

COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA

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Introduction

In this issue of our newsletter we look at the growing evidence of the crisis of elementary education in Africa. While investment in statistical monitoring is increasing, and much interest has been generated by the UN call for greater "gender sensitivity" in pedagogical planning, the reality of elementary schooling in Africa (but the story could apply to South and Central America as well) could not be more dismal, proving the concerns we have voiced now for several years.

CAFA also looks at the worrisome situation developing in post-apartheid South Africa, where the gains expected in education, as well as other areas of social entitlement, are being nullified by the adoption of the same neoliberal policies that have been imposed throughout the continent under the guise of adjustment. Not surprisingly, as a local version of adjustment is perpetuating the inequities of the past, state repression has revived on the campuses, now targeting those who oppose this policy.

This issue also includes an update on the situation in Kenya, and the case of Professor Omari Onyango, and a theoretical/historical essay by Ousseina Alidou on Booker T. Washington and contemporary World Bank policies for education in Africa.

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WORLD BANK CLAIMS FALSIFIED:

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN AFRICA MORE UNACCESSIBLE THAN EVER

It was not long ago when critics of the liberalization of higher education in Africa, would be informed by an array of World Bank experts that the defunding of the universities was imposed in the name of an egalitarian ideal.

Creating more equality, putting the money where it was most needed, allowing more children to have access to elementary education: this, we were told, was what the adjustment of university education was about. As the tale went, the resources cut from higher education would swiftly be rechannelled to the elementary schools, and with that more solid foundation for the entire educational enterprise would be provided. Who could object to such plan? Some of us, for sure, remained unconvinced. It seemed to us in 1991 that "by advising the reduction of funding for higher education, the WB threatens its own alleged policy goal: the expansion and improvement of primary education [in Africa]." (CAFA 1991: 7) Today our suspicions and prognostications have been amply confirmed.

In country after country, the evidence is that the defunding of the universities has gone hand-in-hand with the destruction of the public elementary school system, which is also being restructured on a more market-oriented and privatized basis, and put out of reach of the poor children the World Bank was allegedly so anxious to reach and educate.

Significant, in this context, is the picture portrayed by Patrick M. Boyle in his article in the December 1996 issue of the *Journal of Modern African History* on education in Cameroon (see Boyle 1996). It must be added, however, that Boyle's results can be unfortunately generalized, to most other African countries—Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Uganda, etc.

According to Boyle, cuts in the funding of public education in Cameroon have taken place across the board. No less than in the universities, in the elementary schools as well, the promise of universal and free education has been abandoned, after having been implemented for just one generation span (613). Consequently, public, state-financed elementary schools are literally "falling apart," and new inequalities are developing.

In the vacuum left by the "vanishing of the state" a whole new market is developing, since the parents who can afford it, have rushed to set up

private, fee-based, "economically exclusive" primary and even preparatory schools, whereas the poor majority must renounce the hope of sending their children to any school. (610). Boyle comments that this represents a serious setback from the viewpoint of democratization, integration, and pure and simple social justice, and he warns about the predictable catastrophic consequences this policy will have for millions of African children.

First, there is the spectre of mass illiteracy. In Cameroon, according to a recent census 40% of the population above the age of 11 is illiterate (610), and we can add that in most other countries the picture is even worse.

Second, education is returning to be a factor of class division and elitism, as it was in the colonial period. Ironically, in the general collapse of free education, those who most prosper are the very urban elites the World Bank was so bent on chastizing, as consuming most of the state funds. Among those who have means, Boyle notices a spread of "Associations," formed by parents who, in front of the schools' collapse, are taking the education of their children into their hands and setting up private schools. These initiatives, in his view, have positive aspects as they encourage grassroots, democratic participation (613).

However, urban-based, private education is a fairly limited, elite phenomenon, as private schools are expensive and very competitive. Private education, moreover, does not address the fact that public elementary education is in shambles. Teachers are not paid for months, so that they hardly bother to teach, or do it when they can, combined with several other occupations. Children have no books, no chalk, no time to study, no shoes to go to school, or cannot go because they have to work to contribute to their

families's income.

