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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.22004/ag.econ.295268>

<https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/295268/files/openu012.pdf>

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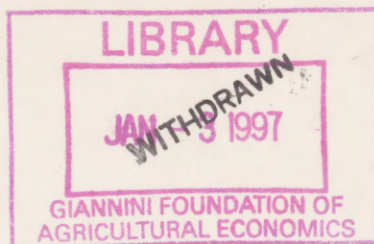
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AGRICULTURAL
"MODERNISATION" IN THE
ERA OF STRUCTURAL
ADJUSTMENT

by

Henry Bernstein

DPP Working Paper No.16

Development Policy and Practice Research Group

Faculty of Technology

The Open University

September 1989

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AGRICULTURAL 'MODERNISATION' IN THE ERA OF STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

This paper tries to address some central contradictions of agricultural 'modernisation' as theorised (albeit implicitly) and practised in the development projects of the World Bank and African states. It locates these contradictions in

- (1) the environmental uncertainties and complexities of farming in Africa VS the drive to standardise the technical conditions of production in 'modernising' agricultural commodity production
- (2) the variant forms of commoditisation and labour processes of peasant farming in Africa, including their specific class and gender relations, VS neo-classical conceptions of the family farm as a unitary enterprise or 'firm'
- (3) how types of markets and peasant-state relations generated by 'actually existing capitalism' in Africa confound the expectations of idealised notions of (capitalist) development contained in agricultural 'modernisation', and its assimilation in World Bank/IMF structural adjustment 'strategies' of the 1980's

It is suggested that the inherited and continuing contradictions of agricultural 'modernisation' are obscured rather than confronted in the World Bank's insistence on 'reforming' African states and liberalising 'the market' as respectively principal cause and cure of agrarian 'crisis'. The so-called 'new realism' of structural adjustment in fact combines, and attempts to conceal, the reality of an imperialist offensive with an ideological and historical fantasy of agricultural development.

The paper originated in a public seminar given in the Department of Rural Economy, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania, May 13 1989. It was written immediately afterwards in response to a request by those who attended the seminar, and (of course) it started to expand. In particular I amplified the section on the Tanzanian economy, and developed somewhat the more theoretical and speculative ideas in the second part, which gives the paper its title.

I decided to incorporate the first sections of the talk (on the Berg Report) because they establish a general context, and the larger section (though still only a selective overview) on the Tanzanian economy because I found it useful to summarise aspects of a more specific context, and think that others might find it useful for the same reason.

As I make clear, all the information and most of the ideas in section 4 on Tanzania are drawn from one of the two books I had with me for reference: Tanzania Country Study and Norwegian Aid Review, sent to me by one of its authors Finn Kjaerby, and which provides an up-to-date and cogent review of developments in Tanzania over the last fifteen years or so (see note 9). The other book I was able to draw on was Phil Raikes' Modernising Hunger. Famine, Food Surplus and Farm Policy in the EEC and Africa (see note 2).

To the text of the paper written in Morogoro I have added some footnotes including references to relevant recent literature.

1. Introduction

It is a great pleasure for me to be in Tanzania again after nine years, and I want to thank the Department of Rural Economy of Sokoine for its hospitality and friendliness. The week and a half I have been here so far have been extremely stimulating, and have encouraged me to think a lot about the issues I shall present this morning.

In the 1970s I participated in the lively critical debate at the University of Dar es Salaam about the agrarian question in Tanzania, peasant-state relations, and the nature of the changes taking place through villagisation and following it.¹ Since then I have not followed developments in Tanzania as closely as I would like, and have been trying to catch up somewhat since I arrived here. The topic I have chosen is a very large one, and the nature of my talk is somewhat broad and theoretical, although I believe general and theoretical ideas are necessary to develop understanding of important practical questions. In trying to illustrate these briefly with reference to Tanzania, I am aware that you are much better informed about events here than I am. At the same time, it is very good to have this opportunity to talk about the issues in the way I want to - in my experience the intensely political nature of debates about development strategy has always been recognised and confronted in Tanzania, as it should be everywhere.

I have also been very stimulated by reading a new book by Philip Raikes, Modernising Hunger, and have drawn on it in developing ideas for this talk. Raikes has many years experience of working as an agricultural economist and researcher in Tanzania, as well as in Mozambique and Kenya, and his book contains many concrete examples and illustrations of the themes I will address more broadly.²

2. The Berg Report: into the era of Structural Adjustment

I start with the Berg Report of the World Bank, published in 1981 (commonly known by the name of its principal author Professor Elliot Berg) because it sets the scene for the 1980s in very important ways, not least through its concentrated focus on macroeconomic policy issues. Obviously the report is not a detailed guide to all that has happened since, but it certainly sets issues of agricultural development in the context of the World Bank's wider concerns, and does so quite explicitly.³ Its main points are as follows

In its analysis of Africa, the first thing to note is the Berg Report's use of the term 'crisis'. This represented a marked departure from the World Bank's usual neutral vocabulary of problems and their (technical) solutions, and I come back to its significance in a moment.

Second, the Berg Report viewed the 'crisis' as a structural one (rather than a temporary one, or manifesting cyclical problems), tied above all to the stagnant or declining performance of agriculture, both food and export crop production.

Third, the Report attributed the poor performance of agriculture mainly to the policies of African governments, and how these have affected adversely - or 'distorted' - the proper workings of markets in the agricultural sector: markets for inputs and incentive goods, as well as for output.

Moreover, this argument concerned not only what are conventionally regarded as sectoral policies, for example, concerning producer prices and marketing, but strongly emphasised the adverse effects of macroeconomic policies, especially

- * overvalued exchange rates
- * the excessive costs of import-substituting industrialisation (ISI), and of favouring industry at the expense of agriculture
- * overcommitted government spending on basic services such as education and health.⁴

Fourth, following from this analysis, the most strategic policy prescriptions of the Berg Report were as follows:

- * adoption of realistic exchange rates (= devaluation)⁵
- * a (sharply) reduced emphasis on industrialisation and ISI in favour of export agriculture led economic recovery to restore import capacity
- * effective incentives to stimulate the revival of agriculture, above all price incentives involving market liberalisation
- * on the input side, a bigger push on agricultural research and new technologies to increase production and productivity
- * an enhanced role for international capital and (business) expertise in agriculture (and mining)
- * cutting down government spending (and by implication employment), including the introduction of user charges for education and health services.

The fifth point is that the Berg Report thus paved the way - or at least announced the World Bank's intention - for a much more comprehensive macroeconomic and national policy intervention than its previous concern with project aid and sometimes sectoral policy, representing an overt politicisation of the Bank's stance and role. The substantial injections of foreign aid essential to support economic recovery in Africa should be conditional on governments adopting comprehensive policy reform, thus 'structural adjustment' for structural 'crisis'. Institutionally and politically, the period of SAL (structural adjustment lending) in the 1980s has seen

- * formal and close collaboration of the World Bank and IMF in drawing up lending conditions for different African countries
- * attempts by the World Bank to bring other aid donors in line with its own position on SAL (apparently with some success in the case of Tanzania, see below).

3. Criticisms of the Berg Report

Next I summarise some of the principal criticisms made of the Berg Report (and subsequent SAL policies and practices).

First, while some of the Report's data and particular points may be valid in themselves, many of the issues they concern (increasing foreign debt, food supplies and imports, environmental degradation) are more symptoms than causes of 'crisis', with the analysis of basic causes very one-sided.

Second, the 'structural' analysis of crisis ignores how African economies were shaped - or even created - by colonial imperialism, and how they are affected by their place in international divisions of labour and world markets, not least in the 1970s - a period of global capitalist recession during which the African 'crisis' started to become evident (see below).⁶

Third, a crucial element of the Report's analysis of agricultural 'crisis' rests on blatantly inadequate or often simply fictional data on trends in food production. The extreme inadequacies of available data on food production in Africa are widely known; it can be inferred that the Berg Report's highly aggregated and conclusive statements about food production decline were used opportunistically to support its view of generalised 'crisis', hence its case for generalised intervention.⁷

Fourth, the argument for an export agriculture led strategy was supported by a series of comparative advantage equations using shaky data and assumptions (in fact, international terms of trade were beginning to move against tropical agricultural commodities again as the Report was published - see below).

Fifth, the (then) President of the World Bank stated in his Preface to the Berg Report that the case for liberalisation was 'pragmatic' rather than ideological, but the whole Report is infused - and held together - by an ideological commitment to the virtues of 'the market'.

