copper Belt Companies expatriated profits without compunction.

It should not be forgotten that outside Southern Africa there were also significant mining operations during the colonial period. In North Africa, foreign capital exploited natural resources of phosphates, oil, lead, zinc, manganese, and iron ore. In Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, there were important workings of gold, diamonds, iron ore, and bauxite. To all that should be added the tin of Nigeria, the gold and manganese of Ghana, the gold and diamonds of Tanganyika, and the copper of Uganda and Congo Brazzaville. In each case, an understanding of the situation must begin with an inquiry into the degree of exploitation of African resources and labor, and then must proceed to follow the surplus to its destination outside Africa—into the bank accounts of the capitalists who control the majority shares in the huge multinational mining combines.

The African working class produced a less spectacular surplus for export with regard to companies engaged in agriculture. Agricultural plantations were widespread in North, East, and South Africa; and they also appeared in West Africa to a lesser extent. Their profits depended on the incredibly low wages and harsh working conditions imposed on African agricultural laborers and on the fact that they invested very little capital in obtaining the land, which was robbed wholesale from Africans by colonial powers and then sold to whites at nominal prices. For instance, after the Kenya highlands had been declared "Crown Land," the British handed over to Lord Delamere 100,000 acres of the best land at a cost of a penny per acre. Lord Francis Scott purchased 350,000 acres, the East African Estates Ltd. got another 350,000 acres, and the East African Syndicate took 100,000 acres adjoining Lord Delamere's estate—all at giveaway prices. Needless to say, such plantations made huge profits, even if the rate was lower than in a South African gold mine or an Angolan diamond mine.

During the colonial era, Liberia was supposedly independent; but to all intents and purposes, it was a colony of the U.S.A. In 1926, the Firestone Rubber Company of the U.S.A. was able to acquire one million acres of forest land in Liberia at a cost of 6 cents per acre and 1 percent of the value of the exported rubber. Because of the demand for and the strategic importance of rubber, Firestone's profits from Liberia's land and labor carried them to 25th position among the giant companies of the U.S.A.

European Trading Companies versus the African Peasant

So far, this section has been dealing with that part of the surplus produced by African wage earners in mines and plantations. But the African working class under colonialism was extremely small and the vast majority of Africans engaged in the colonial money economy were independent peasants. How then can it be said that these self-employed peasants were contributing to the expatriation of African surplus? Apologists for colonialism argue that it was a positive benefit for such farmers to have been given the opportunity to create surplus by growing or collecting produce such as cocoa, coffee, palm oil. It is essential that this misrepresentation be clarified.

A peasant growing a cash crop or collecting produce had his labor exploited by a long chain of individuals, starting with local businessmen. Sometimes, those local businessmen were Europeans. Very rarely were they Africans, and more usually they were a minority group brought in from outside and serving as intermediaries between the white colonialists and the exploited African peasant. In West Africa, the Lebanese and Syrians played this role; while in East Africa the Indians rose to this position. Arabs were also in the middleman category in Zanzibar and a few other places on the East African coast.

Cash-crop peasants never had any capital of their own. They existed from one crop to another, depending on good harvests and good prices. Any bad harvest or fall of prices caused the peasants to borrow in order to find money to pay taxes and buy certain necessities. As security, they mortgaged their future crops to moneylenders in the middleman category. Non-payment of debts could and did lead to their farms' being taken away by the moneylenders. The rate of interest on the loans was always fantastically high, amounting to what is known as "usury." In East Africa, things were so bad that even the British colonial government had to step in and enact a "Native Credit Ordinance" to protect Africans from Asian businessmen.

However, in spite of some minor clashes between the colonialists and the middlemen, the two were part and parcel of the same apparatus of exploitation. On the whole, the Lebanese and Indians did the smaller jobs which Europeans could not be bothered with. They owned things such as cotton gins which separated the seed from the lint; while of course Europeans concentrated on the cotton mills in Europe. The middlemen also went out to the villages, while Europeans liked to stay in towns. In the villages, the Indians and Lebanese took over virtually all buying and selling, channeling most of the profits back to Europeans in the towns and those overseas.

The share of profits which went to middlemen was insignificant in comparison to those profits reaped by big European business interests and by the European governments themselves. The capitalist institution which came into most direct contact with African peasants was the colonial trading company: that is to say, a company specializing in moving goods to and from the colonies. The most notorious were the French concerns, *Compagnie Française d'Afrique Occidentale* (CFAO) and *Société Commerciale Ouest Africaine* (SCOA), and the British-controlled United Africa Company (UAC). These were responsible for expatriating a great proportion of Africa's wealth produced by peasant toil.

Several of the colonial trading companies already had African blood on their hands from participation in the slave trade. Thus, after French merchants in Bordeaux made fortunes from the European slave trade, they transferred that capital to the trade in groundnuts from Senegal and Gambia in the middle of the nineteenth century. The firms concerned continued to operate in the colonial period, although they changed hands and there were a lot of mergers. In Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali, the names of Maurel & Prom, Maurel Brothers, Buhan & Teyssere, Delmas &

Clastre, were all well known. Several of them were eventually incorporated into SCOA, which was dominated by a consortium of French and Swiss financiers. A parallel process in the French port of Marseilles led to the transfer of slave-trade capital into direct trade between Africa and France. After the end of the First World War, most of the small Marseilles firms were absorbed into the massive CFAO, which imported into French West Africa whatever European goods the market would take, and exported in turn the agricultural produce that was largely the consequence of peasant labor. CFAO also had British and Dutch capital, and its activities extended into Liberia and into British and Belgian colonies. It is said that SCOA and CFAO made a profit of up to 90 per cent in good years and 25 per cent in bad years.

In Britain, the notorious slave trading port of Liverpool was the first to switch to palm oil early in the nineteenth century when the trade in slaves became difficult or impossible. This meant that Liverpool firms were no longer exploiting Africa by removing its labor physically to another part of the world. Instead, they were exploiting the labor and raw materials of Africa *inside* Africa. Throughout the nineteenth century and right into the colonial era, Liverpool concentrated largely on importing African peasant produce. Backed by the industrial districts of Manchester and Cheshire, this British port was in control of a great proportion of Britain's and Europe's trade with Africa in the colonial period—just as it had done in the slave trade period. Glasgow also had a keen interest in the colonial trade, and so did the merchants and big business interests of London. By 1929, London replaced Liverpool as the chief port dealing with African import and export.

As indicated, the UAC was the British company which was best known among the commercial concerns. It was a subsidiary of the giant Anglo-Dutch monopoly, Unilever; and its agencies were found in all the British colonies of West Africa and on a smaller scale in East Africa. Unilever also controlled the *Compagnie du Niger Français,* the *Compagnie Française de la Côte d'Ivoire,* SCKN in Chad, NOSOCO in Senegal, NSCA in Portuguese Guinea, and John Walken & Co. Ltd. in Dahomey. Certain other British and French firms were not found in every colony, but they did well in the particular area in which they were entrenched. For example, there was John Holt in Nigeria.

In East Africa, the import-export business tended to have smaller firms than in West Africa, but even so there were five or six which were much larger than the rest and appropriated the largest amounts. One of the oldest was Smith Mackenzie, which was an offshoot of the Scottish company of Mackinnon and Mackenzie which had spearheaded British colonization in East Africa and which also had interests in India. Other notable commercial firms were those of A. Baumann, Wigglesworth and Company, Dalgetty, Leslie & Anderson, Ralli Bros., Michael Cotts, Jos. Hansen, the African Mercantile and Twentsche Overseas Trading Co. Some of them amalgamated before colonial rule was over, and they all had several other subsidiaries, as well as themselves being related to bigger companies in the metropoles. The UAC also had a slice of the East African import trade, having brought up the firm of Gailey and Roberts which was started by white settlers in 1904.

The pattern of appropriation of surplus in East Africa was easy to follow, in that there was centralization of the extractive mechanisms in Nairobi and the port of Mombasa. All the big firms operated from Nairobi, with important offices in Mombasa to deal with warehousing, shipping, insuring. Uganda and Tanganyika were then brought into the picture via their capital cities of Kampala and Dar es Salaam, where the big firms had branches. Up to the start of the last war, the volume of trade from East Africa was fairly small, but it jumped rapidly after that. For instance, the value of Kenya imports rose from 4 million pounds in 1938 to 34 million in 1950 and to 70 million in 1960. The value of exports was of course rising at the same time, and the commercial firms were among the principal beneficiaries of the growth in foreign trade.

Trading companies made huge fortunes on relatively small investments in those parts of Africa where peasant cash-crop farming was widespread. The companies did not have to spend a penny to grow the agricultural raw materials. The African peasant went in for cash-crop farming for many reasons. A minority eagerly took up the opportunity to continue to acquire European goods, which they had become accustomed to during the pre-colonial period. Many others in every section of the continent took to earning cash because they had to pay various taxes in money or because they were forced to work. Good examples of Africans literally being forced to grow cash crops by gun and whip were to be found in Tanganyika under German rule, in Portuguese colonies, and in French Equatorial Africa and the French Sudan in the 1930s.* In any event, there were very few cases where the peasant was wholly dependent on the cash for his actual sustenance. The trading companies took full advantage of that fact. Knowing that an African peasant and his family would keep alive by their own food *shambas,* the companies had no obligation to pay prices sufficient

* These facts came most dramatically to the attention of the outside world when Africans resorted to violence. For example, forced cultivation of cotton was a major grievance behind the outbreak of Maji Maji wars in Tanganyika and behind the nationalist revolt in Angola as late as 1960.

for the maintenance of a peasant and his family. In a way, the companies were simply receiving tribute from a conquered people, without even the necessity to trouble themselves as to how the tributary goods were produced.

Trading companies also had their own means of transport inside Africa, such as motor vessels and trucks. But, usually they transferred the burden of transport costs on to the peasant via the Lebanese or Indian middlemen. Those capitalist companies held the African farmer in a double squeeze, by controlling the price paid for the crop and by controlling the price of imported goods such as tools, clothing, and bicycles to which peasants aspired. For example, prices of palm products were severely reduced by the UAC and other trading companies in Nigeria in 1929, while the cost of living was rising owing to increased charges for imported goods. In 1924, the price for palm oil had been 14 shillings per gallon. This fell to 7 in 1928 and to slightly over one shilling in the following year. Although the trading companies received less for every ton of palm oil during the depression years, their profit margin increased—showing how brazenly surplus was being pounded out of the peasant. In the midst of the depression the UAC was showing a handsome profit. The profits in 1934 were 6,302,875 pounds and a dividend of 15 per cent was paid on ordinary shares.

In every part of colonial Africa, the depression years followed the same pattern. In Sukumaland (Tanganyika) the price of cotton dropped in 1930 from 50 cents to 10 cents per pound. The French colonies were hit a little later, because the depression did not make its impact on the French monetary zone until after 1931. Then, prices of Senegalese groundnuts were cut by more than half. Coffee and cocoa dropped even further, since they were relative luxuries to the European buyer. Again, it can be noted that French firms such as CFAO and SCOA faced lower prices when they sold the raw materials in Europe, but they never absorbed any losses. Instead, African peasants and workers bore the pressure, even if it meant forced labor. African peasants in French territories were forced to join so-called cooperative societies which made them grow certain crops like cotton and made them accept whatever price was offered.

Hardly had the depression ended when Europe was at war. The Western powers dragged in the African people to fight for freedom! The trading firms stepped up the rate of plunder in the name of God and country. On the Gold Coast, they paid 10 pounds per ton for cocoa beans as compared to 50 pounds before the war. At the same time, the price of imported goods doubled or trebled. Many necessities passed beyond the reach of the ordinary man. On the Gold Coast, a piece of cotton print which had sold before the war for 12½ shillings was 90 shillings in 1945. In Nigeria, a yard of khaki which was 3 shillings in prewar days went up to 16; a bundle of iron sheets formerly costing 30 went up to 100.

Urban workers were hardest hit by rising prices, since they had to purchase everyday necessities with money, and part of their food was imported. Worker dissatisfaction highlighted this exploitative postwar situation. There were several strikes, and in the Gold Coast, the boycott of imported goods in 1948 is famous as the prelude to self-government under Nkrumah. However, peasants were also restless under low prices and expensive imports. In Uganda, the cotton-growing peasants could stand things no longer by 1947. They could not get their hands on the big British import-export firms, but they could at least deal with the Indian and African middlemen. So they marched against the Indian-owned cotton gins and demonstrated outside the palace of the Kabaka—the hereditary ruler who often functioned as a British agent in Uganda.

