

The State and the Market: Reflections on Ake's Analysis of the State in the Periphery

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Résumé: Cette étude est une critique de l'analyse de Ake de l'Etat dans la périphérie. Pour Ake, l'Etat est une forme classique de domination de classe et que cette forme de domination est le modèle par lequel la domination de classe est rendue autonome. Comment peut donc l'Etat prétendre ne pas être concerné par la lutte des classes par rapport aux classes dont il doit avant tout défendre les intérêts. La défaite apparente du socialisme pour ne pas dire du marxisme pourrait rendre plus difficile une recherche correcte sur l'évolution de la nature de l'Etat dans la périphérie ainsi que de sa dynamique.

Introduction

Two of Ake's works published in 1985 seem to re-visit the whole question of the nature of the state in peripheral capitalist formations (Ake 1985a, 1985b). More importantly, they reexamine the issue of the autonomy of such states. Coming from Ake, these works point to the fact that the question of the state in the periphery remains unresolved nearly two decades after the pioneering works of writers like Alavi (1972), Saul (1974), Leys (1976) and Ziemann and Lanzendorfer (1977) among others. This paper examines some of the issues in Ake's analysis, particularly as they concern Nigeria.

It is pertinent to begin with an attempt to summarize Ake's major points. Ake begins by noting that 'the state is a specific modality of class domination' (1985a:105, 1985b:1). He goes on to point out that this form of domination represents the way in which class domination is autonomized. By autonomy is meant that the institutional mechanisms of this domination are constituted in a way that they enjoy independence from the social classes and even society such that they appear, following Engels (1978), as 'an objective force standing alongside society' (Ake 1985a:105, 1985b:9).

The ability of an agency which represents class domination to also appear as disassociated from the class struggle (and the classes whose interest it primarily defends) is, therefore, an important characteristic of the state's form of domination. How then is it able to adopt this stance? According to Ake, 'essentially it does so by virtue of its mediation by the thoroughgoing generalization of commodity exchange' (1985b:1). Every member of society appears as a commodity bearer even if the commodity is only labour power.

Of course, every commodity is assumed to have a fair chance in the market depending on the forces of demand and supply. The effect of this is a highly atomized society in which the operative norms are individualism, competition, proprietorship and formal equality.

At the political level, these conditions are reproduced in the way the state is constituted: an autonomous force above the interests of one class or the other. Ake puts it thus:

These conditions, which activate the law of value, are also the conditions which engender the institutionalization of political domination as a largely autonomous force. Being formally free, equal and self-interested proprietors, the community of commodity bearers will necessarily evolve executive power (or government) as an independent public force administered in strict conformity to the rule of law (1985b:2).

It is the foregoing conditions that the state in Nigeria and, indeed, other peripheral capitalist formations lack. Ake attributes this state of affairs to two mutually reinforcing factors: the non-pervasiveness of commodification and low level of development of productive forces (1985a:109 ff). Ake (1985b) then goes on to demonstrate empirically the consequences of this 'lack of autonomy'/'limited autonomy' for Nigeria.

Implication of Ake's Argument

We can make a couple of deductions from Ake's arguments. First, only the modality of class domination under capitalism signify the existence of the state. It is obvious that Ake was describing conditions under capitalism in its 'free market' form. Yet he generalizes these conditions to all socio-economic formations. Perhaps he realized that this is not a very tenable argument but dismisses it by arguing that:

The state is essentially a capitalist phenomenon. That is not to say that the state is exclusively a capitalist phenomenon. The state form of domination may exist in socialist formations as an approximation. In precapitalist formations, the approximation is so crude that for all practical purposes, the state form does not exist (1985a:106).

The point he seems to be making is that although the state's form of domination existed prior to capitalism, such pre-capitalist states cannot really be regarded as states *per se* since the commodity form in those societies was not 'highly developed', 'pervasive' or 'thoroughgoing'.

One obvious implication of this is that pre-capitalist formations and their state forms, represent transitional stages to capitalism and the capitalist state. In other words, they tend towards capitalism and it is a question of the level of capitalism. However, we know that these formations, the feudal formation for instance, are historically specific, with their own dynamics which is dif-

ferent from capitalism. The capitalist state is no more state-like than the feudal state. They represent two types of the state's form of domination different only in the material basis of that domination. Ake's argument may be that like commodity production, the state's form of domination reaches 'maturity' under capitalism. But that does not mean that pre-capitalist state forms are not historically specific.