Now, a co-worker of mine Maureen Mackintosh has recently pointed out how the term 'market' is used in at least three different ways:

- (i) as a purely ideological concept, empty of analytical content - 'the market' (in general)
- (ii) as an element of particular analytical theories or models in economics (eg in A K Sen's model of food markets)

- (iii) in the study of particular markets, with their great variation of specific social (class and gender) characteristics, institutional conditions and political processes, and so on.⁸

The Berg Report in suggesting market 'failure' (due to state intervention) as the prime cause of economic 'crisis' in Africa, hence market 'restoration' as its solution, has no analysis of real markets (iii), may contain implicit models (ii), but certainly conveys its message in the abstract ideological concept of 'the market' and its virtues (i).

A sixth criticism of the Berg Report is that while its main emphasis is on macroeconomic failure and the need for basic reform at the level of national policy, there is a strategic continuity with past World Bank thinking and practice in the conception of agricultural 'modernisation', which I consider later. The usual scenario of 'modernisation' is simply projected into the future, indeed a better future as the macroeconomic conditions for effective modernisation of agriculture are satisfied by structural adjustment.

A seventh criticism is that SAL policies are certain to have a regressive impact on income distribution, intensifying existing pressures on the rural and urban poor of Africa.

An eighth and final criticism of the Berg Report - and the World Bank (and other aid donors) more generally - is that its whole analysis of what has gone wrong in Africa contains no reference to its own role in the processes leading to crisis. It is not just a debating trick to point this out; in my view, it is of central importance and I shall come back to it again at the end.

4.1 Tanzania's 'crisis': an overview

You know much more about what has happened in Tanzania in the 1980s than I do, so I shall provide only a brief summary, then select a few aspects that have struck me and that bear on the themes of my talk today.⁹ And, of course, one must be aware that in many respects Tanzania seems to provide a perfect illustration of the diagnosis of the Berg Report and of the World Bank/IMF more generally.

The Tanzanian economy started to experience serious problems in the 1970s. These were obscured by some extent by abnormally high world coffee prices and earnings in 1976-7, but the manifestations of crisis were evident by 1979 exacerbated by several 'external shocks' (in the phrase of the prevailing vocabulary): the breakup of the East African Community in 1978-9, the second major rise in oil prices in 1979, and the war with Amin's regime in Uganda, 1978-9.

Key macroeconomic indicators show

- * an annual decline in real per capita income of 2% from 1978-1985
- * a growing balance of trade deficit from around 20-25% of total imports in the early 1970s, up to 50% in 1974-5 (the first oil price rise, and major food

imports), down to 25% in 1976-7, back to 50% in 1978 and thereafter growing to 71% (provisional) in 1987.

- * consequently a growing balance of payments deficit, intensifying in the 1980s when the government resorted increasingly to short-term commercial borrowing to finance it - even so by 1985 payments arrears on imports amounted to twice the value of export earnings in that year, and suppliers credits dropped to \$2 million from \$110 million in 1984
- * annual inflation increasing from 10-12% in the first half of the 1970s to 25% by the end of the 1970s and around 30% in the 1980s
- * the government started to run an annual recurrent budget deficit from 1978-9, rising from 20% to 30% by the mid-1980s
- * this was partly financed by increased domestic borrowing by the government, rising from 8.2% in 1977-8 to 25% in 1981-2, thereby fuelling inflation; the reduction in government domestic borrowing after 1982 was due to Commodity Import Support (CIS) from foreign aid - another major step in Tanzania's extreme aid dependence (see below).

There seems to be common agreement that the principal cause of the economic crisis was the ambitious commitment of the government to development expenditure that exceeded absorptive capacity in the context of declining exports, above all of agricultural commodities (about 80% of export value).

4.2 Agricultural performance

From 1973 there was a persistent downward trend in export crop volumes, amounting to a 36% drop by 1982. While the unit value of export crops increased throughout the 1970s, it has declined each year in the 1980s. There was an average annual decline in real export earnings of 8.5% from 1972-1985, of which 70% was due to declining export volume, and 30% to adverse shifts in the terms of trade.

From 1974 to 1982, poor agricultural performance is held to account for more than 40% of the accumulated trade deficit, of which

- (i) 73%, almost \$1.3 billion, is the estimated loss of foreign exchange earnings due to declining export volume
- (ii) 27%, \$470 million, is the cost of food imports above the 1973 level.

The poor performance of export crops is attributed to

- * declining producer prices in real terms
- * adverse internal terms of trade for agriculture

- * amplified after 1978 by the increasing overvaluation of the Tanzanian shilling, constraining higher producer prices in real terms
- * deterioration of necessary infrastructure, notably vehicle capacity and roads for input delivery and crop collection, and also of processing capacity.

The major emphasis has thus been placed on pricing policies and, closely connected with them, the parastatal marketing system for crops, sufficiently inefficient and costly to have a significant affect on overall money supply and inflation (through massive parastatal overdrafts with the domestic banking system), as well as on producer prices.¹⁰

The situation with respect to food production and imports I find complex. First, imports are not a meaningful proxy measure of trends in production.¹¹

Second, relative producer prices shifted from export to food crops after the massive food imports of 1974-5, followed by various attempts since then to restore incentives for key export crops. Nominal producer price rises for all crops, of course, are undermined by an official annual inflation rate of 25% rising to 30%.¹²

Third, aggregate estimates - or guesstimates - suggest that production of the main food staples especially maize, always heavily dependent on weather conditions, has not been too bad since 1976/7. However, I have already suggested that such estimates are notoriously unreliable, and in any case - a fourth point - it is very difficult to ascertain any relationship between these estimates and National Milling Corporation (NMC) purchases of main staples.¹³

Apart from the general phenomenon that marketed food supply fluctuates proportionately more than total food output in peasant agrarian systems,¹⁴ parallel markets (including cross border smuggling) have been estimated to account for 50% or more of food staple sales in Tanzania in the 1980s. At the same time, proportions of sales in parallel and official markets also fluctuate with

- * the size of harvests and their interregional distribution
- * their combined effects for parallel market prices
- * differential access of peasant producers to parallel markets
- * the extent to which producers are locked into official markets by dependence on annual input and credit supply through crop programmes (see further below).

4.3 The Basic Industries Strategy (BIS)

I want to mention now the BIS, adopted in 1974, because I have just been reading about it, and knew far less about its impact on economic trends than I did about the general outline at least of agricultural performance.¹⁵

I find the story of BIS instructive, yet another example of how we can learn from history and its often painful ironies. Much of the intellectual inspiration for the BIS came from two important radical intellectuals of the Arusha Declaration period, the late Justinian Rweyemamu and Clive Thomas, who advocated industrialisation for the internal market as a strategy against dependence.¹⁶ Professor Rweyemamu, I understand, also headed the economic 'task force' in the President's Office concerned with implementing BIS.

The first point that struck me is how much capital goods imports accelerated from the late 1970s and contributed to the import bill, hence the balance of trade and balance of payments deficits. The share of capital goods in imports increased from 20-30% between 1971 and 1975, to 35% in 1976, 50% in 1981, and has remained at 50% -54% in the 1980s, with an annual trend growth rate of 18% from 1971-6, 25% from 1976-81, and almost 26% from 1981-6. In 1981 only 24% of capital goods consisted of much needed transport equipment, with the balance industrial machinery and equipment.

Second, the industrial technologies acquired tend to be very import intensive in their requirements for raw materials, spare parts etc, thereby continuing to exert pressure on scarce foreign exchange: recurrent imports to industry amounted to one-third of total merchandise imports in 1984. In total (including the foreign exchange component of capital equipment amortisation), the manufacturing sector created more than 60% of Tanzania's foreign trade deficit in 1984.

Third, the performance of manufacturing industry has been very poor; a story, as Rune Skarstein put it, of 'increasing forex consumption but declining output':¹⁷

- * manufacturing value added as a share of total GDP declined from a peak of 13.3% in 1978 to 4.6% in 1987 (the lowest since 1963)
- * since 1980 there has been an average annual decline of 4.5% in (absolute) manufacturing value added
- * capacity utilisation in 1984 and 1985 was around 25% (53% in 1976)
- * the value of manufacturing exports in 1984 was lower than in 1975.

At this point, we could say 'so far, so bad', and that the Berg Report must be correct about 'premature' industrialisation in Africa and its exorbitant costs. However, what Skarstein demonstrates, and this is the fourth point, is

- * how much capital imports were financed - and promoted - by foreign aid donors
- * how actively donors were involved in the choice and supply of specific technologies inappropriate to the conditions of the Tanzanian economy.

Of the estimated sectoral distribution of foreign aid between 1977 and 1980, 29% went to industry (nearly three times the share of agriculture), and from 1975-85 foreign aid financed more than 30% of fixed capital formation in new manufacturing industry in Tanzania.