Boyle reminds us, by contrast, of the situation in the mid 1970s, when the state charged no tuition fees, and the national rate of primary school enrollment was 67%, with peaks of over 93% for girls and 95% for boys in Yaounde (616). Since independence, the budget for education was for many years the single largest item in the state expenditure. Before 1980s, except for small fees for uniforms and insurance, the state did not charge tuition fees, unlike state-supported denominational schools. National enrollment continued to grow until the 1990 (by then it was 84%), but it since fell as public schools were "plagued by [high] drop out rates, questions about utility and high cost."

After 1981 the Ministry of Education ordered the directors of the 21 public primary schools in Yaounde to charge tuition. By the end of the 1980s tuition had reached 7,000 CFA francs as against 10,000 to 40,000 in state-supported denominational schools. (p.616). At the same time more class sections were added which led to increase in the crowding of children into old buildings and the running of double shifts. (As a result of this policy the teachers-students ratio is now one of the highest in the world). (617).

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

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1. Introduction

The name "Booker T. Washington" is employed in this article in a dual sense. First, it refers to the person and his ideas, especially on the question of "Black" education in the U.S. The central issues here are the curriculum that Washington adopted for the education of the Black people, who had been subjected to enslavement and later to the reactionary effects of the Jim Crow laws as applied in the context of colonialism and apartheid. Among his ideas on the goals of education—which included moral uplifting and character building, self-reliance and black capitalism—of central concern to this paper is the greater value Washington placed on vocational and industrial education relative to 'mere book learning.' Washington and his supporters intended to give students "such practical knowledge of some industry together with the spirit of industry, thrift, and economy, that they would be sure of knowing how to make a living after they had left us. We wanted to teach them to study actual things instead of mere books alone" (1965: 96).

The name of Booker T. Washington is also a metaphor for an educational "philosophy" that transcends the person and his place and time. Washington and his ideas have not been invoked in the construction of educational policies in Africa since the heyday of British colonialism. Nevertheless, his philosophy has continued to manifest itself, in one form or another, to the present day. In this era of World Bank and International Monetary Funds (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), his philosophy is assuming a monumental importance, as it plays a

major role in the restructuring of educational development in Africa—a fact that has serious consequences for the people of the continent. The Washingtonian tendency in the World Bank educational agenda concerns not only Africa but the "Third World" in general. In this essay, however, I only focus on what is often called "francophone" Africa.

2. Washington, Colonialism and Nationalism

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

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

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

to European colonial control of the African educational system (West 1992: 380-381). To some African nationalists, in fact, Washington simply symbolized Black liberation (albeit through education), and they were not even aware of the fundamental differences between him and W.E.B. DuBois. This confusion is evident in the letter that Harry Thuku, one of the first Kenyan nationalist leaders, wrote to Washington asking him

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

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

By contrast, Washington's idea of vocational education had a special appeal, both for racist and capitalist reasons, for the British colonialists in their colonies, for white settlers in Southern Africa, and for various imperialist agencies in Africa. Functionaries of British colonialism, in countries like Ghana, Southern Rhodesia and (British) Cameroon, tried, at one time or another, to present Washington and aspects of his philosophy as the best pedagogical model and the one worthy of emulation by all colonial subjects. A good example of this interplay between the image of Washington and the colonial educational agenda is the ten-part series on Booker T. Washington's life—seemingly based on his *Up From Slavery*—that was published in a Kiswahili journal intended for local school

teachers. These articles, that appeared under the title "Mtu Mweusi Mtukufu" (the Honorable Black Man), were authored by G.B. Johnson, a leading educational administrator of the British colonial government in Zanzibar (See *Mazungumzo ya Walimu wa Unguja*, Volume IX, Nos 1-10, 1935). What is more significant is that the series appeared at a time when the colonial government had just launched the Rural Middle School, whose curriculum was disproportionately vocational in substance. According to L.A.C. Buchanan, the editor of the journal's issue that carried the first of the Booker T. Washington Kiswahili series, the students at this school,

...will be instructed in rural science, physics, carpentry, a variety of vocational subjects, including masonry, craftsmanship, surveying... It is expected that graduates from this school, will be well placed to build this nation in a very fundamental way (Buchanan 1935: 1, my translation).