Second, even peripheral capitalist class domination does not imply the existence of a state because of the low level of development of the commodity form which supposedly characterizes these formations. Limited development of the commodity form, in turn, means a state that has 'extremely limited autonomy'. And 'because autonomization is the essence of the state as a modality of domination, it is not clear whether we can properly talk of the state in postcolonial Africa' (Ake 1985a:108). He continues:

That is not to say that government does not exist, or that class domination does not exist, or even that there is no coercive apparatus for the subordination of some social groups to others. After all, the state is only a particular modality of class domination (1985a:108-109).

Rather than clarify the issue, this explanation complicates it the more. What is the relationship between government and the state? Can government exist in isolation from the state? What other modalities of class domination exist? From his argument, one of the other modalities of class domination (among others perhaps) would be that not mediated by thoroughgoing commodification. But is it not better to regard these as other specific manifestations of the state rather than classify them as non-state forms?

Related to the above, a third deduction from Ake's arguments seem to be that the state is not so much related to class domination as it is related to commodity relations. What makes class domination a state form of domination is mediation of not just commodity exchange but 'pervasive commodity exchange' in its free market form. We can extend this argument by saying that the dominance of market relations precedes the appearance of the state since we can only correctly speak of the latter where the former fully exists. If the state appears with the appearance of classes and by that fact, the class struggle, as a majority of Marxists agree, then it is either that the appearance of classes follows the appearance of the free market commodity form, or that the free market commodity form is a necessary condition for the appearance of classes. We doubt that either is the case.

Generally the state is not exactly an 'executive power (as a public authority) independent of particular persons and social classes' as Ake suggests (1985b:10). That is more correctly, the stance adopted by a particular type of the state, namely the state in (for want of a better term) advanced capitalist formations. The feudal state, which no doubt is a state, is characterized by the parcelling out of state power to various social forces. It is only

with capitalism that the unity of state power and, consequently, the autonomization of the state is attained. We must not conflate the characteristics of a specific historical manifestation of the state with the essence of the state. The essence of the state is the relations of domination and subordination among classes and other social forces, whether these relations are mediated by a 'thoroughgoing' commodification or not. Otherwise, we can only correctly speak of the capitalist state since it is only under capitalism that full commodification is attained following the complete separation of the producer from the means of production. Thus, the feudal state, the socialist state and the state of peripheral capital would all be misnomers. Ake comes very close to saying so.

It is important to note that this separation (producer from the means of production) leads to full commodification, especially the commodification of labour power, and not the other way round. At the political level, this separation is reflected, in a particular mode of political class domination (state) which appears precisely separated from the economic interest of any class. By so appearing, it creates an illusion of unifying the aspirations of all classes equally. As such, full commodification does not precede any of the two separations: the full separation of the producer from the means of production and the separation of political authority from 'civil society' (Hegel) (Table 1). On the whole, our position is that commodity production neither determines the appearance of the state nor the autonomization of class domination.

Autonomization of Domination and the Bourgeois State

Is state autonomy a necessary feature of the bourgeois state? The impression one gets from Ake's works is that it is. For instance he writes:

Being socially atomized, formally free, and equal and self-interested proprietors, the community of commodity bearers will necessarily evolve an executive power or government as an independent public force that operates in conformity to the rule of law... (Ake 1985a:106) (Emphasis mine).

We believe that we ought to distinguish between the fundamental and lasting characteristics of the bourgeois state and the superficial and ephemeral ones. When Engels notes that 'Bonapartism is the religion of the bourgeoisie' he did not mean that Bonapartism is a necessary condition for the constitution of the bourgeois state. Rather he meant that the functioning of this state (bourgeois rule), which in turn is necessary for the maintenance of the entire capitalist formation (the state being the cohesive factor of this formation), is most effective under Bonapartism. Autonomy is not a fundamental feature of the bourgeois state. We shall return to this in due course.

Table 1: The Capitalist Modality of Class Domination

	Economy	Politics
Level I	The complete separation of the producer from the means of production (REAL)	The separation of political power from economic interests of specific classes. The separation of the state from relations of production, consumption and circulation (ILLUSION)
Level II	Thoroughgoing commodification (The Market: Demand and Supply etc.)	Rule of Law, Political and Legal equality, Citizenship rights: (Electoral Process: Popularity etc.)