To insure that at all times the profit margin was kept as high as possible, the trading firms found it convenient to form "pools." The pools fixed the price to be paid to the African cultivator, and kept the price down to the minimum. In addition, the trading companies spread into several other aspects of the economic life of the colonies, in such a way as to introduce several straws for the sucking out of surplus. In Morocco, to give one example, the *Compagnie Générale du Maroc* owned large estates, livestock farms, timber workings, mines, fisheries, railways, ports, and power stations. The giants like CFAO and UAC also had their fingers in everything. CFAO's interests ranged from groundnut plantations to shares in the Fabre & Frassinet shipping line. The people of Ghana and Nigeria met the UAC everywhere they turned. It controlled wholesale and retail trade, owned butter factories, sawmills, soap factories, singlet factories, cold storage plants, engineering and motor repair shops, tugs, coastal boats. Some of those businesses directly exploited African wage labor, while in one way or another all operations skimmed the cream produced by peasant efforts in the cash-crop sector.

Sometimes, the firms which purchased agricultural products in Africa were the same concerns which manufactured goods based on those agricultural raw materials. For instance, Cadbury and Fry, the two foremost English manufacturers of cocoa and chocolate, were buyers on the West African coast, while in East Africa the tea manufacturing concern of Brooke Bond both grew and exported tea. Many of the Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Liverpool trading companies were also engaged in manufacturing items such as soap and margarine in their home territories. This applied fully to the UAC, while the powerful Lesieur group processing oils and fats in France had commercial buyers in Africa. However, it is possible to separate the trading operations from the industrial ones. The latter represented the final stage in the long process of exploiting the labor of African peasants—in some ways the most damaging stage.

Peasants worked for large numbers of hours to produce a given cash crop, and the price of the product was the price of those long hours of labor. Since primary produce from Africa has always received low prices, it follows that the buyer and user of the raw material was engaging in massive exploitation of the peasants.

The above generalization can be illustrated with reference to cotton, which is one of the most widely encountered cash crops in Africa. The Ugandan farmer grew cotton which ultimately made its way into an English factory in Lancashire or a British-owned factory in India. The Lancashire factory owner paid his workers as little as possible, but his exploitation of their labor was limited by several factors. His exploitation of the labor of the Ugandan peasant was unlimited because of his power in the colonial state, which insured that Ugandans worked long hours for very little. Besides, the price of the finished cotton shirt was so high that when reimported into Uganda, cotton in the form of a shirt was beyond the purchasing power of the peasant who grew the cotton.

The differences between the prices of African exports of raw materials and their importation of manufactured goods constituted a form of unequal exchange. Throughout the colonial period, this inequality in exchange got worse. Economists refer to the process as one of deteriorating terms of trade. In 1939, with the same quality of primary goods colonies could buy only 60 per cent of manufactured goods which they bought in the decade 1870–80 before colonial rule. By 1960, the amount of European manufactured goods purchasable by the same quantity of African raw materials had fallen still further. There was no objective economic law which determined that primary produce should be worth so little. Indeed, the developed countries sold certain raw materials like timber and wheat at much higher prices than a colony could command. The explanation is that the unequal exchange was forced upon Africa by the political and military supremacy of the colonizers, just as in the sphere of international relations unequal treaties were forced upon small states in the dependencies, like those in Latin America.

The unequal nature of the trade between the metropole and the colonies was emphasised by the concept of the "protected market," which meant even an inefficient metropolitan producer could find a guaranteed market in the colony where his class had political control. Furthermore, as in the preceding era of pre-colonial trade, European manufacturers built up useful sidelines of goods which would have been substandard in their own markets, especially in textiles. The European farmer also gained in the same way by selling cheap butter, while the Scandinavian fisherman came into his own through the export of salted cod. Africa was not a large market for European products, compared to other continents, but both buying-prices and selling-prices were set by European capitalists. That certainly allowed their manufacturers and traders more easy access to the surplus of wealth produced in Africa than they would have had if Africans were in a position to raise the price of their own exports.

Shipping and Banking Services

Channels for the exploitation of surplus were not exhausted by the trading companies and the industrial concerns. The shipping companies constituted an exploitative channel that cannot be overlooked. The largest shipping companies were those under the flags of the colonizing nations, especially the British. The shippers were virtually a law unto themselves, being very favorably regarded by their home governments as earners of superprofits, as stimulators of industry and trade, as carriers of mail, and as contributors to the navy when war came. African peasants had absolutely no control over the freight rates which were charged, and actually paid more than citizens in other lands. The rate for flour from Liverpool to West Africa was 35 shillings per ton as compared with only 7½ shillings from Liverpool to New York (a roughly equivalent distance). Freight rates normally varied with the volume of cargo carried, but the rate for cocoa was established at 50 shillings per ton when amounts exported were small at the beginning of this century, and the same high figure remained when exports increased. Coffee carried from Kenya to New York in the 1950s earned the shippers 280 shillings per ton ($40 at the rate of exchange then). Theoretically, it was the merchant who paid the shipper the freight charges, but in practical terms it meant that peasant production was bearing all the costs, since the merchants paid out of profits made by buying cheaply from the peasants. Alternatively, white settler planters paid the costs as in Kenya, and then regained their profits through exploitation of rural wage labor.

Shipping companies retained a high profit margin by a practice similar to the "pools" of the commercial firms. They established what were known as "Conference Lines" which allowed two or more shippers to share the freight loads between themselves on the most favorable basis possible. Their returns on investment were so high and their greed so uncontrollable that even the merchants of the colonizing powers protested. From 1929 to

1931, the UAC (backed by Unilever) engaged in an economic war with the West African Lines Conference—comprising the British shipping firm of Elder Dempster, the Holland West Africa Line, and the German West Africa Line. In that instance, the trading monopoly won a victory over the shipping monopoly; but it was a fight between two elephants, and the grass was trampled all the more. At the end of it all, the African peasant was the greatest loser, because both traders and shippers adjusted their differences by lowering prices of primary products as paid to Africans.

In the background of the colonial scene hovered the banks, insurance companies, maritime underwriters, and other financial houses. One can say "in the background" because the peasant never dealt directly with such institutions, and was generally ignorant of their exploiting functions. The peasant or worker had no access to bank loans because he had no "securities" or "collateral." Banks and finance houses dealt only with other capitalists who could prove to the bankers that whatever happened the bank would recover its money and make a profit. In the epoch of imperialism, the bankers became the aristocrats of the capitalist world, so in another sense they were very much in the foreground. The amount of surplus produced by African workers and peasants and passing into the hands of metropolitan bankers is quite phenomenal. They registered a return on capital higher even than the mining companies, and each new direct investment that they made spelled further alienation of the fruits of African labor. Furthermore, all investment in the colonies meant in effect the involvement of the big finance monopolies, since the smallest trading company was ultimately linked to a big banker. The returns on colonial investment were consistently higher than those in investments in the metropoles, so the financiers stood to benefit from sponsoring colonial enterprise.

In the earliest years of colonialism, the banks of Africa were small and relatively independent. This applied to the *Banque de Senegal,* started as early as 1853, and to the Bank of British West Africa which began as an offshoot of the shipping firm of Elder Dempster. However, the great banking houses of Europe, which had carried on remote control of developments ever since the 1880s, soon moved in directly on the colonial banking scene when the volume of capitalist transactions made this worthwhile. The *Banque de Senegal* merged into the *Banque de L'Afrique Occidentale* (BAO) in 1901, acquiring links with the powerful Bank of Indochina, which in turn was a special creation of several powerful metropolitan French bankers. In 1924, the *Banque Commerciale de l'Afrique* (BCA) emerged in the French territories, linked with the *Credit Lyonnais* and the BNCI in France. By that time the Bank of British West Africa had its finance backed by Lloyds Bank, Westminster Bank, the Standard Bank, and the National Provincial Bank—all in England. The other great English banking firm, Barclays, moved directly into Africa. It purchased the Colonial Bank and set it up as Barclays DCO (i.e., Dominion and Colonial).

The Bank of British West Africa (which became the Bank of West Africa in 1957) and Barclays held between them the lion's share of the banking business of British West Africa, just as French West and Equatorial Africa were shared out between the BAO and the BCA. There was also a union of French and British banking capital in West Africa in 1949 with the formation of the British and French West Africa Bank. French and Belgian exploitation also overlapped in the financial sphere, since the *Société Génèrale* had both Belgian and French capital. It supported banks in French Africa and the Congo. Other weaker colonial powers were served by the international banks such as Barclays, and also used their colonial territories as grazing ground for their own national banks. In Libya, the *Banco di Roma* and the *Banco di Napoli* operated; while in Portuguese territories the most familiar name was that of the *Banco Ultramarino.*

In Southern Africa, the outstanding banking firm was the Standard Bank of South Africa Ltd., started in 1862 in the Cape Colony by the heads of business houses having close connections with London. Its headquarters were placed in London, and it made a fortune out of financing gold and diamond strikes, and through handling the loot of Cecil Rhodes and De Beers. By 1895, the Standard Bank spread into Bechuanaland, Rhodesia, and Mozambique; and it was the second British bank to be established in British East Africa. The actual scale of profits was quite formidable. In a book officially sponsored by the Standard Bank, the writer modestly concluded as follows:

> Little attention has been paid in the text of this book to the financial outcome of the Standard Bank's activities, yet their profitability was an inevitable outcome of survival and was therefore bound to be a primary objective from first to last.

In 1960, the Standard Bank produced a net profit of 1,181,000 pounds and paid a 14 per cent dividend to its shareholders. Most of the latter were in Europe or else were whites in South Africa, while the profit was produced mainly by the black people of South and East Africa. Furthermore, these European banks transferred the reserves of their African branches to the London head office to be invested in the London money market. This was the way in which they most rapidly expatriated African surplus to the metropoles.

The first bank to be set up in East Africa in the 1890s was an offshoot of a British bank operating in India. It later came to be called the National & Grindlays. In neighboring Tanganyika the Germans established the German East African Bank in 1905, but after the First World War the British had a near monopoly of East African banking. Altogether nine foreign banks were in existence in East Africa during the colonial period, out of which the big three were National & Grindlays, the Standard Bank, and Barclays.

East Africa provides an interesting example of how effectively foreign banks served to dispossess Africa of its wealth. Most of the banking and other financial services were rendered to white settlers whose conception of "home" was always Britain. Consequently, when the white settlers felt threatened towards the end of the colonial period, they rushed to send their money home to Britain. For example, when the decision to concede self-government to Kenya was taken by the British in 1960, a sum amounting to over 5½ million dollars was immediately transferred to "safety" in London by whites in Tanganyika. That sum, like all other remittances by colonial banks, represented the exploitation of African land resources and labor.

The Colonial Administration as Economic Exploiter

In addition to private companies, the colonial state also engaged directly in the economic exploitation and impoverishment of Africa. The equivalent of the colonial office in each colonizing country worked hand in hand with their governors in Africa to carry out a number of functions, the principal ones being as follows:

(1) To protect national interests against competition from other capitalists.

(2) To arbitrate the conflicts between their own capitalists.

(3) To guarantee optimum conditions under which private companies could exploit Africans.

The last-mentioned objective was the most crucial. That is why colonial governments were repeatedly speaking about "the maintenance of law and order," by which they meant the maintenance of conditions most favorable to the expansion of capitalism and the plunder of Africa. This led the colonial governments to impose taxes.

One of the main purposes of the colonial taxation system was to provide requisite funds for administering the colony as a field of exploitation. European colonizers insured that Africans paid for the upkeep of the governors and police who oppressed them and served as watchdogs for private capitalists. Indeed, taxes and customs duties were levied in the nineteenth century with the aim of allowing the colonial powers to recover the costs of the armed forces which they dispatched to conquer Africa. In effect, therefore, the colonial governments never put a penny into the colonies. All expenses were met by exploiting the labor and natural resources of the continent; and for all practical purposes the expense of maintaining the colonial government machinery was a form of alienation of the products of African labor. The French colonies were especially victimized in this respect. Particularly since 1921, the local revenue raised from taxation had to meet all expenses as well as build up a reserve.

Having set up the police, army, civil service, and judiciary on African soil, the colonizing powers were then in a position to intervene much more directly in the economic life of the people than had been the case previously. One major problem in Africa from a capitalist viewpoint was how to induce Africans to become laborers or cash-crop farmers. In some areas, such as West Africa, Africans had become so attached to European manufactures during the early period of trade that, on their own initiative, they were prepared to go to great lengths to participate in the colonial money economy. But that was not the universal response. In many instances, Africans did not consider the monetary incentives great enough to justify changing their way of life so as to become laborers or cash-crop farmers. In such cases, the colonial state intervened to use law, taxation, and outright force to make Africans pursue a line favorable to capitalist profits.