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

At present in America there are thousands of black farmers whose agricultural yields surpass that of the entire farming life of their parents, and some of them remember the debt they owe to Washington and to Tuskegee. If we do not assist our students to produce better things than they used to in the past, we shall not have adequately fulfilled our mission (Johnson 1935: 139, my translation).

In the area of African "economic progress", therefore, the British government in Zanzibar was beginning to privilege vocational education over liberal arts education. And the image of Booker T. Washington as "the honorable Black man" was being upheld to legitimize the idea that vocational and 'rural' education were the most suited for African development, at both the personal and national levels.

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

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

3. The Washingtonianism of the World Bank and IMF

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

In *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, Carnoy (1974) presents an exceptionally insightful critique of the dependency relations between the United States and Third World Countries. He shows how the terms of imperialist cooperation were defined at the Bretton Woods conference in 1946, and examines the history of American foreign policy, and the instruments of its implementation in Latin America, particularly in the educational field.

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

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

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

With regard to the World Bank's "African Capacity Building Initiative," George Caffentzis demystifies its meaning and shows its devastating effects on various grounds (Caffentzis 1994). He points out the ambiguity of the term 'capacity,' in relation to its products and systems of knowledge; its implicit devaluation of the African intellect, the initiative's promotion of Africa's dependence on foreign agencies and "donors"; its failure to recognize that the collapse of the African university system is itself a direct consequence of the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs. The "African Capacity Building Initiative," in other words, "is an explicit statement the World Bank intends to dominate the development of academic institutions for the foreseeable future." (Caffentzis, 1994 : 19). Caffentzis adds that "the attempt to justify this domination under the rubric of training Africa to be 'capable,' is as questionable as the Church's justification for burning academic heretics under the rubric of 'salvation'." (Caffentzis, ibid.)

4. From Francophonie to U.S. Hegemony
American ideology is firmly based on a policy of hegemonic expansion and the quest for ever-larger markets. Until the late 1980's, the United States and its allies feared the encroachment of Soviet communism into their spheres of influence. Military assistance and military intervention, emanating from both camps of the Cold War belligerents, were the prevalent policy (Culverson 1989). As for humanitarian assistance, Africa's, especially "francophone" Africa's, socio-economic problems were not a

major concern for the World Bank, IMF, USIA, and the other American intervention agencies.

The former French colonies were considered the responsibility of France, a crucial member of the capitalist block, that was certainly capable of repressing, in its zones of influence, any and all communist insurgencies, either through direct military action, or through the control of crucial socio-economic sectors such as education, health, mining and agriculture. During the Cold War, no parcel of American aid to former French colonies was ever directed to redressing the inadequacies of the inherited system of higher education, which was based on the "Francophone" ideology.

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

Faced with the inappropriateness, and inadequacies, of the French educational model, African political leaders and educators, from many former French colonies, met on several occasions to attempt to restructure the curricula, so that graduates might be more capable of contending with the grim socio-economic realities specific to each country. Yet these aspirations always encountered a stiff French resistance. Key areas of cooperation between France and its former colonies were suspended (Hutchison 1994). For example, the French halted ship-

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

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

The end of the Cold War, however, has precipitated a new equation in Franco-American rela-

tions. The United States now finds itself in the unprecedented position of expanding the "capitalist empire" almost unilaterally. "Democracy" and "efficiency" are the catchwords of the "New World Order", with "Universal Westernization" as the primary concept. As Carnoy suggests:

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

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

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

The ACBI does not present an

accurate picture of policy debate in Africa. On the contrary, it devalues Africans as producers of knowledge; it denies their ability to autonomously achieve mastery of basic cognitive skills; and it calls for foreign agencies to take into their hands the restructuring of African education, in violation of any autonomy rights. ACBI thus represents a violation of political-intellectual sovereignty, and the right to self-determination. It means that, if the planners of the ACBI have their way, Africans will only be allowed to learn what promotes the agenda of foreign capital, with no concession made to their right to self-determination.

