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Perestroika without *Glasnost* in Africa

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Fellow for African Studies

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Perestroika without *Glasnost* in Africa

Report of the Inaugural Seminar of the
Governance in Africa Program
February 17-19, 1989

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Foreword

President Carter's long-standing interest in the African continent has been manifested in the creation of programs of The Carter Center of Emory University (CCEU) which address issues of agricultural development, conflict resolution, child survival, disease eradication, human rights and food security. These activities reflect an increasing commitment to assist Africa overcome the obstacles to renewed socio-economic development.

As these programs expanded, it became apparent that there was need for a unit to provide academic support for their activities. A new fellow, Dr. Richard Joseph, was therefore appointed in 1988 and a program in African Studies was created. It provides advice to CCEU's many Africa-related projects and has also created a Governance in Africa Program (G.A.P.) to address the shortcomings in the administration of public affairs in many countries in the continent. On February 17-19, 1989, 30 leading area specialists were invited to attend the G.A.P.'s inaugural seminar.

During two intensive days of meetings, they sought ways of harmonizing the essential insights they had gained about the relevant problems in the hope of laying the groundwork for the activities of the Program. Their recommendations for future action should help the Center plan activities that would involve scholars and decision-makers concerned about the governance dimensions of Africa's predicament.

We initiated this Program with the sober recognition that Africa's problems often appear daunting in their number and complexity. We ended the seminar, however, with renewed confidence that a new and promising approach has been identified and that it could serve as the basis for future collaborative research and concerted action.

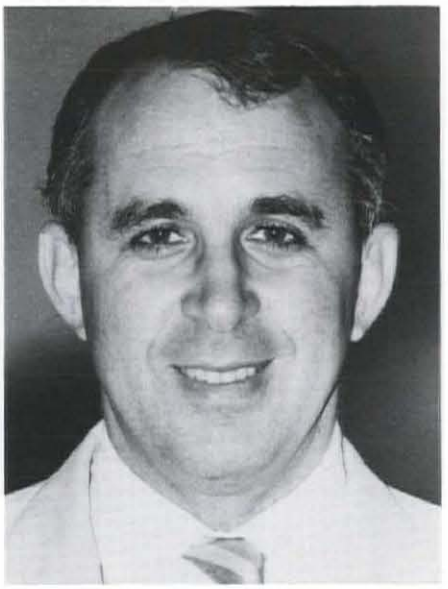
William H. Foege
Executive Director

Former President Jimmy Carter in Africa

David J. Gould

Our cherished and beloved colleague David J. Gould boarded the doomed Pan-American flight in Frankfurt on December 21, 1988 homeward bound for the holidays after another exhausting journey through Africa negotiating arrangements for the Francophonic Africa Management Training Program which he conceived, developed and sustained. David perished as a mere random cipher in the symbolic statement of whatever group planted the fatal bomb. To those who shared his steps, he remains a living force amongst us.

What student in Lubumbashi, Zaire, from 1973-76 could forget David's courses on public administration, and his extraordinary ingenuity in marshalling resources and securing opportunities for practical experience in spite of the veritable deluge of numbers? Who among those directing the Zairian civil service at that time no longer recollects David's imaginative initiatives in developing direct relationships, and offering intensive short courses for administrators? Who among the numerous Zairian students who found their way to this country under Rockefeller or other auspices could not remember yet with gratitude the abundant hospitality and tireless assistance with myriad problems of survival in North America which David unfailingly provided?



David J. Gould

Who among the generations of francophonic public servants who have passed through the program David created at the University of Pittsburgh can ever forget the opportunity for enlarged horizons, professional reflection, and above all the inspiration of contact with David, with his inimitable combination of penetrating insight of venality, yet buoyant optimism about better management of the African state? And what student of prebendal, patrimonial and predatory states has not read with profit David's illuminating treatises on corruption?

We have lost David, but his memory lives with all of us. His boundless energy, his limitless good will, his infectious humor, his intellectual integrity: these traits remain imprinted upon the world we shared. And so they will ever be.

Crawford Young

Introduction

The aim of the inaugural seminar of the Governance in Africa Program (G.A.P.) was to bring together a diverse group of scholars to reflect on some of the central issues which confront the continent. The program takes its acronym from the increasing gap between the democratic and developmental aspirations expressed during the anti-colonial struggle and the monopolization of power and the deepening economic predicament today.

The Carter Center provides a unique setting for scholars and practitioners to share ideas and information about specific problems of international significance. It seeks to transcend the activities of political parties, national interests and the traditional boundaries of professional disciplines. Since the Center aims to identify potential breakthroughs in the areas of public health, agricultural development, conflict resolution and democratization, its mode of operation is to open up new channels of discussion, analysis and action.

The notion of governance is a particularly appropriate one at this juncture in the evolution of African polities. In the words of Michael Lofchie, it "enables us to range widely to determine precisely where effective control of African societies lies." It provides a general framework within which we can seek out "existing or potential locii of decisional authority." Of particular importance today are the various modes of self-governance that are increasingly apparent in Africa. Individuals and groups are actively pursuing survival strategies to mitigate economic hardships and compensate for the inability of formal state institutions to reverse the relentless socio-economic decline.

Brief working papers from the participants served as the basis for the substantive discussions that were conducted in four plenary sessions and two workshops. These papers have been published as a separate volume, *Beyond Autocracy in Africa*. The first session considered the disjunctures as well as continuities between the ways in which African groups and societies

Richard Joseph

manage their common affairs and the style of governance at the national level in many African states. In the second session we compared the various forms of autocratic rule and examined the avenues for encouraging their reform or transcendence. The second day began with analyses of the expanding role of international financial institutions and moved on to discussions of the current programs of economic restructuring. Particular attention was paid to the absence of comparable efforts to encourage political liberalization or, put another way, to the promotion of "*perestroika* without *glasnost*" in Africa. The smaller workshops enabled us to develop a research and action agenda.

Evaluations of the seminar have already been provided by many of the participants who expressed their profound appreciation for the encounter. "I was impressed by the collegial atmosphere" was one verdict: "the participants felt free not only to express their views but also to listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others." Another scholar, who considered the discussions to have been "enormously stimulating and illuminating," welcomed "the opportunity to interact with and learn from such a superb and diverse group of scholars, free of the structures and constraints of the typical professional meeting or scholarly conference." He suggested that they would benefit from the "discussions and cross-fertilization for years to come."

As we enter the final decade of the twentieth century, with the European nations poised for a higher level of economic integration, with North America seeking ways to meet the challenge posed by the economies of the Pacific rim, and with the nations of the Soviet bloc shedding the carapace of their overly centralized systems, Africa must discover the routes to its own political and economic renaissance. We do not pretend to have the answers to all the perplexing problems. We do believe, however, that this is the

time for all resources—intellectual, financial and social—to be harnessed to the overriding tasks of analysis and action. We hope that this report, and the working papers of the inaugural seminar, will prove "stimulating and illuminating" to other categories of interested persons, and especially to our African colleagues who were insufficiently represented at this meeting because of financial and time constraints.

As important as the specific ideas and insights presented at the seminar may have been, of equal importance is the mood of cooperation and collaboration that prevailed. We were able to "place our ideas on the table," we again quote from a colleague, "confident that they would not be dismissed out of hand or the ego of the proposer unnecessarily bruised." This is a time that calls for all ideas to be brought forward and fairly and respectfully examined. We hope that this report and the companion papers will be treated in the manner in which they were generated, and that the process of cross-fertilization will continue and eventually contribute to the formulation of policies and practices that can restore Africa to its rightful place in the world community.