When colonial governments seized African lands, they achieved two things simultaneously. They satisfied their own citizens (who wanted mining concessions or farming land) and they created the conditions whereby landless Africans had to work not just to pay taxes but also to survive. In settler areas such as Kenya and Rhodesia the colonial government also prevented Africans from growing cash crops so that their labor would be available directly for the whites. One of the Kenya white settlers, Colonel Grogan, put it bluntly when he said of the Kikuyu: "We have stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs. Compulsory labor is the corollary of our occupation of the country."

In those parts of the continent where land was still in African hands, colonial governments forced Africans to produce cash crops no matter how low the prices were. The favorite technique was taxation. *Money* taxes were introduced on numerous items—cattle, land, houses, and the people themselves. Money to pay taxes was got by growing cash crops or working on European farms or in their mines. An interesting example of what colonialism was all about was provided in French Equatorial Africa, where French officials banned the Mandja people (now in Congo Brazzaville) from hunting, so that they would engage solely in cotton cultivation. The French enforced the ban although there was little livestock in the area and hunting was the main source of meat in the people's diet.

Finally, when all else failed, colonial powers resorted widely to the physical coercion of labor—backed up of course by legal sanctions, since anything which the colonial government chose to do was "legal." The laws and by-laws by which peasants in British East Africa were required to maintain minimum acreages of cash crops like cotton and groundnuts were in effect forms of coercion by the colonial state, although they are not normally considered under the heading of "forced labor."

The simplest form of forced labor was that which colonial governments exacted to carry out "public works." Labor for a given number of days per year had to be given free for these "public works"—building castles for governors, prisons for Africans, barracks for troops, and bungalows for colonial officials. A great deal of this forced labor went into the construction of roads, railways, and ports to provide the infrastructure for private capitalist investment and to facilitate the export of cash crops. Taking only one example from the British colony of Sierra Leone, one finds that the railway which started at the end of the nineteenth century required forced labor from thousands of peasants driven from the villages. The hard work and appalling conditions led to the death of a large number of those engaged in work on the railway. In the British territories, this kind of forced labor (including juvenile labor) was widespread enough to call forth in 1923 a "Native Authority Ordinance" restricting the use of compulsory labor for porterage, railway and road building. More often than not, means were found of circumventing this legislation. An international Forced Labor Convention was signed by all colonial powers in 1930, but again it was flouted in practice.

The French government had a cunning way of getting free labor by first demanding that African males should enlist as French soldiers and then using them as unpaid laborers. This and other forced labor legislation known as "prestation" was extensively applied in vast areas of French Sudan and French Equatorial Africa. Because cash crops were not well established in those areas, the main method of extracting surplus was by taking the population and making it work in plantation or cash-crop regions nearer the coast. Present-day Upper Volta, Chad, and Congo Brazzaville were huge suppliers of forced labor under colonialism. The French got Africans to start building the Brazzaville to Pointe-Noire railway in 1921, and it was not completed until 1933. Every year of its construction, some ten thousand people were driven to the site—sometimes from more than a thousand kilometers away. At least 25 per cent of the labor force died annually from starvation and disease, the worst period being from 1922 to 1929.

Quite apart from the fact that the "public works" were of direct value to the capitalists, the colonial government also aided private capitalists by providing them with labor recruited by force. This was particularly true in the early years of colonialism, but continued in varying degrees up to the Second World War, and even to the end of colonialism in some places. In British territories, the practice was revived during the economic depression of 1929–33 and during the subsequent war. In Kenya and Tanganyika, forced labor was reintroduced to keep settler plantations functioning during the war. In Nigeria, it was the tin companies which benefited from the forced-labor legislation, allowing them to get away with paying workers 5 pence per day plus rations. For most of the colonial period, the French government performed the same kind of service for the big timber companies who had great concessions of territory in Gabon and Ivory Coast.

The Portuguese and Belgian colonial regimes were the most brazen in directly rounding up Africans to go and work for private capitalists under conditions equivalent to slavery. In Congo, brutal and extensive forced labor started under King Leopold II in the last century. So many Congolese were killed and maimed by Leopold's officials and police that this earned European disapproval even in the midst of the general pattern of colonial outrages. When Leopold handed over the "Congo Free State" to the Belgian government in 1908, he had already made a huge fortune; and the Belgian government hardly relaxed the intensity of exploitation in Congo.

The Portuguese have the worst record of engaging in slavery-like practices, and they too have been repeatedly condemned by international public opinion. One peculiar characteristic of Portuguese colonialism was the provision of forced labor not only for its own citizens but also for capitalists outside the boundaries of Portuguese colonies. Angolans and Mozambicans were exported to the South African mines to work for subsistence, while the capitalists in South Africa paid the Portuguese government a certain sum for each laborer supplied. (The export of Africans to South Africa is still continuing.)

In the above example, the Portuguese colonialists were cooperating with capitalists of other nationalities to maximize the exploitation of African labor. Throughout the colonial period, there were instances of such cooperation, as well as competition between metropolitan powers. Generally speaking, a European power was expected to intervene when the profits of its national bourgeoisie were threatened by the activities of other nations. After all, the whole purpose of establishing colonial governments in

Africa was to provide protection to national monopoly economic interests. Thus, the Belgian government legislated to insure that freight to and from the Congo would be mainly carried by Belgian shipping lines; and the French government placed high taxes on groundnuts brought into France by foreign ships, which was another way of insuring that groundnuts from French Africa would be exported in French ships. In a sense, this meant that Africans were losing their surplus through one straw rather than another. But it also meant that the sum total of exploitation was also greater, because if competition among Europeans were allowed, it would have brought down the cost of services and raised the price paid for agricultural products.

Africans suffered most from exclusive trade with the "mother country" in cases where the "mother country" was backward. African peasants in Portuguese colonies got lower prices for their crops and paid more for imported items. Yet, Britain, the biggest of the colonialists in Africa, was also faced with competition from the more vigorous capitalists of Germany, the U.S.A., and Japan. British merchants and industrialists lobbied their government to erect barriers against competition. For example, Japanese cloth exports to British East Africa rose from 25 million yards in 1927 to 63 million yards in 1933; and this led Walter Runciman, president of the British Board of Trade, to get Parliament to impose heavy tariffs on Japanese goods entering British colonies in Africa. This meant that Africans had to pay higher prices for a staple import, since British cloth was more expensive. From the viewpoint of the African peasant, that amounted to further alienation of the fruits of his labor.

A perfect illustration of the identity of interests between the colonial governments and their bourgeois citizens was provided by the conduct of Produce Marketing Boards in Africa. The origins of the Boards go back to the Gold Coast "cocoa hold-up" of 1937. For several months, cocoa farmers refused to sell their crop unless the price was raised. One apparently favorable result of the "hold-up" was that the British government agreed to set up a Marketing Board to purchase cocoa from the peasants in place of the big business interests like the UAC and Cadbury which had up until then been the buyers. A West African Cocoa Control Board was set up in 1938, but the British government used this as a bush to hide the private capitalists and to allow them to continue making their exorbitant profits.

In theory, a Marketing Board was suppose to pay the peasant a reasonable price for his crop. The Board sold the crop overseas and kept a surplus for the improvement of agriculture and for paying the peasants a stable price if world market prices declined. In practice, the Boards paid peasants a low fixed rate during many years when world prices were rising. None of the benefits went to Africans, but rather to the British government itself and to the private companies, which were used as intermediaries in the buying and selling of the produce. Big companies like the UAC and John Holt were given quotas to fulfill on behalf of the Boards. As agents of the government, they were no longer exposed to direct attack, and their profits were secure.

The idea of the Marketing Boards gained support from top British policy makers because the war came just at that time, and the British government was anxious to take steps to secure certain colonial products in the necessary quantities and at the right times, given the limited number of ships available for commercial purposes during war. They were also anxious to save private capitalists who were adversely affected by events connected with the war. For example, East African sisal became of vital importance to Britain and her war allies after the Japanese cut off supplies of similar hard fibers from the Philippines and Dutch East Indies. Actually, even before fighting broke out, sisal was bought in bulk by the British government to help the non-African plantation owners in East Africa who had lost markets in Germany and other parts of Europe. Similarly, oil seeds (such as palm produce and groundnuts) were bought by a Board from September 1939, in preparation for shortages of butter and marine oils.

With regard to all peasant cash crops, the Produce Marketing Boards made purchases at figures that were way below world market prices. For instance, the West African Produce Board paid Nigerians a bit under 17 pounds for a ton of palm oil in 1946 and sold that through the Ministry of Food for 95 pounds, which was nearer the world market price. Groundnuts which received 15 pounds per ton when bought by the Boards were later sold in Britain at 110 pounds per ton. Furthermore, export duties were levied on the Boards' sales by the colonial administrators, and that was an indirect tax on the peasants. The situation reached a point where many peasants tried to escape from under the Boards. In Sierra Leone in 1952, the price for coffee was so low that growers smuggled their crop into nearby French territories. At about the same time, Nigerian peasants were running away from palm oil into rubber collection or timber felling which did not come under the jurisdiction of the Produce Boards.

If one accepts that the government is always the servant of a particular class, it is perfectly understandable that the colonial governments should have been in collusion with capitalists to siphon off surplus from Africa to Europe. But even if one does not start from that (Marxist) premise, it would be impossible to ignore the evidence of how the colonial administrators worked as committees on behalf of the big capitalists. The governors in the colonies had to listen to the local representatives of the companies and to their principals. Indeed, there were company representatives who wielded influence in several colonies at the same time. Before the First World War, the single most important individual in the whole of British West Africa was Sir Alfred Jones—chairman of Elder Dempster Lines, chairman of the Bank of West Africa, president of the British Cotton-Growing Association. In French West Africa in the late 1940s, the French governor showed himself very anxious to please one Marc Rucart, a man with major interests in several of the French trading companies. Such examples could be cited for each colony throughout its history although in some of them the influence of the white settlers was greater than that of individual metropolitan businessmen.

Company shareholders in Europe not only lobbied Parliament but actually controlled the administration itself. The chairman of the Cocoa Board within the Ministry of Food was none other than John Cadbury, a director of Cadbury Brothers, who were participants in the buying "pool" which exploited West African cocoa farmers. Former employees of Unilever held key positions in the Oils and Fats Division of the Ministry of Food, and continued to receive checks from Unilever! The Oils and Fats Division handed over the allocation of buying quotas for the Produce Boards to the Association of West African Merchants, which was dominated by Unilever's subsidiary, the UAC.

It is no wonder that the Ministry of Food sent a prominent Lebanese businessman a directive that he had to sign an agreement drawn up by the UAC. It is no wonder that the companies had government aid in keeping prices down in Africa and in securing forced labor where necessary. It is no wonder that Unilever then sold soap, margarine, and such commodities at profitable prices within a market assured by the British government.

Of course, the metropolitan governments also insured that a certain proportion of the colonial surplus went directly into the coffers of the state. They all had some forms of direct investment in capitalist enterprises. The Belgian government was an investor in mining, and so too was the Portuguese government through its part-ownership of the Angolan Diamond Company. The French government was always willing to associate itself with the financial sector. When colonial banks were in trouble, they could count on rescue from the French government, and, indeed, a proportion of their shares passed into the hands of the French government. The British colonial government was perhaps the least anxious to become directly involved in everyday business enterprises, but it did run the Eastern Nigerian coal mines—apart from railways.

Marketing Boards helped the colonizing power to get its hands on some immediate cash. One finds that the Cocoa Board sold to the British Ministry of Food at very low prices; and the Ministry in turn sold to British manufacturers, making a profit that was as high as 11 million pounds in some years. More important still, the Board sold to the U.S.A., which was the largest market and one where prices were very high. None of the profits went back to the African farmer, but instead represented British foreign exchange in American dollars.

From 1943, Britain and the U.S.A. engaged in what was known as "reverse lend-lease." This meant that wartime United States loans to Britain were repaid partly by raw materials shipped from British colonies to the U.S.A. Tin and rubber from Malaya were very important in that context, while Africa supplied a wide range of products, both mineral and agricultural. Cocoa was third as a dollar earner after tin and rubber. In 1947, West African cocoa brought over 100 million dollars to the British dollar balance. Besides, having a virtual monopoly of the production of diamonds, (South) Africa was also able to sell to the U.S.A. and earn dollars for Britain. In 1946, Harry F. Oppenheimer told his fellow directors of the De Beers Consolidated Mines that "sales of gem diamonds during the war secured about 300 million American dollars for Great Britain."

