

COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION TO CAFA 11

We now entering the second decade of structural adjustment in African universities. Its impact on academic freedom has been even more devastating than many of us could anticipate in the mid 1980s when the program was first adopted on many African campuses. African universities have been run to the ground as far as funding, infrastructure, and legitimacy are concerned. Students and faculty protests are now regularly met with truncheons, shut-downs and prison terms all over the continent, while the institutions like the World Bank and IMF which demand the continuation of structural adjustment remain conveniently silent. Nevertheless the struggle goes on.

In this issue we examine the situation on the Nigerian campuses, where the strike called by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)—now forced underground—continues. Then Alamin Mazrui illustrates the position (and duplicity) of the World Bank in the vital area of African language education. Ousseina Alidou presents an overview of the pernicious consequences of France's "francophonie" policy for the educational process in "Francophone" Africa.

Hugo Aboites discusses the structural adjustment of Mexican universities in the 1980s and 1990s. We publish this article because it dispels the myth of an African exceptionalism with regard to the crisis of the universities, as it demonstrates that "adjusted" educational systems suffer from the same predicaments worldwide. Aboites also shows that the call for "social relevance," often voiced by supporters of adjustment in higher education is actually a call for turning higher education into an instrumental of business profit, rather than an expression of concern with people's needs.

Finally in this issue we publish a resolution against capital punishment, that we will present at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association for ratification, and an appeal for mobilization in support of Azi Kambule, a South African child whose case dramatizes the need to oppose capital punishment in the US as well as in every other part of the World.

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Table of Contents

On the Future of the African University.....	2
Nigerian University Faculty on Strike.....	5
A Resolution Against the Death Penalty.....	9
Francophonie, World Bank and the Collapse of the Francophone Africa Education System.....	10
The World Bank, the Language Question and the Future of African Education.....	14
Globalization and the Transformation of the Mexican University.....	23
Appeal for Azi Kambule.....	31

On the Future of the African University

by
Silvia Federici

As the predicament of the African educational system continues to be a topic of debate among policy makers and africanists, a new approach is developing that blames the crisis of higher education not on its defunding, but on its lack of social relevance. A case in point is the recent commentary by Jerker Carlsson, "The Future of the African University," published in *News from Nordiska Afrikainstitutet* 1/96 (pp. 5-6).

Carlsson, perhaps inspired by World Bank reports, notices first the lack of management capacity and the low productivity of the African university system, and then suggests that the crux of the problem is its relation to "society." The African taxpayers—he says—want more for their money; the university has to make a contribution to society. So far, however, the university has not defined its goals or been able to develop its activities and strategies in conformity with social needs, being structured on a foreign, European model concerned with modernizing Africa and thus uninterested in traditional knowledge. Conclusion: unless the university reorients its mission, there is no reason why any government should finance an institution that is "inefficient, irrelevant and isolationist". This—we are told—was the agreement reached by the Association of African Universities at its last meeting in Lesotho—an agreement Carlsson obviously approves.

Here then we come, full circle, with the cuts being justified but, this time, in the name of promoting the relevance of higher education to social needs. But what are these "social needs"? Certainly they are not the needs of the many Nigerian students and families, who are facing untold hardships to ensure that they or their children gain a higher education—a must, we are everyday reminded, in this high-tech world, driven by the knowledge /information nexus. Nor are they the needs of Nigerian workers, who are well aware that in the cuts to education—at all levels—the devaluation of their labor is a stake. More likely the "social needs," that Mr. Carlsson and the AAU refer to, are the needs of international agencies, foreign investors and African elites, who, on the one side, are dissatisfied because the African universities have failed in the past to produce a sizable number of technocrats sensitive to their needs; on the other, are afraid of the presence of an educated, frustrated, unemployed youth in an Africa designed, in their plans, to be a source of cheap, unskilled, likely immigrant labor.

Blaming the African university system for being "socially irrelevant" accomplishes, from this viewpoint, two tasks. First, it hints to the need for a closer relationship between industry and schooling, of the type that is now preached virtually everywhere, as a *sine qua non* condition for the

disbursement of educational funds. This, undoubtedly, is how we should translate the complaint that the university is "inefficient, irrelevant and isolationist". We can rest assured, in fact, that what is being deplored here is not the failure of the university system to produce students who dedicate their life to help peasants recuperate their lands, or organize with workers so that they can gain higher wages, or assist communities so that they can get clean water, electricity, medical care and good transport. One clue to the fact that these social needs are not those haunting the minds of Carlsson and the AAU is the passing reference to "tax-payers wanting more for their money"—which excludes the largest percentage of the African population, who these days has hardly any money even to feed itself. The smart shoppers—Carlsson refers to—who, money in hand, are demanding a better educational service, are understandably drawn from the African elites, whose primary need is to acquire the know-how enabling them to profit, together with their foreign partners, at the spoiling of their countries. This, however, may be too crude to be admitted, and this is where the rhetoric of "social needs" and "relevance"—which conveniently leaves undefined whose needs are to be cared for and from whose viewpoint is relevance to be measured—comes again useful.

There is, however, another agenda that transpires from Carlsson and the AAU recommendations, which may seem, at first, strangely at odd, with an appeal to the need for a higher educational efficiency. This is the surprising claim that African universities are too influenced by European standards, and disinterested in traditional knowledge. This is the type of critique that one would expect from leftist or nationalist intellectuals, preoccupied with challenging the colonial or neo-colonial domination of African culture. Why, then, is this critique voiced today by university administrators (if we are to believe Carlsson account), and by mainstreamers like Carlsson himself—who is so preoccupied with not disturbing digestion in the corridors of power that he does not even mention once, in his article, the role of the World Bank in the current shaping of the African university system?

The answer, we may speculate, is that

boosting the business content of the African university is not enough. Equally important is reducing its size, expelling the many who do not have the money to pay for it, nor a profession waiting for them after graduation. It is to sweeten the bitter pill of a major university downsizing that the denigration of the African university system as "shaped on a European model", and the revaluation of "traditional knowledge" are offered. How else to explain this strange complaint about African universities being too "European," made at a time when Europeans and Americans are running the African continent, including its educational system, and by people who are totally acquiescent and complicitous with this situation?

If the problem is the "European" control of African universities, why is no provision mentioned for expelling from its management the World Bank and the vast panoply of European and American donors and NGOs, who today control its budget, its curriculum, its educational equipment, its research agendas, its human power requirements and so forth?

The fact that the names of the World Bank, SAP, USAID are not even mentioned in Carlsson's account, and that he does not seem at all concerned with the role of such influential organizations as the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Ford Foundation—who are pulling the strings of the Africa's educational system—reveals that the charge of Eurocentrism is a smoke screen, only serving to discredit the African university in the eyes of a population who is to be eased out of it. Proof of this is the fact that, whenever they can, the children of the African middle and upper class—including probably the children of the members of the Association of African Universities—flock to European or American schools, or to the American private universities that are now sprawling in Africa. For they know that a degree obtained in a European or American institution is a key to success in the "global economy"—a key to jobs that pay more than a minimum wage, a safeguard against unemployment, a condition, if not a guarantee, for social mobility. Why, then, should Africans be told that a "European" type education is not worthwhile, and that this is the reason why public higher education

will not be funded? And why are Africans being encouraged to turn to "traditional knowledge" when on the continent today every tradition—beginning with the right to land—is being trampled upon? What could a ban on European education mean—coming from the pulpit from which it is issued—other than the fact that the majority of Africans are not entitled to have the same aspirations that are taken for granted by youth in Europe and America? Which means that they are destined to a very different place in the international division of labor from that occupied by their peers in the industrialized world.

It should not be necessary to clarify, at this point, that the question here is not to defend the so-called "European" model of education—which should be more properly described as the bourgeois model of education. The question is a strategy that parades as a defense of educational autonomy and "traditional knowledge," only to delegitimize the public funding of higher education, in the same way as the revaluing "traditional medicine" is often used these days to legitimize the defunding of public health care.

Finally, Carlsson, and those who have inspired his views, should also be taken to task for arguing that "the initiative [in the reorientation of the African university's priorities], must..... largely come from the universities themselves."

But who makes up the universities? The teachers? The students? If that is the case, they have demonstrated plenty of initiative, as the pages of the CAFA Newsletter have documented over the years, by struggling against government policies and foreign dictates, concerning what function the university should serve and the political direction of their countries. Why, then, does Carlsson fail to even mention their demands and recommendations?