With the European nations poised for a higher level of economic integration...and with the nations of the Soviet bloc shedding the carapace of their overly centralized systems, Africa must discover the routes to its own political and economic renaissance.

The seminar was dedicated to the memory of Dr. David J. Gould whose sterling career can be identified with each of the major themes we discussed. His important scholarly contributions and deep personal commitment to African development will be dearly missed.

For the assistance they provided in the planning and conduct of the seminar and the preparation of this report, special thanks are extended to Janet Hankins, Cecelie Counts Blakey, Annette Sheckler, Mark Joseph, Obi Okeke and Ruth Neal. The following participants provided valuable help as chairpersons and rapporteurs for the sessions: Michael Bratton, Peter Ekeh, Harvey Glickman, Frank Holmquist, Willard Johnson, Nelson Kasfir, Carol Lancaster, Janet MacGaffey and Crawford Young. Funding for the seminar was provided by start-up funds from The Carter Center and Emory University. The production and dissemination of the Report is made possible by a major grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to support the activities of the Governance in Africa Program.

Richard Joseph
Fellow for African Studies
The Carter Center

(From left) Thomas Callaghy, William H. Foege and Donald Rothchild

I. Governance in Africa

Selection of the notion of governance as a guiding principle to advance the conceptualization of contemporary African political processes is particularly timely, for the term governance, as opposed to more long-standing usages, such as "governments" or "leadership," enables us to range widely to determine precisely where effective control of African societies lies. Governance does not prejudge the locus or character of real decisional authority.

— Michael Lofchie

Governance is a broader, more inclusive, notion than government. It usually refers to the general manner in which a people is governed. It can apply to the formal structures of government as well as to the myriad institutions and groups which compose civil society in any nation. We have become obliged to look outside the formal structures of government in Africa for other modes of governance not just because they have often become so ineffective. It is also because of the realization that an important part of the governing process in Africa continues to elude these institutions. Goran Hyden, one of the major advocates of this area of discussion and analysis, observed that "a process of institutionalization of values and rights is going on hidden from our usual way of studying governments and can only be captured by looking at the issues in a broader sense under the concept of governance."

The seminar discussions ranged widely from discussions of the internal governance of African associational groups, whether customary or "modern," to the practices of African political regimes, to the external governance of the continent by international financial organizations. We were free to seek out, as Michael Lofchie suggested, existing or potential locii of decisional authority, and to reflect on the various modes of self-governance in Africa as individuals and groups pursue survival strategies to mitigate the many economic hardships and compensate for the inability of formal state institutions to reverse the relentless decline.

The economic reforms that many African governments have been forced to introduce have led to changes in the administration of various aspects of public policy. Apart from such changes, however, there are few examples of actual political reforms being carried out. Since the new economic policies usually provoke challenges to the political stability of regimes, they have often been accompanied by efforts to bolster the instruments of political control. New patterns of governance are therefore more likely to emerge in the near future outside the formal political order. As fascinating as these may appear to be, the question the seminar had to confront on several occasions is how these societal changes could lead to the wider transformation of the national political order.

II. Beyond Autocracy: Prospects for Progressive Statecraft

The patrimonial autocratic state has normatively and empirically failed.

— Crawford Young

The political formula adopted at independence has been an albatross around Africa's neck.

— Goran Hyden

Autocratic rule is pervasive in Africa today. Most governments are under the control of a single party and usually of a single leader who remains in power until he is violently overthrown or dies in office. African populations have little access to formal mechanisms to keep their leaders and governments accountable to them. The absence of effective methods of participation and accountability is reflected in the widespread corruption that exists.

Crawford Young reflected at the seminar on the changes that had occurred over the past thirty years. He pointed out that at a Conference on Cultural Freedom held at the University of Ibadan in 1959, only the Nigerian participants had dissented from the general belief that the one-party model would be appropriate for Africa. Few of the others associated such a model with autocracy. Instead, the nation-building and developmental aspirations of the continent were seen to depend on the acquisition of a cohesive political instrument in the form of the single party. Today, the ambition to achieve maximum consensus has resulted in a state structure, whether in military or civilian guise, whether capitalist or socialist in official ideology, that seems detached from the vital creative energies of the African people and their societies.

The participants had been asked to reflect on the prospects for creating "stable, democratic and efficiently governed polities." Larry Diamond's reply was that this was no mean challenge with regard to a region that had been mainly characterized by "political instability, democratic failure and institutional decay." "What works?" "What are the openings?" "What are the prospects for alternative forms of governance?" "Where are the innovative structures?" Hyden, Willard Johnson and others relentlessly queried their fellow participants. Nelson Kasfir wondered whether there were grounds for optimism. "Is it possible at present," he bluntly inquired, "for African states to introduce governments that will serve their people?"

'What works?' 'What are the openings?' 'What are the prospects for alternative forms of governance?' 'Where are the innovative structures?'

For the major external donors in the 1950s and 1960s, a concern with governance in Africa had meant improving the performance of the public sector, civil service, national economic planning, the drafting of constitutions and the creation of public management institutes. Today it is widely felt that attempts to seek improvements in the performance of African public institutions in ways which disregarded the "social logic" of contemporary Africa, to use the formulation of Achille Mbembe, would be doomed to disappointment. A technocratic approach to the relevant problems — "If state personnel knew what to do and how to do it the job would be done" (Frank Holmquist) — has led to the expenditure of vast funds with negligible returns.

The state hovered in the background of our discussions as a "Kilimanjaro," to use Michael Bratton's metaphor, because of the seemingly open plains of alternative institutions surrounding it. The African state monopolizes legal political activities, absorbs a high proportion of external revenues, employs much of the salaried labor force, and is simultaneously coddled and besieged by external donors and international agencies. The participants were ambivalent in their attitudes toward the African state. Despite the fascination with the strengthening of civil society in the continent, it was felt by most of them that the continued marginalization of the African state because of the decline in its "competence, credibility and

probity" (Crawford Young) was not a desirable outcome.

Instead of hastening the shrinking capacity of the state, Larry Diamond recommended a positive-sum attitude which sought simultaneously to increase its capacity along with that of groups and institutions in civil society. Michael Bratton also addressed this issue with his intriguing attempt to distinguish between civic engagement and civic disengagement with the state. He distinguished those activities of non-governmental organizations in Africa which could be conducted independently of state action and those which required state involvement if they are to be successful.

Carolyn Somerville (Left) and Jane Guyer

III. Prebendalism or the "Social Logic" of African Politics

The problem of "prebendalism" may be more tenacious than the problem of "tribalism" in terms of its threat to democratic and effective governance.

— Larry Diamond

Most students of state and society in Africa have arrived at a basic understanding of the interaction of social groups and political brokers although they sometimes use differing terminologies. Goran Hyden calls it the "politics of affection," the counterpart of his "economy of affection" which is "characterized by the investment of individuals and social bodies in patronage relations at all levels." Richard Joseph has developed in his studies of Nigeria the notion of prebendalism which was referred to on several occasions during the seminar, especially by Larry Diamond, Achille Mbembe and Crawford Young. According to this formulation, the offices of African states are now treated as if they were the prebends of decentralized patrimonial states, discussed by Max Weber, which could be appropriated and exploited by their occupants to benefit themselves and their sectional constituents.

Larry Diamond contended that there was little hope for effective governance and stable democracies in Africa "until the enormous economic premium on controlling political power is substantially reduced." The centrality of prebendal attitudes to political office in contemporary Africa, he believes, has to be directly tackled. The constant leakage of resources, and the flagrant disregard for rules governing the legitimate exercise of public affairs, undermined any hope for effective governmental action. Michael Lofchie similarly stressed the high level of absorption of public resources by African bureaucrats who were in turn preyed upon by rent-seeking individuals. All the participants would concur with the opinion of Crawford Young that "overconsumption and underperformance" now characterized the behavior of Africa's patrimonial autocracies which had "lost the capacity to incorporate a public-regarding ethos" in their daily actions.