Linking the two points above, we should remember that the 1970s was a period of global capitalist recession with, on one hand, a lot of 'loose' money circulating in the system, and on the other hand heavy engineering and capital goods sectors in the West seeking new channels for profitable investment.

The two are linked, of course, in that reduced demand for borrowing by Western industry contributed to the flow of petrodollars seeking 'outlets', and finding them in the rapid expansion of commercial bank lending to Third World governments (notably the big Latin American debtors like Brazil and Mexico, but also in Africa e.g. Nigeria).

In short, bilateral donors pushed the interests of their own capital goods sectors. It was common for engineering consultancy subsidiaries to do the project planning and choose the technologies then supplied by their parent companies through their governments' aid to Tanzania. The effects were

- * to choose and implement large new investments, and as rapidly as possible (rather than rehabilitating and improving existing capacity)
- * to establish large-scale, capital-intensive, and highly import-intensive industries
- * to impose on the Tanzanian economy the burden of meeting the recurrent import requirements of the technologies thus transferred.

Now I do not know what role the World Bank had in any of this, but the story is certainly one important element in the African, and specifically Tanzanian, 'crisis' that the Berg Report was very quiet about. And, as I have suggested, the story illustrates some specific circumstances and effects of the international capitalist recession in the decade during which Africa's 'crisis' emerged.

4.4 Foreign aid in the 1970s

The point about the 'loose' money of the 1970s, just noted, can be extended in considering foreign aid to Tanzania, which increased nearly 14 times from 1970 to its peak in 1981 of \$702 m. The significance of (especially bilateral) aid in financing new industrial investment has been outlined, and I turn next to some brief observations about agriculture.

The few indicative figures I have are for agricultural and livestock development expenditure in the Tanzanian budgets, but in which foreign aid, including that by the World Bank, is heavily implicated. The first thing to note is that actual investment in agriculture in the 1970s did not exceed 10% of the development budget, with the exception of two years connected with villagisation and the beginning of major food imports (1974-5, 1975-6).

Second is the heavy bias of investment towards parastatal farming. From 1974 to 1982, food crops received 45.9% of agricultural development expenditure, of which

- * 71% alone went to sugar development (parastatals)
- * 24% went to cereals, mostly state farm wheat and paddy

And 78% of expenditure devoted to livestock went to parastatal ranches with 2% of the national herd.

We know that foreign aid was heavily involved in this project bias towards large-scale farming, both World Bank and bilateral donors (Canada in wheat at Basuto, China in rice at Mbarali); also that several sources of parastatal investment are not included in the government development budget. This seems to be an increasing trend, and of some political importance (see further below).

Third, of 26% of development expenditure devoted to non-food crops, mostly peasant grown, much was disbursed to marketing and processing, key functions of the new crop parastatals, rather than on improving production.

In the second part of my talk, I will consider the significance of the last two points in relation to the 'logic' of agricultural 'modernisation' in (i) 'bypassing' peasants or (ii) 'locking in' peasants to particular technologies, patterns of commoditisation and markets.

4.5 From SAP to IMF/ERP¹⁸

In the face of the growing economic crisis sketched earlier, the Tanzanian government instituted the National Economic Survival Programme (NESP) from 1981-2, and the more significant Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) from 1982-5.

SAP, as its name suggests, incorporated many of the aims - and also the policy mechanisms - of World Bank 'structural adjustment', eg

- * restoring balance in the government and external accounts
- * reducing inflation
- * restoring output to pre-crisis levels
- * rehabilitating economic infrastructure
- * using the pricing system to reduce the costs of

parallel markets and to achieve more efficient resource allocation.

The 1984/5 budget pushed such measures as far as they were to go in the last year of SAP through

- * partial trade liberalisation
- * increases in real producer prices
- * removal of many subsidies
- * 'cost sharing' in social services
- * more flexible internal trade regimes.

Trade liberalisation eased some of the acute shortages of goods in the country, and, as I understand it, amounted to an implicit and partial devaluation in that imports became more expensive, while exports continued to be sold 'cheaply' in shilling terms at the official rate of exchange.

Now, as the Berg Report had stressed, the chances of success of such policies depend on substantial foreign aid to facilitate the 'adjustment' process (for import support, rehabilitation of productive capacity and infrastructure, etc.) What happened in - or to - Tanzania in the first half of the 1980s was that foreign aid declined considerably, above all World Bank aid, while export revenues were also dropping rapidly.

From its peak of \$702 m in 1981, aid declined each year to \$487m in 1985. Havnevik et al are right to say (p127) that the reduction of aid was not a cause of the crisis of the 1980s but certainly aggravated it. And the lead, of course, was taken by the World Bank. From being the largest aid donor with \$98 m in 1982 (14.3% of total aid), the World Bank was ninth of the major donors with \$28.5 m in 1985 (5.8% of the total). Of the reduction in aid in 1985 compared with 1982, over one-third was due to the World Bank alone.

Given the inability of the Tanzanian government to maintain existing projects, let alone find the foreign exchange to maintain new investments, the Scandinavian donors and the Netherlands switched their aid increasingly to commodity import support (CIS), but the amount of CIS also declined from 1982 to 1985 in line with all aid. There can be little doubt that, helped by right-wing governments in most of their countries, the World Bank gave the lead to all the major bilateral donors in putting pressure on Tanzania as the crisis deepened, with the IMF no doubt policing commercial (suppliers') credit which virtually ceased in 1985 (see above).

Why, when the Tanzanian government was starting to introduce structural adjustment measures of the approved type through SAP? There are two likely hypotheses:

- * the World Bank/IMF considered these measures to be too little, too late
- * Tanzania still stood out against devaluation, the

keystone of World Bank/IMF structural adjustment lending, and had to be made an example of.

In 1986, then, Tanzania finally signed an agreement with the IMF, the conditions of which were incorporated in the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), 1986-9, combining many of the measures of its predecessor SAP with of course the obligation to devalue the Tanzanian shilling. The main items of the SAL 'package' and ERP concern monetary and other macroeconomic management, with some institutional reform, as follows:

- 1 devaluation
- 2 cutting annual inflation to a target of 20%
- 3 improving revenue generation and exercising tighter expenditure controls to balance the government budget
- 4 raising interest rates to real positive rates
- 5 reducing the growth of the money supply to about 15-20% per annum
- 6 raising industrial capacity utilisation
- 7 parastatal reform
- 8 redirecting credit and investment away from services to directly productive activities, and from the public to the private sector.

Moving towards the end of the ERP, some preliminary assessment can be attempted (as of May 1989). Undoubtedly, and expectedly, devaluation has been the most 'successful' measure to date: the Tanzanian shilling has been devalued about five times in the period of ERP to date. The record of other monetary measures is much more patchy:

- * inflation in fiscal year 1988/9 was 31.2%, from 30% in 1987/8 (Daily News, 12 May 1989)
- * no significant improvement in the government budget deficit
- * interest rates have been pushed up to near the annual inflation rate, if not positive real rates, but domestic credit expanded in 1987 by 45%
- * money supply increased slightly more than inflation in 1987, in part due to the overdrafts of the marketing boards and cooperatives, especially the National Milling Corporation and the Tanzania Cotton Marketing Board.¹⁹

Of the other measures,

- * industrial capacity utilisation is patchy but still lagging badly in some branches like fertiliser and textiles that are crucial to the agricultural sector (Daily News, 12 May 1989)
- * there has been no significant progress in reforming parastatals, although their liquidity has been squeezed as a result of devaluation and increased interest rates
- * there have been some measures of privatisation, although I have no information on their extent and effects.²⁰

Finally, there has been no marked improvement in the balance of trade: exports in 1988/9 were able to finance only one third of the import bill (Daily News, 12 May 1989).

One sign of modest overall recovery is a slight growth of real per capita income of 0.3% in 1985/6, 0.6% in 1986/7, and 1% in 1988/9.²¹ Agricultural production has shown signs of recovery (though very unevenly by crop sector) aided by good weather conditions, and a better supply of incentive goods. How much of the gains of devaluation are passed on to export crop producers, how much is retained by the marketing system, and how much increased producer prices are countered by higher prices of imported inputs, remains to be seen.

In fact, an annual inflation rate reasonably steady at around 30% might be considered an achievement given the expected inflationary effects of devaluation. Possibly these effects have been absorbed in the first place by cutting into the scarcity rents of traders, which provide only a temporary and limited slack, however.²² As devaluation is passed on through the import content of local production and rising costs transmitted to retail prices, in conditions of a continuing critical trade deficit and expanding domestic credit and money supply, it is difficult to see how inflation can be controlled on future, let alone reduced.