Moreover, is it disingenuous to wave the finger at the university, and require that it "take the initiative" in the reshaping of the future of African education, without specifying what kind of initiative is recommended, (monetary, curriculum), and without acknowledging the powerful international forces that have to be reckoned with in such process.

In concluding we may also ask why is it assumed that higher education in Europe or the

U.S., or even Latin America—as Carlsson implicitly suggests—is more relevant to people's needs than it is in Africa. Is it because it is more attuned to business needs and generates less conflict, given the position Europeans, North Americans and Japanese occupy in the international division of labor? (We leave aside South America, as any daily news program would testify to the existence of an intense, daily conflictuality on most South American campuses, indicating that there too social relevance is not been addressed).

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

What distinguishes the situation of the African universities is the especially negative evaluation of their function in international circles, due to the belief that African labor has so far failed to satisfy the requirements of what business defines as "a congenial investment environment." Thus, the consensus among some World Bank circles that the African university is "outdated," and the new attention being paid to "traditional knowledge," which like "traditional medicine" from the World Bank's viewpoint has the advantage of coming at no cost.

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

FACULTY STILL ON STRIKE IN NIGERIA

Update on the ASUU strike.

Contrary to the declarations made in recent weeks by the Nigerian government, the nationwide strike of the university faculty is still continuing, but it has taken a new form. All over the country, by September 30, universities had been formally reopened and teachers and students have returned to the campuses, but, with few exceptions, teachers are still staying away from the classrooms.

The decision to return to the campuses was taken after the Abacha government escalated his assault on the strikers, at first by banning ASUU and all the other university unions, including those of the staff who had not gone on strike (NASU and SSANU). On August 21, moreover, Abacha also promulgated the Trade Disputes Decree N.24, which stipulates that any person caught participating in the activities of the three banned unions is to be arraigned by the Miscellaneous Offenses Tribunal and, if convicted, must pay a fine of 10,000 Nairas or suffer imprisonment from one to three years, or both [*The (Nigerian) NEWS*, 10/21/96].

After the ban failed to convince the teachers to return to work, the government issued a directive to Vice-chancellors of the universities instructing them to reopen their institutions if they could get 60% of teachers back to their desks, and ordered that the lecturers who still refused to teach should be evicted from their homes. The teachers were asked to sign a register indicating their willingness to end the strike or face dismissal.

At this point, the now banned ASUU advised its members to appear on campus, but not to engage in any academic activities, and this is what most faculties have done. Although many have signed the register in many university teaching activities have not resumed. As a senior lecturer interviewed by *The NEWS* explained, teachers "have now adopted a new strategy of teaching according to how much (they) are paid." Thus, on some campuses none of the teachers who signed to resume work has actually done so.

In early July, the government had also demanded that union locals negotiate separately with each university administration, but this too was rejected. Instead, by early September many teachers—291 just from the university of Ilorin, and 400, out of a teaching staff of 1,000, from Ibadan—were beginning to resign in mass and demand their entitlements. There is, in fact, a widespread feeling, among the Nigerian faculty, that matters have reached a breaking point and, unless drastic measures are taken by the government to infuse new resources into the university system, and end the climate of intimidation that now prevails in the campuses, teaching is absolutely impossible.

At the moment it is not clear how the ASUU strike will be resolved. It is evident, however, that the government is determined to use all means to break the back of the Nigerian teachers. This is why it more than ever important that we show our Nigerian colleagues our support, and let the Abacha government know that they are not alone.

There many initiatives we can take to make this point. First, it is important that we systematically challenge any form of cooperation with the Nigerian Government, starting from our own academic institutions. We have recently learned, for instance, from a declaration by Wole Soyinka, that New York University has accepted a donation by General Abacha to set up a scholarship in the Faculty of Medicine carrying his name. We have not verified yet if this allegation is correct, but we invite our colleagues, beginning with those at New York University, to investigate it and, if it is true, to expose this shameful collaboration.

We also join with ACAS (Association of Concerned Africa Scholars) to ask you to:

1. Write, call, or fax the Nigerian Ambassador protesting academic repression. In your own words call on the Nigerian government to respect the freedoms of speech, assembly, association and the

collective bargaining rights of Nigerian students, academics, and all Nigerian citizens and workers. Demand that the government end violence against peaceful demonstrations, that it unban the staff and student unions, and that it negotiate in good faith to resolve the strike.

Ambassador Zubair M. Kazaure
The Embassy of Nigeria
1333 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Fax: (202) 775-1385
Tel: (202) 986-8400; 822-1500

2. Write, call, fax or e-mail your Washington Representatives and let them know you are concerned about the repression of academics and all people in Nigeria. Ask them to co-sponsor and vigorously support the legislation introduced by Senator Nancy Kassebaum and Representative Donald Payne that calls for sanctions against Nigeria.

The Honorable [name]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable [name]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
Capitol switchboard: (202) 224-3121

For electronic addresses see the ACAS web site:
<http://www.prairienet.org/acas/dc.html>

3. Develop local networks on campuses and communities. Network action would be particularly appropriate. Considerable information on these actions and the situation in Nigeria is available through the ACAS web site: <http://www.prairienet.org/acas/>

4. Obtain a 60+pages documentation packet on Nigeria that ACAS has prepared for scholars and activists (cost \$6). Write to ACAS, c/o Bill Martin, 326 Lincoln Hall, 702 S. Wright St., Urbana, IL 61801.

Background to the Repression of Academics and the ASUU Strike

The strike was called by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) on April 9, after it had conducted a referendum on all the campuses, and then engaged in a series of demonstrative, "Monday-only" strikes, for one month, to give the government the chance to respond to the teachers' grievances. In response, the Abacha government has cut the striking teachers' wages, and on May 16, banned the national university unions, including ASUU, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), the Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU) and the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU).

At the origin of the strike was the government's reneging of the agreement the faculty reached with Babangida in 1992. At that time, the government promised to raise teachers' wages—which currently average 5,000 Naira per month, or about \$60 US dollars—and to make a new investment in the university to revitalize its collapsed infrastructure. None of these agreements, however, have been kept. As a result, the conditions of Nigerian universities have deteriorated to a degree that makes teaching a tragic joke.

Teaching is without books, since neither the libraries, nor the students can afford to buy them. Labs are non-existent. In some universities chemistry students graduate without ever entering one, and teachers have to continuously invent substitutes allowing them to give the student an idea of what the experiments may be like. Moreover, both teachers and students are starving, as academic wages have remained abysmally low (as the saying goes, among Nigerian academics, "my take home pay does not take me home.") and students must pay for higher accommodation, feeding and tuition costs, in addition to contributing to the upkeep of the university. Students, for instance, on many Nigerian campuses, must provide the everyday supply of educational materials (like chalk and paper) needed in the classrooms, since nothing is anymore available. At exams time, they

may even be asked to come up with the money for the external examiner, since procurement by the bursary is so slow that exams could not take place otherwise. And they have to provide the ink, the paper and the stencils for the publication of their results.

In some state universities tuition fees have been raised up to several thousands nairas per year, in the effort by the administration to compensate for the absence of government funds. To raise funds, Ogun State University has even adopted a new admission policy: admitting students if they can pay 50,000 Nairas to the University, regardless of their grades on the entrance exams. A total of 70 students have gained admission through this policy, and the university has collected 3.5 millions Nairas as a result (regular students are also been asked to contribute a development levy of 2,000 Nairas in addition to their tuition fees). Meanwhile, another state-owned university, the Ogun State Polytechnic, has received the permission by the military government of the state to follow this example, on the ground that "the government can no longer carry the burden of financing the institution" (*Newswatch*, 29/4/96). In the federal universities, tuition is, in theory, still free, but the cost of going to school has enormously increased. First because students must now provide educational materials, and also because they have to pay more for accommodation food and transport, not to mention books, paper and journals, which are out of reach for the majority.