To convey the perniciousness of prebendalism in Africa today, one has only to reflect on what the United States government would be like if the practices that have been shown to be pervasive in the operations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the direction of Samuel Pierce and during the Presidency of Ronald Reagan, were to characterize the behavior of the entire administration. Some of the abuses charged to this powerful bureaucracy include influence peddling, the giving of exorbitant commissions to political cronies, the ineffectiveness of auditing and surveillance mechanisms, the use of public funds for private purposes, and laxness in the implementation of policies and their diversion from their public welfare purposes to serve narrow partisan and class interests. In Africa, such behavior is too often the norm rather than the exception. Moreover, since the public sector accounts for a far larger share of economic and social activity than is the case in the industrialized nations, the leakage and wastage of resources often means the dissipation of whatever disposal resources exist. Finally, the nefarious effects of prebendalism are rendered more intractable by what Crawford Young sees as its embeddedness in a framework of democratic aspirations. The misdeeds of office holders are often defended in Africa on the grounds that they reflect the participation of the appointed or elected representatives of particular ethnic, regional, linguistic or religious groups in the sharing of public power and largesse.

IV. Civil Society and the Vitality of Associational Life

Meaningful change will only come about through people organizing themselves outside the structures of the party-state, in multifarious independent social groupings. The operative goal is not the reform of the party-state but the reconstitution of civil society.

— János Kis, Hungary

The empowerment of civil society in order to impose higher levels of accountability upon the state requires the acceptance of spheres of autonomous operations for such diverse bodies as unions, cooperatives, churches and local governments. Enlargement of the scope of private markets is another path to reinforcing civil society in its interaction with the state.

— Frank Holmquist

One of the striking aspects of the seminar was the vigorous discussion and diverse perspectives presented regarding the vitality of associational groups in Africa, such as customary institutions, women's groups, religious sects, private voluntary organizations and a range of self-help, welfare, and even vigilante groups. Hyden spoke of "most African communities being rich in organized activities" and suggested that the political landscape of Africa in the 1980s shows "greater institutional density and activeness" than before. In a similar vein, Bratton spoke of African associational life being vibrant and of voluntary organizations becoming more organized and assertive.

There is a new wave of democratization in the world. Much of Africa has not yet been drawn into this global process. Yet, as the case of China vividly demonstrates, such a process can just as easily slip backward as move forward. A prerequisite to the successful transformation of the party-state, as János Kis suggests, is the reconstitution of civil society. It appears from the seminar discussions that the revitalizing of civil society is taking place in Africa as the state is forced to recede from areas of public policy it previously monopolized and as individuals and groups are thrown back on their own resources and initiatives to counter the deepening economic crisis.

Africa, just as Eastern Europe today, has the opportunity to forge its own political renaissance that involves a subtle, tense and sometimes conflictual process of action and reaction between state and society.

A vigorous debate ensued around a cluster of relevant issues. Voluntary associations, as Bratton suggested, were the building blocks of the nationalist movements in Africa. What therefore happened to them? Were they all absorbed or repressed by the monopolizing post-colonial state and single parties or did their activities become more camouflaged, more elusive? Or finally did they continue much as before but social scientists, especially political scientists, looked elsewhere in their analyses of the dynamics of the unfolding political systems? Few would dispute the existence of what Hyden calls a "second generation" of popular or populist organizations in the continent consisting of evangelical churches and spiritualist sects, mutual and development societies, self-defense groups and a variety of women's organizations. Such groups are seen to develop innovative uses of indigenous social institutions. Bratton believes they are filling a relatively large realm of "unoccupied political space beyond the state's control." There are a host of troubling questions and concerns that must be addressed by those who are enthusiastic about these developments. The first regards the methods and processes by which the work of these associations can be combined. Can they be aggregated, Crawford Young inquired, so that they can begin to have an effect on the national political system? "Small may be beautiful," argued Willard Johnson, "but it must aggregate to something meaningful and complement more broadly framed activities." What is the connection between the many new or revived associational activities and the traditional norms and institutions especially of rural life in Africa?

Jane Guyer expressed the need for greater precision about the kinds of organizations we are speaking about since some of them, such as age-grade societies and secret societies, are not voluntary in nature. In certain parts of Africa, the persistence of chieftaincy structures must also be considered since they are linked to these forms of associational life and to distinct and often patriarchal patterns of governance.

A cautionary note was further added by Pearl Robinson who expressed a concern that civic groups can display authoritarian modes of governance and thus replicate rather than challenge those that prevail in the national political arena. In a similar vein, Willard Johnson argues that we should avoid simply romanticizing non-governmental organizations: many of them are not confrontational but rather accommodationist vis-a-vis the state. We should therefore be concerned with how they could be federated and even become the dispensers of developmental assistance, a task that is normally exercised by external bodies. In addition to the more participatory and democratic ways in which they should operate, he also wondered whether they could function on the basis of universalistic criteria and not the clientelistic, self-serving ones that usually characterize the conduct of public office. Finally, Johnson wondered if organizations, public or private, at the regional and local levels in African societies could incorporate practices of accountability that were absent from the national levels of the political system.

Ronke Oyewumi reminded the participants that the reliance on associations that were more local in nature in Africa meant confronting the persistence of kinship ties, and all the implications that suggests for the strengthening of ethnicity. Similarly, religious fundamentalism is another unavoidable feature of associational life in contemporary Africa. The discussion was therefore evenly balanced, shifting between enthusiasm regarding the proliferation of informal groups to expressing concern for the need for rigorous analysis of the provenance, number, scale, mode of operation and aspirations of the diverse forms of civil action. If a "vast reservoir of political energy" is being poured into syncretic movements and forms of cultural resistance, as

What is the relationship between group life and political life. . . and how can African leaders be induced to be more tolerant of forms of informal political activities which they have heretofore suppressed and driven underground?

Horace Campbell suggests, how can it be redirected to more secular and developmental purposes? What is the relationship between group life and political life, as Lofchie asked, and how can African leaders be induced to be more tolerant of forms of informal political activities which they have heretofore suppressed and driven underground? Will such leaders permit a vibrant associational life with all its political implications to blossom at the bottom and on the periphery of their political systems?