It was on this very issue of currency that the colonial government did the most manipulations to insure that Africa's wealth was stashed away in the coffers of the metropolitan state. In the British colonial sphere, coins and notes were first issued through private banks. Then this function was taken over by the West African Currency Board and the East African Currency Board, established in 1912 and 1919 respectively. The currency issued by those Boards in the colonies had to be backed by "sterling reserves," which was money earned by Africa. The manner in which the system worked was as follows. When a colony earned foreign exchange (mainly) through exports, these earnings were held in Britain in pounds sterling. An equivalent amount of local East or West African currency was issued for circulation in the respective colonies, while the sterling was invested in British government stock, thereby earning even more profit for Britain. The commercial banks worked hand in hand with the metropolitan government and the Currency Boards to make the system work. Together they established an intricate financial network which served the common end of enriching Europe at Africa's expense.

The contribution to sterling reserves by any colony was a gift to the British treasury, for which the colony received little interest. By the end of the 1950s, the sterling reserves of a small colony like Sierra Leone had reached 60 million pounds; while in 1955 the British government was holding 210 million derived from the sale of cocoa and minerals from Gold Coast. Egypt and the Sudan were also heavy contributors to Britain. Africa's total contribution to Britain's sterling balances in 1945 was 446 million pounds, which went up to 1,446 million by 1955—more than half the total gold and dollar reserves of Britain and the Commonwealth, which then stood at 2,120 million. Men like Arthur Creech-Jones and Oliver Lyttleton, major figures in British colonial policy-making, admitted that in the early 1950s Britain was living on the dollar earnings of the colonies.

The British government was surpassed by its Belgian counterpart in exacting tribute from its colonies, especially during and after the last war. After Belgium was overrun by the Germans, a government-in-exile was set up in London. The Colonial Secretary of that exiled regime, Mr. Godding, admitted:

> During the war, the Congo was able to finance all the expenditure of the Belgian government in London, including the diplomatic service as well as the cost of our armed forces in Europe and Africa, a total of some 40 million pounds. In fact, thanks to the resources of the Congo, the Belgian government in London had not to borrow a shilling or a dollar, and the Belgian gold reserve could be left intact.

Since the war, surplus of earnings by the Congo in currencies other than the Belgian franc have all accrued to the National Bank of Belgium. Therefore, quite apart from all that the private capitalists looted from Congo, the Belgian government was also a direct beneficiary to the tune of millions of francs per annum.

To discuss French colonialism in this context would be largely to repeat remarks made with reference to the British and Belgians. Guinea was supposedly a "poor" colony, but in 1952 it earned France one billion (old) francs, or about 5.6 million dollars in foreign exchange, based on the sale of bauxite, coffee, and bananas. French financial techniques were slightly different from those of other colonial powers. France tended to use the commercial banks more, rather than set up separate currency boards. France also squeezed more out of Africans by imposing levies for military purposes. The French government dressed Africans in French army uniforms and used them to fight other Africans, to fight other colonized peoples like the Vietnamese, and to fight in European wars. The colonial budgets had to bear the cost of sending these African "French" soldiers to die, but if they returned alive they had to be paid pensions out of African funds.

To sum up briefly, colonialism meant a great intensification of exploitation within Africa—to a level much higher than that previously in existence under communalism or feudal-type African societies. Simultaneously, it meant the export of that surplus in massive proportions, for that was the central purpose of colonialism.

The Strengthening of the Technological and Military Aspects of Capitalism

A Preliminary Examination of the Non-monetary Benefits of Colonialism to Europe

There are still some bourgeois propagandists who assert that colonialism was not a paying concern for Europeans, just as there are those who say that the slave trade was not profitable to Europeans. It is not worthwhile to engage in a direct refutation of such a viewpoint, since it consumes time which could otherwise be more usefully employed. The foregoing section was a statement on the level of actual monetary profits made by colonialist powers out of Africa. But, Africa's contribution to European capitalism was far greater than mere monetary returns. The colonial system permitted the rapid development of technology and skills within the metropolitan sectors of imperialism. It also allowed for the elaboration of the modern organizational techniques of the capitalist firm and of imperialism as a whole. Indeed, colonialism gave capitalism an added lease of life and prolonged its existence in Western Europe, which had been the cradle of capitalism.

At the beginning of the colonial period, science and technology as applied to production already had a firm base inside Europe—a situation which was itself connected to overseas trade, as previously explained. Europe then was entering the age of electricity, of advanced ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, and of the proliferation of manufactured chemicals. All of these were carried to great heights during the colonial period. Electrical devices were raised to the qualitatively new level of electronics, incorporating miniaturization of equipment, fantastic progress in telecommunications, and the creation of computers. Chemical industries were producing a wide range of synthetic substitutes for raw materials, and a whole new branch of petrochemicals had come into existence. The combination of metals by metallurgical innovations meant that products could be offered to meet far-reaching demands of heat resistance, lightness, tensile strength. At the end of colonialism (say 1960), Europe was on the verge of another epoch—that of nuclear power.

It is common knowledge that the gap between the output of the metropoles and that of the colonies increased by at least fifteen to twenty times during the epoch of colonialism. More than anything else, it was the advance of scientific technique in the metropoles which was the cause of the great gulf between African and Western European levels of productivity by the end of the colonial period. Therefore, it is essential to understand the role of colonialism itself in bringing about the scientific progress in the metropoles, and its application to industry.

It would be extremely simple-minded to say that colonialism in Africa or anywhere else *caused* Europe to develop its science and technology. The tendency towards technological innovation and renovation was inherent in capitalism itself, because of the drive for profits. However, it would be entirely accurate to say that the colonization of Africa and other parts of the world formed an indispensable link in a chain of events which made possible the technological transformation of the base of European capitalism. Without that link, European capitalism would not have been producing goods and services at the level attained in 1960. In other words, our very yardsticks for measuring developed and underdeveloped nations would have been different.

Profits from African colonialism mingled with profits from every other source to finance scientific research. This was true in the general sense that the affluence of capitalist society in the present century allowed more money and leisure for research. It is also true because the development of capitalism in the imperialist epoch continued the division of labor *inside the capitalist metropoles* to the point where scientific research was a branch of the division of labor, and indeed one of its most important branches. European society moved away from scientific research as an *ad hoc,* personal, and even whimsical affair to a situation where research was given priority by governments, armies, and private capitalists. It was funded and guided. Careful scrutiny reveals that the source of funding and the direction in which research was guided were heavily influenced by the colonial situation. Firstly, it should be recalled that profits made by Europe from Africa represented *investible surpluses.* The profit was not merely an end in itself. Thus, the East and West African Currency Boards invested in the British government stock, while the commercial banks and insurance companies invested in government bonds, mortgages, and industrial shares. These investment funds acquired from the colonies spread to many sectors in the metropoles and benefited industries that had nothing to do with processing of colonial products.

However, it is easier to trace the impact of colonial exploitation on industries directly connected with colonial imports. Such industries had to improvise that kind of machinery which most effectively utilized colonial raw materials. That led for example to machinery for crushing palm kernels and to a process for utilizing the less delicately flavored coffee by turning it into a soluble powder, namely "instant coffee." Merchants and industrialists also considered ways in which colonial raw materials could be modified to meet specifications of European factories in quality and quantity. An example of this type would be the care taken by the Dutch in Java and by the Americans in Liberia to breed and graft new varieties of rubber plants yielding more and being more resistant to disease. Ultimately, the search for better-quality raw materials merged with the search for sources of raw material which would make European capitalism less dependent on colonial areas—and that led to synthetics.

In the sphere of shipping, it can readily be appreciated that certain technological modifications and innovations would be connected with the fact that such a high proportion of shipping was used to tie together colonies and metropoles. Ships had to be refrigerated to carry perishable goods; they had to make special holds for bulky or liquid cargoes such as palm oil; and the transport of petroleum from the Middle East, North Africa, and other parts of the world led to oil tankers as a special class of ships. The design of ships and the nature of their cargoes in turn affected the kind of port installations in the metropoles.

Where connections were remote or even apparently non-existent, it can still be claimed that colonialism was a factor in the European technological revolution. As science blossomed in the present century, its interconnections became numerous and complex. It is impossible to trace the origin of every idea and every invention, but it is well understood by serious historians of science that the growth of the body of scientific knowledge and its application to everyday life is dependent upon a large number of forces operating within the society as a whole, and not just upon the ideas within given branches of science. With the rise of imperialism, one of the most potent forces within metropolitan capitalist societies was precisely that emanating from colonial or semi-colonial areas.

The above considerations apply fully to any discussion of the military aspects of imperialism, the protection of empire being one of the crucial stimulants added to the science of armaments in a society that was already militaristically inclined ever since the feudal era. The new colonial dimension to European military preoccupation was particularly noticeable in the sharp naval rivalry among Britain, Germany, France, and Japan before and during the First World War. That rivalry over colonies and for spheres of capitalist investment produced new types of armed naval vessels, such as destroyers and submarines. By the end of the Second World War, military research had become the most highly organized branch of scientific research, and one that was subsidized by the capitalist states from the profits of international exploitation.

During the inter-war years, Africa's foremost contribution to the evolution of organizational techniques in Europe was to the strengthening of monopoly capital. Before the war of 1914, the Pan-Africanists Duse Mohammed Ali and W. E. B. Du Bois recognized that monopoly capital was the leading element in imperialist expansion. The most thorough and the best-known analysis of this phenomenon was made by the Russian revolutionary leader, Lenin. Lenin was virtually prophetic, because as the colonial age advanced it became more and more obvious that those who stood to benefit most were the monopoly concerns, and especially those involved in finance.

Africa (plus Asia and Latin America) contributed to the elaboration of the strategies by which competition among small companies gave way to domination by a small handful of firms in various economic activities. It was on the India trade routes that shipping companies first started the "Conference Lines" in 1875. This monopoly practice spread rapidly to the South African trade and reached a high pitch in West Africa in the early years of this century. On the commercial side, it was in West Africa that both the French and the English derived considerable experience in pooling and market-sharing; apart from the fact that little companies were steadily being gobbled up by bigger ones from the beginning to the end of colonialism.

It was in Southern Africa that there emerged the most carefully planned structures of interlocking directorates, holding companies, and giant corporations which were multinational both in their capital subscriptions and through the fact that their economic activities were dispersed in many lands. Individual entrepreneurs like Oppenheimer made huge fortunes from the Southern African soil, but Southern Africa was never really in the era of individual and family businesses, characteristic of Europe and America up to the early part of this century. The big mining companies were impersonal professional things. They were organized in terms of personnel, production, marketing, advertising, and they could undertake long-term commitments. At all times, inner productive forces gave capitalism its drive towards expansion and domination. It was the system which expanded. But in addition, one can see in Africa and in Southern Africa in particular the rise of a capitalist superstructure manned by individuals capable of consciously planning the exploitation of resources right into the next century, and aiming at racist domination of the black people of Africa until the end of time.

Ever since the fifteenth century, Europe was in strategic command of world trade and of the legal and organizational aspects of the movement of goods between continents. Europe's power increased with imperialism, because imperialism meant investments, and investments (with or without colonial rule) gave European capitalists control over production within each continent. The amount of benefits to capitalism increased accordingly, since Europe could determine the quantity and quality of different raw material inputs which would need to be brought together in the interests of capitalism as a whole, and of the bourgeois class in particular. For instance, sugar production in the West Indies was joined in the colonial period by cocoa production within Africa, so that both merged into the chocolate industry of Europe and North America. In the metallurgical field, iron ore from Sweden, Brazil, or Sierra Leone could be turned into different types of steel with the addition of manganese from the Gold Coast or chrome from Southern Rhodesia. Such examples could be multiplied almost indefinitely to cover the whole range of capitalist production in the colonial period.

As John Stuart Mill said, the trade between England and the West Indies in the eighteenth century was like the trade between town and country. In the present century, the links are even closer and it is more marked that the town (Europe) is living off the countryside (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). When it said that colonies should exist for the metropoles by producing raw materials and buying manufactured goods, the underlying theory was to introduce an *international division of labor* covering working people everywhere. That is to say, up to that point each society had allocated to its own members particular functions in production—some hunted, some made clothes, some built houses. But with colonialism, the capitalists determined what types of labor the workers should carry on in the world at large. Africans were to dig minerals out of the subsoil, grow agricultural crops, collect natural products, and perform a number of other odds and ends such as bicycle repairing. Inside Europe, North America, and Japan, workers would refine the minerals and the raw materials and make the bicycles.