The price of accommodation has increased so much that all students sublet their rooms. Thus rooms that were originally made for two and, in recent years, have been redefined as being fit for four, in the majority of cases host more than fifteen, as students sublet their space, and sleep there in turns to share the cost. Many students also use the classrooms as hostels. As a result, the classrooms are rapidly deteriorating: seats are broken, half of the students that attend do not have a place to sit, a large number do not even attend, for lack of space (The lecturers too have no space; three or four crowd in an office; others have no office and wander around using their colleagues'). The cost of feeding too has increased, sometimes as much as

tenfold. In 1986, an average meal at the local "mama-put" cost 2.50 Naira; today, even without one piece of meat, you have to pay 30 Naira. Thus, students practice the famous "0-1-0": zero breakfast, lunch, and zero supper—or the "0-1-0 without," since they cannot afford even one piece of meat with their lunch.

In view of this situation ASUU now wants the government to make a fresh assessment of what is needed to revive the universities. Another crucial issue involved in the strike is the question of academic freedom, which ranges from administrative abuse of authority, to government interference in the appointment of academic administrators and faculty, to the growth of vigilantes squads, who disseminate terror on the campuses, by armed attacks on activists and any students and teachers they oppose. Violence by well armed "cultist groups" is now so common that teachers and students no longer dare to walk alone at night on the campus, and acts of aggression and murder have become a fact of university life.

One of the most gruesome examples of what campus life is like in Nigeria comes from the University of Port Harcourt, where, on January 17 of this year of this year, at 12 p.m., in full daylight, ten students hacked down another student at the convocation area while one thousand students and four lecturers were scared away from the scene of the murder with gun shots (*The Week*, 26/2/96). As a result of the attack, which was described by a witness as "a Mafia-like action," the student died four days later. Surprisingly even a congress of the students' union, on January 31, did not address the issue, possibly out of fear, or because students no longer hope the authorities will punish the culprits. Students say, in fact, that the so-called cult-members have virtual immunity and receive their weapons straight from the police, so that even when assailants are identified little is done against them. So-called "cult members"—have been known in the past to break up NANS meetings and to challenge NANS elections, forcing the elected candidates to give up their position in favor of one among their ranks. When students have protested with the university administration they have found themselves charged with the crimes committed by their

victimizers and expelled from the school. [This is what happened at Obafemi Awolowo University (Ife), in July 1995, where one Anthony Fashayo, brutalized the winner of the student union election, had himself elected by force, and gained recognition by the university Chancellor, who rushed to disburse into his hands the funds due to the union, and to criminalize the lawfully elected students. (From the 1995 CDHR Annual Report On the Human Rights Situation in Nigeria).

Compounding the campus violence is the violence unleashed by state and federal government on any form of opposition.

On June 5, police in Ibadan attacked thousands of student demonstrators who were protesting the assassination of Kudirat Abiola, the wife of imprisoned opposition leader Moshood K. Abiola.

The students were joined by Ibadan merchants as they marched through town, singing anti-military songs and calling for international intervention to restore democracy. (ACAS Action Alert)

Meanwhile, murders of and assaults on regime opponents have also intensified, while the prisons are overflowing with students, union leaders, human rights activists. To what degree the human rights situation in Nigeria has degenerated is well documented by the 1995 Annual Report of the Committee For the Defence of Human Rights, now available at the following address :

CDHR

Plot 9, Ladipo Oluwole Street,

Off Adeniyi Jones Avenue

Ikeja, Lagos Nigeria

Tel/Fax 234 01 4977488; 234 01 4936907

THE VICISSITUDES OF THE NSEP: AN UPDATE

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) has undergone a new metamorphosis. This program was established in 1991, with the sponsorship of former Senator Boran, to provide funds for training graduate and undergraduate students in area and language studies that would be useful to U.S. economic and military "security" in the post-Cold War era. It was also to provide funding for universities to open up or expand programs concerning cultures and languages that have not previously been intensely studied but which might be of importance to U.S. "security interests."

This program has been quite controversial from its inception, however. First, because it was initially to be administered by the Defense Department and not the Department of Education and second, because of its "service requirement," i.e., graduate students who accepted NSEP fellowships were required to work in the intelligence services after completing their degrees, otherwise they would have to pay back the grants with interest. A number of changes were made in the administration of NSEP and in its "service requirement" in 1993 in response to critics who charged that students who accepted grants and went abroad might be identified as intelligence agents.

But last year Congressional Representative Bob Young (R-Florida) successfully introduced legislation that required NSEP students to work in the Defense Department or the "intelligence community." He argued that the Pentagon and the CIA should benefit directly from a program they finance. Young's amendment forced a halt in the functioning of the program and much confusion and anxiety among the grant recipients and their academic institutions.

Then Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois) introduced an amendment to Young's revision of the NSEP service requirement in the recently passed 1997 authorization bill for the Department of Defense. "Under the latest modification of the program's service requirement, award recipients can full their obligation by working in a federal agencies with 'national security responsibilities.'" [The Chronicle of Higher Education, 10/4/96] This latest change has inaugurated a semiotic uproar in Washington, for what agency has national security responsibilities: Defense, surely, but why not the Geological Survey or the National Zoo? This five year-long "confusion" is simply a sign that the U.S. government can neither understand nor support knowledge disconnected from murder and mayhem. CAFA urges African studies programs, Africanist scholars and students to refuse to participate in NSEP and to expose those institutions and individuals that do.

ASA DRAFT RESOLUTION AGAINST CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The following is a resolution against capital punishment that the Committee For Academic Freedom in Africa will ask the African Studies Association to endorse in its November 1996 meetings.

We believe that Africanist scholars cannot remain silent in front of the escalation of legal murders perpetrated by the U.S. state in our name and presumably in order to guarantee our safety.

We protest against capital punishment first because the death penalty is against all that we stand for as educators. As teachers we must be committed to the idea that people are reasonable and can be made to understand their faults and cannot be treated as if they were dangerous animals, particularly when they are no longer in the position to inflict any harm.

No one is in a better position to understand the political meaning of capital punishment than Africanists, who are well acquainted with the deep historical connection between capital punishment, slavery, colonial oppression and racism. Each of these curses is today making a come back in the U.S. and internationally, as new plantation systems are emerging, driven by a globalization process

that cheapens human labor and commercializes every aspect of human life.

Africanist scholars should also be concerned with the international repercussions of the U.S. enforcement of the death penalty as a legal means of punishment. There is no question, in fact, that the position of the U.S. legitimizes the state use of executions to deal with social problems and social protest worldwide. The case of Saro Wiwa and the other Ogoni leaders executed by the Nigerian government was the object of an international uproar. What is less known is that prior to the execution of Saro Wiwa, between July and September 1995, seventy five convicts were hung or shot at the stake, in prisons and public places, across Nigeria, and the use of the death penalty is gaining ground all over Africa, as in response to the dramatic decline in the standard of living more people are led to crime as a means to survive.

We ask all Africanists to support our move to have the ASA pass the following resolution, and we welcome any suggestion specifying how this resolution can be improved and how we can organize so that we can contribute to put an end to this barbaric practice.

Resolution

Whereas the death penalty is not a deterrent to murder;

Whereas the death penalty devalues human life;

Whereas the death penalty discriminates on the basis of race and class;

Whereas the death penalty fosters the pernicious idea that social problems can be solved through the annihilation of other human beings.

Be it resolved that the African Studies Association will request the President of the United States and the state governors to present to the Congress and the respective state legislatures legislation that abolishes capital punishment and immediately ends executions in the federal and state prisons.

Be it also resolved that the African Studies Association will urge its members to use their resources to educate their students and their communities about the negative effects of the death penalty on the social political and spiritual well-being of the nation.

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

by
Ousseina D. Alidou
Ohio State University

Since the mid 1980's the threat of an uncontrollable crisis in Africa's educational system has been visible all over the continent and more acutely in the so-called 'Francophone' countries. One may have hoped that the wind of democratization that swept Africa in the 1990s would have alleviated this crisis, but this has not happened.

The crisis of the African school system has been created by internal as well external factors. The most important among them are (1) the existence of repressive governments which hinder academic freedom at the level of curriculum development/ implementation, and at the level of institutional freedom of expression and self-governance; (2) the adoption of unpopular educational reforms, forced upon the African school system both by France (through its Francophonie policy) in its former colonies, and by multilateral backers such as World Bank and IMF—the major vehicles of contemporary "western" imperialism today.

Why has this unpopular reform been adopted? And what are the mechanisms by which it operates? Who benefits from it? These are questions I will examine in this essay.

