MAWAZO INAUGRAL WORKSHOP
FACULTIES OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
KAMPALA
UGANDA
JUNE 13 - 15 1983

The Sources and Consequences of Economic Instability in Africa

By
Jossy R. Bibangambah
Associate Professor, Agricultural Economics
Makerere University

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INTRODUCTION

In terms of a more recent history instability in Africa is represented by the strife in the Congo from the early 1960s; the civil war in Nigeria, numerous military coups d'etat and political assassinations, the civil war in Chad; the energy/fuel crisis, the World inflationary spiral, bureaucratic and political corruption, disappointing progress in the economic field, famine and drought and most recently the near collapse of the O.A.U. But these instances have their origin or their roots in earlier developments. There are also interactions or linkages between or among them. Thus an investigation of economic instability in Africa is not just a study of business cycles or seasonality. Firstly, it should involve looking at Africa in a historical perspective as the Africa of today is a product of both past and present developments. Secondly, it is a study of Africa's position in international ties of dependency and in the World economic crisis. Thirdly, it is a study of conflicts and imbalances. Fourthly, it is a study of the delicate balance between man and his environment. Fifthly, it is a study of recurrent man-made socio-economic and political upheavals. Sixthly, it is a study of mismanagement and disorganisation. Finally, in my case, it is a study of the African himself and his role in the alliance and partnership of corruption and exploitation and in the mismanagement and misuse of Africa's resources.

I am aware that those who call themselves "radicals" see all African problems as coming from outside. The African, they argue, has always been a victim, a victim of exploitation. It is "uncritical," it is emphasized, to blame a victim.

I do not, in any way, discount or deemphasize or shy away from, the evils of imperialist exploitation or unequal development. But I have argued and I continue to argue that it is "uncritical" for those who call themselves radicals not to explain how come that it is the African who is always forced into mismanaging the economy of his country as our Zairean brother is doing; that it is the African who is always manipulated into looting his country as the ruling elites of Africa have done; that it is the African who is always driven into squandering the resources of his country; that it is the African who is always confused about the appropriate structures and mechanisms necessary for the development of his country and that it is the African who is always deceived about the priorities of his country.

If the African is all this Vulnerable it is not enough to attri bute his vulnerability to history. It is not enough for Novelist Chinua Achebe to say that Africans should reflect back and find out where the "rain began to beat them." We need to know why the African never took cover, why he never provided himself with a shelter and why he continues to be in the rain. We must find out why he has always conducted himself in such a manner as not to escape from being a cictim. It is hard for me to accept that those who constitute the African ruling class - enjoy high incomes, wealth and status - are victims of the international system, when they are the very people perpetuating unequal development, iniquitous economic relations and the exploitation of ignorance or weakness. To simply sing that this reflects internal contradictions is mere rhetoric.

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

To-day there exists a wide gap between Africa and the European/ American societies in terms of productive organisation, magnitude and use of wealth and technological power. This is a historical development. It is a direct consequence of: a European initiated immoral trade, the slave trade, that constituted a great haemorrhage to Africa; an imperialist invasion that became a great disstabilizing (destabilising) factor; a colonial exploitation that sucked and drained away the vital elements of growth and development; an unjust international economic system that has fostered and ensured the pauperization of the African people. In short, it is a result of disastrous contacts between the African people and others in the course of the last five centuries.

Through the long centuries of the rise and ripeness of the Iron Age (which in Africa owes its spread to the Phoenicians, Kushites and Axumites in about 500 B.C), Africans had built political, social and economic systems of their own. These had given birth to the States and Empires of West Africa, (which were the chief suppliers of gold to the Mediterranean World until the opening up of the Americas); to those of the Monomotapa and the Changamir and many others[1] But this development was halted and further progress prevented by:

i) Three centuries of slave trade.
ii) Three centuries of slave trading wars.
iii) Wars of colonial conquest.
iv) European colonization and exploitation.
v) The development of an unjust international economic system that has perpetuated the exploitation of African by ensuring the survival of neo-colonialism.