The international division of labor brought about by imperialism and colonialism insured that there would be the maximum increase in the level of skills in the capitalist nations. It took mainly physical strength to dig the minerals from and to farm the African soil, but the extraction of the metals from the ores and the subsequent manufacture of finished goods in Europe promoted more and more technology and skills there as time went on. Take the iron and steel industry as an example. Modern steel manufacture derives from the Siemens open-hearth system and the Bessemer process, which were both already in existence in the second half of the last century. They both underwent major modifications, transforming steel manufacture from intermittent operations to something requiring huge continuous electrical furnaces. In more recent years, skilled workmen have been replaced by automation and computerization, but altogether the gains in technology and skills were immense, as compared with the years before imperialism got under way.

Iron ore was not one of Africa's major exports in the colonial days and it may therefore appear to be an irrelevant example. However, iron was very significant in the economy of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and North Africa. It can be used to illustrate the trend by which the international division of labor allowed technology and skills to grow in the metropoles. Furthermore, it must be recalled that Africa was an important source of the minerals that went into making steel alloys, notably manganese and chrome. Manganese was essential in the Bessemer process. It was mined in several places in Africa, with the Nouta mine on the Gold Coast having the largest single manganese deposit in the world. American companies owned the Gold Coast and North African mines and used the product in the steel industry of the U.S.A. Chrome from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia also played a similar role in steel metallurgy, being essential for the manufacture of stainless steel.

Columbite was another of the African minerals valuable for the creation of steel alloys. Being highly heat-resistant, one of its principal uses was in making steel for jet engines. First of all, it was the rapid development of European industry and technology which caused columbite to assume value. It had been a discarded by-product of tin mining in Nigeria up to 1952. Then, once it was utilized, it gave further stimulus to European technology in the very sophisticated sphere of airplane engines.

Obviously, according to the international division of labor prevailing under colonialism, it was the American, Canadian, British, and French workers who had access to the skills involved in working with columbite, rather than the Nigerian worker who dug the ore out of the ground. For certain reasons, columbite fell off sharply in demand after a few years, but during that time it had contributed towards making the European metallurgist even more proficient and experienced. In that way, it was helping to promote self-sustained growth and to produce the gap which is evident in any comparison of the developed and underdeveloped countries.

Copper, too, fell neatly into the category under discussion. Unskilled production by Africans was required to get the ore for export, followed by refinement in a European capitalist plant. Copper was Africa's chief mineral export. Being an excellent conductor of electricity, it became an indispensable part of the capitalist electrical industry. It is an essential component of generators, motors, electric locomotives, telephones, telegraphs, light and power lines, motor cars, buildings, ammunition, radios, refrigerators, and a host of other things. A technological era tends to be defined by the principal source of power. Today, we speak of a Nuclear Age, since the potential of nuclear power is shown to be immense. The Industrial Revolution in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteeth centuries was the Age of Steam. In a parallel manner, the colonial epoch was the Age of Electricity. Therefore, the vital copper exports from Congo, Northern Rhodesia, and other parts of Africa were contributing to the leading sector of European technology. From that strategic position, its multiplier effects were innumerable and were of incalculable benefit to capitalist development.

In the context of a discussion of raw materials, special reference must again be made to the military. African minerals played a decisive role both with regard to conventional weapons and with regard to the breakthrough to atomic and nuclear weapons. It was from the Belgian Congo during the Second World War that the U.S.A. began getting the uranium that was a prerequisite to the making of the first atomic bomb. In any case, by the end of the colonial period, industry and the war machine in the colonizing nations had become so interwined and inseparable that any contribution to one was a contribution to the other. Therefore, Africa's massive contribution to what initially appears as peaceful pursuits such as the making of copper wire and steel alloys ultimately took the shape of explosive devices, aircraft carriers, and so on.

It was only after European firearms reached a certain stage of effectiveness in the nineteenth century that it became possible for whites to colonize and dominate the whole world. Similarly, the invention of a massive array of new instruments of destruction in the metropoles was both a psychological and a practical disincentive to colonized peoples seeking to regain power and independence. It will readily be recalled that a basic prop to colonialism in Africa and elsewhere was the "gunboat policy," which was resorted to every time that the local police and armed forces seemed incapable of maintaining the metropolitan law and the colonial order of affairs. From the viewpoint of the colonized, the strengthening of the military apparatus of the European powers through colonial exploitation was doubly detrimental. Not only did it increase the overall technological gap between metropole and colony, but it immeasurably widened the gap in the most sensitive area, which had to do with concepts such as power and independence.

The international division of labor of the colonial period also insured that there would be growth of employment opportunities in Europe, apart from the millions of white settlers and expatriates who earned a livelihood in and from Africa. Agricultural raw materials were processed in such a way as to form by-products, constituting industries in their own right. The number of jobs created in Europe and North America by the import of mineral ores from Africa, Asia, and Latin America can be seen from the massive employment roll of institutions such as steel works, automobile factories, alumina and aluminum plants, copper wire firms. Furthermore, those in turn stimulated the building industry, the transport industry, the munitions industry, and so on. The mining that went on in Africa left holes in the ground, and the pattern of agricultural production left African soils impoverished; but, in Europe, agricultural and mineral imports built a massive industrial complex.

In the earliest phases of human organization, production was scattered and atomized. That is to say, families preserved a separate identity while working for their upkeep. Over time, production became more social and interrelated in character. The making of a pair of shoes in a mature feudal trading economy involved the cattle rearer, a tanner of the leather, and a shoemaker—instead of one peasant killing an animal and making himself a pair of shoes, as under self-sufficient communalism. The extent to which a society achieves this social interdependence in making commodities is an index of its development, through specialization and coordination.

Undoubtedly, European capitalism achieved more and more a social character in its production. It integrated the whole world; and with colonial experience as an important stimulus, it integrated very closely every aspect of its own economy—from agriculture to banking. But *distribution* was not social in character. The fruits of human labor went to a given minority class, which was of the white race and resident in Europe and North America. This is the crux of the dialectical process of development and underdevelopment, as it evolved over the colonial period.

The Example of Unilever as a Major Beneficiary of African Exploitation

Just as it was necessary to follow African surplus through the channels of exploitation such as banks and mining companies, so the non-monetary contribution which Africa made to European capitalism can also be accurately traced by following the careers of the said companies. We offer below a brief outline of the relevant features of the development of a single firm—that of Unilever—in relationship to its exploitation of African resources and people.

In 1885, while Africa was being carved up at the conference table, one William H. Lever started making soap on the Merseyside near Liverpool in England. He called his soap "Sunlight" and in the swamps where his factory stood, the township of Port Sunlight grew up. Within ten years, the firm of Lever was selling 40,000 tons of soap per year in England alone and was building an export business and factories in other parts of Europe, America, and the British colonies. Then came Lifebuoy, Lux, Vim, and within another ten years, Lever was selling 60,000 tons of soap in Britain, and in addition had factories producing and selling in Canada, the U.S.A., South Africa, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium. However, soap did not grow in any of those countries. The basic item in its manufacture was stearin, obtained from oils and fats. Apart from animal tallow and whale oil, the desirable raw materials all came from the tropics: namely, palm oil, palm-kernel oil, groundnut oil, and copra. West Africa happened to be the world's great palm produce zone and was also a major grower of groundnuts.

In 1887, the Austrian firm of Schicht, which was later to be incorporated in the Unilever combine, built the first palm-kernel crushing mill in Austria, supplied with raw materials by a Liverpool firm of oil merchants. That was not simply coincidence, but part of the logic of imperialism and the opening up of Africa as the raw material reservoir for Europe. As early as 1902, Lever sent out his own "explorers" to Africa, and they came to the decision that the Congo would be the most likely place to get palm produce, because the Belgian government was willing to offer huge concessions of land with innumerable palm trees. Lever obtained the necessary concessions in Congo and brought in machinery to extract oil from palm kernels.

But the main palm-oil experts came from areas on the coast to the north of the Congo. Therefore, in 1910, Lever purchased W. B. McIver, a small Liverpool firm in Nigeria. That was followed by acquisitions of two small companies in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Indeed, Lever (at that time called Lever Bros.) got a foothold in every colony in West Africa. The first major breakthrough occurred when Lever bought the Niger Company in 1920 for 8 million pounds. Then, in 1929, the African and Eastern, the last big rival trading concern, was brought into partnership; and the result of the merger was called the United Africa Company (UAC).

During the 1914–18 war, Lever had begun making margarine, which required the same raw materials as soap; namely, oils and fats. The subsequent years were ones in which such enterprises in Europe were constantly getting bigger through takeovers and mergers. The big names in soap and margarine manufacture on the European continent were two Dutch firms, Jurgens and Van der Bergh, and the Austrian firms of Schicht and Centra. The Dutch companies first achieved a dominant position; and then in 1929 there was a grand merger between their combine and Lever's, who in the meantime had been busy buying off virtually all other competitors. The 1929 merger created Unilever as a single monopoly, divided for the sake of convenience into Unilever Ltd. (registered in Britain) and Unilever N.V. (registered in Holland).

For its massive input of oils and fats, Unilever depended largely on its UAC subsidiary which was formed that very year. The UAC itself never stopped growing. In 1933, it took over the important trading firm of G. B. Ollivant, and in 1936, it bought the Swiss Trading Company on the Gold Coast. By that time, it was not relying simply on wild palms in the Congo, but had organized plantations. The Lever factories in the U.S.A. drew their oil supplies mainly from the Congo, and in 1925 (even before Unilever and the UAC emerged as such) the Lever works in Boston showed a profit of 250,000 pounds.

Unilever flourished in war and in peace. Only in Eastern Europe did the advent of socialism lead to the loss of factories through nationalization. By the end of the colonial period, Unilever was a world force, selling traditional soaps, detergents, margarine, lard, ghee, cooking oil, canned foods, candles, glycerin, oil cake, and toilet preparations such as toothpaste. From where did this giant octopus suck most of its sustenance? Let the answer be provided by the Information Division of Unilever House, London.

> Most striking of all in the post-war development of Unilever, had been the progress of the United Africa Company. In the worst of the depression, the management of Unilever had never ceased to put money into UAC, justifying their action more by general faith in the future of Africa than by particular consideration of UAC's immediate prospects. Their reward has come with the post-war prosperity of the primary producer, which has made Africa a market for all kinds of goods, from frozen peas to motor cars. Unilever's centre of gravity lies in Europe, but far and away its largest member (the UAC) is almost wholly dependent for its livelihood (represented by a turnover of 300 million pounds) on the well-being of West Africa.

In some instances, Lever's African enterprises made losses in the strict cost-accounting sense. It took years before the Congo plantations paid for themselves and made a profit. It also took some time before the purchase of the Niger Company in 1920 was financially justified; while the SCKN in Chad never showed worthwhile monetary profits. But, even in the worst financial years, the subsidiaries comprising the UAC were invaluable assets, in that they allowed the manufacturing side of Unilever to have control over a guaranteed source of essential raw materials. Of course, the UAC itself also provided handsome monetary dividends, but it is the purpose here to draw attention not to the financial gains of UAC and

Unilever but to the way that the exploitation of Africa led to multiple technical and organizational developments in Europe.

Both the soap industry and the margarine industry had their own scientific and technical problems which had to be solved. Scientific advance is most generally a response to real need. Oils for margarine and for cooking purposes had to be deodorized; substitutes had to be sought for natural lard; and, when margarine was faced with competition from cheap butter, the necessity arose to find means of producing new high-grade margarine with added vitamins. In 1916, two Lever experts published in a British scientific journal the results of tests showing the growth of animals fed with vitamin concentrates inside margarine. They kept in touch with Cambridge University scientists who pursued the problem, and by 1927 the vitamin-rich margarine was ready for human consumption.

With regard to soap (and to a lesser extent margarine), it was essential to devise a process for hardening oils into fats—notably whale oil, but also vegetable oils. This process, referred to as "hydrogenation," attracted the attention of scientists in the early years of this century. They were paid and urged on by rival soap companies, including Lever and the other European firms which later merged to form Unilever.

One of the most striking illustrations of the technological ramifications of the processing of colonial raw materials is in the field of detergents. Soap itself is a detergent or "washing agent," but ordinary soaps suffer from several limitations, such as the tendency to decompose in hard water and in acids. Those limitations could only be overcome by "soapless detergents," without the kind of fatty base of previous soaps. When Germany was cut off from colonial supplies of oils and fats in the first imperialist war, German scientists were spurred on to the first experiments in producing detergents out of coal tar. Later on in the 1930s, chemical companies began making similar detergents on a larger scale, especially in the U.S.A. Two of the firms which immediately stepped into detergent research were Unilever and Procter & Gamble, a soap combine with its headquarters in Cincinnati.