Francophonie and "Francophone" Africa

In the aftermath of the independence of African countries, France could not tolerate the idea of losing territories and resources vital for its internal survival. Thus, it adopted a more pernicious but subtle policy, under the name of 'francophonie,' that tightened more than ever before, its political and economical control over the so-called "francophone" countries. The philosophical founda-

tion of francophonie was the imposition of French as the major linguistic medium. This guaranteed France's intellectual and cultural control over African countries and reinforced her former colonies economic dependency on her. (Bokamba and Tlou 1980; Bokamba 1984). Moreover, in the name of technical assistance, France, through the terms of francophonie, has controlled even diplomatic cooperation between francophone African countries and their non-francophone partners.

Thus, francophonie had several effects on the educational system in Africa. One of the main characteristics of the francophone educational system is its lack of adaptation to the social and economic needs of the countries. This is due to the fact that it operates on the basis of a backward system inherited from the old metropole which still dictates to Africans what their school curricula and administration ought to be at all educational levels, from primary schools to the universities. Agence Culturelle de Cooperation Technique (ACCT) its the cultural and technical agency through which francophonie controls the implementation of reforms, and the design of school curricula in Africa (Hutchison 1994; Alidou 1995). Within this context, the francophone African countries become the dumping market for French school manuals and technology that the French educational system itself has judged as pedagogically inadequate and rejected for its own schools. One wonders what makes a bad manual in France good for Africa, particularly if one considers that the access to French universities by African graduates depends on whether or not they can compete with their French colleagues of the same level.

Another dimension of French imperialist cooperation with the francophone countries, as far

as education is concerned, is the flow of unqualified French educational experts to Africa whose mission is to train African educators—often more knowledgeable than the 'experts'!—in how to use the useless materials dumped there. Thus, francophone Africa becomes the employment market for these unqualified experts who cannot be absorbed by a saturated and competitive employment market in France. The worse part of this arrangement is that the maintenance of these useless French expatriates is at the expense of the poor African countries, that have to pay their salaries according to the scale dictated by the cost of living in France. Thus, in contrast to their African colleagues who live a totally unenviable life, French expatriates in francophone Africa enjoy a standard of living far superior to the one they could afford in France. Meanwhile, the maintenance of these communities of French expatriates in Africa, in the name of technical assistance to education, forces the francophone African countries to look for loans from backers such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Funds (IMF) at interest rates beyond these countries' reimbursement capacity. This is one of the unnecessary burdens that are weighing, and will continue to weigh for generations to come on many francophone African countries.

The African Reform and the Reaction of Francophonie

In an attempt to limit the damage of French control over their educational systems, francophone African countries decided in the late 70's to revise their curriculum according to their developmental needs, inspired by the educational reform carried on in Anglophone countries like Tanzania and Nigeria. An aspect of this reform was the revaluation of African languages as media and subjects of instruction, and the production of school manuals, published locally and reflecting African socio-cultural realities. At the higher educational level, these effort resulted in the opening of departments of linguistics, agronomy and medical

schools that would train graduates locally, thus focusing on national imperatives, while at the same time would give their programs a scope that would keep them competitive at the international level.

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

In the 1980's, France decided to cut its supply of educational equipment and materials, which are very crucial for local publishing companies, in the hope of crippling their accomplishments. France also continues to block the supply of materials to vital sectors such as health and agriculture, in order to pressure African countries to restore the educational system established under the terms of francophonie, and to secure a market for French educational products, and employment for French experts.

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

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

The new educational reform proposed by World Bank and IMF insists that Africa should promote vocational training because it lacks both the intellectual and technological capacity to sustain higher education. In other words, what Africa needs are carpenters, agricultural agents, nurses, but not engineers, agronomists, and doctors. The latter should be supplied to Africa by "the West", under the guise of international bilateral or multilateral cooperation, through institutions such

as Francophonie, World Bank and IMF, who are supposedly better suited to identify the local African needs.

This racist and simplistic view of what type of education African ought to have is articulated by Christian Vandrendriessche, the French cultural attaché in Central African Republic:

One could desire that access to scientific knowledge for everybody in this planet. The educational manuals would then be more or less standardized. However, this is not desirable merely because if the world is only made up of pedagogic experts and doctors, it would lose its identity. One must by all means preserve its diversity and its inequality levels. This diversity is also a form of wealth. Personally, I do not believe that everybody should have access to the same education....The reform in Africa? One must make a distinction between African specificity and even national particularity and the need to open up to the world. (Afrique Education 1995: 13, 29-30)

In other words, educational underdevelopment is to be considered a worthy form of cultural diversity!

All over Africa this racist, anti-popular and exploitative reform recommended by World Bank and IMF and their allies faces the resistance of African educators, students, at all levels, and informed citizens, in the form of strikes against and violent confrontations with African leaders who are puppets of the new imperialism. In francophone Africa, the crisis is made worse by the devaluation of the CFA franc, a development that, according to the terms stipulated with the independence agreement between France and its colonies, should never have occurred. In addition to this unexpected devaluation, the World Bank and the IMF structural adjustment programs have forced the francophone African countries to reduce the salary of their civil servants, and to cut student stipends, thus worsening living conditions that were already unbearable. The irony is that the dependent condition of the francophone African students is the consequence of an administrative system inherited from the French, which prohibits full time students from earning a living even when the government cannot provide for their stipends.

These western institutions are thus engaged in a well calculated strategy whose main purpose is

to bring Africa down to the limit of its resilience, and eventually establish favorable conditions for modeling the continent according to their imperialist agenda.

This international conspiracy against the African educational system is evident in the World Bank's choice of French and French Canadian publishing companies, for the supply of manuals and other educational materials intended for francophone African schools, and its decision to ignore local African publishers. It is against this western monopoly of production, in the publication of African educational manuals, that a Togolese publisher tries to call to the attention of both African governments and their bilateral and multilateral partners:

I am sorry to point out that World Bank policy of advertisement does not favor local African publishers. It sets conditions of contract that cannot be met by local publishers who are limited in their capacities and cannot compete with western companies. I am not aware of the Canadian (Quebec) government's initiative to consolidate African countries publishing capacities. With regard to France, I have not seen an undertaking for strengthening the publishing capacities in the South. I do not believe it is in the interest of French publishers to help develop African publishers in the sense that for countries such as Cameroon, 90% of the publishing market is controlled by French publishers (Afrique Education 1995: 13, p. 24).

The same view was stressed by a publisher from Ivory Coast in the same interview:

I must start to say that we are hostile to the World Bank advertisement policy because it does not intend to help national publishers. We don't have any relationship with the World Bank. Having said this, it must be the responsibility of each country to determine its own priorities even if the World Bank is the loans provider. It gives loans, but it should not dictate what the publishing structures should be. In fact, it wishes to see African publishing companies destabilized (Afrique Education 1995: p. 24-25).

Why should the World Bank privilege French or French Canadian publishers such as Lavalin, Servedit, Haitier and Edicef instead of African publishers, if its intent is really to revitalize African development? Isn't it counter-productive for poor countries, such as Niger, Togo, and Benin, that

cannot even guarantee basic living conditions for their teachers and students, to have to purchase textbooks from western publishers who generally deal in hard currency and impose high prices, while the local publishers can offer better deals and provide job opportunities to many unemployed young people? Who benefits the most from the co-operation between African countries and France, World Bank and IMF? The reform intended to promote vocational training, rather than higher education, is merely a pretext for these institutions to restore their old control in Africa, and create a rationale for the return of western 'experts' to implement their reform agenda.

The general paralysis of education brought about by student and teacher strikes in Africa, and more acutely in francophone Africa, is one way Africans attempt to resist this new invasion by western imperialism. From 1987 to 1988, the University of Dakar was closed for a full academic year. In 1992, the University of Gabon experienced the same fate. In the Niger Republic, since 1989, the educational system has been in a state of chaos, and this has been the way the educational constituency has shown its opposition to the governments' decision to implement the reform policy wanted by France, the World Bank's and the IMF. The same pattern is to be found in most francophone African countries, and the contradic-

tions inherent to this situation are continuing to intensify, because of the deepening economic crisis caused by Structural Adjustment Program and the return of dictatorships.