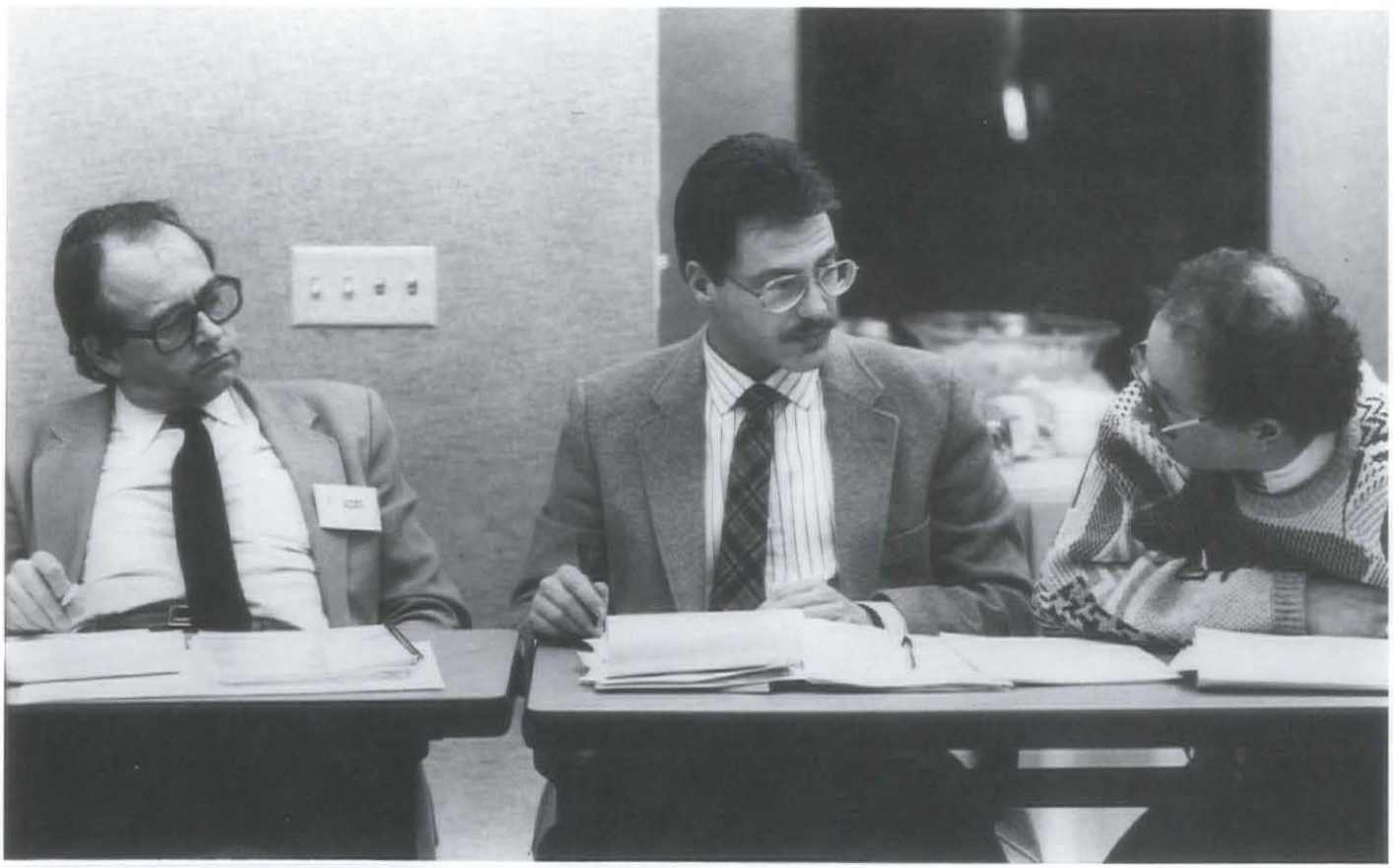
Interesting contrasts were drawn from some of the case studies presented at the seminar. John Holm described the array of institutions that serve as vehicles for public opinion in Botswana (one of the few democracies in Africa) including the *kgotla*, a traditional meeting place in front of a chief or headman's residence where government policy at the village level can first be discussed, criticized and even voted down. Gwendolyn Mikell discussed the attempts being made by the Rawlings regime in Ghana to stimulate the emergence of rural organizations, such as *mobi-squads* and *nnoboa* work groups, to provide cooperative assistance in agricultural projects. Instead of local associations with traditional roots being organized in opposition to, or autonomous of, state action, the Ghanaian experience points to a concerted governmental attempt to be the catalyst, and political beneficiary, of such initiatives.

It is clear that many African societies are seeking alternatives to the autocratic political order which has become consolidated during the post-colonial era. Having drawn on the energies of the multiplicity of voluntary organizations during the nationalist period, the parties which came to power distrusted pluralism and therefore sought to implant a monistic system. Such an effort was eventually blunted, according to Mbembe, by the recalcitrance and organizational resourcefulness of African societies. In the same way that these societies had stymied and eluded authoritarian rule during the colonial period, so also did they find ways to refashion political space in postcolonial Africa using the extended family system and communal groups. In general, they were motivated by the need to devise collective strategies "to avoid, get around, official norms." Consequently, the drive for "hegemonic construction" on the

part of the state was countered by the retention of abundant modes of evasion on the part of African societies.

In the view of Mbembe, Africa is characterized by a disjuncture between the state's pretensions to monolithism and unanimity and a disorganized and ambiguous creativity on the part of African societies. How, we are left to discover, can these informal modes of self-governance contribute to the transformation of state structures? Practices of social evasion carry the risk of parochialism and the elaboration of an Africa whose effective political order is limited to the village level. Where will the blue-print for the reconstituting of the entire political order come from? Will it be "centrally-mandated ones," Bratton asks, with party cells and administrative development committees, or "spontaneous tradition-based local organizational development by self-help groups?" Can there be a merging of the two, as seems to be attempted in Uganda under the Museveni government? Africa, just as Eastern Europe today, has the opportunity to forge its own political renaissance that involves a subtle, tense and sometimes conflictual process of action and reaction between state and society. Vital to the successful outcome of this process will be the empowerment of groups in civil society and the enhancement of their capacity to serve as building blocks of the new order rather than just stepping stones to the elimination of the old as took place during the terminal colonial era.

Voluntary associations... were the building blocks of the nationalist movements in Africa. What therefore happened to them? Were they all absorbed or repressed by the monopolizing post-colonial state and single parties or did their activities become more camouflaged, more elusive?



(From left) Goran Hyden, Larry Diamond and John Holm

V. Liberalization Versus Grand Democratization

In Africa in the near future the tension between statism and pluralism is likely to intensify.

— Michael Bratton

The apparent exhaustion of authoritarian routes to the developmental state in Africa brings us back to democratic forms of accountability as perhaps the only means of disciplining ruling classes and regimes.

— Frank Holmquist

For the most part, the "Westminister model" that was hastily transferred to Africa during the decolonizing era failed to take root. After the general entrenchment of authoritarian regimes, with a few "semi-democracies" in small states such as Senegal and the Gambia, Botswana and Mauritius, a new wave of democratic restoration surfaced during the late 1970s with transitions from military to civilian regimes in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Nigeria and Ghana. Each of the successor regimes soon collapsed and Africa was left, once again, with its few democratic exceptions.

At the seminar, some of the participants were skeptical about the prospects for democratic transformation in Africa. Edmond Keller, for example, saw the greater likelihood of deepening authoritarianism and corporatism rather than liberal democracy for most African countries. Richard Sklar, on the other hand, a longtime advocate of the development of democratic institutions and practices in Africa, showed little mellowing of his enthusiasm, despite the reversals that have taken place in recent years. Larry Diamond, a more recent student and promoter of democratic transitions, took a fervent but pragmatic approach to the subject. No sudden "reverse course" is to be expected in Africa, he argued: progress toward democratic government is likely to be "gradual, messy, fitful and slow."

Some of the issues that the seminar had to confront were as follows. What is the social foundation for democracy in Africa, especially in the absence of a strong middle class? (Nelson Kasfir and Frank Holmquist) Will a democracy that reflects African realities look different than it does in the West? (Beverly Grier and Gerald Bender) If African leaders, such as General Olusegun Obasanjo, contend that African countries must evolve their own political structures and systems that involve the modernization and adaptation of aspects of traditional culture, could there be a role for non-Africans in this process? How should we assess attempts to build a new political system from below, as in Jerry Rawlings' Ghana, which involves rejecting the demands of urbanites for a rapid return to competitive parties and general elections? Harvey Glickman pointed to the searches of Africans "for constitutional forms of governance, with procedures of accountability, that are meant to fit their own circumstances."

Will a democracy that reflects African realities look different than it does in the West?