Source: Compiled by author.

Before we leave these general issues, it would appear that underlying much of Ake's argument about the state and capitalism is an assumption that the capitalist market is always 'perfect'. All through, it is on this type of market relations that he hinges his argument. Yet we know that imperfect competition in the form, for instance, of monopoly and oligopoly are types of capitalist market relations. This means that the commodity form could take various shapes at various times. Such differences are usually registered at the political level. That is why, for instance, the state of monopoly capitalism differs from other types of the capitalist state. Can we then say that the capitalist state at such times becomes less state-like? One thinks that the dominant market form in the periphery is not the 'perfect competition' form. We do not think that the problem is that commodification has not made enough penetration. Rather it is that a particular form of commodification is dominant: the 'imperfect competition' form. This form is maintained by various means: force, manipulation, intimidation, and so forth. In lieu of the free reign of the forces of demand and supply (which is necessary for the perfect market), another force is substituted: direct intervention of the state. This explains why the peripheral capitalist state is interventionist and therefore unable to distance itself from the class struggle. That of course means a low level of autonomy. This way all the distortions at both the economic and political levels that Ake brilliantly essays enter. However, all these do not make the peripheral state less of a state than any other state.

The State in the Periphery: Nigeria

Ake is not exactly sure whether the state in countries like Nigeria qualify to be regarded as such. We think that part of the problem is the two different ways in which the issue of the autonomy of the state is posed in these works. Sometimes it is posed as whether a state is autonomous or not. Thus, he speaks of a colonial state that 'lacked autonomy' (1985b:11), the 'lack of

an autonomous state' being an effect of the limited development of commodity relations (1985b:14), 'lack of autonomy' expressing the limits of capitalist development (1985b:16), and 'the state lacks autonomy' implying the privatization of state power (1985b:17). At other time the issue is posed as what level of autonomy a state demonstrates or possesses. As a result of these two conceptions, at some points the Nigerian state lacks autonomy and at other times it shows a limited level of autonomization. We think that the first way in which the issue is posed is faulty.

Autonomy is nothing possessed once and for all in which case a state is either autonomous or not. The autonomy of the state is the product of a series of relations, among social forces and between them and the state. As a result, it is not constant. Thus, in his writings on Bonapartism in France, Marx (1969) shows how the autonomy of the French state changed over time, in the context of Bonaparte's coup of 1851. It is important to note that different regimes, being the products of the class struggle, also affect the level of autonomy of the state. While a particular regime enhances it, another may retard it. This is the case because although the economy may have a determinant role it does not always hold the dominant role. The political does intervene in the market with far-reaching implications for commodity relations. As such, the level of intervention of a state, which may depend on the type of regime/government, will affect the autonomy of a state. One would think that it is necessary to show how different regimes and governments have affected the autonomy of the state in Nigeria.

Not even the state in contemporary Western capitalist countries could be said to be autonomous in terms of a once and for all thing. The ability of this state to mask class struggle, to appear to be above classes and to present itself as the national-popular state, changes from time to time. We need not belabour this point since it is obvious. A clear case is the period of economic crisis during which the capitalist state intervenes decisively in favour of capital. and we know how recurrent the crisis of capitalism tends to be. Even in times of serious conflict between national and global capital, the 'advanced' capitalist state often intervenes on behalf of one fraction or the other depending on which fraction is hegemonic. For instance, it is known that the British government broke its own (and EEC's) 'fair trading' rules by offering British Aerospace 'sweeteners' to ensure that it took over Rover, thereby blocking foreign bidders.

The autonomy of the capitalist state is to be established in two directions which are two aspects of a single approach. The first is in the precise separation of the political from the economic which is organically related to the total separation of the producer from the means of production. The second is to be found in the specific constitution of classes and the class struggle. Again, there are two aspects to this autonomy. The relative independence of the state from:

- a) the relationship between the dominant and subordinated classes; and
- b) the relationship between the dominant classes and their fractions.

On another note, the autonomy of the capitalist state should not be conceived in terms of the specific power of the state. In this case, autonomy is considered absolute by being reduced to the power of the group that concretely represents this, power through government. For example, the bureaucracy, the political elite, etc. (Poulantzas 1976:72-73). The point is that contrary to what many 'new political economy' literature tell us (not Ake), those who occupy the state apparatuses and the apparatuses themselves do not possess a will or power of their own outside the power relationship among struggling classes and fractions.