It may at first appear strange that though detergents were competitors to ordinary soap, they were nevertheless promoted by soap firms. However, it is the practice of monopoly concerns to move into new fields which supplement or even replace their old business. That is necessary to avoid their entire capital from being tied up in products that go out of fashion. The soap firms could not leave detergents to chemical firms, or else their own hard soap, soap flakes, and soap powders would have suffered, and they would not have been the ones with the new brands on the markets. So great effort was put into the chemistry of detergents by Unilever, retaining to a considerable extent the vegetable oils, but modifying them chemically. That kind of research was not left to chance or to private individuals. By 1960, Unilever had four main laboratories—two in England, one in Holland, and one in the U.S.A. These four, together with other smaller research units, employed over three thousand people, of whom about one-third were qualified scientists and technologists.

The multiplier effects radiating from Unilever and its colonial exploitation can be traced with some accuracy. When palm kernels were crushed, the residue formed a cake which was excellent for livestock. One by-product of the soap industry was glycerin, which was utilized in the making of explosives. Europeans killed themselves with some of the explosives, but some went into peaceful purposes, such as mining, quarrying, and construction. Several other products were linked to soap through the common base in oils and fats—notably cosmetics, shampoos, perfumes, shaving creams, toothpaste, and dyes. As one writer put it, those by-products "served to broaden the commercial base on which Unilever rested, while making further use of the fund of knowledge already possessed by the oils and fats technologist." Besides, these operations were creating hundreds of thousands of additional jobs for European workers.

The manufacturing of soap and margarine required raw material inputs other than oils and fats. Soap-making consumed large quantities of caustic soda, so that in 1911 Lever bought land in Cheshire suitable for the manufacture of that alkali. Capitalist giants nourished by colonialism and imperialism could afford to do things in a big way. When Lever needed abrasives, the company bought a limestone mine in Bohemia; and when Unilever wanted to assure themselves of supplies of wrapping paper, they bought a paper mill.

Transport was another key problem which stimulated growth at the European end. Within a month of buying the Niger Company in 1920, Lever was engaged in a project for constructing facilities on the Mersey to receive ocean-going ships bringing cargoes from West Africa. The UAC was a pioneer in getting ships constructed to carry palm oil in bulk tanks, and Van der Bergh considered buying a shipyard to build ships for his company some years before the merger. This did not materialize, but Unilever did acquire several ships of their own, including vessels fresh from the shipyards and made to their specifications.

Another linkage of the Unilever industries was that with retail distribution. Their products had to be sold to the housewife, and the Dutch firms that went into Unilever decided that they should own grocery stores to guarantee sales. By 1922, Jurgens had control of a chain of grocery stores in England, appropriately named the "Home and Colonial." Van der Bergh (at the time a rival) was not to be left behind, so he secured majority shares in the chain store owned by Lipton of Lipton's Tea fame. All of these shops passed to Unilever. The grocery store business soon ceased being considered merely as an outlet for soap and margarine, and became an end in itself.

Sometimes, the multiplier effects do not seem connected. On the surface, there was no apparent reason why Lever should set up a huge retail chain called Mac Fisheries to sell fish! There is little in common between soap, sausages, and ice cream—but Lever bought Walls as a sausage firm and later Walls opened an ice cream manufacturing plant. The underlying connection is that capital seeks domination. It grows and spreads and seeks to get hold of everything in sight. The exploitation of Africa gave European monopoly capital full opportunities to indulge in its tendencies for expansion and domination.

Before leaving Unilever, it should be noted in conclusion how a company such as that pointed the way towards change in the capitalist system. The device of the dual structure of Unilever Ltd. and Unilever N.V. was an innovation first utilized when Schicht and Centra of Central Europe merged with the Dutch margarine firms of Jurgens and Van der Bergh, and it was designed to cut down taxation. Unilever comprised two holding companies with the same governing boards and with arrangements to transfer and equalize profits. It was a professional company from its inception. All of the firms involved in the merger had years of experience in organizing staff, production plants, and marketing procedures. Schicht was one of the earliest to work out a system of cost accounting and financial control. Lever had himself been a pioneer of mass advertising in Europe and in the competitive field of the U.S.A. The firm of Unilever inherited and perfected the techniques of mass production and advertising so as to achieve mass consumption.

The significance of the organizational changes are best seen on a long-term basis, by comparing Unilever's sophisticated international organization with the chartered companies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which had difficulties managing accounts. The efficient accounting and business methods which are supposed to characterize capitalist firms did not drop from the sky. They are the result of historical evolution, and in that evolution the exploitation of Africa played a key role—from the era of the chartered companies right through the colonial period.

Contributions of Colonialism to Individual Colonizing Powers

Analysis of the non-monetary benefits of colonialism to the colonizers can of course be carried out most readily within the framework of relations between each colony and its "mother country," apart from the framework of the individual firm, which has just been discussed in some detail. Using the conventional approach of European metropole in relationship to its own colonies, one finds a wide range of positive effects, although the benefits varied in extent from colony to colony. Portugal was the lowliest of the colonizing powers in Africa, and its was nothing in Europe without its colonies: so much so that it came to insist that Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea were integral parts of Portugal, just like any province of the European country named Portugal. France sometimes propounded the same doctrine by which Algeria, Martinique, and Vietnam were all supposedly "overseas France."

Neither Britain nor Belgium put forward any theories of a greater Britain or overseas Belgium; but in practice they were as determined as other colonial powers to insure that sustenance should flow from colony to metropole without hindrance. Few areas of the national life of those Western European countries failed to benefit from the decades of parasitic exploitation of the colonies. One Nigerian, after visiting Brussels in 1960, wrote: "I saw for myself the massive palaces, museums and other public buildings paid for by Congo ivory and rubber."

In recent times, African writers and researchers have also been amazed to find the amount of looted African treasure stacked away in the British Museum; and there are comparable if somewhat smaller collections of African art in Paris, Berlin, and New York. Those are some of the things which, in addition to monetary wealth, help to define the metropoles as developed and "civilized."

Sustenance given by colonies to the colonizers was most obvious and very decisive in the case of contributions by soldiers from among the colonized. Without colonial troops, there would have been no "British forces" fighting on the Asian front in the 1939–45 war, because the ranks of the British forces were filled with Indians and other colonials, including Africans and West Indians. It is a general characteristic of colonialism that the metropole utilized the manpower of the colonies. The Romans had used soldiers of one conquered nationality to conquer other nationalities, as well as to defend Rome against enemies. Britain applied this to Africa from the early nineteenth century, when the West Indian Regiment was sent across the Atlantic to protect British interests in the West African coast. The West Indian Regiment had black men in the ranks, Irish (colonials) as NCOs, and Englishmen as officers. By the end of the nineteenth century, the West Indian Regiment also included lots of Sierra Leoneans.

The most important force in the conquest of West African colonies by the British was the West African Frontier Force—the soldiers being

Africans and the officers English. In 1894, it was joined by the West African Regiment, formed to help suppress the so-called Hut Tax War in Sierra Leone, which was the expression of widespread resistance against the imposition of colonial rule. In East and Central Africa, the King's African Rifles was the unit which tapped African fighting power on behalf of Britain. The African regiments supplemented the metropolitan military apparatus in several ways. Firstly, they were used as emergency forces to put down nationalist uprisings in the various colonies. Secondly, they were used to fight other Europeans inside Africa, notably during the First and Second World Wars. And thirdly, they were carried to European battlefields or to theatres of war outside Africa.

African roles in European military operations were vividly displayed by the East African campaign during the First World War, when Britain and Germany fought for possession of East Africa. At the beginning of the war, the Germans had in Tanganyika a regular force of 216 Europeans and 2,540 African *askari*. During the war, 3,000 Europeans and 11,000 *askari* were enrolled. On the British side, the main force was the K.A.R., comprising mainly East Africans and soldiers from Nyasaland. The battalions of the K.A.R. had by November 1918 over 35,000 men, of whom nine out of ten were Africans.

Quite early in the East African campaign, the British brought in an expeditionary force of Punjabis and Sikhs, as well as regiments of West Africans. Some Sudanese and West Indians were also there. At first, a few white settlers joined the war, because they thought it was a picnic; but within a year the white residents of British East Africa were showing extreme reluctance to join local fighting forces. In effect, therefore, Africans were fighting Africans to see which European power should rule over them. The Germans and the British had only to provide the officers. According to the history books, the "British" won the campaign in East Africa.

France was the colonial power that secured the greatest number of soldiers from Africa. In 1912, conscription of African soldiers into the French army was pursued on a large scale. During the 1914–18 war, 200,000 soldiers were recruited in French West Africa, through the use of methods reminiscent of slave hunting. These "French" soldiers served against the Germans in Togo and Cameroon, as well as in Europe itself. On the European battlefields, an estimated 25,000 "French" Africans lost their lives, and many more returned mutilated, for they were used as cannon fodder in the European capitalist war.

France was so impressed by the military advantages to be gained from colonial rule that when a part of Cameroon was mandated to France by the League of Nations, France insisted on the privilege of using Cameroon African troops for purposes unconnected with the defense of Cameroon. Naturally, France also made the maximum use of African troops in the last world war. Indeed, Africans saved France after the initial losses when France and most of French Africa fell under the Germans and the fascist (Vichy) French. In French Equatorial Africa, it was a black man, Felix Eboue, who proved loyal to the forces led by General de Gaulle, and who mobilized manpower against the French and German fascists. Africa provided the base and much of the manpower for launching the counterattack which helped General de Gaulle and the Free French to return to power in France.

French use of African troops did not end with the last war. West Africans were sent to Madagascar in 1948, and put down nationalist forces in a most bloody manner. African troops were also employed to fight the people of Indochina up to 1954; and, later still, black African troops and Senegalese in particular were used against the Algerian liberation movement.

No comprehensive studies have as yet been devoted to the role of Africans in the armies of the colonial powers in a variety of contexts. However, the indications are that such studies would reveal a pattern very similar to that discovered by historians who have looked at the role of black soldiers in the white-controlled armies of the U.S.A.; namely, that there was tremendous discrimination against black fighting men, even though black soldiers made great and unacknowledged contributions to important victories won by the white-officered armies of the U.S.A. and the colonial powers. Hints regarding discrimination are to be seen from regulations such as that barring African soldiers in the West African Regiment from wearing shoes and from the fact that there were actually race riots in the European campaigns, just as black troops fighting for the U.S.A. continued to riot right up to the Vietnam campaign.

A number of Africans served as colonial soldiers with pride, because they mistakenly hoped that the army would be an avenue for displaying the courage and dignity of Africans, and, perhaps, in the process, even earning the freedom of the continent, by making Europeans pleased and grateful. That hope was without foundation from the outset, because the colonialists were viciously using African soldiers as pawns to preserve colonialism and capitalism in general. A very striking instance of the above fact was provided when John Chilembwe led an African nationalist uprising in Nyasaland (now Malawi) in 1915. Nyasaland was then a British colony, and although the British were fighting the Germans in East Africa at that time, they immediately dispatched a column of the

K.A.R. to contend against Chilembwe. Furthermore, before the K.A.R. arrived, it was a German lieutenant who organized the resistance of Nyasa white settlers against Chilembwe's bid for freedom. In the light of that evidence, one writer commented:

> While their countrymen in Europe fought the bloodiest war ever known, in Africa Europeans were instinctively white men first—and German and British second, [for] John Chilembwe was part of something that in the end would swamp all their colonial dreams.

The African continent and the African people were used by the colonialists in some curious ways to advance their military strengths and techniques. By chance, North Africa and the Sahara became available as a laboratory for the evolution of techniques of armored warfare in the period when Rommel and Montgomery battled for superiority. And, by design, Ethiopians were used as guinea pigs, upon whom the Italian fascists experimented with poison gas. This followed their brazen invasion in 1935 of that small portion of Africa which still clung to some form of political independence. At that time, the Italians argued that it was absolutely essential that the fruits of colonialism be opened to Italy if it were to take "its place in the sun." Significantly enough, both Britain and France had already seen so much of the sun and products of Africa that they found it difficult to refute Italy's claims.

Britain and France ruled over the greater part of colonial Africa and they also had the largest empires in other parts of the world. The whole existence and development of capitalism in Britain and France between 1885 and 1960 was bound up with colonization, and Africa played a major role. African colonies meant surplus appropriated on a grand scale; they led to innovations and forward leaps in technology and the organization of capitalist enterprise; and they buttressed the capitalist system at home and abroad with fighting men. Sometimes, it appeared that these two principal colonial powers reaped so many colonial benefits that they suffered from "too much of a good thing."