Slave trade, which gave the white intruders access to labour that was often skilled in tropical farming, mining and metal working, and helped to build capital accumulation for the English and French industrial revolutions and later the American economic growth and expansion, constituted not only a drain and haemorrhage to Africa but also left the continent paralysed, if not unconscious. It is calculated that in three centuries of slave trading 20 million Africans were shipped to America. It is also estimated that for every slave that arrived in the Americas, nine died in the slave hunt or in the hold of slave ships. This means that through a one-sided partnership of slave trade with the nations of Western Europe Africa lost a total of about 200 million people[2]. This represents a great loss not only in manpower but also in productivity as the slavers took only the cream of the population - the strongest, youngest and ~~healthie~~ healthiest. As Dard ~~has put it~~ "What civilization could have survived such a haemorrhage?"[3]

Slave trade in Africa was not merely a process of collecting and selling captives. Raiding for captives led to new wars between African States. These wars were won by the chief who had the most firearms. And Europeans would sell them only in exchange for slaves. So the need for more firearms led to the chase for more captives and the need for more captives led in turn to the demand for more firearms. Thus Africa was engulfed in a ruinous vicious circle in which the ravages of the slavers - notably in Angola during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in eastern Africa during the nineteenth - entirely ruined a number of polities and their peoples.[4]

After slave trade came (especially in the last year of the 19th century) wars of colonial conquest. The European imperialist invasion of Africa came in four main directions: Against North Africa by the French in Algeria and Morocco and Tunisia (and afterwards by the British in Egypt and the Italians in Libya); Against West Africa by the British and French, and to a much smaller extent by the Germans; while the Portuguese were busy in Angola; Against South Africa by the Boers (the African - born descendants of Dutch settlers), afterwards by the British; and lastly by the Germans in South-West Africa. And against East Africa by the Omani Arabs of Southern Arabia and then by the British and Portuguese, with the Italians also taking most of Somalia. Meanwhile Belgium got control by force and fraud of the Congo basin.

The effect of all these invasions varied with the invaders and with the degree of resistance that Africans could or did offer. In some cases occupation was by agreement with local kings and chiefs. In other cases occupation was a result of wars and quick repressions. In yet other cases the Europeans had to conduct "wars of pacification" as they euphemistically called them, for several years and even tens of years. These wars were horrible. Rene Dumont said of them: "They made the situation of the dark continent even worse by accumulated massacres and devastations most often uselessly. Even trading firms protested several times, fearing that they would be unable to make sufficient profit from a scorched earth."[15]

Two main factors explain why the invasion of Africa was a quick and easy mission. The first was Europe's vastly superior strength in technology, militaty organisation and knowledge of what was going on. The second was the lack of unity between African kings and states. The slave trade had made too many of them fear and fight each other. Faced with the common danger of imperialist invasion, they failed to stand together. None of them was strong enough to stand separately from the others. Disnited, one by one they fell.

This African lack of unity and genuine Co-operation continues to contribute to the survival of colonialism and the iniquitous economic order imposed by colonialism. None of the efforts being made to create regional and sub-regional co-operation have achieved anything long-lasting. This is a result of lack of genuine commitment on the part of African states and failure to establish the essential structures and mechanisms that will make regional groupings work. The establishment of mere super-structures without any definite objectives, strategies and action programmes, as is the case with the Kagera Basin Development Organisation consumes resources without any contribution to the states' productive capacity or actual output. Instead of projects and programmes determining the necessary Support Services, bureaucratic structures are treated as an end in themselves.

The colonial regime continued and extended, in a new form, the same pattern of exploitation as the slave trade. Details of colonial exploitation have been documented(6). I should like, however, to stress three important facts. The first is that the economic system under colonialism placed the colonized country in a state of total dependence on the colonizing country. The organisation of the colony's economy reflected the needs of the metropolis, the local trade buying only for export and selling mainly import produce. Agriculture was oriented not toward meeting the needs of the native population but toward meeting the requirements of the metropolis. A large number of countries have thus become specialized in one or two crops which characterize the structure of their exportations even to-day: ground-nuts in Senegal, Gambia and Niger; Coffee in Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Ethiopia; Cotton in Uganda, Upper Volta, Chad, Niger and the Sudan; Cocoa in Ghana, Palm oil in Dahomey, bananas and Sugarcane in Somalia. The result of this overdependence on a few export crops is the famous deterioration of terms of trade which has led to a continuous lowering of the African peasants purchasing power and is therefore an important factor in his induced poverty. It is estimated that between 1960 and 1969 Africa lost the equivalent of some 6000 million dollars as a result of unfavourable changes in the terms of trade.