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

5. Conclusion: Education and Resistance

In addition to its economic and intellectual agenda, however, Washingtonianism in education had also certain political implications. In both the colonial and the post-colonial periods, education in Africa was partly designed to serve the interests of "western" imperialism. In both cases, however, education—liberal education in particular—had the unforeseen effect of generating a critical consciousness and political resistance. And in both instances, the growth of this political consciousness resulted in attempted educational reforms by those in power. In the colonial dispensation, for example, liberal arts education was sometimes explicitly blamed for the rise of anti-colonial nationalism. The agents of imperialism, in some British colonies,

adopted Washington's model of education in the hope that:

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

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

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

In country after country, demonstration after demonstration, in slogans, flyers and position papers, the African student movement has shown a remarkable homogeneity..."NO to Structural

Adjustment, to corrupt leaders, and to the recolonization of Africa" are slogans that have unified African students in the SAP era to a degree unprecedented since the anti-colonial struggle (CAFA 1996: 8).

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

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

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1. Academic Repression in the "Democratic Transition"

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

The report by the Commission of Inquiry was issued after confidential documents had been

leaked to the press which showed that the members of the Commission itself received direct pressures from the Ministry of Education in order to recommend actions against the 12 activists. The charges issued by the Court, however, endorsed only the less serious ones among those recommended by the Commission. The Court's action underlines the political nature of the Commission's recommendations. Nonetheless, the combined effect of criminal charges and banning orders have seriously disrupted COMSA's organization and operations on campus.

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

Both Amaral and three of the activists charged at UDW are moreover members of the editorial collective of the radical journal *Debate - Voices from the South African Left*, which has closely followed the above episodes (see *Debate* 3, 1997). The cases of Amaral and of the "UDW 12" are particularly dramatic steps in a dynamics of intervention by state security forces inside universities. This process seems to have accompanied the democratic transition in South Africa after the 1994 elections. Two notable examples are the continued presence during 1995 and 1996 of agents of the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) at campuses such as University of Venda,

University of Pretoria and University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits), whose function was to identify potentially "troublesome" students and lecturers, and the massive waves of expulsions and arrests of students and workers following struggles at Wits and Vista University (Soweto) in 1994 and 1995. These repeated interventions by state security agencies, which mainly affected individuals and organizations on the left of the ANC, were significantly taking place in a phase marked by the adoption of a neoliberal approach to education on the part of the government.

2. The Shift to Neoliberalism in South African Tertiary Education

The policies of the new democratic state with respect to tertiary education have been shaped in relation to a stated necessity to find an uneasy compromise between potentially conflicting imperatives. On one side, students and academics have been demanding a meaningful redress of the inequalities inherited from the apartheid system, a legacy defined in the form of undemocratic and unaccountable governing bodies, a white-dominated student and staff composition in "top" universities that did not reflect the country's demographic composition, a huge gap in resources between historically "white" institutions and previously discriminated "black" institutions, and a culture of teaching and learning promoting passive adherence to Eurocentrist notions of standards and "academic excellence".

On the other hand, the need to provide strategic skills and "human resources" for the reinsertion of the country into world markets, limiting at the same time the economic burden this would imply for the state, was soon indicated as a crucial priority by government policy planners (National Commission for Higher Education, 1996). To this aim, universities themselves, also by virtue of the principle of "autonomy," are given a major role in generating resources through measures of "internal efficiency," rationalisation and synergies with the private sector. In fact, the bulk of

public funding was aimed to be shifted from generalized "core" subsidies (currently 85% of all state funding to universities) towards "ad hoc" provisions of "performance related" funds, in accordance with the following goals: "improved operational efficiency," provision of training needed to compete internationally, and only a "targeted" redress of the most serious inequalities. This also justified, also in the name of "the government's commitment to fiscal discipline" (Department of Education, 1997), a substantial cut in public funding for tertiary education, that forced most institutions to adopt "rationalization plans" recommending increasing student fees, merger of departments, closure of cost-ineffective structures, retrenchment of staff, privatization and outsourcing of services, whereby closures of even whole universities is now considered "inevitable" (*Financial Mail*, 5/9/1997).

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

The similarities of the policies described here with orientations theorized by the World Bank (Saint, 1992) and implemented in most of the continent as part of structural adjustment packages are striking. The parallel can be extended to the deeply entrenched link between adjustment, restructuring and repression that has emerged all over the continent. On the other hand, it does not seem sufficient to show how the adoption of a

neoliberal approach in tertiary education enables the state to have a repressive stance towards potential sources of disruption in the universities alone. For struggles at universities are in fact one aspect of the broader political recomposition of an antagonistic response to neoliberalism. It is therefore important to locate current trends of restructuring, resistance and repression in South African universities inside the broader framework of neoliberal policy-making and social struggle in this country.