Certainly, in Britain's case, it can be argued that colonialism allowed British industry to lead a soft life, and that, in some decisive spheres of production and marketing, Britain grew lazy. Industrial plants installed in the nineteenth century were not renovated or replaced, and little dynamism was put into selling new lines of goods. In contrast, when deprived of colonies after 1918, Germany was forced to live off its own resources and ingenuity. Nevertheless, while that is an interesting detail of the whole colonial picture, it must be borne in mind that colonialism was one aspect of imperialism. Colonialism was based on alien political rule and was restricted to some parts of the world. Imperialism, however, underlay all colonies, extended all over the world (except where replaced by socialist revolutions), and it allowed the participation of all capitalist nations. Therefore, lack of colonies on the part of any capitalist nation was not a barrier to enjoying the fruits of exploiting the colonial and semi-colonial world, which was the backyard of metropolitan capitalism.

Colonialism as a Prop to Metropolitan Economies and Capitalism as a System

The composition of Unilever should serve as a warning that colonialism was not simply a matter of ties between a given colony and its mother country, but between colonies on the one hand and metropoles on the other. The German capital in Unilever joined the British in exploiting Africa and the Dutch in exploiting the East Indies. The rewards spread through the capitalist system in such a way that even those capitalist nations who were not colonial powers were also beneficiaries of the spoils. Unilever factories established in Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S.A. were participants in the expropriation of Africa's surplus and in using that surplus for their own development.

Germany always had a stake in colonial Africa, even after 1918 when the other capitalist powers deprived Germany of its colonies. German shipping revived in the 1920s and played an active role in East, West, and South Africa. German financial houses also had contacts with Africa, the most direct being the Twentsche Bank in East Africa. Dutch shipping companies were involved with the German and British in the West African Conference Line, while the Scandinavian shippers were noted for the hiring out of "tramp" ships which freighted cargo between Africa and Europe outside of the scheduled lines. The old East African Trading Company was supported by Danish capital. The Swiss had no colonies in Africa, but they had substantial capital in SCOA, they played a key role in imperialist banking, and they kept out of the wars fought by other capitalists so that they could still continue to trade with both sides and thereby acquire colonial produce. Then there was Japan—a capitalist/imperialist power with colonies in Asia and with a keen interest in trade with Africa. Japanese capitalists tried to undersell their European counterparts, but the trade they conducted with Africa was still unequal and disadvantageous to the Africans.

To fully understand the colonial period, it is necessary to think in terms of the economic partition of Africa. Unlike the political partition of the nineteenth century, the economic partition had no fixed or visible boundaries. It consisted of the proportions in which capitalist powers divided up among themselves the monetary and non-monetary gains from colonial Africa. For instance, Portugal had two large political colonies in Southern Africa, but economically Mozambique and Angola were divided among several capitalist powers, which were invited by the Portuguese government, because Portuguese capitalists were too weak to handle those vast territories.

Congo and South Africa had their own special arrangements of economic partition, both of them being valuable territories. At first, Congo was designated the "Congo Free State" under King Leopold II of Belgium. That meant that it was to have been a free trade zone and an area open to investment by capitalists of all nationalities. In practice, Leopold used administrative devices to monopolize the wealth of the Congo, and that was one of the principal reasons the international capitalist community moved against Leopold in 1908. When Belgium took over the administration of the Congo, it also insured that most of the surplus and other benefits should accrue to Belgium. However, non-Belgian capitalist interests were able to penetrate through investment in mining; and, as the colonial period advanced, the British, French, and Americans cut bigger pieces of the Congo cake.

For a long while, South Africa was the most important raw material reservoir for the whole of imperialism. Britain was the European power which had already been entrenched in South Africa for many years when gold and diamonds were discovered in the nineteenth century, on the eve of the Scramble. Britain had to come to terms with the Boer settlers, whose livelihood then came primarily from the land, and whose main interest was to see to the exploitation and domination of the African population and other groups of non-white immigrants. Therefore, the economic and political partition of Africa gave Britain the lion's share of the mineral wealth, while the Boers retained the political power necessary to institutionalize white racism. As capitalists of other nationalities entered into relations with South Africa through investment and trade, those capitalists agreed to strengthen, and did, the racist/fascist social relations of South Africa.

Economic partition and repartition of Africa was going on all the time, because the proportions of the spoils that went to different capitalist countries kept changing. Special mention must be made of the U.S.A., because its share of the benefits from Africa was constantly increasing throughout the colonial period.

As time went on, the U.S.A. got an ever bigger slice of the unequal trade between the metropoles and colonial Africa. The share of the U.S.A.

in Africa's trade rose from just over 28 million dollars in 1913 to 150 million dollars in 1932 and to 1,200 million dollars in 1948, at which figure it represented nearly 15 per cent of Africa's foreign trade. The share of the U.S.A. in West Africa's trade rose from 38 million dollars in 1938 to 163 million dollars in 1946 and to 517 million dollars by 1954.

However, it was South Africa which was America's best trading partner in Africa, supplying her with gold, diamonds, manganese, and other minerals and buying heavy machinery in turn. Apart from direct U.S.A.-South African trade, most of South Africa's gold was resold in London to American buyers, just as most Gold Coast and Nigerian cocoa was resold to the U.S.A.

Intercontinental trade brought out the need for shipping services and America did not leave those in the hands of capitalists of other nations. James Farrell, President of the United States Steel Export Company, acquired a shipping line to Africa because of his "belief in the future of the Dark Continent." Officials of the UAC had said exactly the same thing, and it is obvious that, like them, Farrell meant the bright future of metropolitan capitalism in exploiting Africa. It is always best when these individuals speak for themselves. Vice-Admiral Cochrane of the United States Navy was a great admirer of Farrell shipping lines. In 1959, he wrote an introduction to a study of Farrell's operations in Africa, in which he said:

> We read of stiff international competition to assure the supply of strategic materials for our current industrial-military economy. Farrell Lines is making American maritime history. It is demonstrating clearly and emphatically that ships wearing the flag of a nation do in fact stimulate the commerce of that nation . . . demonstrating the value of American-flag ocean commerce to the health and wealth of the United States.

United States capitalists did not confine themselves to mere trade with Africa, but they also acquired considerable assets within the colonies. It is common knowledge that Liberia was an American colony in everything but name. The U.S.A. supposedly aided the Liberian government with loans, but used the opportunity to take over Liberian customs revenue, to plunder thousands of square miles of Liberian land, and generally to dictate to the weak government of Liberia. The main investment in Liberia was undertaken by Firestone Rubber Company. Firestone made such huge profits from Liberian rubber that it was the subject of a book sponsored by American capitalists to show how well American business flourished overseas. Between 1940 and 1965, Firestone took 160 million dollars' worth of rubber out of Liberia; while in return the Liberian government received 8 million dollars. In earlier years, the percentage of the value that went to the Liberian government was much smaller, but, at the best of times, the average net profit made by Firestone was three times the Liberian revenue.

And yet the non-monetary benefits to the United States capitalist economy were worth far more than the money returns. Vice-Admiral Cochrane, in the quotation above, went to the heart of the matter when he mentioned strategic raw materials for the functioning of the industrial and military machine of the American imperialists. Firestone acquired its Liberian plantations precisely because Britain and Holland had been raising the price of the rubber which came from their Asian colonies of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, respectively. In Liberia, the United States rubber industry obtained a source that was reliable in peace and war—one that was cheap and entirely under American control. One of rubber's most immediate connections was with the automobile industry, and so it is not surprising that Harvey Firestone was a great friend and business colleague of Henry Ford. Liberian rubber turned the town of Akron, Ohio, into a powerful rubber tire manufacturing center, and the tires then went over to the even bigger automobile works of Ford in Detroit.

American investment in Africa during the last fifteen years of colonialism was in some ways at the expense of the actual colonizing powers and yet ultimately it was in the interest of Western European capitalism. This paradox is explained by noting that the U.S.A. had become the world's leading capitalist/imperialist power by the outbreak of the Second World War. It possessed the colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines, but much more important were its imperialistic investments throughout Latin America and to a lesser extent in Asia and Africa. America's foreign investments in the 1930s drew slightly ahead of those of Britain, which were a long way ahead of the imperialist outlay of France, Germany, and Japan. The 1939–45 war tremendously accelerated the changeover in America's favor.

Europe suffered staggering losses, but no battles were fought on American soil, and so its productive capacity expanded. Therefore, after 1945, American capital moved into Africa, Asia, and Europe itself with new aggressiveness and confidence, due to the fact that other capitalist competitors were still lying on the ground. In 1949, both British and French bankers had no choice but to invite American financiers into the African continent, for the French and British had insufficient capital of their own. The United States-controlled International Bank for Reconstruction and Development became an important vehicle for American influence in Africa and one of the tools for the economic repartition of the continent.

Research by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah revealed that direct private investment by Americans in Africa increased between 1945 and 1958 from 110 million dollars to 789 million dollars, most of its drawn from profits. Official estimates of profits made by United States companies from 1946 to 1959 in Africa are put at 1,234 million dollars. In considering the question of economic partition, what is relevant is the *rate of growth* of United States investments and profits compared to those of Britain, France, Belgium. For instance, the American investment in 1951 was 313 million dollars, which was nearly three times what it was five years earlier, and in the subsequent five years the investment went up two and a half times. Meanwhile, British and French investment increased much more slowly.

However, while the U.S.A. was edging out the other colonialists, they all stood to gain from the advances made within the North American capitalist economy in terms of science, technology, organization, and military power. As pointed out earlier, when an African colony contributed to the European metallurgical industries or to its electrical industry, that contribution passed into other aspects of the society, because the sectors concerned were playing leading roles within the capitalist economy. Similarly, the U.S.A. was a geographical area that was in the forefront of capitalist development. For instance, its technological know-how passed into Western European hands by way of a series of legal devices such as patents.

Furthermore, because the U.S.A. was by then the world's leading capitalist state, it also had to assume active responsibility for maintaining the capitalist imperialist structure in all its economic, political, and military aspects. After the war, the U.S.A. moved into Western Europe and Japan both to establish its own stranglehold and at the same time to give a blood transfusion to capitalism in those areas. A lot of the blood was definitely African. It is not just that America made (relatively) small profits out of Africa in the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, but above all it must be recalled that North America was that part of the European capitalist system which had been the most direct beneficiary of the massacre of the American Indians and the enslavement of Africans. The continued exploitation of African peoples within its own boundaries and in the Caribbean and Latin America must also be cited as evidence against American monster imperialism. The U.S.A. was a worthy successor to Britain as the leading force and policeman of the imperialist/colonialist world from 1945 onwards.

Under the Marshall Plan, by which United States capitalism aided Western European capitalism after the last war, it was announced that American experts were exploring Africa from end to end for agricultural and mineral wealth—especially the latter. Marshall Plan money (through the Economic Commission for Africa) went to firms like the Mines de Zellidja, which mined lead and zinc in North Africa; and, at the same time, the money allowed Americans to buy controlling shares in the company. Thus in 1954, Morgan of the U.S.A. shared with Rothschilds of Europe most of the net profit of 1,250 million old francs (8.16 million dollars) made by the Mines de Zellidja in that year. Similarly, the Belgian government received substantial aid from the U.S.A. to implement a ten-year economic program in Congo from 1950 to 1959; and, as the price of the aid, United States monopolies established control over some companies in Congo. The U.S.A. took second place after Belgium in Congo's foreign trade, and United States capitalists had to be granted a range of privileges.

So the paradox continued, whereby United States capitalists intruded and elbowed out French, British, and Belgian capitalists in colonial Africa, while providing the funds without which the Western European nations could not have revived and could not have increased their exploitation of Africa—which is what they did in the period of 1945–60.

Over the last few decades of colonialism, colonial possessions served capitalism as a safety valve in times of crisis. The first major occasion when this was displayed was during the great economic depression of 1929–34. During that period, forced labor was increased in Africa and the prices paid to Africans for their crops were reduced. Workers were paid less and imported goods cost a great deal more. That was a time when workers in the metropolitan countries also suffered terribly; but the colonialists did the best they could to transfer the burdens of the depression away from Europe and on to the colonies.

The great economic depression did not affect the Soviet Union, where socialism caused great development; but the slump spread from one end of the capitalist system to the other. It was a product of the irrationality of the capitalist mode of production. The search for profits caused production to run ahead of people's capacity to purchase, and ultimately both production and employment had to be drastically reduced. Africans had nothing to do with the inherent shortcomings of capitalism; but, when Europeans were in a mess, they had no scruples about intensifying the exploitation of Africa. The economic depression was not a situation from which Britain could benefit at the expense of Sweden or where Belgium could gain at the expense of the U.S.A. They were all drowning, and that was why the benefits of the colonies saved not only the colonizing powers but all capitalist nations.