Foreign aid, of course, has picked up again since the IMF agreement and the adoption of the ERP (World Bank aid alone more than doubling from 1985 to 1986) so that the Tanzanian economy and budget are even more dependent on external financing.

First, the proportion of external finance in the development budget increased from an average of 37% (1982/3, 1983/4) to 71% in 1986/7, and 90% in 1987/8. Second, and the central new trend of the 1980s, has been the increasing amount of aid in the form of CIS, which shot up following the IMF agreement to \$281.6 m in 1986/7, one quarter of which was the World Bank/IDA Multisectoral Rehabilitation Credit (co-financed by some bilateral donors).

The significance of CIS is the extent to which external finance is now thereby incorporated in recurrent revenue and expenditure. CIS cash cover payments to the Treasury (roughly 50% of total CIS aid) of about Tsh 8 bn (\$157 m) contributed 16.3% of the total government budget in 1986/7 (rising to 16.9% in 1987/8). In effect CIS cash cover payments have replaced government borrowing from the domestic banking system, but have an inflationary impact as they automatically expand the money supply. In terms of the sectoral distribution of CIS, it seems that the share of industry has exceeded its target allocation in the ERP at the expense of agriculture and transport.²³

Finally, we should also note that increasingly significant amounts of project aid are not even shown in the government development budget (as mentioned earlier). This suggests that growing aid dependence has a new qualitative dimension with important political implications, beyond the quantitative expansion sketched above.

First, there is the role of the World Bank/IMF in 'coordinating' or bringing the policies of bilateral donors into line with their own strategy, which has been summarised as monetarism and the supply side economics formula of encouraging liberalisation and privatisation, and squeezing labour.²⁴ Second, there is the growing tendency of donors to plan, supervise and implement projects directly, including establishing their own sectoral coordination units, without 'interference' from government - in short, implanting autonomous management structures in the economy, thus 'by passing' the state.

5. The logic of agricultural 'modernisation'²⁵

The overview of the Tanzanian economy presented follows standard conventions of macroeconomic description and analysis, with some critical observations pointing towards this part of my talk, which is more theoretical and speculative in the synthesis of ideas it attempts. Issues of social analysis were not emphasised so far, nor did I try to survey the effects of economic crisis on Tanzanian society, differentiated by relations of class and gender, and other divisions characteristic of capitalism.²⁶

Here I want to use some of the concepts of political economy first to investigate the logic of agricultural development as 'modernisation', giving several illustrations from Tanzania. Next I suggest some contradictions of this conception and its typical practices in relation to peasant agriculture in Africa, and some contradictions between the World Bank and African states in the pursuit of agricultural 'modernisation', for which the agenda of the Berg Report and the specific case of Tanzania's 'crisis' have provided a context. Finally I propose some conclusions about the politics of imperialism in the era of 'structural adjustment'.

What is agricultural 'modernisation'? In brief, it is a conception that (1) is often presented simply as technical progress: the growth of output and productivity, but (2) is intrinsically connected with commoditisation: the process of the development of commodity production, markets, and divisions of labour. In short, 'modernisation' in this context (as in others) abstracts from a particular view of the development of capitalism and its virtues and suggests their universal replicability. This abstraction combines ideas about the development of technical conditions of production with ideas about the development of certain social conditions of production (that is, markets, or simply 'the market').

In the sphere of production, technical efficiency is expressed in the formula 'high input - high output' farming. In the sphere of exchange, the key logic is the familiar (neo-classical) one of efficiency of resource allocation through competition, that is, the operation of demand and supply transmitted by market prices which determine (optimal) ways of producing different agricultural commodities.

Processes of commoditisation inevitably involve specialisation: the development of more complex divisions of labour, more specialised branches of production, and more specialised markets for their commodities ('inputs' or means of production, 'outputs' which are means of consumption or of further production).

In the case of agricultural 'modernisation' there is a particular dimension of commoditisation and specialisation, namely the drive to standardise the technical conditions of production in the face of the uncertainties of natural environments. The rationale of standardisation is to reduce the variations, obstacles and unpredictability of natural environments in the following ways:

- * soils - through fertilisers
- * climate - through irrigation, greenhouses
- * crops - through plant breeding, improved varieties
- * crop diseases - through chemicals
- * crop vermin - through pesticides
- * weed growth - through herbicides.

In short, various means of standardising the technical conditions of production, as illustrated above, all mean increasing inputs to thereby increase both the quantity of output and its predictability. This, of course, also entails specialisation - in research and development, technical innovation, production and supply of new crop varieties, agricultural chemicals, and equipment. On the 'downstream' side, comparable pressures on farming to specialise and standardise are exerted by commoditisation through

- * the development of particular processing technologies
- * how exchange and distribution are organised
- * and the particular characteristics of markets whose demand they supply.²⁷

The other side of the coin of specialisation is the need for integration. Ideally this takes place through the efficient operation of markets which link together producers and consumers of different inputs and outputs in complex divisions of labour and commodity chains. Also market competition, together with (varying) economies of scale in different branches of production and in the organisation of input supply, processing, marketing etc, generates a distribution of resources towards more efficient (types of) enterprises at the expense of the less efficient.

The conception of agricultural 'modernisation' thus produces two (associated) processes:

- (i) satisfying the conditions of economies of scale, technical efficiency, market competitiveness, specialisation, and standardisation at the level of the unit of production for yields that are as predictable, as well as large, as possible
- (ii) integrating farming units (whether 'family farms' or capitalist enterprises) so that the above conditions and effects are satisfied at the level of the agricultural sector and its linkages as a whole.

So far I have outlined some key features of a model that is simultaneously an abstract and idealised representation of the development of capitalist agriculture in the West, and the inspiration of policies to 'modernise' agriculture in Africa and other parts of the Third World. Now I want to emphasise one implicit feature of this model. Commoditisation is typically an uneven process, and this unevenness - it is often argued - is accentuated in the case of agrarian change because of the uncertainties of the natural environments in which farming takes place (and which we can contrast with the technical conditions of industrial manufacture of tractors or fertilisers, for example).²⁸

The effect is that farming units tend to vary - by their forms of social organisation (types of family labour, wage labour, contract labour), distribution and degree of concentration of capital in them, size and scale, extent of mechanisation, etc - much more than the enterprises to which they link backwards (in input manufacture) and forwards (in processing and marketing), and in which capital tends to be more consistently concentrated the more 'modern' the agricultural sector (and economy in which it is located). And the more 'modern' the agricultural sector generated by the process outlined, the more it tends to be integrated not by 'free market' exchanges between a series of 'free agents' buying and selling different goods and services but by the concentration of capital in agribusiness.

The typical base of agribusiness capital is in input production (notably seed and chemical companies) and/or in crops marketing, processing and distribution, rather than in farming. Agribusiness may also invest directly in farming, or achieve integration by imposing specific technical conditions of production, credit arrangements, marketing channels and prices on (nominally) 'independent' agricultural producers, for example through contract farming schemes.²⁹

It seems to me that the process of integration in the model of agricultural 'modernisation' (and how it is influenced by the domination of farming by agribusiness) contributes to an important distinction between the agricultural sector and the conditions of its 'modernisation' on one hand, and any notions of the needs and interests of farmers on the other hand. In short, to talk about the agricultural sector in this sense is not the same as talking about the needs and interests of farmers, especially family farmers and peasants.

In the framework of 'modernisation' the agricultural sector is constituted as a system of interrelated technical functions and price relationships. There may be more or less serious attempts to build the needs and interests of farmers into, or reconcile them with, the demands of 'modernising' the agricultural sector. But the difference between the two, and the subordination of farmers it typically involves, is likely to generate considerable social, ideological and political tension.³⁰

What are the implications of all this for 'modernising' agriculture where it consists exclusively or largely of peasant producers? There are two main thrusts (which may be combined). One is to go for technologies and/or forms of organisation requiring a substantial scale of operation, thus 'by-passing' peasant farming in the first place but tending to subsequently marginalise, and perhaps ultimately dispossess, peasant producers. This assumes an initial availability of unoccupied cultivable (or grazing) land, preferably with good soils, rainfall, and locations in relation to transport and markets.

The other principal option is to 'lock in' peasants (or at least those commanding adequate resources) through agribusiness style integration, 'modernising' their farming through higher - and controlled - levels of input and credit use, and controlling (increased) output through the organisation of marketing and processing, thus achieving greater commoditisation, specialisation, and standardisation.

Two effects of the second option are especially significant. The first is the concentration of resources where conditions are most conducive to accelerated commoditisation:

- (1) on high potential areas with higher and more reliable rainfall vs lower potential or marginal areas
- (2) on farmers with more resources vs those with fewer resources
- (3) on men vs women farmers, which tends to be associated with (2).