3. Homegrown Structural Adjustment

The largely yet to be written story of the rightwing shift to neoliberalism in South African tertiary education demonstrates that it is possible to analyze neoliberalism and resistance in this country as part of broad, continent-wide processes. This challenges a long-established view among African and South African scholars considering this country as an "exceptional" case, relatively industrialized and over-polarized along the racial divide, therefore not easily explainable with categories of dependence, underdevelopment, state and class formation applied elsewhere in the continent (Mamdani, 1996).

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

The phrase "homegrown structural adjustment" (Bond, 1997) explains the dynamics of neoliberalism in this country. This expression implies that, rather than the impersonal "objective" necessity of transnational markets and

institutions, it was the convergence of mainly internal factors that caused the right-wing shift in South Africa's macroeconomic policy. These factors point to the strategic advantage gained by capital in relation to social opposition, thanks to the monopolization of resources during apartheid and to an active pro-business line by the democratic state, for the sake of "development", business confidence and international competitiveness. The nature of neoliberalism as a product of class antagonism and struggle is therefore emphasized in this case.

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

A decisive contribution to the consolidation of this political scenario was given by two crucial processes. First, the establishment of "corporatist" structures of policy making and consultation where a powerful labor movement is tied to the imperative of finding "social compacts" with capital and the state in a conflict-free economy conducive to foreign investment. Second, the rise of an albeit tiny black corporate industrial and financial sector provides a powerful legitimizing tool for a monopolistic, highly finance-based capitalism characterized by extreme concentration of ownership and control and by the total absence of meaningful welfare policies to address the inequalities inherited from the past.

The case of "homegrown structural adjustment" in South Africa shows us therefore how strategies of resistance to neoliberalism in tertiary

education cannot afford to neglect the continuing relevance of the state as agent of "globalization" and of internal class composition in promoting liberalization, privatization, and restructuring. Opening up this terrain of analysis and contestation can greatly contribute to overcome the fatalism implied in views that regard the "objectivity" of global macroeconomic constraints as the main or only determinants.

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Kenya Update

While the brutal murder of Solomon Muruli, a Nairobi University student leader, in February 1997 (see *CAFA*, N. 12) remains unpunished, despite evidence of police officers' involvement in it, the government's attack on Kenyan students has intensified. In July, raids were conducted on several campuses which left four students dead and led, on July 9th to the closure of Kenyatta University and all four campuses of Nairobi University (*Human Rights Watch*, Academic Freedom Committee). The crack-down came in response to students' mobilization in support of a national day of protest called by the political opposition to the Moi regime for July 7th, which was suppressed with armed force, and against a proposed legislation "facilitating the expulsion of university of students with tuition arrears" (ibid.) As Human Rights Watch reported:

"On the morning of July 7th police raided the campuses of Kenyatta and Nairobi Universities, tracking down dozens of students and attacking them in their dormitory rooms and classrooms where year-end exams were being held. Numer-

ous students, bystanders and at least one professor were hospitalized, some with gunshot wounds. On July 8th unconfirmed reports stated that four students were among the ten or more individuals killed on the previous day."

The Human Rights Watch report adds that, in response to this news, students began gathering to mourn their colleagues, but their processions were in turn violently attacked, leading to a series of battles between the police and students and the closure of the campuses on July 9th. Only at the end of the month were some students allowed back on the campuses of Kenyatta and Nairobi Universities, mostly the seniors who had exams to complete. But the student protest against the expulsion of those who cannot pay the new, higher fees and in favor of political reforms continues; and we strongly encourage our colleagues in North America to give students and teachers in Kenya all their support.

COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN AFRICA: APPEAL OF SUPPORT FOR HUNTED KENYAN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' UNION LEADER

August 8—called "NANE NANE (Eight, Eight)" in Kenya—was a day of struggle for the reform movement in Kenya. On that day, a general strike had been called by the movement in Nairobi that was hundred per cent successful. All shops were closed and even government workers did not go to work.