The second is the fact that in many countries of Africa the economic imbalances or regional disparities which are in many cases the source of tension as in Kenya, Uganda, Liberia, SierraLeone, Zaire etc were deliberately encouraged and fostered by colonial policy. In the case of Uganda some areas were delineated as export enclaves, other areas were made to assume the role of a labour-reservoir and others emerged as reserves for international tourism. These imbalances and therefore inequalities lie at the root of the often virulent ethnic conflict that has proved to be so de-stabilizing in a number of countries. The other imbalance relates to the focus of attention on urban centres. Cities or towns were the abodes of the foreign rulers and served as administrative headquarters, commercial centres and also fortresses during initial and troublesome periods. After independence they came to be occupied by politicians, top administrators, commercial magnates and industrial elite classes. Policies derived from the colonial era have been slow to change. Most cities and towns came into being as collecting and forwarding centres of rural produce and naturally the policy was to collect the maximum of what could be exported at the minimum possible price. This relationship still persists.

It simply means that rural areas of developing countries are directly linked to or made victims of international parasitical processes by the urban centres of the developing countries themselves.

The third fact is the absence of appropriate preparation of the African countries to assume full independence. It is significant that in the English-speaking countries most African leaders who took over power at the time of independence came out of prison: Nkrumah in Ghana; Banda in Nyasaland (now Malawi); Kaunda in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya. In the coutries where the leaders had not been in prison, evolution was nonetheless difficult. In Tnganyika, five years before independence the legislative council had no elected member and the Executive council had no African. It was not until 1960, in otherwards, on the eve of independence in 1961 that there was a responsible government with an elected legislative council in which the majority of the seats were occupied by Africans.

The French-speaking African countries were in no better position. The Brazzaville Conference of 1944 convened to develop a so-called liberal concept of French Colonial policy had concluded: "the purpose of the civilization operation carried out by France in the colonies rule out any idea of autonony, any possibility of development outside the French block of the empire. Any form of constitution, even far from self-government, in the colonies is unthinkable".(7)

In certain cases (Botswana and Mauritania) the government had to provide themselves with a capital city after independence, their countries having been administered from neighbouring territories (South Africa and Senegal respectively).

The most unprepared were the Belgian colonies, the most scandalous being Zaire, the symbol of Africa as a continent rich in resources but poor (, if not catastophic) in performance.

AFRICA'S POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL TIES OF DEPENDENCY

The term dependency is used, in this paper, in three senses: Firstly,it expresses excessive reliance on the proceeds of a single economic sector or commodity. In this sense a country is said to be export-dependent when its development is based on the export of one or a few locally produced products. In most cases of export-dependent economies, export goods comprise agricultural, forestry and mineral raw materials. Secondly,the term dependency expresses an unequal relationship, between different countries or economies. In this sense a country is dependent if its entire socio-economic development is determined by external factors - such as the investment decisions of foreign companies, the import demands of foreign producers or consumers or the credit allowances of foreign banks-without the country concerned being able to excercise an equivalent influence on its foreign business partners. In the words of Theotonic de Santos, dependency means "subordination of an economy to autonomous decisions .... undertaken in other economies".(8) and Cordova and Michelena see dependency as a situation when "the economic development of any one country is no longer the result of its own internal structure and dynamic but rather is dependent upon the size and nature of its relations with the other countries of the world."(9) As expressed here, therefore, the external factors limiting the latitude of decision-making as well as the development possibilities of a nation are the totality of its foreign economic relations. Thirdly the term dependency expresses the exploitation of and domination over developing countries within the global capitalist system in which external domination and exploitation find a harmony of interests with internal forces.(10) This is not so much of the external dependency of an economy. Emphasis is on the existence of structural and global relationships between the peripheral countries (developing countries) and the centre (developed countries). Studies on dependence have shown that the interests of the central economies (and the ruling classes which support them in these countries) coincide with the interests of the local ruling classes within underdeveloped countries themselves. There is therefore a structural link-up between the centre and the periphery and this link up is broadly based: it is not limited to the international market circuit but penetrates deep into society, aligning the interests of external and internal groups and classes and generating political alliances among them which affect all aspects of state activity. In this case the problem of development becomes more of a class struggle and therefore ceases to be an economic problem and becomes a political one.