In short, on the grounds of maximising growth of output and returns to new technologies and project investment, agricultural 'modernisation' is likely to accelerate spatial or regional differentiation, social differentiation (or class formation), and gender differentiation.

The second effect is that the emphasis on 'modernisation' as technical progress encourages investment in (single) crop development programmes to promote and reap the benefits of specialisation and standardisation. The single crop bias of research stations and of technical packages of 'improved' inputs and cultivation practices has been amply demonstrated and debated, with a further critical impetus in recent years from farming systems research (FSR) and research into 'indigenous technical knowledge' or peasant 'science'.³¹

For the moment let me remind you that the capitalist development of agriculture in the USA and Western Europe, from which the model of 'modernisation' is abstracted in a one-sided fashion, has now reached a point where

- * massive overproduction is subsidised to support rates of profit, and is manifested in US/EEC trade rivalry to realise their surpluses in world markets (often with serious effects for Third World countries)
- * the 'technological treadmill' of high yield farming is sustained only by increasing social costs in terms of energy and chemical use, and of environmental pollution
- * the concentration and competition of capital in the food processing industries generates increasing chemical treatment (poisoning) of food in field and factory
- * farming in 'high input - high output' agriculture employs only a tiny fraction of the total labour force.

6 Some Tanzanian examples

A first example concerns the tendency of 'modernisation' to by pass peasant farmers (and pastoralists) through investment in large-scale production. As noted earlier, this is illustrated in Tanzania by the allocation of development expenditure to large state or parastatal farms in the 1970s, particularly in

- * sugar and sisal (traditionally plantation crops)
- * wheat and rice
- * to some extent other grains (maize, sorghum) on NAFCO and other parastatal farms (including prison farms)
- * ranching and dairy farming.

This bias towards large-scale production is suggestive of two aspects of 'modernisation'. The first is the lure of high technology, high input farming using economies of scale (technical and/or organisational) with levels of capitalisation beyond the reach of peasant farmers: in sugar and sisal partly mechanised estate production - perhaps with limited numbers of outgrowers - linked to central processing facilities; in the case of wheat fully mechanised operations, and of rice large-scale irrigation; in maize and sorghum the technical 'advantage' of mechanical ploughing of large areas, with (in theory) uniformity of fertiliser application, while other operations including harvesting are done by hand labour in Tanzania; in ranching and dairy farming 'modern' production of higher quality livestock and livestock products linked to processing and the supply of mostly urban higher-income demand.

The second aspect is to obtain a more predictable and regular market supply of grain staples and other foods (sugar, meat, dairy products) than peasant farming allows, for technical reasons and social reasons: the variant forms of peasant integration in markets, and the diversion of peasant produced commodities into parallel markets.³²

I have not seen a systematic evaluation of Tanzanian state farms - of their technical and economic efficiency - in particular crop sectors or as a whole, but Raikes provides a series of negative vignettes of their record to date. The by pass option, on the surface, combines actively promoting large-scale 'modern' agriculture with a passive stance towards peasant farming leaving it to sink or swim by its own devices. But, of course, allocating the major share of resources to 'modern' farming has definite effects for the peasantry: first in diverting resources away from it, whether capital, land, access to inputs and marketing, research funding and priorities etc. which, second, may produce direct competition over land and labour and other resources to the detriment of peasant household farming.

A second strategy of the 'logic' of modernisation concerns locking in peasant production and exchange to an agribusiness type of agricultural sector integration, whether this is organised through private or public sector (parastatal) capital, in either case supported by foreign aid. A key example in peasant grown industrial and export crops in Tanzania was the conversion of marketing boards and authorities into parastatal crop companies in the early 1970s, an attempt to move beyond controlling the exchange of peasant crops to controlling their conditions of production, both technical and social, as well. The structure of crop parastatals incorporated an agribusiness style of linked functions both 'upstream' (research, extension, input supply, credit) and 'downstream' (crop collection, transport, processing, marketing) of peasant farming. Is it a coincidence that as this new system was being introduced, comprehensive villagisation was implemented with the stated aims of concentrating the rural population to make service and input supply more effective, and to facilitate the control and supervision of peasant labour?³³

Another example of locking in peasant production is provided by the case of maize, the most important (marketed) food staple in Tanzania. The National Maize Project (NMP), funded by the World Bank and USAID, covered the whole country in the second half of the 1970s with an HYV 'package' of hybrid seeds and fertiliser supplied to peasant farmers on seasonal credit (organised, as far as I remember, through the new village administrative structures introduced with villagisation). National Milling Corporation (NMC) official purchases of maize recovered from an all-time low of 24,000 tons in 1974/5 (the peak of the villagisation 'operations' and their widespread disruption combined with very poor rains) to 220,000 tons in 1978/9.

Sales of hybrid maize seed increased more than six times from 1974/5 to 1980/1 (to 8025 tons), and fertiliser supply increased steadily over the same period.³⁴ However, Raikes is sceptical about the role of technical 'modernisation' via the NMP in the recovery of maize supply, and suggests as far more significant

- * increased producer prices
- * a move towards commodity production of maize in areas previously outside NMC marketing channels, sometimes involving a switch from other cash crops
- * in particular a shift in maize deliveries from the north to the four southern highlands regions of Iringa, Mbeya, Rukwa and Ruvuma (the last two were the most dramatic new zones of surplus maize production, their poor communications and high transport costs compensated - in a fashion - by the introduction of pan-territorial pricing).

The national scale of NMP was succeeded by the regional concentration of maize in the National Agricultural and Food Credit Programme (NAFCREP) on the southern highlands whose relatively high and reliable rainfall produced the best returns to the new technology in terms of output growth (and despite the high costs of transport).

In the 1980s, the southern regions listed provided 50% - 80% of maize sold to NMC. NMC purchases, however, again declined from 1979/80 with serious shortfalls (to between 70,000 and 90,000 tons a year) from 1981/2 to 1984/5, resulting in a further upsurge of food imports. Raikes attributes this downturn to a decline in real producer prices, and possibly a significant illicit trade in maize across the southern border with Zambia. The subsequent recovery in maize deliveries to NMC since 1985/6 may reflect both improved producer prices and, as Kjaerby suggests, very good harvests which tend to saturate parallel markets and bring their prices in line with official (NMC) prices.

The story of NMP/NAFCREP is a good example of agricultural 'modernisation' in several ways. First, hybrid seeds (and the fertiliser they need for good yields) represent a 'higher stage' of the commoditisation of peasant production through its increased dependence on annual purchases of inputs. Maize types used previously enabled farmers to reserve part of their harvest as a stock of seed for the next year's planting, but they cannot reproduce their own seed stock from hybrid varieties (which also represent a further step in standardising the technical conditions of production). Second, peasants cannot obtain hybrid seeds and associated inputs other than through the channels of NAFCREP.

The effects of this kind of 'modernisation' include higher risks for peasant farmers due to

- * irregularities of timing and quantity in input supply
- * possible adverse movements in the relative prices of inputs and outputs (which parallel markets and smuggling do not necessarily cushion)
- * the longer term implications of annual monocropping for soil fertility and sustainability of yields, emphasised by Kjaerby and Raikes
- * increased spread of disease and vermin infestation over large monocropped areas, including the development of resistance to available pesticides.

There are also very important social effects especially in terms of gender relations and practices that Kjaerby highlights (but which remain hidden from the 'modernising' vision of increased input/output technical progress). First, women farmers are mostly unable to gain access to inputs and credit because they lack titles to land. Second, however, the intensification of labour typically entailed by new technical packages, eg in weeding, is mostly borne by women. Third, this diverts women's labour from activities in which they exercise the skills of locally adaptive and sustainable cultivation such as mixed cropping and green manuring.

It seems likely to me, too, that the qualitative development of commoditisation described will accentuate inter-household differentiation, as well as gender differentiation, in favour of those commanding the resources to reap the largest gains from hybrid maize production, in its extensive aspects (eg tractor ownership and renting out for ploughing larger areas) and intensive aspects (intensification of labour demanded by both the nature of the technology and the increased acreage to which it is applied).

7. Contradictions of Agricultural 'Modernisation' in Africa

Drawing on the framework sketched in section 5, we can hypothesise that the contradictions of agricultural 'modernisation' are located in processes intrinsic to, and connecting

- 1 the environmental conditions of agriculture in Africa
- 2 the social relations and labour processes of peasant farming in Africa
- 3 the forms of peasant integration in markets and social divisions of labour, including peasant-state relations.

Of course, none of these has a static or 'essential' character; each is formed historically and changes historically in interaction with the others.