On the same day, Professor Omari Onyango was Master of Ceremonies in a rally called by the National Convention Executive Council (NURU), the organ of the reform movement, within which Prof. Onyango has a crucial role, as one of the co-chairs of the Task Force on Mass Action. Professor Onyango is also Secretary General of Kenya's University Academic Staff Union.

During the rally a policeman was killed and there was later looting in town. There is evidence that the disturbances were organized by the government to discredit the movement and to have reasons to arrest people participating in the rally. In fact thirty people who had attended the rally were arrested and charged with murder.

It was under these circumstances that the police also tried to arrest Professor Onyango. The day after the rally, a contingent of 35 fully armed policemen surrounded the offices of "the Four Cs" (The Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change) looking for Professor Onyango, saying that they were going to arrest him for inciting people to loot. Their attempt failed. Professor Onyango had been advised to go underground and was able to escape arrest.

However, his situation remains very dangerous, as the police are still looking for him. It is important here to remember that already, on May 31 of this year, Professor Onyango, in the course of another rally, had been brutally attacked by the police, who beat him, leaving a big gush on his head that nearly killed him. This attack and the attempt to arrest him are undoubtedly connected with Professor Onyango's role as one of the co-chairs of the Task Force on Mass Action. This is why his life is still in danger and he needs all our support.

We appeal to all our academic colleagues to write to President Moi, the Kenyan Attorney General and the Police Commissioner and urge them to stop persecuting Professor Onyango for his role in the reform movement.

Letters should be sent to:

1. The Attorney General, State Law Office, PO Box 40112, Nairobi, Kenya.
2. The Police Commissioner, State Law Office, P.O. Box 40112, Nairobi, Kenya.
3. President Daniel Arap Moi, Office of the President, Harambee House, PO Box 30510, Nairobi, Kenya.

An Account of Events that have led to my being away from my Country
by
Omari Onyango

I believe my current problems started in 1993, when I became part of a new team of Universities Academic Staff Union [UASU]. Our single most important agenda was to have the union registered as required by law. Part of our strategy towards achieving this goal was to organize for a strike, if the government did not accede to our demand. The strike lasted nine months, the longest such workers strike in our country. By the time it was over, most of the leadership had been dismissed and remains so to date.

Though initially elected as deputy General Secretary [of UASU], I ended up acting as General Secretary for most of the time, a factor that made me shoulder the heavy demands of that office. This made the government to come to the conclusion that I was the mastermind behind the union. Several attempts were made to neutralize my perceived influence.

We had made it very clear in both our private and public discussions with government representatives that we shall not back down on our demand for a union. This position has not changed to date. In one of those occasions on 4th of July 1994 during the celebrations for the United States Independence day at the US ambassador's residence in Kenya, I publicly informed the President that our quest for a union was legitimate and genuine despite all the information he had been given to the contrary. This made the Minister for Foreign Affairs to protest to me very bitterly. I was latter informed that the President had vowed to teach me a lesson for having the guts to contradict him in public, hence causing him embarrassment. This was definitely not my intention, but it was difficult for me to bear his distortion of facts in regard to our quest for a union.

After the government eventually crushed the strike through a combination of intrigues and maneuvers, I opted to remain in Kenya. I have only been leaving the country for consultancy work. But whenever I come back, I realized that the security organs were aware of my every move as they would send someone to ask me why I keep on coming back, since a number of my fellow union leaders have since left the country as there are no job opportunities for them due to their involvement with union activities.

After the government crushed the strike, I chose to continue the struggle elsewhere. This was due to the realization that the struggle for the union was part of the larger struggle for the democratization of the country. I therefore joined the Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change, otherwise commonly referred to as "the 4Cs." This is a body made of civil organizations which have pledged to champion the constitutional reform process. We had all come to the same conclusion that there is no organization that can meaningfully function whether legally registered or not under the current constitution.

Later, the 4Cs together with the opposition political parties founded the National Convention Assembly, with the National Convention Executive Committee[NCEC] as its executive arm. In May this year, the NCEC elected me to be the Convenor of its Task Force on mass action with the mandate to plan, coordinate and implement all resolutions of the NCEC in regard to mass action. During the NCEC's 2nd rally in Nairobi, I was brutally attacked by the security operatives in plain

clothes and had to be hospitalized[ref. *Daily Nation* of June 1st 1997 & *Economic Review* of June 9-15th 1997].