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

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

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

This linguistic situation that was bequeathed to the African educational system by colonial rule, has prompted two kinds of responses over the years. There is, first, the functionalist response which stresses the inevitability and even usefulness of English, suggesting that, because of its global status, because of its wealth of publications, because of its "affinity" with the inherited school system, English is the natural choice as the medium of African education. As soon as Kenya became independent in 1963, for example, the Ominde

Commission—set up to advise the government on educational policies—recommended that English be used as a medium of instruction starting from first grade, on the grounds that it would facilitate learning in all subjects, partly by avoiding a presumed difficult transition from the "vernaculars," and partly because of the language's own "intrinsic" resourcefulness (Republic of Kenya, 1964: 60). The report of this commission thus strengthened the already growing support for the introduction of English, as the preferred medium of instruction, at an earlier stage of the educational process than the one that had been chosen by the British themselves. The Kenyan government, then, is a prime example of a regime that has continued to be influenced by a functionalist ideology concerning the place of English in African education.

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

This controversy about which linguistic medium of instruction provides the child the best learning facility has led to several experimental projects, both in Africa and elsewhere, especially in the "Third World". The results of some of these

experiments have seemingly vindicated the functionalists, while others, the nationalists. In Africa, for example, there was the 1968 Iganga experiment in Uganda, that was based on the teaching of geography, and concluded in favor of English as the medium of instruction. The Six Year Primary (Experimental) Project at Ile-Ife (Nigeria), that was launched in 1970, on the other hand, arrived at the opposite conclusion: that instruction in a first language greatly facilitates learning (Ayo Bamgbose, 1991: 76-77). These conflicting experimental results do not necessarily demonstrate that one approach is as good as the other and may reflect the ideological biases of the experimenters. But these uncertainties, concerning the effects of a chosen medium of instruction, are not reflected, as we shall see, in the World Bank's position on the matter.

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

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

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

The World Bank and the Question of Instructional Media.

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

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

Against this backdrop, the World Bank claims that the most effective educational approach is one that begins instruction in a local language and switches to the second language—almost invariably the European tongue of colonial origins—at a later stage. “With this approach,” we are told, “children are able to acquire basic literacy, learn the fundamentals in various subjects and adjust to the school and its demands before they confront the task of learning a new language” (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991:167).

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

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

be a high priority for any institution claiming to have the educational welfare of the continent at heart.

However, in spite of its proclaimed conviction about the pedagogic and educational value of “mother-tongue” instruction, the World Bank claims that it cannot impose an educational language policy on African countries. Each country, we are told, must be free to determine which language policy is best commensurate with its own unique political, economic, cultural and linguistic peculiarities. This same institution that has been coercing African governments into overhauling their educational structures virtually overnight, suddenly becomes mindful of the national sovereignty of these countries, and of their right to linguistic self-determination. Thus, it well understands “that there are many instances when early immersion — that is, instruction in the European languages, in an all European language environment, from day one of schooling — is more appropriate than instruction in local languages, and that such immersion may be the only pragmatic option available to a nation” (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991:167).

With this seemingly democratic (albeit patronizing) posture, the World Bank’s real position on the question of the linguistic medium of instruction become transparent. Behind the mask, a view transpires that encourages the consolidation of the imperial languages both in Africa and generally the “Third World,” and favors education in the local languages, in the earlier years of schooling, merely as a means of facilitating the students’ acquisition of the imperial language at a later stage. This may explain why the World Bank never raises the possibility of using African languages beyond the first few years of elementary school. UNESCO has indeed campaigned for a shift to local languages in the earlier years of a child’s education; but it has also recommended, on educational grounds “that the use of the mother-tongue be extended to as late a stage in education as possible” (1953: 47). Still the World Bank does not seem to regard the linguistic Africanization of all primary education and beyond as a worthwhile effort. Its publication on strategies for stabilizing

and revitalizing the universities, for example, makes absolutely no mention of the place of language at the tertiary level of African education (Saint, 1993).

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

One of the most important and difficult problems connected with the use of vernacular languages in education is that of providing reading materials. It will often happen that even a language which is quite capable of being used as a medium of instruction will be almost entirely without books or other materials. The difficulty is... above all to find the money. (UNESCO, 1953: 50-51)

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

The World Bank’s structural adjustment programs are also contributing to consolidate the use of the imperial languages in education in a different demographic sense. In its attempts to justify its pressure on African governments to cut down educational expenses and to force students to assume part of the cost of higher education, the World Bank has sometimes argued that the majority of students can afford to pay for their education,

because they come from fairly affluent backgrounds. Subsidies to public universities, in particular, are considered an inefficient educational investment, and a regressive social spending because supposedly university students are disproportionately from the upper end of the scale of income distribution (World Bank, 1994: 3).

In absolute terms, however, World Bank figures show unequivocally that the majority of students in Africa (an average of about 60%) come from the ranks of the peasantry, workers and petty-traders, who are not likely to have the means to meet the increasing cost of university education. The natural outcome of the tuition fees increase, then, is the increase in drop-out rates among students from poorer families. In Kenya’s Moi and Egerton Universities, for example, with their combined population of about 6000 students, over 2000 students were deregistered in early May of 1996 because of the non-payment of fees and tuition (*Daily Nation*, Nairobi, 5/4/1996:18). Thus, the net effect of the World Bank’s structural adjustment programs in education is to transform the African university into a “white collar” institution, as far as the background of the student body.

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

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

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

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

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

severe problems with financial resources to purchase petroleum products and other inputs needed for the maintenance of its economic sector?" (Roy-Campbell, 1992:171).

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

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

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

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

From the above examples, then, it is clear that the World Bank is speaking from both sides of

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

Virtually throughout Africa, there have been alarm bells about declining academic standards. Yet, neither the World Bank-IMF pair nor the British Overseas Development Agency have even questioned the wisdom of educational instruction in European languages. On the contrary; in the one country, Tanzania, that has dared challenge the hegemony of the imperial language, by replacing it with Kiswahili in the primary school, its educational language policy has been quickly singled out by the World Bank as the culprit for its supposedly poor academic standards. The double standard here is evident; and, behind it, we may glimpse the World Bank's hidden agenda for linguistic Eurocentrism in African education.

Language, Education and Development.

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

Some nationalists have sought to explain linguistic imperialism in deterministic terms. In

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

A different perspective on the place of language in imperialist control focuses on its economic imperatives, both from the labor and the market viewpoints. In this perspective, the World Bank's language "policy," as far as educational instruction in Africa, can be seen as part of a wider economic agenda intended to meet the labor requirements of foreign capital. Here the language question goes hand-in-hand with the World Bank's recommended replacement of African university education with regional polytechnics charged with the production of graduates endowed with the practical skills needed by African economies (World Bank, 1991). Expectedly, European languages will continue to be the media of instruction in these institutions, and the development of technical and vocational Euro-linguistic skills will be an essential part of this labor policy.

The labor needs of foreign capital in several African countries usually operate at three interdependent levels. They include: (a) workers qualified for unskilled or semi-technical jobs in light manufacturing and assembly plants; (b) technical maintenance workers and workers for other "support" services for foreign and other businesses (e.g. hotels); (c) middle management operatives,

mainly for corporations investing in Africa. May the World Bank's approach to the question of the language of instruction in Africa have something to do with the reproduction of this labor hierarchy?

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

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

The socialists are struggling for the creation of the economic and political conditions necessary to install collectivism and the international. When the international is formed, it is possible that the increase of contacts between people, the methodical and regular integration of large masses of workers, will slowly bring about a reciprocal adjustment between

the Afro-European languages and will probably extend them throughout the world because of the influence the new civilization will exert. (1985: 30)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

same time, a widespread use of African languages as media of instruction.

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

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

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

But to use English to create counter-discourses and counter-ideologies does not necessarily amount to undermining the language's role in the consolidation of the global capitalist market, and in the stratification of labor for the benefit of international capital. Nor does it reduce dependency on "the West" in the educational sphere. Furthermore, *counter-discourse is not the same thing as independent discourse*. Counter-discourse is often a reactive process to the terms of discourse established by the "other." The African quest for intellectual independence must be based on independent terms of reference capable of guiding the continent towards a more organic path. Under the present global configuration of power relations, the English language is not likely to allow Africans the politico-economic space for this kind of intellectual independence. African languages may fare better, for the very act of (re)centering them sets in motion new dynamics that may provide some room for intellectual maneuver, at least in the short run. But the struggle to (re)center these languages naturally demands our engagement in a

wider struggle— against imperialism, against organizations such as the World Bank and IMF and what they represent — to create a new world order.