Concerning the first, the problems of the natural conditions of agriculture in Africa are well-known. This is not only a matter of the uncertainties and fragility of rainfall, soils and vegetation, but also of the extent and complexity of micro-ecological variation. In short, African environments present formidable obstacles to standardising the means of appropriating nature which, as suggested earlier, is central to the logic of agricultural 'modernisation' as a vision of technical progress informed by a particular economics.

Concerning the second, the social relations and labour processes of peasant farming in Africa are generated by specific historical paths of capitalist development. These produce complex variations in inter- and intra-household relations governing access to land and other resources, divisions of labour in the activities of production and reproduction, and claims on income, which similarly defy the conventional unifying assumptions of the neo-classical farm enterprise or 'firm' (a single economic 'actor' allocating the resources at its disposal to the pursuit of maximising goals).³⁵ The variation and complexity of peasant labour processes in Africa are the effect of cultivating (and grazing) variable and uncertain environments in social conditions generated by different patterns of commoditisation.

Concerning the third, different patterns of commoditisation and of state formation have produced different types of commodity chains, markets and market integration, as well as different forms of class and gender divisions, and of spatial differentiation. Simply, these are the expressions of variant forms of 'actually existing capitalism' in Africa, its historical trajectories, unevenness and social contradictions, which are increasingly investigated and documented by historians and anthropologists in particular, and gradually better understood within the framework of political economy (see note 40).

The point of identifying these three areas (environment, peasant farming, its location in capitalist economies) is not just to counterpose the diversity of material and social conditions to the unitary logic of models and practices of agricultural 'modernisation'.³⁶ More general observations and themes can now be advanced. A first and critically important observation, implicit in the examples from Tanzania and central to the argument of Raikes' book, is that African states and the World Bank share much of the same vision of agricultural 'modernisation'. Consequently, they have to deal in some way with its contradictions in recent African history: how - and how much - agrarian 'crisis' is indeed a consequence of abortive 'modernisation' plans and projects.

It was just suggested that the pursuit of agricultural 'modernisation' has been confounded, in substantial measure, by African realities it is unable to comprehend or successfully engineer, both 'technical' (the vagaries of nature) and 'behavioural' (what peasants do, and don't do). This corresponds to the causes of failure of agricultural projects as perceived by both their apologists and critics of various kinds (in a body of literature far more substantial than that concerning project success).

First, there are explanations in terms of the inappropriateness of the technological packages on which the targets and hopes of 'modernisation' projects are based - how the drive to standardise the technical conditions of production has foundered on the variations and uncertainties of nature in Africa. For example, Raikes notes that the National Maize Project in Tanzania (above) came up with just two fertiliser recommendations (different dosages of the same fertiliser) for the whole country, with its enormous variations of rainfall and soil conditions. Project Failure Type I, then, is 'technical' - the package does not deliver the goods as expected. Within the logic of 'modernisation', the solution is to replace less with more effective technologies (a matter of research). For 'reformist' modernisers, the solution is more flexible and locally adaptive technologies to be generated by a different style of research (e.g. FSR). For eco-populist critics of 'modernisation', the solution is to encourage and support indigenous technical knowledge and build on its results (the 'peasant wisdom' argument).³⁷

Second, there are explanations in terms of the inability or unwillingness of peasants to adopt and use new techniques to produce the desired results. These explanations vary with perspective, from notions of peasant conservatism or incompetence at the ideologically cruder end of 'modernisation', to the rationality of peasant resistance to modernising innovations that exploit them or otherwise undermine their modes of economic calculation, survival strategies, cultural values, etc,³⁸ to how the assumptions and calculations of development project planning concerning the availability of household resources of labour and land are confounded by the social relations and labour processes of peasant farming, its differentiation by class and gender.³⁹

Project Failure Type II, then, is 'behavioural' to modernisers, a matter of social relations (differently understood) to populist and materialist critics. For modernisers, one solution is more effective extension and education, and better project management (together with the current emphasis on incentives - see below). For reformist modernisers the solution is more 'client oriented' and 'participatory' styles of project design and management. For radical populist critics of modernisation, the solution is again one of 'withdrawal': leave the peasants to get on with it themselves, supporting them with such resources as they may request.

Even this brief overview of Project Failure Types I and II indicates something of the variety of ideological and theoretical diagnoses of the pathology of agricultural 'modernisation' in contemporary Africa. Most strategically for present purposes, where does this record of failure leave the leading agencies of 'modernisation'? In particular, African states and the World Bank whose aspirations to this path of growth and development have foundered on the realities of African environments and the social processes of peasant farming? This is the point at which would-be modernising states and the World Bank abruptly part company, precisely the point of entry of the Berg Report and the era of Structural Adjustment of the 1980s.

We thus arrive at the third area indicated above, that of the forms of integration of peasant economic activity, and by extension of state interventions, policies, and macroeconomic (mis)management, in short the hallowed ground of markets and prices (and the profane ground of their violations). This is the terrain of Project Failure Type III, the all-purpose one which subordinates specific causes of project failure to the general causation of the policy errors and institutional irrationalities of African states. I suggest that there is a crucial political dynamic at work here, as follows.

- 1 In important ways, agrarian failure is the result of contradictions between the logic of 'modernisation' and the appropriation of nature through the variant social forms of peasant production in Africa (the effect of specific historical patterns of commoditisation).
- 2 African states and the World Bank have collaborated, albeit as sometimes uneasy partners, in the pursuit of agricultural 'modernisation'; moreover, the technical packages and detailed planning of agricultural projects have been supplied by the World Bank (as well as other aid agencies), which is thus heavily implicated in their failure.
- 3 Transforming African farming systems and African peasantries in the ways it wants is largely beyond the capacity of the World Bank (other than destructively), but states, it appears, are much more available targets, accessible to direct pressure and coercion.
- 4 Blaming the state for Africa's 'crisis', the World Bank simultaneously obliterates the history of its own major responsibility for the failure of agricultural 'modernisation', and sublimates the frustration of its incapacity to transform nature and society in rural Africa in the discovery that the principal problem all along was that of incentives. Thus the obsession of Structural Adjustment with pushing back the state and 'getting the prices right', and the opportunistic regard for small farmers (note 4): the failure of agricultural

'modernisation' is neither their doing nor ours after all, but can be laid squarely at the door of the state.

8 The prospects of agricultural 'modernisation' under Structural Adjustment

I have argued that coercing African states into basic policy 'reform' does not confront, hence cannot resolve, the contradictions of agricultural 'modernisation' in the face of the environmental conditions and social processes of peasant farming in Africa. The response of the World Bank through Structural Adjustment in effect plays down the force of the critique of agricultural 'modernisation' (and its own role in its failures) by attributing the blame to the macroeconomic policies of African states.

In one key respect the argument of the Berg Report converges, of course, with much of the critical literature, both populist and socialist, concerning state appropriation of the agricultural 'surplus' - the taxation or 'exploitation' of the peasantry, primarily through the exchange of agricultural commodities. While strategic differences between populist and socialist positions have been blurred, in the ideological confusion surrounding Africa's 'crisis', what they have in common (at their most serious) is a comprehensive critique of peasant-state relations, including how state/World Bank development projects seek to control the conditions of peasant production, the uses of peasant labour.⁴⁰

A comprehensive critique of social relations, their contradictions and dynamics, highlights the theoretical inadequacy and ideological inspiration of the World Bank's obsession with the question of the market, of 'getting the prices right'. First, this abstracts one sphere of activity - that of exchange - from the totality of relations of production and power, with inevitably distorting results. Second, as noted earlier, the distortion is compounded by substituting an overarching ideological conception of 'the market' for the analytical and empirical investigation of 'actually existing' markets in Africa, how they are produced by specific historical patterns of commoditisation, and how they work.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to respond to questions one hears all the time in Africa today. Even with the problems indicated, will Structural Adjustment policies, especially concerning the liberalisation of markets in agricultural commodities and means of production, not yield some improvement? Things could not get worse than they already were, could they? I do not think there is a single or simple answer to these questions, which in itself is part of a response to the wholesale advocacy of Structural Adjustment by the World Bank and by some social elements in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa. Grounds for scepticism were indicated above (section 3), to which several more points can be added.

First, when things are so bad there may be some immediate improvement, but we must distinguish very carefully between the effect of injecting new capital and commodities into exhausted economies as a result of SAL agreements, and the effects of SAL policies themselves. The greater availability of basic commodities (and their incentive effect) in rural areas of Tanzania since 1986 is significant, but it reflects the single most important difference since 1986, namely the renewal of foreign aid. This buys more imports and makes more goods available (at the same time as qualitatively new forms of aid dependence are emerging). However, the effectiveness of the policy 'reforms' on which that aid is conditional has yet to be seen.