There seem to be two fundamental contrasting perspectives on democratization as it relates to Africa and other developing areas of the world. The operative distinction has been captured by Pepe Zalaquett, a Chilean scholar and human rights activist, at an internal Ford Foundation meeting in 1987. He sees the need to find ways of extending democracy beyond the restoration of civilian rule and the improved protection of civil and political rights for the middle class. Such a process would involve the introduction of "innovative forms of popular participation and debate," the building of a "democratic culture," and the empowering of disadvantaged groups. In the context of Africa, it seems that these approaches can be embraced under the rubrics of "grand democratization" and "liberalization." Grand democratization would refer to the process currently underway in Nigeria in which an entire constitutional and political system is being erected, involving the formation of national political parties and the conduct of competitive elections, leading to the creation of elected governmental units at the local, state and national levels. Liberalization, however, would be a process that is not conducted in a top-down fashion following a detailed blueprint.

In a seminal paper published two decades ago on "Colonialism and the Two Publics," Peter Ekeh theorized about a fundamental ethical dichotomy in African societies that was referred to on several occasions during our discussions. Africa has two civic publics, one deriving from the colonial administration which lacks legitimacy and moral authority, and another from indigenous societies which possess them. These publics, according to Ekeh, exist side-by-side in Africa. In a similar vein, Hyden argues that the indigenous civic public, which constitute "systems within the system," can be "building blocks of governance, guided by their own normative structures." African societies are, he contends, "poly-constitutional." Another student of Africa, Richard Sandbrook, has similarly observed that "there is rarely any link between the political institutions prescribed in constitutions and the indigenous institutions of the pre-colonial period."

A strategy of liberalization in Africa would pursue these hunches about the sources and directions of Africa's political renaissance while seeking to avoid some obvious pitfalls. It is an approach which is conscious of the risk of ethnocentrism and rejects the external determination of political institutions and guidelines for Africa. It furthermore allows for the maturation of political processes which are already underway in Africa, especially in the rural areas, and promotes awareness of African governance practices associated with the second of Ekeh's two publics. Liberalization, unlike "grand democratization," would be deliberately incremental, permitting "the germination of political accountability" (Bratton) in a variety of social settings. By placing emphasis on a "bottom up" process, the raw elements for institutional construction that Obasanjo believes is present in African culture, or that Mbembe sees as inherent in the *longue durée* or history of African societies, would be gradually made to adapt to the realities of the modern nation-state. Moreover, the dynamics of the contemporary "informal political sector" in Africa, which many participants saw as a corollary of the informal economic sector, would also be drawn upon in this process of political reconstruction.

. . . there is rarely any link between the political institutions prescribed in constitutions and the indigenous institutions of the pre-colonial period.

There is obviously much idealism invested in such an imagined scenario. At the seminar, some participants returned time and time again to the hope for an African democracy which "grows out of the soil" (Grier) or which reflects more closely "African realities" (Mikell). Here we come up against what can be called the "paradox of localism": If there is a belief that what is authentic in Africa can be found in small and especially rural communities, it must be recognized that these communities are also the source of diverse particularisms in thought, behavior and social institutions. Liberalization in Africa must seek to unleash the moral resources that are to be found in such social units without fostering an atomized polity. Organizations such as trade unions, peasant groups, women's organizations, and the bar and other professional associations must provide a counterbalance to any emphasis on the political legitimacy of units of local governance. In African countries which have highly contrasting structures of customary rule, it is difficult to conceive how "traditional norms and institutions," as some participants seemed to argue, would be sufficient to provide the basis for a national system of governance. Perhaps a way can be found to distill from these norms and institutions what is applicable and generalizable to the wider polity. Finally, we must ask if such a distillation can satisfactorily take place within an autocratic setting, as seems to be attempted in Ghana, or whether it should be combined with democratization at all levels of the political system, as is currently being pursued in Uganda.

VI. *Perestroika* Without *Glasnost*

In many respects, Africa is lost between state and market. It wanders between an ineffectual state and weak domestic and international markets.

— Tom Callaghy

If one does not attack simultaneously the intellectual foundations as well as the material and political bases of post-colonial authoritarianism, the adjustment of African economies will remain a marginal phenomenon.

— Achille Mbembe

The olden ideological clash between capitalism and socialism appears to be as remote from the question of democratization in Africa as it is from the contemporary crises of health care, nutrition, education, environmental protection, and public safety.

— Richard Sklar

Perestroika, *glasnost*, and *novoye myshleniye* — usually translated as restructuring, openness and new thinking — have as much relevance to the states of contemporary Africa as they do to those of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Throughout Africa, a high level of state involvement in economic activities has been the norm, resulting in large and stifling bureaucracies, inefficiencies and corruption. Independent media, where they exist, are usually severely curtailed. And even the intellectual community has been hampered in its ability to generate new thinking because of the deleterious effects of Africa's economic decline on the universities and the persistence within African academia of the ritualistic uses of ideologies that are crumbling elsewhere. Crawford Young speaks of socialism as a "shattered paradigm" while Frank Holmquist intones that "all paradigms are in disarray."

In this era of economic reform in Africa, half the states of the continent are currently implementing structural adjustment programs, usually under the close direction of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Carol Lancaster presented to the seminar a succinct summary of the basic thrust of these programs which reflect the conviction that "African governments are unable to manage economic resources efficiently and that the private sector discipline of making a profit will ensure a more efficient use of resources." The main elements of these reform programs include the reduction of the size of the African state and its controls over the economy, the establishment of incentive prices for agriculture, the freeing-up of prices and the reduction of state subsidies and public employment rolls, the privatization of many government economic units, the liberalization of trade and exchange controls and the revising of investment codes to encourage private (foreign and domestic) investment.

. . . structural adjustment in the short term reinforces "commandism" and "militarism" in Africa.

There was not much confidence expressed by seminar participants that these reforms will meet with great success, especially in the short-term. Frequent references were made to the contraction of world trade, the severe drop in the terms of trade for African exports, and the difficulty that Africa faces in pulling itself out of the economic quagmire based on a strategy premised so heavily on the resuscitation of agricultural exports. It was also acknowledged that there were few alternatives at present to these policies. Whenever attempts were made at the seminar, such as by David Abernethy, to posit a different strategy, it usually involved restating key features of the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 which committed African governments to adopt more self-reliant economic policies, greater integration among their economies, the expansion of food crops and the development of internal linkages between their agricultural sectors and small-scale labor-intensive industries. The shortage of investment capital in Africa today, and the debt overhang that is soaking up a large percentage of earned foreign exchange, highlight the need for political strategies, domestic and international, that could mobilize and attract the much higher levels of assistance needed.

Only a multilateral "Marshall Plan for Africa" — in essence what was

proposed at the UN General Assembly Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in 1986 — could seriously address the need for a comprehensive program involving aid, investments, debt relief, and new trading opportunities for Africa. What the seminar was able to tackle more directly were the political impediments to, and consequences of, externally-imposed liberalization in Africa. The seminar was faced with a number of paradoxes. As suggested by Tom Callaghy, "the degree to which an African government can adjust is determined by its ability to insulate itself from the political logic, characteristics and effects of the dominant African post-colonial syndrome." In short, to succeed economically, the patrimonial autocracies of Africa should be currently undergoing a fundamental alteration in their basic political mode of operation. This is generally not the case. Achille Mbembe felt that this fundamental contradiction could not be wished away: "The current crisis is . . . a crisis of authoritarian reasoning (la raison autoritaire)."