The second major occasion on which the colonies had to bail out the metropoles was during the last world war. As noted earlier, the African people were required to make huge sacrifices and to supply vital raw materials at little cost to the metropoles. Africa's military importance was also decisive. Not only did Africans fight and die on various battlefields of the war, but the continent held a key strategic position. In November 1942, a third front was opened in Africa (following the European and Asian fronts), and that front was the means to final victory.

Accidents of geography meant that Africa controlled communications in the Mediterranean and in the South Atlantic, and it commanded the two western entrances into the Indian Ocean. As one military analyst put it, "The side that held Africa was on the way to final victory." With the aid of African fighting men and resources, the major colonial powers maintained control of the continent in the face of attacks by the Italians, who had only Libya, Somaliland, and (briefly) Ethiopia. The Germans of course by then had no colonies in Africa, and they had to use what was offered by the Italians and fascist Vichy Frenchmen.

Unlike the First World War, the Second World War was not simply one between capitalist powers. The aggressor states of Italy, Germany, and Japan were fascist. The governments of Portugal, Spain, and South Africa also subscribed to that ideology, although for opportunist reasons both the Portuguese and the South African Boers found it more convenient to be allied with Britain, France, the U.S.A., and the other bourgeois democracies.

Fascism is a deformity of capitalism. It heightens the imperialist tendency towards domination which is inherent in capitalism, and it safeguards the principle of private property. At the same time, fascism immeasurably strengthens the institutional racism already bred by capitalism, whether it be against Jews (as in Hitler's case) or against African peoples (as in the ideology of Portugal's Salazar and the leaders of South Africa). Fascism reverses the political gains of the bourgeois democratic system such as free elections, equality before the law, parliaments; and it also extolls authoritarianism and the reactionary union of the church with the state. In Portugal and Spain, it was the Catholic church—in South Africa, it was the Dutch Reformed church.

Like its progenitor, capitalism, fascism is totally opposed to socialism. Fascist Germany and Italy attacked both the other capitalist states and the Soviet Union, which was still the only socialist state in the world by 1939. The defeat of fascism was therefore a victory for socialism, and at the same time it preserved the other capitalist nations from having to take the historically retrograde step of fascism.

When the last world war ended, Africa's further role was to help Europe reconstruct. In that crisis, the U.S.A. played a major part, as has just been mentioned; but the colonizing nations also had direct recourse to their colonies, in spite of shortage of capital. It is noteworthy that

European capitalism from the late 1940s onwards recognized Africa's potential as a savior of their own war-torn economies, and they openly made statements to that effect.

It was in 1946 that the Ministry of Colonies in the French cabinet was renamed the Ministry of Overseas France and that colonized Africans were euphemistically called "overseas Frenchmen." About that time, a statement from the French Ministry of Education frankly admitted that:

> France would be only a little state of Europe without the seventy-five million overseas Frenchmen whose young force has revealed itself to the world in such a remarkable manner [referring to Africa's role in the war].

Shortly afterwards, when France prepared its Four Year Plan for 1949–52, statements such as the following were to be encountered:

> Morocco will take an active part in the recovery of France by supplying manganese, cobalt and lead ore, canned goods and agricultural produce.

At the end of the last war, both Britain and France set up agencies for the "development" of their colonies. In the British sphere, this was known as the Colonial Development and Welfare (CD&W), while the French fund was known as FIDES. Their principal function was to provide loans, the purpose of which was to help the colonies to help the metropoles. In other words, the crisis of postwar reconstruction required that even greater effort should be made to maximize the resources of colonies.

It was no ordinary postwar crisis which Western Europe faced in the 1940s and 1950s. The bourgeoisie had to rebuild capitalist states at a time when socialism had already proved itself in the Soviet Union, and in a period when the Red Army of the Soviets had ·aided groups of socialists to come to power in Eastern Europe. This was the greatest challenge ever to be faced by the bourgeoisie because (unlike fascism) socialism threatened the basic capitalist principle of private ownership of the means of production. Furthermore, socialist principles were making their presence felt even in remote corners of the colonies, and the capitalists realized the necessity for cutting the colonies off from socialist thought, as well as using colonial resources to stave off what they termed "the threat of communism."

In the capitalist struggle to keep off the challenge of socialism as a competing mode of production and way of life, Africa played at least two key roles—one being to provide bases for the capitalist militarists, and the other being to provide a wide range of raw materials essential for modern armament industries. The most vital of these raw materials were uranium and other radioactive substances for atomic and later nuclear weapons, including the hydrogen bomb. Almost rivaling uranium in importance were certain rare minerals (like lithium from Rhodesia) needed for the special steels that went into new aircraft rockets, tanks, guns, and bombs.

Colonial powers already had small military establishments in each colony, and right up to the end of the colonial era, it was considered necessary to strengthen those. For instance, in the 1955 French budget there was a special vote of six billion francs (16.8 million dollars) for the improvement of military installations in the colonies, and notably for strategic bases in Dakar and Djibouti. Some time previously, the Belgians had completed a huge air base near Kamina in the Congo.

Adding to the regular bases in long-established colonies, the imperialist powers were able to set up military installations in African territories which fell into their hands during the war. In this context, the U.S.A. was particularly important, because it was already the principal buttress of the capitalist defense system in the form of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Thus, after helping to recapture North Africa from the fascists, the United States was able to build major air-force bases in Morocco and Libya. In Italian Eritrea, the Americans stepped in with modern radar stations; and Ethiopia conceded military bases.

Though nominally independent, Liberia had little option but to accept a massive military presence of Americans, as a logical consequence of America's economic exploitation and domination of Liberia. When the U.S.A. agreed to build a port at Monrovia in 1943, they also obtained the concession that the U.S.A. was to have "the right to establish, use, maintain and control such naval, air and military facilities and installations at the site of the port, and in the general vicinity thereof, as may be desired for the protection of the strategic interests of the U.S.A. in the South Atlantic." Throughout the war, Liberia's Robertsfield airfield had been of considerable value to the U.S.A. and later on it continued to have a military utility. To tie matters up further, the U.S.A. entered into what it called a military assistance pact with Liberia in 1951.

Needless to say, in the 1950s when most Africans were still colonial subjects, they had absolutely no control over the utilization of their soil for militaristic ends. Virtually the whole of North Africa was turned into a sphere of operations for NATO, with bases aimed at the Soviet Union. There could easily have developed a nuclear war without African peoples having any knowledge of the matter. The colonial powers actually held military conferences in African cities like Dakar and Nairobi in the early 1950s, inviting the whites of South Africa and Rhodesia and the government of the U.S.A. Time and time again, the evidence points to this cynical use of Africa to buttress capitalism economically and militarily, and therefore in effect forcing Africa to contribute to its own exploitation.

Apart from saving capitalism in times of crisis, the dependencies had always been prolonging the life of capitalism by taking the edge off the internal contradictions and conflicts which were a part of the capitalist system. The principal contradiction within capitalism from the outset was that between the capitalists and the workers. To keep their system going, the capitalists had constantly to step up the rate of exploitation of their workers. At the same time, European workers were gaining increasing mastery over the means of production in the factories and mines, and they were learning to work collectively in big enterprises and within their own trade union structures. If the bourgeoisie continued to deprive them of the major part of the fruits of their own labor and to oppress them socially and politically, then those two classes were set on a collision path. Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, Marx had predicted class collision would come in the form of revolution in which workers would emerge victorious. The capitalists were terribly afraid of that possibility, knowing full well that they themselves had seized power from the feudal landlord class by means of revolution. However, imperialism introduced a new factor into this situation—one that deferred the confrontation between workers and capitalists in the metropoles.

Only in Russia was there a workers' revolution, and Russia was on the fringe of Europe rather than being one of its metropolitan capitalist centers. That very fact highlighted how much capitalism in places like Britain, France, and Germany had been stabilized by exploiting the colonies and other semi-colonies such as Latin America, where states were independent in name only.

Surplus from Africa was partly used to offer a few more benefits to European workers and served as a bribe to make the latter less revolutionary. The bribe came in the form of increased wages, better working conditions, and expanded social services. The benefits of colonialism were diffused throughout European society in many ways. Most capitalist enterprises offered consumer goods which were mass produced at low prices, and therefore the European housewife got some relief. For instance, instant coffee brought that beverage within the reach of the ordinary worker. Meanwhile, the capitalist still made his fortune by insuring that the Ivory Coast or Colombian grower got no price increase. In that way, colonialism was serving all classes and sectors of Western Europe and other capitalist metropoles.

European workers have paid a great price for the few material benefits which accrued to them as crumbs from the colonial table. The class in power controls the dissemination of information. The capitalists misinformed and miseducated workers in the metropoles to the point where they became allies in colonial exploitation. In accepting to be led like sheep, European workers were perpetuating their own enslavement to the capitalists. They ceased to seek political power and contented themselves with bargaining for small wage increases, which were usually counterbalanced by increased costs of living. They ceased to be creative and allowed bourgeois cultural decadence to overtake them all. They failed to exercise any independent judgment on the great issues of war and peace, and therefore ended up by slaughtering not only colonial peoples but also themselves.

Fascism was a monster born of capitalist parents. Fascism came as the end-product of centuries of capitalist bestiality, exploitation, domination, and racism—mainly exercised outside Europe. It is highly significant that many settlers and colonial officials displayed a leaning towards fascism. Apartheid in South Africa is nothing but fascism. It was gaining roots from the early period of white colonization in the seventeenth century, and particularly after the mining industry brought South Africa fully into the capitalist orbit in the nineteenth century. Another example of the fascist potential of colonialism was seen when France was overrun by Nazi Germany in 1940. The French fascists collaborated with Hitler to establish what was called the Vichy regime in France, and the French white settlers in Africa supported the Vichy regime. A more striking instance to the same effect was the fascist ideology developed by the white settlers in Algeria, who not only opposed independence for Algeria under Algerian rule, but they also strove to bring down the more progressive or liberal governments of metropolitan France.

Inside Europe itself, some specific and highly revealing connections can be found between colonialist behavior and the destruction of the few contributions made by capitalism to human development. For instance, when Colonel Von Lettow returned from leading the German forces in East Africa in World War I, he was promoted to a general in the German army, and Von Lettow was in command of the massacre of German communists in Hamburg in 1918. That was a decisive turning point in German history, for once the most progressive workers had been crushed, the path was clear for the fascist deformation of the future. In brutally suppressing the Maji Maji War in Tanganyika and in attempting genocide against the Herero people of Namibia (South-West Africa), the German ruling class were getting the experience which they later applied against the Jews and against German workers and progressives.

When the fascist dictatorship was inaugurated in Portugal in 1926, it drew inspiration from Portugal's colonial past. After Salazar became the dictator in 1932, he stated that his "New State" in Portugal would be based on the labor of the "inferior peoples," meaning of course Africans. In addition, Portuguese peasants and workers had to submit to police terror, poverty, and dehumanization, so they paid (and are still paying) a high price for fascism at home and colonialism abroad.

Colonialism strengthened the Western European ruling class and capitalism as a whole. Particularly in its later phases, it was evidently giving a new lease of life to a mode of production that was otherwise dying. From every viewpoint other than that of the minority class of capitalists, colonialism was a monstrous institution holding back the liberation of man.

Brief Guide to Reading

Here again, few scholars have treated capitalism and imperialism as an integral system involving the transfer of surplus and other benefits from colonies to metropoles. And, where there is an awareness of the unity of the system, no detailed analysis necessarily follows. In effect, one is faced with the limitations of a metropolitan viewpoint. Thus, European or white American Marxists who expose the rapacious nature of modern capitalism within their own countries have not generally integrated this with the exploitation of Africa, Asia, and Latin America—except for the very recent neo-colonial period.

GEORGE PADMORE, *Africa: How Britain Rules Africa.* London: Wishart Books Ltd., 1936.

KWAME NKRUMAH, *Africa Must Unite.* New York: International Publishers, 1970.

——— *Neo-colonialism, the Highest Stage of Imperialism.*

W. A. HUNTON, *Decision in Africa.* New York: International Publishers, 1957.

The most vociferous remarks about Africa's contribution to Europe have been made by politically involved Pan-African intellectuals, such as these three.

GROVER CLARK, *The Balance Sheets of Colonialism.* New York: Russell and Russell, 1967.

D. K. FIELDHOUSE, *The Colonial Empires.* New York: Delacorte Press, 1966.

These two texts proclaim that colonialism was not essentially economic, and that the colonizers did not gain. The second book is recent, and the view is still very much alive.

U.S.S.R. Institute of History, *A History of Africa 1918–1967.*

PIERRE JALÉE, *The Pillage of the Third World.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970.

These (Marxist) texts specifically about Africa and the exploited sector of the capitalist world do make the point that the metropoles were extracting huge colonial surpluses.