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These three definitions of dependence are very much applicable to Africa. Our export dependence on primary commodities cannot be disputed. In Senegal, groundnuts account for three-quarters of the country's export earnings and about one-third of its budgetary revenue. In IvoryCoast coffee and cocoa account for well over half of export earnings. In Ghana nearly three-fifth of export earnings come from cocoa alone. In Chad more than four-fifth of her foreign revenue come from cotton. As for as East Africa, coffee and cotton, account for three-quarters of export earnings in Uganda; tobacco and tea account for three-fifth in Malawi and coffee and tea account for nearly half in Kenya.(11)

The other two forms of dependence are represented by a whole cluster of dependence relationships centuring on transnational corporations, international financial institutions and super-powers. These dependence relationships include technological dependence, financial dependence, capital dependence, dependence on externally generated information as a decision-making tool, dependence on organisation and management models formulated by the transnationals and cultural dependence in the sense of dependence on the lifestyle and consumption pattern of foreigners. Although it may be said that Africa is still relatively marginal as far as the investment activities of the "transnationals" are concerned (only 5% of their direct investment of U.S.$ 160 billion has come to Africa) foreign investment still plays a very important role. The estimated value of production of foreign investment as percentage of gross national production was more than 35% for Africa as a whole in the early seventies. Furthermore while the ratio of the stock of foreign investments to G.N.P was 0.09 for all the underdeveloped countries, it was 0.15 for Africa (excluding South Africa). Mkandawire has asserted that the relationship between the 'transnationals' and African states is characterized by "cyclical alternations of conflict and collaboration involving at one time 'liberal policies' and at another 'nationalistic' policies. Time and again one sees regimes which carry out bold measures against foreign capital only to reappear at a later time if not in a supine position at least on their knees negotiating for a rescheduling of foreign loans acquired in the process of nationalisation (with fair compensation') of foreign capital. In any cae, the African - TNC connection seems to be characterised by ambiguity so that in several African States, one witnesses within government policy, rhetoric and practice that is opposed to foregn capital and a whole arsenal of measures aimed at serving as incentives to foreign capital".(12)

Dependence on agricultural exports is a major source not only of economic instability but also of Africa's induced poverty because of two main factors: <u>price instability</u> and a relatively slowly growing demand.

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In considering the problem of price instability it is necessary to remember that in a capitalist economy it is inevitable since price fluctuations are a necessary part of free-market economy governed by the free forces of supply and demand.

SOURCES OF AGRICULTURAL PRICE INSTABILITY

Three main factors, one on supply side and two on demand side, account for the tendency of agricultural prices to show wide fluctuations. On the supply side the root of the trouble is the fact that agricultural production is biological. It therefore cannot be increased or reduced as rapidly as the production of factories or mines. This makes it impossible to adjust production to changes in consumer demand as rapidly as for manufactured products because of the long gestation periods and even longer life-cycles for some of the agricultural products. Moreover the volume of production varies unpredictably from year to year according to the vagaries of weather. Many farm products are also perishable so that stora- is only acticable r/ limited periods. The biological nature of agricultural production also means that supplies of most crops and livestock products are likely to greatly exceed demand for a short period each year when seasonal production is at its peak or on a larger scale when the production of a staple commodity for a period of years outruns effective demand.

On the demand side instability is associated with two factors:

(a) Relatively low elasticity of demand for foodstuffs so that a small over-supply leads to a disproportionate fall in price and vice-versa. With the better-off consumers the limiting factor is appetite; with the poorer it is income.