There must therefore be a simultaneous attack, for Mbembe, on the intellectual, material and political bases of African autocracy. Economic liberalization is inconceivable without political and social liberalization. Yet, there are further complications. Once African regimes accept, through conviction or resignation, that major changes have to be introduced in their economic policies and structures, it is their authoritarian nature that enables them to impose the desired changes promptly on their societies. As Horace Campbell argues, structural adjustment in the short term reinforces "commandism" and "militarism" in Africa. In view of the severe impact of the reforms on urban dwellers, salaried workers, wage-earners, and public employees, African governments which undertake them are usually confronted with increased risks to their survival. Ways of repressing protest must therefore often be bolstered. Is it any wonder then, as Holmquist contends, that "the current language of state reform basically refers to an in-house reform of the administration . . .? There is little reference to structures of accountability or participation, let alone real structures of democracy."

If glasnost is seen as an inherent part of perestroika for the USSR, Hungary and Poland, it should now be asked: Is not the same true for Africa?

We are therefore left with a host of puzzling questions such as the following. Having been forced to shift resources from urban to rural areas, would African regimes also try to compensate for their loss of support from urbanites by developing openings for political participation by rural dwellers (who are supposed to be the immediate beneficiaries of the reforms)? Will African governments be able to develop new coalitions of political support for the economic reforms which might enable them to reduce reliance on coercion? How can they build such support, Tom Biersteker and Ernest Wilson inquired, when the reforms involve sharp reductions in the usual patronage resources available to the governments? African regimes are thus caught in the paradox that their authoritarian character enables them to administer the bitter medicine of economic reforms to their societies, yet the sustainability of these reforms seem to require a greater sense of participation and openness. Carol Lancaster's blunt question summed up these uncertainties: "Could the long term political consequences of structural adjustment force a move toward greater democracy in Africa?"

It is obviously necessary to broaden the debate over current economic policies in Africa. At the moment, and rightfully so, much attention is devoted to their appropriateness, sustainability and the need to mitigate the severe human costs which the sharp devaluations, reduced imports, increased prices, and high unemployment impose on the most vulnerable sections of society. However, more attention must be devoted to the opportunities that these changes generate for political openings and for the kind of innovations in self-governance and participation that were discussed earlier. In brief, if *glasnost* is seen as an inherent part of *perestroika* for the USSR, Hungary and Poland, it should now be asked: Is not the same true for Africa? The seminar first tip-toed around the sensitive issue of the need for political, as well as economic, conditionalities by external donors, but unavoidably returned to it during the closing sessions. With regard to the considerable role of external organizations in the determination of economic policies in Africa, however, the central issues were confronted without inhibitions as all participants recognized that they are some of the most characteristic and troubling features of contemporary Africa.

VII. The Governance of Africa by External Agencies

The effective governance of Africa has passed increasingly away from its official political leaders to the two major international lending institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.
— Michael Lofchie

Typically, negotiations about economic reforms are not genuine dialogues between the African debtor state and officials of international financial institutions.... African sovereignty is eroded when the international institutions unilaterally decide upon the conditionalities of the loan, the design of adjustment programs, and the reform implementation process.
— Carolyn Somerville

The African continent, which wrested independence from foreign powers a generation ago, finds itself subjected to direct governance by agencies which are dominated by representatives of these same nations and the United States. With an average decline in per capita gross national product from 1976 to 1986 of over 2% annually, as David Abernethy pointed out, and a 40% drop in export earnings during the 1980s, African countries have been forced to get help wherever it is available. Private investments have long become desultory, and commercial bank lending, according to Lancaster, "dried up in 1982." This left, she added, international financial institutions as the only source of additional foreign exchange for most African states. Access to that foreign exchange, however, and official assistance from western governments have become increasingly tied to the acceptance of the adjustment programs largely devised by these institutions.

The seminar saw a wide range of opinions expressed concerning the degree of dominance of contemporary Africa by external donors and financial agencies. Michael Lofchie took perhaps the most resolute position: the programs of the World Bank and IMF reflect a certain ideology; their effective control of the budgetary decisions of African governments enable them to exercise "real governance"; and their programs are not limited to providing general outlines of reforms but often include detailed policy prescriptions which in effect give these institutions "authority to manage Africa's national economies." David Abernethy, who strongly criticized the "outward-oriented, export-expanding strategy" which underlies adjustment programs, felt that African officials had in effect become "policy-takers rather than policy-makers." The question must therefore be asked, he contended: What should happen if it turns out that "there are conflicts between what African countries should do and what the industrialized West would prefer?"

States which lay claim to national sovereignty and autonomy find themselves having to give up or share authority for the major economic decisions that determine the allocation of benefits and burdens within their societies.

Attention was devoted both to the economic strategies devised by international agencies for Africa and to the specific mechanisms of external governance that have accompanied them. Mention was frequently made of the "policy dialogues" that now regularly take place between officials of the international institutions and African governments. For Abernethy, the term was really a euphemism for what are in effect "policy monologues." Even participants who had a less critical view of this process of interaction, such as Carol Lancaster, still recognized the extent to which the international agencies have created their own channels of influence within African governments and are usually able to bypass officials who prove recalcitrant. They may even bring about the appointment to important posts in planning and finance ministries of sympathetic African nationals. In some countries, it now appears that the distinction between external and internal officials, as far as their attitudes and ideas are concerned, is becoming increasingly blurred.

Carolyn Somerville pointed to the emergence of a group of African technocrats who, though employed by their local governments, are now as much committed to spreading structural adjustment reforms as are members of the visiting teams from the international agencies. Since these agencies make every effort to recruit African and other Third World economists as

consultants and officials, the emergence of a "transnational" stratum of such officials could lead to the consolidation of a governing class that exceeds in power and coherence the one forged by western imperial nations during the colonial era. What effect will such developments have, not only on the economies of African nations, but on their capacity to act effectively in their own interests in the making and implementing of economic policy? Callaghy, Lancaster and Biersteker all tended to downplay what they saw as an exaggerated portrayal of external governance.

"...there are as yet no African success stories where stabilization and structural adjustment have resulted in economic recovery and sustained growth."

Callaghy felt that most African regimes tended to blunt or circumvent many of the commitments they make to the international institutions. Similarly, while Biersteker agreed that policy formulation was largely determined externally, he feels it is an exaggeration to extend that assessment to policy implementation which often diverges from what the strategy requires.

There is obviously much impressionistic evidence that could be cited to support either interpretation, especially in view of the fact, as Hyden argues, that "we really have no good study that highlights the extent to which donors are influencing recipients." Hyden sees much of the policy dialogues as accommodationist rather than confrontational in nature and that the reforms reflect compromises struck rather than packages meekly accepted. He sees this tendency as one of the reasons for the indifferent economic results since there is a limited degree of national commitment behind the implementation of the reforms. This assessment is bolstered by Biersteker's observation that most African countries have adopted policy reversals reluctantly, usually as a result of "an external payments crunch."

The governance of contemporary Africa is obviously a confused one today. States which lay claim to national sovereignty and autonomy find themselves having to give up or share authority for the major economic decisions that determine the allocation of benefits and burdens within their societies. Usually, the surveillance mechanisms to ensure compliance with adjustment programs give external agencies privileged access to the most sensitive information about these countries' resources and prospects. When we add to the involvement of the large financial institutions the vast number of development agencies which now operate in Africa, often with minimal oversight by local governments, fears expressed about the gradual recolonization of Africa cannot be dismissed as mere posturing.