Second, it has been suggested to me by several people in Tanzania that the effect of liberalisation measures is mostly to legitimate parallel markets that already existed and the activities of those who have thrived on them, not least because of their (continuing) political connections and influence. In this instance then, Structural Adjustment might simply enhance the scope for the formation and expansion of merchant capital, which often has its base in transport.

Third, as far as production is concerned, the political and ideological climate of the era of Structural Adjustment (rather than any of its specific policy instruments) might stimulate greater private investment in agriculture (see note 20). Whether such investment generates a virtuous cycle of accumulation and productivity growth is another matter. Tanzania has experienced before the syndrome of capital plundering new land (eg Ismani in the 1960s) in contrast to the expectations of the type of agrarian capital envisaged by the 'classic' model of (capitalist) accumulation and development.⁴¹ In any case, the development of capitalist farming will compete with peasant production for better quality land, labour, inputs, and access to markets. Villages in some areas of Tanzania may become holding camps or 'reserves' for peasants reproducing themselves primarily through subsistence farming, (dwindling) opportunities for non-agricultural petty commodity production, and casual wage labour - a process more likely to generate social and political tension in the countryside than sustainable economic growth.⁴²

At a broader level, the World Bank faces a critical double contradiction in its relationship with African states, which becomes more intense -and its effects more exposed - the more ambitious its own programme of economic transformation, as in the case of Structural Adjustment. 'One aspect of the contradiction is that while seeking to push back the state it has to act through the state.⁴³ This includes forming alliances with key individuals and factions in the state apparatus, in the context of complex indigenous political processes that it is unable to penetrate and that constitute strong limits to the realisation of its goals. The interests of those individuals and factions are likely to diverge from the Bank's reform programme (as they do from the interests of the masses), and covertly to subvert it. For this reason it is quite logical, from a radical populist position, to attack Structural Adjustment on the grounds that its anti-statism is fundamentally compromised, as Gavin Williams does.⁴⁴

The other aspect is that African states marked by the full misery of their own contradictions - as documented in the symptomology of irrationality, inefficiency, corruption and authoritarianism - hardly provide a convincing agency for carrying out an idealised and rationalist project of bourgeois 'reform'.⁴⁵ It is much easier for imperialism to rewrite its own history at an ideological level (as in the Berg Report) than it is in terms of effective practice. Contemporary African states are formed within the history of imperialism, and cannot be simply re-formed to comply with the current blueprints of imperialist technocrats.

Moreover, the 'leaner' state required by Structural Adjustment is by no means a minimalist state (a continuing bourgeois illusion in the conditions of late capitalism) but one on which greater demands of technical expertise and efficient performance in policy and macroeconomic management are imposed, as well as - by hidden agenda - greater effectiveness in terms of control. The 'modernising' state called for by Structural Adjustment has to be much more 'stable' as well as 'efficient' than African states have proved to be up to now. And 'stability' means controlling the social and political tensions (of class, of gender, of rural-urban divisions, of regional and cultural diversity) generated by the history of capitalism in Africa, and likely to be exacerbated by the effects of Structural Adjustment.⁴⁶

9 Conclusion: Structural Adjustment and the politics of imperialism

It is a mistake to adopt a 'balance sheet' approach to assessing the programme of Structural Adjustment, that is, ticking off some of its elements and practices as 'right' (eg its ostensible championing of 'small farmers', its criticism of overvalued exchange rates) and others as 'wrong'.⁴⁷ It is a mistake because it too abstracts from a totality, that of the politics of imperialism exemplified by the World Bank.

The main point about the Bank's rewriting of Africa's history since Independence - and its writing out of the script any consideration of its own contribution to agrarian and economic crisis - is its lack of any accountability to the people of Africa. However poor the record of accountability in any democratic sense on the part of African states, they do have to confront the consequences of their actions - if only by the exercise of repression - in ways that the World Bank or IMF do not.⁴⁸ African regimes are often overthrown as a direct or indirect result of popular discontent and opposition. Structural Adjustment may wreak havoc on a majority of Africans with no costs to the World Bank or IMF.

I suggest that Structural Adjustment in Africa, as other instances of the 'new realism' elsewhere, is a particular class response to the social contradictions of imperialism in a period of its own recession and crisis. While its so-called 'realism' often embodies ideological fantasy, its reality is that of a class offensive by international capital with the considerable power it commands. Surely it is better to investigate the conditions of effective struggle against that offensive than to be seduced by the promises of the 'new realism' in which it cloaks itself?

Notes

- 1 The most significant theoretical contribution to this debate in recent years is Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985).
- 2 The second half of this paper owes a lot to engaging with Raikes (1988).
- 3 World Bank (1981); I have not studied major World Bank reports on Africa since Berg, but nothing I have read or heard about SAL suggests any significant change in emphasis.
- 4 The question of food subsidies is also emphasised by Bates (1981), whose economic analysis converges with that of the World Bank on most key points, but who also provides a more overt political explanation in the notion of a dominant urban 'development coalition'. Also Bates' championing of small farmers is more consistently populist (on the lines of neo-classical populism - see Scott, 1977) than the World Bank's. The Berg Report's praise of the virtues of small farmers is opportunistic and used as a stick to beat the kinds of state intervention and policies outlined. The examples of agricultural 'modernisation' recommended by Berg in fact support 'progressive' farmers and agribusiness type schemes incorporating small farmers (see sections 5 and 6 of this paper).
- 5 Edward Schuh, director of agricultural research at the World Bank in the early 1980s, said that the exchange rate is the single most price factor for agriculture.
- 6 Especially as a crisis of the state, rather than of the deprivations of workers and peasants which are the 'normal' condition of underdevelopment - see the comments of Barker (1984) and Bernstein (1985).
- 7 As implied by Berry (1984); see also Watts (1989), and the illuminating discussion by Raikes of food production data, and why food imports can not be used as a proxy for trends in production (1988) pp 17-23, and 23-25, 27-29. On p 18 Raikes notes that

there are few countries in sub-Saharan Africa where the level of food production is known to within plus or minus 20 per cent ... If one compares estimates of maize production for 1982 in the 1982 and 1984 (FAO) Production Yearbooks, for the twenty largest sub-Saharan countries, only five remain unchanged. Eight are revised between 1 and 10 per cent, another five by between 11 per cent and 50 per cent and two by over 50 per cent. But while this gives some idea of the degree of uncertainty, there is no reason to suppose that because figures have not been revised, they must necessarily be accurate.

- 8 Mackintosh (in press); Sen (1981).

- 9 Data and much of the analysis in section 4 are drawn from Part I of Havnevik et al (1988), a lucid and critical review of Norwegian aid to Tanzania that made the front pages of Norway's newspapers. The study was commissioned from the Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen, by the Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation, showing a degree of openness to public debate unthinkable on the part of government in Britain today.
- 10 Much of the analysis of pricing policy and parastatal marketing in Tanzania rests on the pioneering research of Frank Ellis (1982, 1983, 1988a).
- 11 See note 7.
- 12 Here it is worth noting evidence of rural people seeking alternatives to farming to secure their livelihoods, through urban migration and wage labour and non-agricultural petty commodity production in rural areas - Havnevik (1988) Ch 7; Mbilinyi (in press).
- 13 Tables 3.1 and 3.2 in Havnevik et al, pp 63,67.
- 14 See Raikes (1988) p 26.
- 15 This closely follows Ch 4 of Havnevik et al.
- 16 Rweyemamu (1973, 1976)); Thomas (1974).
- 17 Havnevik et al p 84.
- 18 See Havnevik et al pp 151-155.
- 19 These two parastatals because of bumper maize and cotton crops; some cotton from the 1987 harvest was still uncollected from villages in 1989 because of transport problems - unsurprisingly cotton harvests since 1987 slumped again. In fiscal year 1988/9 the National Bank of Commerce made loans totalling Tsh 20 billion to the crop marketing institutions (Daily News May 15 1989). The latter include cooperative societies as well as marketing boards; problems of repayment of these NBC loans are widely reported.
- 20 There is anecdotal evidence of growing land accumulation in various parts of the country, legitimated by the provisions on private (leasehold) tenure in the Agricultural Policy document of 1983 (URT 1983), Clause 30 pp 10-11. Elizabeth Wily's research in two villages near Tabora town in 1986 has generated systematic evidence about this of a rare detail and quality, Wily (1988).
- 21 For 1988/9 calculated from figures in the Daily News May 12 1989, including an annual population growth rate of 2.8%, which is best treated as an approximation.
- 22 Havnevik et al p 153.
- 23 Havnevik et al p 137.