On the night of 1st June 1997, about five to eight armed people invaded my residence. They only retreated when the guards raised an alarm[ref. to my Press Release and its coverage in *Nation* and *Standard* of June 4th 1997].

On the 8th of August 1997. NCEC had organized country-wide demonstrations and rallies in order to press for constitutional reforms. On that material day, the Management Committee of the NCEC converged at the All Saints Cathedral before proceeding to the Central Park, the venue of the rally in Nairobi. By the time we reached the venue, the rally was well in advance. I then took over as the Master of Ceremony. As I can remember, the meeting went on smoothly and the only incident which occurred was when people refused to be addressed by Hon. Martin Shikuuku. Apparently a 'police officer' had been killed even before we got to the park. I regret the loss of this precious life as I do for all those who had been senselessly and brutally murdered during our previous mass meetings. May their blood act as the seed for the new and democratic constitutional order for a new Kenya. We later learned that the state security organs had started rounding up pro-reform supporters before, during and after the rallies. Having been the most visible person as master of ceremony during the Nairobi rally, I was advised to lie low for a time. As initially planned, rallies in all parts of the country were to have two major components: a peaceful demonstration and a rally during which a message from the NCEC was to be read. During the Nairobi rally this message was read by Prof. Kivutha Kibwana. After the rally, the congregation proceeded for a peaceful demonstration in the city center where there were few incidents as compared to our earlier rallies. Since it is obvious that the NCEC is infiltrated and its rallies and demonstrations are open to all including government agents, these incidents are not surprising.

On 9th August 1997, the *Standard* in its editorial agitated that I should be held responsible for organizing the NCEC rallies. The paper repeated the same message on 14th August 1997 [ref. *Standard* of 14th August 1997]. On 13th August 1997, the state security made it public that it was looking for me [ref. *Nation* of 13th & 14th August 1997]. More information started filtering in to the effect that the security apparatus was very keen on having me behind bars. After several consultations, it was decided that I leave the country immediately. On 16th August 1997, I crossed over to a neighboring country where I stayed for some time. When my hotel room was broken into, it became clear that I was not safe even in that country, and therefore I relocated. Through time a number of other incidents have taken place which point a finger at the government. For example, early this year my wife lost her job, which she had held for over five years. We later learned that her boss is a staunch KANU supporter. She has made several job applications without any success. My brother who works for the government lost his study scholarship even before the completion of his course. His wife has been threatened with eviction. I feel very sad that these people have to suffer just because they are related to me.

NIGERIA UPDATE

The confrontation between the university authorities and the teachers and students continues in Nigeria in the aftermath of the ASUU strike in the Spring of 1997.

On August 29, the registrar of Bayero University in Kano decided to close down the university presumably to prevent the outbreak of an epidemic that could result from the unsanitary conditions prevailing on the campuses. However, according to ASUU, this move was meant above all to intimidate the faculty and stifle protest against the dismal living conditions. The decision came in the wake of a students' demonstration protesting the acute water shortages and the frequent power cuts that have plagued the university, leading to what one newspaper described as a "frightening situation" with students and teachers not being able to bathe for days and having to go to the bushes because the toilets on campus and in the hostels are out of order (*Source*, 10.13.97).

This situation is not unique to Bayero University. The lack of water and electricity, making it impossible for students and teachers to work at night and have adequate sanitary conditions on campuses—a common occurrence even before the universities were adjusted and defunded—is now a fact of life throughout the Nigerian school system. But in the Kano area the water shortage has been even more dramatic because of the lack of rain.

"Nature," however, is not the main culprit in the suffering to which students and teachers are exposed. It appears that the university and state authorities are allowing the situation to deteriorate and are using the unrest it causes to expel from the campuses those they consider "trouble-makers."

This is what has occurred at Bayero, where a students' peaceful demonstration at the residence of the Vice-Chancellor, which followed many

warnings by the faculty to the administration concerning the agony students suffered because of the lack of water, was answered with punitive measures, such as the expulsion of 13 "ringleaders" and eventually the shut down of the campus.