The occupants of the state apparatuses neither constitute a separate class by virtue of occupying those apparatuses) with structurally determinate interests, nor do they represent the interest of their classes of origin when they are not drawn from the dominant classes. Rather, within the state apparatuses they function according to a specific internal unity. Thus, their class origin recedes to the background in relation to that which unifies them: the fact that they belong precisely to the state apparatuses and that they have as their objective function the actualization of the role of the state. This role coincides with the interests of the dominant classes (Poulantzas 1969).

State Autonomy and the Modernization Logic

More disturbing is the fact that Ake's arguments appear to lend credence to those usual shibboleths of modernization. For instance, he attributes the lack of autonomy of the Nigerian state to the fact that a majority of Nigerians are still living, following Durkheim, under conditions of 'mechanical solidarity'. Embedded in this is the whole notion of the dual economy in which one is capitalist and modern, and the other (under which 70% of Nigerians live) is traditional and backward. More important is that this mechanical solidarity - Organic solidarity dichotomy leads into another erroneous one: non-autonomous state - autonomous state. The point we are trying to make is that the entire argument fits perfectly into the modernization logic: an autonomous state is desirable, the Nigerian state is not autonomous because of the limited penetration of capitalism (commodification) and persistence of a traditional rather than modern outlook (mechanical solidarity). Therefore, more capitalism, more commodification and movement toward an organic solidarity.

This kind of argument tends to support the current orthodoxy of the market forces being spread by the IMF, World Bank, etc. It has been well documented that the increasing penetration of capital and capitalist relations into agriculture (especially since the 1970s) has spelt doom for the majority of Nigerian producers (peasants). Indeed, the entire project of capitalist agriculture in Nigeria was an unmitigated disaster. The current experimenta-

tion with SAP, a quintessential context for the penetration of commodity relations, has only guaranteed mass impoverishment and social strife for the country. We need not belabour this. Still, it is ironic that this meaning could be read into Ake's work considering his known position on modernization and political development (Ake 1982).

We have already argued that the problem with the periphery is much less one of limited commodification as it is one of a particular type of commodification. Let us note that capital has no particular attachment to any one type of commodity relations. Whichever most ensures accumulation, with the least threat to the system, is best. When Ake says that the bulk of Nigerian society are not in the market society and capital relations (obvious reference to the peasantry), he is not exactly correct. This reminds us of Hyden's 'uncaptured peasantry' (Hyden 1980). The question of the relationship between the Nigerian peasantry and capital is not adequately captured by the notion of their non-involvement in commodity relations. Here again it is a question of the kind of market relations. Let us say that there must be something odd about saying that the bulk of the producers of value in a capitalist society are not part of commodity/capital relations. If we remember, as Ake shows, that the working class is still very small in Nigeria, it becomes clear that the only producers of surplus value to sustain the accumulation process is the peasantry. And apart from its now occasional direct exploitation, the peasantry lives out a better part of its exploitation through exchange. In any case, upwards of a century of feeding an ever growing urban population as well as supplying the raw material export market, no doubt, has the effect of increasingly integrating the peasantry into the market. The Nigerian peasantry is definitely 'captured' even if indirectly via exchange.

The idea of a Nigerian peasantry engaged essentially in the production of use value, rather than exchange value, does not adequately depict the realities of peasant production. Let us state right away that the dichotomy between subsistence and commercial peasants is a false one. It seems to us that subsistence makes more sense in terms of the scale or size of the production unit rather than in terms of the use value-exchange value matrix. The point is that the Nigerian peasantry is integrated into the capitalist market even to the extent that the market determines the production of their subsistence. The very reproduction of the peasantry is, to a very large extent, controlled by the market.

It appears to us that the situation is not that peasant are not part of commodity/capital relation. Rather they are part of a set of highly exploitative commodity relations from which they withdraw from time to time to cushion their destructive effect. We see the use value-exchange value matrix as a continuum. The movement of peasants in either direction of this continuum depends on a complex conjuncture of factors such as the terms of trade of

the market, coercion (usually by the state), demands of the non-food expenditure of the peasants, and so on.