There will continue to be a number of divergent assessments made about externally-directed economic liberalization in the continent. Lancaster asserted that "there are as yet no African success stories where stabilization and structural adjustment have resulted in economic recovery and sustained growth." What positive results have been identified, for example in Ghana, may prove to be short-term in nature, the effects of higher agricultural incentive prices, increased aid and good weather. The World Bank has had to pull back from some of its glowing reports on the performance of adjusting African countries in the face of sharp criticism by analysts of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. From the standpoint of the seminar, some of the more

In a competitive world of nation-states, can Africa's long term economic interests ultimately be served by their smooth harmonization with the strategies of the advanced industrialized nations?

perplexing questions that must be given serious attention are: Will this period be transitional in nature leading to the emergence of more effective African governments which can reassert their primacy over external agencies? In a competitive world of nation-states, can Africa's long-term economic interests ultimately be served by their smooth harmonization with the strategies of the advanced industrialized nations? And, finally, how will the future of the new institutional actors outside the state structures in Africa be affected by the close collaboration which is being forged between patrimonial autocratic regimes and powerful international financial institutions?

VIII. Conclusion: An Agenda for Further Research and Action

The major analytic challenge now is to construct a theory of state reform so that the state can be linked to the vast creative energies of Africa's people.

— Tom Callaghy

As we watch reform sprout in Africa, it is not at all clear whether these changes will gather a powerful momentum among local interests and hence grow quickly like a rich tropical forest, or whether they are simply isolated green shoots in the dry grasslands of the post colonial political economy.

— Ernest Wilson

This is a time of great political and economic adjustment in many areas of the world. The Soviet Union is undergoing changes which, if consolidated, could rank in amplitude with the Revolution of 1917. Just as that revolution, and its sequels, changed the shape of world politics, so also *perestroika* may usher in a more interdependent world in which, to paraphrase President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the geopolitical notions of the past will no longer apply. Western Europe is similarly on the verge of a momentous step forward in the integration of its economies. And the states of the Pacific rim continue to demonstrate a degree of economic dynamism that is altering the former East-West/ North-South distinctions in the world economy. Where is Africa in this wave of transformations as the 21st century looms? Falling further behind in most domains is the only honest reply. How can a new wave be summoned up to move the continent forward again? That in brief is what the range of problems and ideas discussed in this seminar sought to address.

What have we uncovered? For one thing, a demonstration of the collaborative spirit that specialists on Africa can nurture as they pool their talents in a broad endeavor to identify paths to Africa's resurrection. Second, a deeper realization that Africa's development cannot be stage-managed from abroad. Such processes as the democratization of the continent, the loosening of the rigidities of authoritarian rule and the broadening of societies' initiatives in governance and self-rule require coordinated internal and external action as took place during the struggle to end colonialism.

Fundamental to Africa's transformation must be the resurrection of the capacity of African authorities, at the level of the state as well as civil society, to speak, plan and act in ways which enjoy broad legitimacy among their people.

As was made evident during our deliberations, the major world powers and the large international financial institutions and aid agencies possess the means to influence and often direct the course of affairs in contemporary Africa. They are therefore responsible for ensuring that this influence is not simply used to smother Africa's sovereignty, or incorporate that continent's economies into a long-term dependent relationship with the world system, or finally, to give a new lease on life to the decaying patrimonial autocracies. Fundamental to Africa's transformation must be the resurrection of the capacity of African authorities, at the level of the state as well as civil society, to speak, plan and act in ways which enjoy broad legitimacy among their people. Such a need requires greater sophistication and awareness by all non-African actors and institutions, as they relate to the continent from a position of strength, of the fragility and limitations but also hidden resources of African governance.

Autocracy and Corruption

The patrimonial autocratic state, with its "high premium on political power" for obtaining economic benefits, must be rendered a short-term phenomenon in African history. The institution of President-for-life must be seen as the great anachronism that it is, blocking the way to the emergence of fresh leadership that could meet

Richard Sklar (left) and Horace Campbell

the challenges of today's rapidly changing environments, internally and externally. The possibility of alternation in power, Crawford Young urged, must become a reality for all African countries. Leaders in Africa must not only move to end the monopolization of political space by their own ruling structures, they must also become more tolerant of organizational initiatives at the periphery and in the interstices of their political systems.

Corruption, present in all countries of the world, is pervasive in Africa. Indeed, in many cases it represents the norm rather than the exception in the conduct of public affairs. Strengthening the legal basis of government operations, as Jane Guyer suggested, and the launching of a resolute attack on the expansion of prebendal uses of public office as Larry Diamond proposed, must be followed by appropriate strategies. Accountability must be the hallmark of both governmental and civic institutions in Africa. In every social and political organization, where funds are collected and disbursed, appropriate measures to ensure the highest level of probity must be introduced and sustained. If Africa does not stop the material and spiritual erosion brought about by corrupt behavior, it will continue to see most of its disposable resources wasted or spirited away to foreign havens.

Civil Society

Much hope is attached to the revitalizing of social life in Africa. Yet, as has been shown, this is a complex arena. Ways must be sought to foster "the innovative use of indigenous social institutions" while avoiding making the polity hostage to the many particularisms they harbor. The active participation of women is crucial to the invigoration of African associational life for women are usually at the center of productive, social and familial institutions in the continent. Civic groups, if they are to play the redemptive role assigned to them by some theorists, must be the nurseries of higher levels of accountability, of democratic participation, and of managerial skills.

Foreign donors are heavily involved with, and committed to, the activities of private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in Africa. While seeking to promote them, they have a special obligation to avoid swamping them with funds which are beyond their capacity to utilize responsibly. On the other hand, ways must also be sought, as Willard Johnson maintains, to foster the creation of intermediate organizations in Africa which can take over from foreign institutions the role of funding and supervision of indigenous PVOs. Larry Diamond emphasized the need for the simultaneous development of state and civil society in Africa, while Michael Bratton saw the possibility of distinguishing those areas where engagement with the state or autonomous action by civic groups are required. Donald

The active participation of women is crucial to the invigoration of African associational life for women are usually at the center of productive, social and familial institutions in the continent.

Rothchild called attention to the insufficiently debated issue of the decentralization of government operations in Africa.

The retreat of the state in Africa has important implications for the future of the continent. Rights of association and assembly must be given more than lip-service. The monopolizing bias of many post-colonial regimes must be abandoned and replaced by the encouragement of a vibrant pluralism. Such an effort can be combined with the consolidation of a slimmed-down and more effective state entity. If there is an "authentic Africa" that has been confined to practices of evasion and resistance, as Mbembe contends, ways must be found to open up spaces where its seedlings can blossom and multiply.

Liberalization and Human Rights

The African Charter of Human and People's Rights that was ratified in 1987, although ringed with provisions to protect African regimes from being openly embarrassed, still represents a significant step forward in the official acceptance of universal standards of human rights in Africa. Yet considerable distance must still be travelled to obtain general observance of the Charter's provisions. As the struggle against apartheid enters its final years, increasing attention will be devoted to the poor human rights record of most African nations. There are many African gulags still to be revealed to add to those already known, such as the dreadful prisons of the former Guinean President Sekou Touré. Support for the rights of an independent media and unfettered press is therefore paramount.

For Crawford Young, "the trend to democratization is at once overwhelming and fragile." There must be significant support given to African regimes which pursue democratic openings and maximum pressure applied to those which resist such changes. The continent suffered in the shadows of the geopolitical maneuvers of the Cold War as both West and East supported leaders who sided with them regardless of how much they exploited and repressed their own people. One of the fundamental tenets of the new era should be a rejection of such policies. The seminar participants were concerned to avoid projecting their own models of democratic governance on the continent. Horace Campbell believed that Africa could generate "a far richer concept of democracy than simply formal political representation." The devising of such concepts and systems should be encouraged and supported. As was noted earlier, strategies of political liberalization which create room for the transposition of indigenous notions of good governance within African societies to the wider national political system should be pursued. In the process it is hoped that a new political culture of democracy would take root and flourish.

Regimes which have been accountable to no one but themselves cannot continue to lead their people into economic quagmires and then expect to be meekly obeyed when directives are issued by these same regimes in an attempt to lead them out.