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Globalization and the Transformation of the Mexican University

Hugo Aboites¹

Within the last ten years, the Mexican university has been drastically transformed. The economic policy of privatization and reliance on foreign investments has been paralleled in the educational sphere by a similar privatization of knowledge and a greater dependence on 'imported knowledge'. Until these recent changes, the Mexican university was the expression of a social pact dating back to the 1910 Revolution, according to which the university was to be an institution committed to providing free education, open to all, autonomous (boards were usually composed of faculty, students, administrators and staff, while government officials and businessmen were never present), democratic, intellectually progressive and, thanks to the unionizing drives of the seventies, professionalized. The university was also the institutional foundation of the country's research infrastructure. Of the nearly 2,100 units of research and development, 880 belonged to the universities and only 55 to private industry, government centers accounting for most of the rest. This vision of what the university was to be was seldom completely realized; it was, however, the frame of reference of many university struggles over the last six decades. By contrast the changes that have been introduced in the 1980s in higher education involve a complete reinterpretation of the legal mandate of the institutions, which often instructed that research and teaching should address the "needs and the problems of the society".

The changes that have taken place have been dramatic in almost every area. Tuition fees, in most universities, have increased, and so has the influence of big business on higher education,

following the creation of national and local organisms endowed with academic authority, whose membership includes selected faculty members, government officials and business representatives. A new wage policy has been introduced that ties faculty salaries to productivity. Unions have been pushed to the margins of university life, by the introduction of new wage policies that are not subject to collective bargaining, and by a legal disposition, dating back to 1981, that prevents them from negotiating most of the issues relevant to academic life. Subsidies for education have been cut, with the result that the growth rate of students in higher education, already very low (15% of the youth in the 18-24 bracket, against 50% in the U.S.), is slowing down. The space given to the discussion of ideas and criticism has shrunk and has been subjected to market rules. Students, staff and faculty organization, that were instrumental in establishing that education is a right and an exercise of democracy, are slowly being replaced by an amorphous number of individuals who only relate to each other as providers and consumers of an "educational service." These tendencies have been intensified by the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). According to the logic of the NAFTA, knowledge-producing institutions must come under the control of both the industrialists, who are eager to acquire technological innovations, and the government whose task, under the Agreement, is to protect the property rights of U.S. and Canadian companies (see Chapter 17 of the Agreement), and insure that the production of knowledge is controlled by the market.

State and University in the eighties

The "rationalization" of the Mexican university is the outcome of a process that began in 1982. In the fall of that year, the Mexican government declared that it could not continue to service the foreign debt. No event could have been more dramatic and symbolic than this moratorium. It showed that the State was unable to foster growth within the political and economic arrangement created over the last decades and even before. It also showed that, for the last ten years, the crisis had been postponed only through the borrowing of more and more funds, so that, in less than a decade, the debt had grown from around \$30 billion dollars to more than \$100 billions. The rate of borrowing had increased especially in the previous years, when the flight of capital by Mexican investors had reached record heights.

The collapse was to serve the government, in the following years, as the basis for the introduction of a different kind of social deal in the country, where any new step would be justified as a "painful but necessary measure" in a period of economic emergency. A crisis of such depth, it was said, could not be resolved without a complete restructuring of the country's economy. Accordingly, the new group in power—the technocrats and modernizers—argued that Mexico should conform to the rules and standards set by the international financial agencies, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), presumably to gain a new international respectability and build the conditions for a new type of development.

It was clear for the modernizers that Mexico's integration in the global economy and its expected sequel, the arrival of foreign capital, were not possible within the context of the existing relations between the State and the main social sectors in the country. The social benefits stipulated by such relations, including access to education, were presented as an excessive overhead for the State and prospective investors. Thus, in May 1992, the federal government put an end to the existing single, centralized system of elementary and secondary education, both in order to shift the

financial responsibility of education to states and local communities, and to disperse in 30 different sections a union that, up to that point, had been the only one in the country for all the employees of the Ministry of Education and, as such, was one of the most powerful unions of Latin America. For years the presence of a single union had forced the State to negotiate almost every change, and had greatly inhibited business' influence on education.

A similar logic was applied to the university system. Beginning in the early 1980s, a quick series of new measures were introduced that undermined the most positive characteristics of the Mexican university. In 1980, following a change in the constitutional article concerning education², new labor rules were introduced that limited the rights of university workers' organizations (especially those of the faculty) to negotiate "academic" matters. This meant the exclusion of the teachers' union from any bilateral supervision over the academic process used to recruit and promote the faculty. The new legal provision also explicitly ruled out the possibility of a national union of university workers. Later on, in 1982-83, another milestone in the path of change was reached. Following to the letter the recommendations of the IMF, a drastic reduction in higher education subsidies was put into place. It was carried on by increasing, by only a few points, the funds for higher education, whereas the yearly inflation neared 100% percent. Not surprisingly, by 1984, the real value of the subsidies and the salaries of the faculty and staff workers had fallen by almost 50%.

The cut of subsidies, put a strong pressure on the universities' administrators, leading them to question the feasibility of a virtually free higher education and to explore the possibility of strengthening relations with the private sector. Later, the government educational cabinet³, took the increases in tuition-fees, and the search for ties with private companies, as a sign that university administrators were willing to start a process of "reform towards excellence." Soon such moves would be seen as the condition for granting additional funds, for specific projects, in selected institutions. According to the new criteria, funds that were much needed for the foreseen expansion of

the university, were given, instead, to those institutions that pursued change within the governmental guidelines.

This strategy of reductions combined with selective support worked so well that, ten years after the first cuts, in 1992, the real value of the regular subsidies had not substantially increased (it never returned to the pre-1982 levels), while the funds based on "quality" have substantially increased to the advantage of science and technology programs, and graduate studies.

By the second half of the eighties, the government's success in the reshaping funding policies, and tying them to desired institutional behavior, had made a big dent on the universities' autonomy, with regard to their ability to distribute resources. As the regular subsidy was insufficient, and supplementary funds could not be transferred to any other budget line, being usually earmarked for very specific projects, the search for additional resources became frantic. This undermined one of the bases of university autonomy: the use of such criteria as real or projected enrollment, to determine the amount of funds needed. The government, however, was satisfied, and declared that universities should now adapt to the reality of global competition (by raising quality and helping industry) and demonstrate a greater efficiency in the use of public funds.

The strategy of selective funding also served to diffuse the protest of the *universitarios* against the new austerity policies. In the early eighties, the subsidy cuts had created a unified front in every higher education sector—scientists, administrators, unions, prominent faculty, artists, intellectuals, students and families. But the selective distribution of funds in scientifically and politically strategic areas (to top researchers, for example) cooled the protest.

At the same time, the new procedures for distributing funds created other problems. University presidents were frequently put in the position of having to figure out what to do to appear productive. In an effort to homogenize and render more democratic the application of guide-lines, the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (*Asociación Nacional de*

Universidades e Instituciones de Enseñanza Superior, ANUIES)—a board made up of the presidents of all institutions—was given the task of determining the criteria to be used by 'peer committees' for the evaluations of the institutions. But they could not change the new approach set up by the government.

The introduction of this new form of funding marked the transition from "austerity" (simple cuts) to "structural change," or "restructuring" (selective distribution), in governmental parlance. A classical example of the new approach is how the notion of faculty salary changed and, with it, the concept of a professional faculty. Starting in 1984, selected faculty began to receive a substantial supplement to their wages (30-40% more), directly from the Ministry of Education. Who should receive this supplement, and how much it should be, was a decision made outside the institutions, by committees appointed by the government. In June, 1984 a presidential decree had created the National System of Researchers (*Sistema Nacional de Investigadores*, SNI). It included around 4,000 scientists, many of them part of the country's 14,000 members full-time faculty. In 1989, special funds were also allocated for public institutions, so that they could establish a similar program; however the government specified that funds were to be given to no more than 30% of the eligible faculty. The adoption of similar practices for the distribution of research funds by the National Council of Science and Technology (*Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología*, CONACYT) and other agencies completed the new scenario.

The structural changes served not only to lower the level of political confrontation (for it could always be said that, however little, something was being done for higher education); they also served to reduce public spending for education. Ten years after the first cuts of 1982-83, the State finances were in a better shape than ever (the 1992 budget had a surplus), but spending for education has hardly increased, and is still far from the pre-1982 levels, despite the growth of the university system in these years.