- 24 Havevik et al p 142-3.
- 25 In thinking about the issues addressed in this second part of the paper I have been stimulated by Raikes (see note 2), and also by discussions in recent years with Maureen Mackintosh and Peter Mollinga, though they will not necessarily recognise nor agree with what follows.
- 26 See Ch 8 in Havnevik et al concerning the pressures on social reproduction, and women as the 'shock absorbers' of economic crisis (p 177); also Mbilinyi (in press). The impact of Structural Adjustment policies on women in Africa is discussed more generally by Elson (1989).
- 27 In the best of all possible 'modern' worlds, according to neo-classical economics, particular characteristics of market demand for 'fresh' and processed foods are determined by 'consumer sovereignty'. The massive investment of capital in manipulating, and creating, demand for (specific types of) food products is indicated by Susan George (1977) among others. A glimpse of the scale of food industry capital is provided by current business deals, eg 'French food giant BSN has sold the Walkers and Smiths crisp firms to US snacks giant Pepsico for a staggering \$1.35 billion' (The Guardian, July 4 1989). Walkers and Smiths are well known British brands, acquired by BSN just a month earlier as part of a \$2.5 billion deal with the US food group RJR Nabisco; Pepsico, manufacturer of Pepsi Cola, is also 'the world's leading producer of potato snacks'.
- 28 Which thus confronts capital with particular risks in agricultural production, (partly) accounting for its concentration upstream and downstream of farming, leaving production risks to farmers. This is formalised in contract farming systems (note 29). The uneven patterns of capitalist investment in farming have also been explained in terms of the non-identity of production time and labour time. As the former exceeds the latter due to the seasonal and cyclical maturation of crops (growing time), capital is 'tied up' and has to wait to realise the value created by labour (time) in production - see Mann and Dickinson (1978).
- 29 Valuable recent essays on the social relations and dynamics of contract farming include those by Carney (1988), Clapp (1988), and Watts (in press); see also the documentation on Africa in Dinham and Hines (1983).
- 30 In my view, this gap between the 'agricultural sector' (and its interests - in effect those of agribusiness capital and the state) and farmers (and their interests) is of crucial ideological and political importance, and constitutes a space in which agrarian populism thrives. The idealisation of peasants and small farmers by agrarian populism is partly then a response to the material power of agribusiness capital over farmers and its ideological representation in conceptions of agricultural 'modernisation', and could be added to the illuminating discussion of the phenomenal bases of 'peasantism' by Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985) pp 182-4. In Tanzania, the

space indicated is occupied by the 'peasantist' discourse of the political party CCM and its tensions with the 'new realist' discourse of government policy 'reformers' in the period of Structural Adjustment; see also note 47.

- 31 The broadest populist wrapping of FSR is found in the well-known work of Robert Chambers with its 'Farmers First and Last' slogan - Chambers (1983), Chambers and Jiggins (1987). A serious argument for 'peasant science' in African conditions is advanced by Paul Richards (1983, 1985, 1986), who represents a kind of eco-populism with a strong anarchist flavour (see note 37).
- 32 While in Morogoro I asked a colleague returning from Basuto about the efficiency of the large wheat farms there. He felt unable to answer that one, but stressed that the advantage of these farms to the national economy and its planners is the predictability of their supply response (relative to that of peasant wheat growers, if there are any left in northern Tanzania). Whether empirically accurate or not, this certainly resonates the ideological aspirations of 'modernisation'.
- 33 Bernstein 1981, 1982.
- 34 Havnevik et al (1988) p.50; my discussion of maize programmes in Tanzania draws heavily on Kjaerby's Ch 3 in Havnevik et al, and Raikes (1988) pp 58-9.
- 35 A valuable systematic and critical review of neo-classical models of household farming is provided by Ellis (1988b).
- 36 Of course understanding such diversity places particular demands on theory rather than being satisfied by empirical (let alone empiricist) description and typologies. At a similarly general level of method, theoretical investigation that takes historical specificity seriously (or historical research that takes theory seriously) will always confound the expectations of 'rationalist' models of capitalist development, of which agricultural 'modernisation' is one example; see further below.
- 37 See note 31; also the commentary on Richards (1983) by Watts (1983b), and the judicious scepticism about 'peasant wisdom' expressed by Raikes (1988) p 4, note 8 p 102.
- 38 As can be inferred, broadly populist criticism of agricultural 'modernisation' and its development projects comprises a somewhat mixed bag of ideas and emphases. I would argue that any coherence populism has is ideological rather than theoretical in character. The most consistent statement of agrarian populism in this context that I know remains that by Gavin Williams (1976), whose work is grounded in African agrarian history and the issues inherited from Russian Narodism and the Soviet collectivisation debates (see also note 40).
- 39 This is well demonstrated in the cogent case study by Carney (1988); labour processes in peasant farming in Africa, especially with regard to gender relations, are theorised in

original and powerful essays by Guyer (1984b) and Whitehead (in press).

- 40 Understanding of the social relations and dynamics of peasant commodity production in Africa, including peasant-state relations, has advanced greatly in recent years, in particular as a result of anthropological and historical research and theoretical investigation within a broadly materialist perspective. A very selective and partial list includes the work of Cooper (1981), Cowen (1981a, 1981b, 1983), Guyer (1981, 1984b, 1988), Kitching (1980, 1985), Mackintosh (1989), Mamdani (1987), Vaughan (1987), Watts (1983a), and Whitehead (1980; in press). There is now a need for a systematic review and synthesis of historical findings and theoretical advances, which would also identify continuing problems and lacunae in the research agenda. In my view, an important political objective would be to clarify the differences between materialist and populist positions, and what is at stake in them. Some preliminary steps in this direction are indicated by Gibbon and Neocosmos (1985), Morris (1987), Levin and Neocosmos (1989), Bernstein (1985; in press).
- 41 'Plundering' forms of capitalist farming and their social and environmental effects are also well documented for northern Ghana, Nigeria, and the Sudan.
- 42 See note 12; Mbilinyi (in press) suggests that the current concern of aid donors and governments with 'rural employment creation', not least in 'Women in Development' type programmes, reflects a recognition of rural marginalisation, the forms of opposition it generates, and the dangers they pose to social control.
- 43 Harris (1989) gives a useful overview of the global framework and rationale of IMF and World Bank activity, and the place within it of their dealings with individual countries.
- 44 Williams (1983); Williams (in press) is a detailed review of World Bank agricultural sector documents on Nigeria and the story they represent, which details their duplicity and special pleading. Much of the pretension to objectivity and disinterested good faith of World Bank project planning warrants the cynicism expressed by Raikes (1988). It would be worthwhile for someone with access to a competent libel lawyer to put together the numerous first-hand stories of the intellectual and material corruption of a lot of World Bank consultancy and project planning.
- 45 Bernstein (1981) in the case of Tanzania, and Berry (1985) in the case of Nigeria, suggest that a central feature of post-colonial states in Africa is how they assimilate the contradictions of civil society into their own apparatuses and practices, rather than being able to regulate them in the manner of the 'classic' bourgeois state. Albeit from somewhat different positions, these two authors attempt to ground this view in an understanding of the historical specificities of capitalism in Africa, rather than attributing the incapacities of African states to persistent 'pre-capitalist' features as

(also in somewhat different ways) do Hyden (1983), Hart (1982), Amselle (1985), and Bryceson (1988). See also the sharp observations of Raikes (1988) pp 47-8 on the prospects of 'normal' capitalist development in Africa.

- 46 The single merit of the 'new realist' position presented by Sender and Smith (1986) is its explicit admission that their version of capitalist accumulation requires 'efficient' repressive state apparatuses; see the review by Bernstein (1987).
- 47 Not that a simple nationalist rejection of the World Bank's embrace offers a way forward either. This is exemplified in the case of Tanzania by Othman and Maganya (1989), including an attempted defence of the record of parastatals in Tanzania that is as uninformed and baffling as it is brief: one table of highly aggregated and wholly suspect financial data is presented to support a claim that 'there is no empirical evidence of parastatal inefficiency' (p 92). To me this represents the kind of threadbare gesture which is all that remains of CCM's 'Marxist' wing. Tensions between the Party and government in Tanzania (see note 30, also the comments in Ch 5 of Havnevik *et al*) do have real sources and real effects, but what they amount to is a clash between two different versions of state capitalism mediated by the usual dense history of personal and factional politics.
- 48 The most important area of current political debate and theoretical work among socialists in Africa concerns the question of democracy - see Shivji ed (1985), Shivji (1988), Mamdani (1987), Anyang' Nyong'o ed (1987).

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