(b) Cyclical variations in economic activity and speculative motives in industrialised coutries. These cause variations or fluctuations in the demand for raw materials needed or held by manufacturers.

The Vulnerability of Africa and other LDC's as a result of export dependence on primary commodities is best expressed by Peter Donaldson in the following passage:

> "What developed countries say to less developed is broadly along these lines: 'If you care to export to us primary commodities which we need and which we do not produce ourselves - then feel free to do so. We shall put no barrier in your way and your problems will be those arising from price instability and a relatively slowly growing demand (partly caused by our capability and interest in producing synthetic substitutes) - which means that you will probably have to export larger and larger quantities to pay for any given volume of imports of our manufacturers. You can't of course, expect us to be quite liberal with regard to those primary products which we can, if only by offering subsidies sometimes produce ourselves. If, however, you decide to hedge against these difficulties by processing yourselves some of the

raw materials which would otherwise have been sent to us, then we are afraid that some distinctive is called for. Duty will be payable on such imports."(13)

This passage expresses, not a hypothetical but a real situation. This is exactly, how in practice, the developing countries are treated by the developed nations. The economically overdeveloped countries make enormous profits by obtaining raw materials cheaply from poor nations and then extract another round of profits as expensive sellers of manufactured products in these poor nations. Any attempt bythe poor nations to modify these trade relations is quickly repulsed by actual imposition, or a threat to impose, a "punishment". Besides the danger of externally induced instability the passage brings together the three diamensions expressed in our three definitions of dependence: over-reliance on export of a single or a few primary commodities; an unequal relationship between different countries; exploitation of and domination over developing countries within the global capitalist system.

In our analysis of causes of price instability with respect to agricultural exports we indicated cyclic variations in the economic activity of importing countries as one of the causes. But we need to go beyond this and state broadly that economic fluctuations occuring within one economy or country are transmitted to others. In this sense Africa is bound to be affected by economic crises that may have their origin in developed countries. This works through a combination of income and price effects associated with international trade.

According to the income theory of international trade, a rise in exports (ie increased export revenue from either increased quantity or higher prices of exports) has the effect of raising the level of national income by increasing income and employment in the export industries. The recipients of this income are in a position to spend it on factors of production, so that the initial increase, coming in the export industries is difused to other parts of the home economy. And as incomes rise there is more purchasing power for both domestic goods as well as foreign-made goods.(14)

Similarly, a fall in exports leaves a small total of purchasing power within the country and there is a contraction of expenditures for all things within the economy. As a consequence the money flow in the domestic economy shrinks.

In times of general shortage or scarcity of either consumer goods or factor inputs as during the energy/fuel crisis engineered by the OPEC countries, price effects are of significant consequence. The servicing of additional export sales (induced by increased demand) in importing countries) may involve bidding for scarce resources. This may generate cost push inflationary pressures which are then transmitted to the importing country.

The period since the mid 1960's has been characterised by recessions that are in turn characterised by stagflation ie similtaneous unemployment and inflation. Since Africa as part of the Third World is an integral part of the Capitalist World, the crisis, attributed to over-accumulation or over-investment in capital equipment in the industrialised countries,(15) has been immediately transmitted to us through growing balance of payments deficits. As demand in the industrialised countries declined or grew more slowly, prices for exported raw materials other than petroleum declined or grew more slowly. At the same time, the vast world inflation in the industrialised economies has increased the prices of manufactured commodities imported by Africa. The terms of trade have been shifting against the underdeveloped countries during this crisis despite the temporary raw material price boom in 1973-74. The non-petroleum exporting underdeveloped countries have faced increasingly serious balance of payments problems and foreign debts. The growing debt of Third World Countries has been used increasingly as a political instrument to impose measures that are often unpopular and disadvantageous to a developing country. For instance the International Monetary Fund insists on currency devaluation to make exports and foreign investment cheaper, and insists on super-austerity policies such as reduction of welfare expenditures through government budgetary cuts.