The institutionalization of a reduced commitment by the State towards higher education

signals a new political relation between the State and the academic institutions, and a new concept of the relation between the university and society. The message is that any concern for the problems of society must be superseded by the needs of the productive apparatus, as defined by the corporations and the business community. In the words of the Under-Secretary of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the Ministry of Education (*Secretaría de Educación Pública, SEP*):

[T]he most important part of the new university will be its linkage to society; joint planning between universities and industry; sharing of information for decision making; coordinated use of laboratories of industry, coordinated research, and the fact that industry's training and professionalization of its personnel become a process [endorsed] by the certification of the universities.⁴

As a result of the protectionist policies pursued by the government in previous years, Mexican industry had never felt the need to invest in research and development programs and infrastructure. Thus, it is not surprising that the 120,000 businesses, that constitute the industrial apparatus of the country, have only a total of 55 R&D centers. Nor is industry in any rush to set up a research infrastructure, although it is the accepted wisdom that global competition will wipe out the companies that cannot upgrade their technology and productivity. For its part, the government is not asking industry to finance the establishment of research centers in their plants, nor is prepared to finance the creation of such centers. It prefers to welcome industry to the use of the 880 centers available in the public higher education institutions. Everything there is ready and working.

The new imperatives set by competition within the new global economy have been the center piece of the ideology by which the government has justified the transformation of the university. It is now accepted that the competitive challenge posed by economic globalization calls for a "high quality" university, as far as teaching and research, and that universities must develop the technological basis enabling Mexican industry to become a competitive exporter. Many university presidents, thus, are convinced of the intrinsic

goodness of linking the university to industry; and this reasoning is strengthened by the fact that, again and again, the government has used the scarcity of funds to pressure academic institutions to establish closer relations with business. Such relations are now a prerequisite for the approval and funding of some academic programs⁵.

It is at the national level that this trend is most visible. The government is calling for the achievement of a broad agreement between government, industry and the universities. Meanwhile, the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT) has secured the participation of several CEOs of large corporations (airlines, communications, construction), as members of the highest ranking committee that is charged with the formation of highly trained scientists. Among other things, this committee decides which graduate programs—in the country's academic institutions and in the universities of the entire world—are "of excellence." In such programs, students may receive scholarships for room, board and fees, and the programs themselves are eligible for additional funds. More importantly, in 1990, the Ministry of Education and the representatives of the private sector signed an agreement that made government and business partners, in the operation of that segment of higher education (the technical institutions) directly depending on the government.

The trend being set, some autonomous universities are exploring in which ways their relation with business can become an institutional program. Some universities, like UAM (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana), try to circumvent their founding charter by setting guidelines and regulations that give priority to "research programs harmonizing the needs of research and the needs of production."⁶ Others are more adamant and change their charters. This is what occurred in the Universidad Autónoma de Sonora, where changes were introduced allowing for the increase of tuition fees and the participation of businessmen in the Board of Directors.

One of the consequences of the new funding policies is that the possibility for the university to have a cohesive body of workers (staff and academic) has been undermined. The lowering and

restructuring of salaries have created a sharp differentiation within the institutions. The programs introduced to supplement the salaries have widened the lower-higher income gap from 5 to 12. They have also created an atmosphere of uncertainty, since the supplements are temporary and new merit schemes are constantly being devised with different objectives (four are currently in operation). Finally, supplement programs deteriorate the professional commitment of those faculty and staff (about 90% of the total in any given institution) who are not eligible, or have been rejected in the evaluations.

With respect to salaries, only 10% of all workers (lumping together academic and staff) have incomes similar, in real value, to those of the past decade, that is \$2,000 dollars a month or more. By contrast, 90% have an average income of around \$500 dollars a month. Thus, many of the latter have to find alternative ways to supplement their salaries outside the institution. The merit pay policy, then, means a *de facto* reduction in the number of faculty and staff actually devoted to full-time work in the universities. For only about one third of the 16,000 full-time faculty, in the public higher education institutions, are in fact 'fully' paid.

The change in funding and pay policies have deeply affected the unions. The response from unions and faculty in 1983-1986 was very strong, but it has receded. A series of strikes during those years, which, at one point, closed up to twenty universities for a month, were unable to win a substantial salary rise or modify the government plan for the universities. As a result, unions are now forced to accept very low increases, and are not allowed to supervise, in any capacity, the granting of the supplementary programs. The explicit instruction given by government officials to the university administrators is that they should not, by any means, negotiate the amounts or criteria for those funds.⁷

The new rules concerning the funding of the universities have also prompted a race among the administrators of different institutions to increase or introduce tuition fees. One remaining stronghold of free higher education still in existence is the National Autonomous University

(UNAM), where a tenacious student movement has been able to prevent a planned tuition fees increase from the present amount—less than \$1 dollar a year—to \$750 dollars. In other public institutions, tuition fees have already risen from similar low levels to \$200 dollars a year. Given that more than half the students in public institutions come from families with incomes under \$8,400 dollars a year, these increases will certainly have a strong impact on the families' ability to afford higher education for their children. Moreover, we can be sure that, once the idea is established that public education is not free, the burden of every fiscal crisis will be placed on the students.

The new creed that universities must submit to the plebiscite of the market is also reducing the spaces available for free and independent analysis. The 'needs of society' are now unequivocally identified with those of the CEOs or their managerial offices, or with those defined by the Government. Significantly, some salary supplements are only granted to teachers whose activities follow the government plans for the country's development.⁸

While the importance of the unions and other collegiate bodies, as channels of participation and cohesion in the university, has diminished, institutional bureaucracies have been strengthened both in numbers and in functions. Echoing some of the suggestions of the World Bank for higher education in Latin America⁹, the Under-Secretary for Higher Education and Scientific Research has condemned the way in which universities select their presidents, administrators and representatives in the university councils, which are the core of self-government in the universities. The claim is that "[t]he process used to appoint and choose authorities and representatives in several universities is far from sensitive to the opinion and the weight that should be given to the more brilliant faculty"¹⁰—"the more brilliant" referring, without doubt, to the teachers selected in the evaluations for supplementary salary.

In conclusion, the new relations that have been established, inside and outside the university, point to a historic change with regard to the role of the university in Mexican society. True, the State's

blueprint for the universities will have to undergo modifications, given the resistance of students, university workers (including the faculty), collegiate bodies, and the administrators themselves. It is, indeed, possible that the State may not be able to guarantee that the changes so far implemented will hold. The network of relations that supports these changes is still tenuous, top-down, and based on little consensus. Competence, productivity, quality and market needs can hardly be points of reference for academic activities, because the changes introduced inhibit such integration. Productivity, and merit pay can have an appeal for those who have access to programs providing a supplementary salary. For the rest, given the low salaries and the striking differences in pay, they have the opposite effect. In addition, the available programs are run by the government and from outside the institutions, which means that no self-sustaining dynamics can be generated from within the universities. In part to avoid this problem, the government is planning to create a few "high quality" universities so well connected to the market as to not need any prodding, and 40% to 60% self-sufficient as far as their funding requirements (through a combination of tuition fees, industry contracts and private donations). As for the remaining institutions, they are to form a subordinate layer, most of them receiving little funding and only in specific circumstances, and for "solid" projects. This plan fits very well with what is happening in other sectors, like the postal service and bussing. Unable to modernize the entire postal system, the government has created a special high-price system that runs efficiently, but only attends to a small fraction of the bulk of the mail. In the case of bussing, if a passenger can afford a 100% increase, instead of traveling the entire night in a crowded bus, s/he can travel in a super luxurious bus, with t.v. sets, bar and seats that extend for a full nights' rest.

This scenario is already unfolding in academe as well, and so are its contradictions. First, promoting a deep differentiation among institutions and university workers, holds very few promises as a strategy for increasing productivity. No matter how well paid and motivated are the

10% of the university workers who receive "merit pay", and no matter how hard they work, their effort can not compensate for the ballast represented by the 90% of the workers who have low salaries and resent this differential treatment. Such deep differences in earnings, in fact, make it clear that workers do not control their work environment, and justify a low-level commitment on the side of the faculty and staff not included in the new deal. A similar approach can be used to judge the probable efficiency of creating such enormous differences between institutions.