Perestroika and External Governance

The current restructuring of African economies represents a considerable gamble on the part of African regimes and international financial institutions. The need for drastic steps to be taken to improve the chances of success of these programs is being recognized by Africa's creditors. These steps are taking the form of new World Bank and IMF concessional lending arrangements for Africa and the cancellation of blocks of official debt by the major western governments. These adjustments represent priceless opportunities for Africa. It was strongly believed by the seminar participants that political liberalization must accompany economic liberalization in Africa. Regimes which have been accountable to no one but themselves cannot continue to lead their people into economic quagmires and then expect to be meekly obeyed when directives are issued by these same regimes in an attempt to lead them out.

External agencies have to confront the current linkage between structural adjustment and autocracy. As Rasma Karklins, a noted student of the Soviet Union, has observed: "Although *perestroika* is innovative, it is also contradictory; sooner or later Gorbachev will have to choose between democratization and continued reliance on centralization and coercion." The same can be said for African states and the international institutions which are now deeply involved in the planning and implementation of that continent's versions of *perestroika*. The centralized and coercive ways in which many of the reforms are being implemented should be transitional in nature. Those who wield influence in the determination of public policy in Africa will be held responsible if, at the end of the day, they have

merely rescued and modernized African autocracies.

African Integration

A surprising topic which emerged at the seminar was, to use the words of Pearl Robinson, "the irrelevance of Africa's Berlin Conference borders." Reference here is to the 1884 Berlin Conference which ratified the partition of Africa among the imperial nations. It was felt by many participants that the balkanisation of Africa represents a continued impediment to rational economic development. It was pointed out that transnational groups are emerging in many areas — health, environmental concerns, human rights — and there is an observable increase in the importance of religious groups and voluntary development organizations whose activities transcend national boundaries. Even the widespread smuggling activities in most areas of Africa were seen to suggest the existence of informal regional trading systems.

Those who wield influence in the determination of public policy in Africa will be held responsible if, at the end of the day, they have merely rescued and modernized African autocracies.

A concern with the need for African integration has a long history and an equally long record of disappointing results. Carol Lancaster's observation that "the many small, resource poor, often landlocked, politically unstable countries of Africa appear unlikely candidates for private investment led growth" would come as no surprise to any student of African history and political and economic thought. Today, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria insists that there are too many countries in Africa: "I would like to see African leaders work concertedly toward creating six confederations in the twenty-first century." If it is recognized that the multiplicity of Africa's boundaries and micro-economies impede development and discourage capital investment, then the encouragement of integrative processes should feature in the activities of all African and non-African institutions which can influence attitudes in that direction. With the United States and Canada moving to free up trade between their two economies, and with the Europeans moving even more rapidly toward economic integration, it is regrettable that the history of postcolonial Africa should show repeated failure to implement regional integration policies.

Political Conditionality

Political conditionality, especially when imposed multilaterally, has become one of the most important instruments for promoting economic and political reforms in the contemporary world. The Solidarity Movement in Poland would not today have its representatives sitting in the country's parliament were it not for the stringent economic pressures that were brought to bear on the Jaruzelski regime. After the massacre of Chinese students in Tiananmen Square, economic and other sanctions were immediately applied by several countries on China. In the case of Africa, however, such sanctions have seldom been imposed, reflecting the absence of strong international concern for the observance of human rights and democratic progress in that continent. Such a situation must change. Indeed, if Africa is to make progress in these areas, such change is imperative.

Helen Kitchen has written that the leverage applied to African countries concerning human rights abuses and similar issues in the past has seldom worked because "in most cases, the government involved and the United States knows that they will get the aid anyhow." Similar observations were also made at the seminar concerning the failure of external pressure to effect positive change in Zaire and Liberia. The participants concluded, however, that it is not that conditionalities did not work in these cases but rather that they were not made to work. There was an inadequate level of real concern to induce change, and an unwillingness to subordinate short-term geostrategic priorities to human rights objectives. General Obasanjo has proposed an even broader use of conditionalities for Africa: "I would. . . suggest making official development assistance contingent on a country taking effective steps to curb corruption and adhering to any international agreements on that subject."

It is frankly recognized that most African governments have been able to insulate themselves from political pressures for change from their own populations.

It is paradoxical that a seminar which was so concerned about undue external influence on Africa

in the formulation and implementation of economic policy should be willing to entertain the use of that influence to promote political progress and especially the protection of human rights. This apparent contradiction has not discouraged increasing demands by African scholars and political activists for the application of such pressures. It is frankly recognized that most African governments have been able to insulate themselves from political pressures for change from their own populations. The paradox can therefore be partly resolved by regarding such external pressures as needed to force these governments to be more accountable to their people.

In the United States, the TransAfrica lobby, the Black Congressional Caucus and the Africa Subcommittee of the House of Representatives have increasingly sought to have the U.S. government use the leverage it possesses to pressure African governments to reduce political repression and corruption. If such efforts can be tied to the universal objective that such governments should be responsive to the true needs and aspirations of their people — which as a prerequisite requires them to uphold the freedoms that would allow such desires to be manifested without fear of retribution — then the demand for political conditionalities can be justified on the grounds of inducing a wider process of self-rule and self-determination for Africa's people. Larry Diamond, one of the participants who called most strongly for such pressures to be applied, expressed a preference that they be conducted on a multilateral rather than unilateral basis.

Toward a Charter of Progressive Governance in Africa

Many of the elements of a charter of concerns, principles and objectives that could guide the behavior of Africans and non-Africans who are determined to see the continent emerge from its distress before the end of the twentieth century have been discussed in this report. Academic,

Pearl Robinson

legal and human rights associations in Africa, as well as religious groups and organizations with an international mandate such as the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, are also implicitly involved in debating the fundamental elements of such a charter. This seminar was organized on the premise that many insights regarding the problems of Africa today circulate largely within the community of African specialists. The seminar was successful in getting a selected group of these scholars to present their insights and debate them vigorously and freely.

This report, together with the published working papers, should bring our discussions to a wider circle of interested persons. It is hoped that further research will be stimulated on the complex and perplexing questions raised. The fundamental aim of this undertaking is to promote the new thinking which, in breaking loose from ideological preconceptions of all sorts, will permit the identification of those innovative strategies that might enable Africa to develop its own ideas about political participation, leadership and accountability. Africa is unlikely to achieve such an objective in the near future solely on its own because of the ravages that have been inflicted by the current crisis, nor will it ever be achieved if others simply arrogate to themselves the right to do so on its behalf. It is therefore between the Scylla and Charybdis of disengagement and preemption that we hope to steer this project during the next stage involving close collaboration with African scholars and policymakers.

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

David Abernethy
Department of Political Science
Stanford University

Gerald Bender
School of International Relations
University of Southern California

Thomas Biersteker
School of International Relations
University of Southern California

Michael Bratton
Department of Political Science
Michigan State University

Thomas Callaghy
Department of Political Science
University of Pennsylvania

Horace Campbell
Department of Political Science
Northwestern University

Larry Diamond
Senior Fellow
Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace

Peter Ekeh
Department of Political Science
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Harvey Glickman
Department of Political Science
Haverford College

Beverly Grier
Department of Government
Clark University

Catherine Gwin
Project Officer
The Rockefeller Foundation

John Holm
Department of Political Science
Cleveland State University

Frank Holmquist
Department of Social Science
Hampshire College

Goran Hyden
Department of Political Science
University of Florida

Willard Johnson
Department of Political Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Richard Joseph
African Studies Program
The Carter Center of Emory University

Nelson Kasfir
Department of Political Science
Dartmouth College

Edmond Keller
Department of Political Science
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