Price instability or economic instability in general, and hence the need for stabilization measures became a weighty argument in support of government interventionist policies in both colonial and post-colonial times. Although the argument - that inflationary pressures generated by shortage of consumer goods during and immediately after World War II had to be checked, that there was need to operate Price Assistance Funds to reduce the price uncertainty facing peasant producers with low risk-bearing capacity - seemed reasonable <u>interventionist policies</u> became instruments for the parasitic extraction of the rural surplus and therefore great contributors to Africa's <u>induced poverty</u> especially rural poverty. It is estimated that between 1946 and 1951 the West African Marketing Boards kept back from the producers more than £200 million while about £ 30 million were accumulated in Price Assistance Funds in Uganda.(16) It should be noted that in the case of British colonies these funds were part of the capital outflow from colonial territories as they were being held in Britain. This extraction was so alarming that even some British analysts considered it reasonalbe to point out as Hazelwood did that even in the <u>interest of stability</u> the accumulation of sterling reserves <u>had gone too far</u>. Hazelwood went even further and stated that if producers were not be paid the <u>full value of their output</u>, there were arguments for using the funds for local investment projects (in Africa) rather than sending the funds to U.K banks(17)

But both the mode and direction of extraction did not change with the advent of political independence. In fact with independence the need for growth in government revenue increased and in the absence of other easily taxable sources of revenue governments developed increasingly heavy taxation policies on export agriculture and marketing boards became more of revenue raising agencies for the government. Essentially, therefore, the pricing programme for agricultural products was even more adverse as the need for more government revenue increased.[18] For instance in Uganda, forthe period 1972-79 the farmer's share of the coffee crop value was, on average, as is evident from the table below, 25%, the average of 75% being retained by government as export tax and marketing board surpluses.

DISTRIBUTION OF COFFEE CROP VALUE (%) 1972/73 - 1977/78

Year	Farmer	Miller	CMB	Tax	Surplus
1972/73	39	10	11	30	10
1973/74	27	7	8	43	15
1974/75	32	8	10	39	11
1975/76	19	5	7	56	13
1976/77	15	4	6	66	9
1977/78	28	6	6	63	- 3

Source: J.R. Bibangambah (18)

These pricing and tax policies had the following adverse effects on the rural sector. First, they worsened the rural sector's terms of trade and this in turn meant loss of rural welfare and increased inequality in income distribution. Second, they robbed the rural sector of the capacity and ability to invest and expand its productive capacity and hence they perpetuated rural poverty. Third, through influencing existing as well as potential producers they discouraged potential expansion in production. Fourth, they contributed to the forces of structural distortions in the economy, especially the growth of the informal sector.[19]

SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF INSTABILITY IN FOOD SUPPLY IN AFRICA.

The causes of famine - a "State in which the amount of food available and being consumed by households or individuals is absolutely insufficient to sustain life" - at household level with special reference to East Africa is conceptualized by P. Muzaale in a recent article as in the table below.[20]:

Rural Nutritional Deprivation : A Causal Model in Outline

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC STATUS AND ECOLOGICAL LOCATION

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RB. Resource Base factors : factors and relationships determining the qualityaand quantity of a household's means of access to food.

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TE. Trend and Episodic factors : Long-term and occasional influences on the quality and quantity of the resources of a household, including risk-generating variables and variables making for lack of resilience.

↓

BU. Back-up factors : factors in the mobilization and management of back-up resources at the various levels of social organization.

↓

HA. Household Access : factors determing access for individual households to socially organized back-up resources, the social shock absorbers.

↓

FS. Food Supply factors : variables in the performance of the food supply system at the various levels of society, including the impact of TE factors on a household's ability to bring food to the table, as it were.

↓

ADEQUACY / INADEQUACY OF NUTRIENT INTAKE AT HOUSEHOLD AND INDIVIDUAL LEVELS

Unlike Muzaale, Deborah Bryceson arrogantly begins by blaming famine on peasants.(21) With the usual comb ination of capitalist bias and cultural arrogance she asserts, "famine and food shortages exist as an expression of the disruptive nature of pre-capitalist modes of production." We must accuse Bryceson not only of bias and arrogance but also of ignorance. Several detailed and well documented studies contain evidence to substantiate the view that the pace of destruction and the advance of increasingly desertic conditions outward from the tropical High Pressure zones is <u>frequently accelerated</u> rather than retarded by the introduction of advanced capitalist technology(22).