Furthermore, the corporate sector does not seem that interested in funding the universities or extensively using their laboratories. Possibly, only a few big corporations will establish relations with the universities, and probably many of them represent foreign capital. Judging from what is happening now, it is doubtful that such an intervention could make a significant difference in the universities' budget, or could pay for the real costs of the services. It is to be expected that the corporate world will only establish those connections that are clearly to its advantage, and will only seek to take advantage of the low overhead and low salaries of the researchers. Thus, in addition to the difficulty of face saving, in front of the fact that the new university is charging tuition and, at the same time, subsidizing big and foreign corporations, this leaves the government in the difficult position of having to continue to run the system and pay for it directly.

The resistance of workers and students, however dispersed, has managed to slow the pace of change or, at times, bluntly stop it. This is what has happened in the National Autonomous University (UNAM) in 1986-87, when plans to increase the tuition fees were met by demonstrations of more than 100,000 students, and by a student strike that shut down the university for a month. As a result of these and other instances of resistance, the government now knows that, before attempting to change certain areas and institutions, it must give careful consideration to the risks involved. As the national electoral landscape becomes more and more unpredictable, mobilizations in the universities are not welcome. This is why, in 1992,

the proposal to increase tuition fees in UNAM was again withdrawn, in front of the threat of new demonstrations and strikes, and the likelihood that these disturbance might quickly link with another potentially explosive conflict surrounding the elections in the state of Michoacán.

Another political problem is that all these changes have deep consequences for power relations inside and outside the institutions. Conflicts arising from disputes over areas of influence inside the institutions are more likely to occur in an environment undergoing constant changes, especially if the latter lack widespread support, and are based on little more than the authority to control resources. The instability of institutional life is also increased by the marginalization of large organizations such as the unions. At the national level, repeated confrontations between the Presidents of public universities and the Minister of Education, on matters related to funding, clearly show that the new relations have not crystallized yet and they may never do.

The State, in the universities and other areas, is now experiencing the effects of these contradictions. To 'modernize' itself it had to shrink in size and sever its ties with the popular sector. However, by doing so, it has lost a great deal of the support it needed to carry on its programs. Support from the corporations, and a favorable world public opinion, are not enough to maintain the control of the rudder. The establishment of the "Solidarity" ("Solidaridad") program (which devotes federal resources to public and community works, in collaboration with peasants and the urban poor) has revealed the acceptance of the limitations typical of a neo-liberal approach to development. The Mexican State has had to realize that a pure will to change, and a technocratic blueprint are not sufficient to change a country. In the countryside, in the factories and in the universities the times seem mature for the establishment of a new social pact.

Endnotes

1. Departamento de Education y Comunicacion, Division de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana- Xochimilco (UAM) Medico, D.F. Tel. & FAX (5) 568 63 51.
2. This constitutional amendment established autonomy as a constitutional right of the universities, but it also resulted in the banning of a national union, and the banning of the supervisory participation of unions in the admission, promotion and removal of the faculty.
3. This includes the Ministry of Education (SEP, for its initials in Spanish), particularly the Under-Secretary for Higher Education and Scientific Research; the Ministry of Planning and Budget (SPP, in Spanish), and, with regard to specific issues and overall guidelines, the Presidential Office itself.
4. *La Jornada*, 25/6/1990. (p.1)
5. Programs in technology and engineering may also be evaluated according to the following : (i.) the relations of the faculty with the productive sector; (ii.) the relation between the research program and the problems of the productive sector. CONACYT Convocatoria : Actualizacion del Padron de Programas de Posgrado de Excelencia. *La Jornada* (Mexico) 25/5/1992. (p.18).
6. The last part of the sentence was added by the proponents in order to ease its approval by the University Council, and it evokes the discourse of the nationalist sector in industry. Its future is in doubt in light of the North American Free Trade Agreement. *Políticas de Investigación*, 1.2. *Políticas Generales*. UAM 1985.
7. "...the administration of money incentives for faculty...should be completely outside of the negotiations with unions or guilds." *La Jornada*, 24/4/1992. (p.3).

8. For example, the criteria to be met by applicants to the National System of Researchers are "the recent productivity of the researcher...[and his/her] contribution to the scientific, technological, social and cultural development of Mexico, taking into account the objectives and direction stated in the National Plan of Development". This Plan is the program prepared by the President's team as the guideline for the government actions. It is not submitted to any legislative discussion for approval and it changes every six years with the new Administration (no reelection is allowed). "Acuerdo por el que se establece el Sistema Nacional de Investigadores." Secretaria de Educacion Publica. *Diario Oficial*. 26/7/1984.

9. D.Winkler, "Higher Education in Latin America. Issues of Efficiency and Equality." World Bank Discussion Paper #7, 1990. There are many "policy choices" that are based on the assumption that "significant constraints to improving efficiency include a system of governance which often substitutes political for performance criteria; emphasis on university autonomy which rejects policy directives from government" (p. xiii).

10. In "Existe en las universidades simulacion, abandono e improductividad", *El Universal*, 27/11/1992.

Two New Lists of CAFA interest

There is now an explosion of interest in e-mail list-servers and internet sites in African studies and human rights circles. We include two new lists that will be of interest to CAFA members and readers of our Newsletter.

The first is the AfricaW. It is "an unmoderated forum to support the struggle of African women for social progress in Africa and in the world at large and to discuss matters of mutual concern. The term 'African women' shall include women of the African diaspora, and the list aims to promote their solidarity with the women of Africa."

To subscribe to AfricaW, send a message to:

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SAVE AZI KAMBULE'S LIFE! MISSISSIPPI MUST RESPECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL CHILDREN

After surviving some of Apartheid's most turbulent years Azikiwe Kambule is facing the death penalty in Mississippi for a crime in which we was little more than a bystander.

Azi came to Mississippi with his mother who is a South African continuing her studies in the United States. One evening, Azi found himself in the middle of a car-jacking in which a young African American woman was killed. Azi was so far away from the murder scene that he did not even hear the gun shots. When arrested, he was the only one to cooperate with the police. He fully explained the terrible series of events and tried repeatedly to help the authorities in their investigation.

Despite having no criminal record, no history of violence and providing his full cooperation to the authorities, this 17-year old South African honor student and choir boy has been charged as an accomplice to a capital murder. Mississippi is seeking the death penalty or to put Azi in jail for life, a child in the tenth grade.

Join with conveners of the Azi Kambule Committee for Justice (AKCJ) like Dennis Brutus, Ramsey Clark, Mike Farrell and Danny Glover to urge Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, Attorney General Mike Moore and Madison County District Attorney John Kitchens to respect international human rights law, and cease their efforts to put Azikiwe Kambule, or any other child on death row or behind bars for the rest of their lives. Azi's case is coming to trial in early 1997. He needs financial help in obtaining good legal representation. He also needs vocal support from the Africanist scholarly community so that he will not find himself killed under the Mississippi and US laws that violate the most elementary human rights.

For more information write or call:

AKCJ

c/o National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

918 "F" Street, NW

Suite 601

Washington, DC 20004

Fax: (202) 347-2510 Phone: (202) 347-2411 (ext. 16)

To support the legal defense work send your check to:

AKCJ

c/o Rev. Robert Abrams, Chairperson

Prison Ministries Committee

Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church

216 North Azalia Drive

Wiggins, MS 39577

WHO IS CAFA AND WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?

The Committee for Academic Freedom in Africa (CAFA) consists of people teaching and studying in North America and Europe who are concerned with the increasing violations of academic freedom that are taking place in African universities and who believe that it is crucial that we support the struggle our African colleagues are conducting to assert and preserve their rights.

CAFA was organized in the Spring of 1991 and since then has been involved in numerous campaigns on behalf of African teachers and students. We have also created and continue to update a "Chronology of the African Student Movement from 1985." The CAFA Newsletter contains scholarly articles on the impact of the World Bank and IMF on African education as well as action alerts and other information about student and faculty struggles on African campuses.

CAFA's objectives include

- *informing our colleagues about the current situation on African campuses;
- *setting up an urgent action network to respond promptly to emergency situation;
- *mobilizing our unions and other academic organizations so that we can put pressure on African academic authorities as well as international agencies like the World Bank and the IMF;
- *organizing delegations that will make direct contact with teachers and students and their organizations in Africa.

The annual fee for membership in CAFA is \$25. CAFA's coordinators and the editors of the CAFA Newsletter are:

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