Such a decision is interpreted by colleagues at Bayero not only as a sign of disinterest of the authorities for the well-being of students and staff, and their determination to let the universities be "run down," but also as an attack on the faculty, that has been especially disgruntled in the aftermath of the strike. At Bayero, in fact, teachers have not received the unpaid five-months salaries withheld during the strike, nor has the university administration disbursed any allowances and research grants or given any leaves of absence or sabbaticals. The administration has argued that the economic conditions in Nigeria do not allow for these expenses. The teachers believe, however, that this is a reprisal for their participation in the strike, as well as a move intended to force many of them out of the university, as demanded by the university "rationalization" plan to which Nigeria is committed.

Indeed, according to the *Source*, many teachers at Bayero have already resigned, and some departments are so understaffed that they are failing to win accreditation. (*ibid.*: 24) This is what happened in the Faculty of Medicine; according to the *Source*, also in the Mathematics Department 10 out of 15 teachers have left, and in the Pharmacology Department only one is left "who double up as the head of the department." The belief that the Bayero university authorities are intentionally letting the university "fall apart" and using the protest against these conditions to carry on purges of teachers and students perceived as too rebellious is strengthened by the example of developments in other universities. ASUU has noted that, far from complying with the promise made during the strike of a "new package," for higher education the government has continued to turn a deaf year to the teachers' demand for salary raises and improved working

conditions. Further, the plans for the "rationalization" of tertiary education—i.e. for the closure of departments and colleges and the raising of tuition fees for undergraduates—are speeding ahead, and the climate of arbitrariness and fear that characterizes life at many colleges has only intensified. Since the strike, the government has advocated the right to appoint the university councils and the vice-chancellors, and an "anti-intellectual wave" has spread in government circles with the Minister of Education announcing that Nigeria does not need sociologists, but

criminologists (*The News*, 10.13.97). All over the country, moreover, ASUU leaders have suffered reprisals because of their role in the strike. The University of Nigeria at Nsukka has sacked 15 lecturers, including the ASUU president Professor Assisi Asobie. More teachers have been sacked at the Federal Institute of Technology in Owerri, at the Enugu State University of Technology, Benue State University, the University of Benin and Edo State University, here "no fewer than 100 were sacked" (*The News*, *ibid.*: 25).

Latin American Update

The protest against the defunding of education at all school levels has been proceeding intensely throughout South and Central America in the Spring and Summer of 1997.

In Argentina, a teachers' strike in mid-April 1997 for better living conditions in the Nequén region sparked off a nationwide anti-austerity movement that has had a deep impact on the country's political scenario, as demonstrated in the recent elections. Despite the strike, in May the World Bank made the granting of a \$60 million loan to Salta province conditional on the elimination of 4,000 more public posts. In Mexico as well, throughout May and June, elementary school teachers were on strike, again to demand better pay (in this case, a 100% increase) and working conditions (*La Jornada*, June 13, 1997); while demonstrations by university students and teachers organizations were also under way to protest the government decision to apply one standard university entry exam ("examen unico"), which, its opponents claimed, penalizes students from working class background.

In Bolivia and Columbia, teachers have been at center of strikes and demonstrations as well. Colombian teachers, for example, were part of nationwide strike by civil servants that forced the

government to raise wages in the public sector by 20%—a seemingly substantial adjustment which, however, barely suffices to counter the the losses civil servants have suffered because of austerity policies the government has adopted. Just as in Africa, there is a new student movement growing in South and Central America. Students' confrontations with government and university authorities have become endemic, since the implementation of "adjustment" and the accompanying trends towards privatization of the schooling system.

Meanwhile in Nicaragua students have suffered a set back after President Aleman reversed a vote by the Nicaragua's National Assembly, on March 11, that approved a 6% increase of the university budget. "Like Violeta Chamorro before him, Aleman did so under heavy pressure by the IMF, whose vision of Nicaragua's role in the global economy is to provide unskilled labor" (quoting from Interpress Third World News Agency (IPS), Nicaragua Hotline, May 5, '97). According to IPS, the decision has angered the university community and the public, both because of its broader implications for Nicaragua political economy and because it is possibly unconstitutional, given that Aleman vetoed the decision of the National Assembly three weeks after it was made, whereas his veto power can only be applied 15 days after a decision by the Assembly.

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 we have 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 policies 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 and urgent action network to respond promptly to emergency situation;
- *mobilizing our unions and other academic organization 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 organization 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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