Of the factors presented in Muzaale's causal model, the most relevant to our study of instability are:

(i) the episodic shocks within social and physical environment ie drought, flood, human diseases, livestock diseases, crop diseases/pests; war or civil disturbances.

(ii) Forces influencing the flow of resources to households ie the rules and incentives within:

a) the moral community (ie Kinship and friendship groups.)

b) the market economy .

c) the Polity or Commonwealth (ie governmental organisation).

The episodic factors cause crop failure, reduce capacity for work, cause livestock decimation, crop loss and curtailment of production and food movements. In these ways they cause fluctuations in food supply. It is not yet certain as to the causes of drought, the most notable of the episodic shocks in recent years. It is hypothesizedthat it may be due to one or a combination of the following:

(i) an equator-ward shift in global pressure systems limiting the incursions of more humid monsoonal conditions in the wet season.

(ii) A shift in local pressure systems due to higher temperatures in the soil and lowest atmosphere following a reduction in vegetation.

(iii) A rapid spread of desert conditions because of the overgrazing of perennial grasses and their replacement by annuals which cover the ground for only a short part of the year and expose the land to dresiccation by the sun in the dry season.(23)

But there is no automatic or direct link between them and famine. Any connection is mediated by political and economic arrangements of a society. In Africa political and economic structures have converted a problem of climatic unpredictability into an immense human catastrophe(24). The most conspicuous of such structures is the dualistic structure of Africa's agricultural economies. This is characterised by a conspicuous division between the production of a narrow range of export crops and a broadly based food production sector. This dual structure has generated what has come to be termed Africa's agrarian paradox. During a period when a number of African countries have recorded food deficits, the same countries have been able to record sharp increases in annual production of agricultural goods destined for external markets. During the period 1960-70 when food production increasing at 2.5% a year was already beginning to lag behind the rate of population increase, the production of export crops was rising by about 4% a year. This means that countries where starvation was imminent in the early 1970's were, at the same time, exporting hundreds of thousands of tons of agricultural commodities to European and American markets. We have two illustrative cases. In Mali, one of the Sahel countries notorious for their devastating drought, the production of food crops had fallen precipitously by the early 1970. Maize production had fallen by more than one-third between 1969 and 1971 and millet showed no increases at all. During the same period Mali's export crops attained bumper levels. During the crop year 1971/72 cotton-seed production reached a record high of 68,000 metric tons - a 400% increase in a six year period. Groundnuts production totalled more than 150,000 tons - an increase of 70% during a four-year period. Rice production, largely for export, reached a record high of 174,000 tons in 1972.

Tanzania has found itself in a similar position as Mali. Food production for local consumption began to decline disastrously in early 1970's. By 1974 food production had fallen so low that the government exhausted its entire reserve of foreign exchange to purchase food from overseas. At the same time, however, the export sector was flourishing - total level of production of export crops was approaching record highs. During 1972/73 Tanzania exported 120,000 tons of cotton, more than [illegible] 100,000 tons of coffee, about 235,000 tons of sisal and 280,000 tons of cashew nuts.(25)

This paradox has its origin in what I have termed a mischievous attitude to African Agriculture.(26) This is the attitude or the view that African Agriculture is "Commercial agriculture" only when the Africans are producing export crops for industrialised countries and that an African producer whose objective function is not defined in convertable currency is irrational and primitive and must be regarded as someone operating outside a money economy. Unfortunately for Africa some Africans themselves, and worse still those supposed to play the role of change agents are converts to this kind of thinking and are instrumental in perpetuating it.

The roots of the problem of over-emphasis on export agriculture are associated with two main historical factors. The first is that of european economic interests that aimed at maximization of supply of needed raw materials for their industries. The second relates to the fact that export agriculture provided the most efficient medium of extracting resources (funds) from the colonies to finance European development. These reasons lend support to those who maintain that the food crisis is directly due to capitalist exploitation of Third World peoples.(27) A very recent practical example of structures which do not respond to the needs of the masses but respond to the priorities of the priviledged classes and multinationals is the planning of the Bakalori irrigation project in Northern Nigeria. The need to earn as much money as possible, to export as much industrial produce as possible and tie the Nigerian agricultural sector to the industrial agribusiness sector of FIAT and the Italian economy influenced the decision to use flood irrigation system. This approach caused great damage to soils, food sources and the land tenure system and eventually provoked violent resistance from farmers. The state had to bear the burden of a capital intensive irrigation stratrgy by providing ₦ 3 million to keep the farmers silent.(28)

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Besides the dualistic structure, there are two other important factors that have worked to the disadvantage of food production. The first relates to a whole variety of methods, used by colonial admministrators to compel (with Kiboko) the rual population to make itself available as a labour-supply for export crop production. These included various sytems of taxation, imposition of certain work requirements as part of an individuals obligation to colonial authority, and forced labour. The second factor relates to the rural policy which so starved food production of government services, supports, and agro-scientific inputs. It is not surprising that of all the research stations in Uganda, none was instituted for bananas, a staple food for almost two-thirds of the population. Also notable is the fact that the infra structures of African nations - roads and railways - are patterned in such a way as to facilitate the transportation of exportable agricultural commodities from the interior to the ports rather than to improve the internal distribution of food.

While the African is made to believe by his imperialist advisers like Mr. Peel, the Africa Editor of Financial Times, that to produce food is to operate outside a money economy, they have the following to say to themselves and to their own people.(29):

i) "Food is a Weapon. It is one of the principal tools in our negotiating Kit." - Earl Butz, U.S Secretary of Agriculture.

ii) "Food is a power. In a very real sense it is our extra measure of power."

- The late U.S Senator Hubert Humprey.

iii) "In a cooler and therefore hungrier World, the U.S near - monopoly as a food exporter - - - - could give the U.S a measure of power it never had before - possibly an economic and political dominance greater than that of the immediate post World War II years - - - Washington could acquire virtual life and death power over the fate of multitudes of the needy."

- U.S Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Political Research.

iv) "People who can't afford to live let them eat promises."

- Headlines in the London Observer and Gurdian.

THE AFRICAN MISMANAGEMENT.

To me nothing characterises Africa more than mismanagement.** ie mismanagement of national resources, of institutions, of infra-structures, of policies, of programmes and of projects.

Development as a process of change presupposes the existence of change agents who are qualitatively superior in ideas, skills, imagination, discipline, integrity, entrepreneurship and commitment. But in Africa those

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**The unbelievers should visit Mulago Hospital.

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expected toplay the role of change agents are the greates mismanagers and the looters of the very resources that should be inputs in the transformation process. There is nowhere in the World that ruling elites have such a high time preference and such a high propensity to consume as in Africa. In my view even illiterate peasants are more careful and more efficient with the use of their resources than most Africanadministraors. A peasant has his objectives, he knows his priorities and has strategies specifically designed to achieve his objectives. More importantly, he has a commitment to his strategies, to his priorities, to his objectives and therefore to the welfare of his family. The ruling elites in Africa have no such commitment. Their objectives seem to be to loot as much as possible in the shortest time possible and this is in no way different from the plunder carried out by the colonial invaders.

Development involves both "being" and "doing" ie doing the relevant things in order to eliminate people's poverty, deprivation and degradation. But in Africa we are doing exactly the opposite of things that should be developmental. What is developmental about delegations of hundreds of people on each of a hundred trips to Europe a year? What is developmental about fleets and fleets of Mercedes - Benz Cars? What is developmental about all kinds of consumer activities that use up millions and millions of dollars a year? Africa seems to be more concerned with the entertainment, amusement, fascination and aggrandizement of the ruling elites than with developmental change.

I have talked about the instability caused by colonial invasion, slave trade, dependence, price fluctuations, natural calamities, and inappropriate economic structures.. Let me hope that someone will talk about instability caused by stagnation,suffering, frustration and anger caused by African mismanagement. Of similar importance is the analysis of the instability caused by greed and hunger for power, another chronic disease in Africa.

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