Peasants and the State

Following his argument of the non-involvement of the peasantry in commodity relations, Ake also argues that the peasantry is external to the state. According to him, peasants 'are strictly speaking not a constitutive element of the state' (1985b:25). They relate to the state in 'externality'. The point Ake is trying to make here could be better grasped in the context of what Poulantzas (1978) calls 'pertinent effect' and 'autonomous part of a conjuncture'. According to Poulantzas, a class or fraction constitutes an autonomous part of the conjuncture of the class struggle (that is a social force) only when its connection with the relations of production, its economic existence, is reflected at the other levels - political and ideological - with 'pertinent effect'. By pertinent effect Poulantzas designates the fact that:

The reflection of the place in the process of production on the other levels constitute a new element which cannot be inserted in the typical framework which these levels would present without this element. This element, thus transforms the limits of the levels of structures or class struggle at which it is reflected by 'pertinent effects'; and it cannot be inserted in a simple variation of these limits (Poulantzas 1978:79).

The whole issue goes back to Marx's argument about the French peasantry. In the 'Eighteenth Brumaire', Marx notes of the French peasantry:

In so far as millions of (peasant) families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, ... they form a class. In so far as... the identity of their interests begets... no political organization among them, they do not form a class (Marx and Engels 1969:170-171).

But this does not necessarily mean that a class organizes its own political party. Thus, the emergence of Louis Bonaparte was enough to constitute the peasantry into an autonomous class (Poulantzas 1978).

One is not exactly sure that we can correctly argue that the typical framework of the political class struggle in Nigeria has not been modified by the very existence of the peasantry. Actually, the very persistence of the peasantry in the face of the increasing capitalization of agriculture in Nigeria, tends to suggest the pertinence of the peasantry in the conjuncture. And it appears to us that the peasantry cannot be inserted in a simple variation of the limits of the political and ideological class struggle in Nigeria. Ake may be correct that '... nowhere do they (the peasants) have even a physical presence in the state' (1985b:25). But it is at least debatable if the

social origins of the bulk of the Nigerian Army is the working class rather than the peasantry.

However, more crucial is the importance of the peasantry at the ideological level of the class struggle in Nigeria at present. Never has the peasantry been more important as an ideological support of the ruling class as it is at present. The peasantry is portrayed by the Babangida regime as the only hope for the country's economic recovery. Rural development has come close to a religion. In fact, the basis for this new role was already being laid in the 1960s with moves by the state, international agribusiness, local capital and international financial institutions like the World Bank. It is not a coincidence that the Berg report insisted that the problems of sub-Saharan Africa is mainly the result of the neglect of the peasantry (Ibeanu 1991:114-183).

Suddenly, the Nigerian state has become the champion of the peasantry. We know that in reality this has little to do with improving the living conditions of the peasantry. Its purpose is clearly ideological: to distort the struggle of the underprivileged in Nigeria by putting a wedge in the unity of the struggles of workers and peasants. This is achieved by emphasizing the distinction between town and country, between the working class and the peasantry. The latter is presently portrayed as the 'real Nigerians' who do all the work but reap the least benefit because they cannot get the 'true' market prices for their products, and because government favours the urban dwellers to the detriment of the rural masses. The subterfuge is clear. The Nigerian worker becomes one of the 'privileged' urban dwellers and is portrayed as contributing, in no small measure, to the problem of the peasantry. Thus, the two sections of the people view each other with suspicion. Nevertheless, we cannot discount that this position of the peasantry changes the framework which the political and ideological class struggle in Nigeria would otherwise present. We think that the Nigerian peasantry constitutes an autonomous class and, therefore, is part of the state.

The State, the Market and the Ethnic Question

The same framework could be adopted in analyzing the group which Ake calls 'primary group' (1985b:26 ff). We agree with much of his analysis of this group. However, we do not exactly agree that they, as in his argument about peasant, are external to the state. We do not accept that 'only social forces which are real or potential social classes can really properly be a constitutive element of the state' (Ake 1985b:26-27). Otherwise how can we explain theocracies in which social forces based on religion completely dominate the state. We shall argue that these groups exist as autonomous social categories (that is social forces when their place at the level of structures on which they are basically distinguished (in this case ideological structures), is reflected at the other levels by pertinent effects. We argue that ethnic groups, and to a lesser extent, religious groups, meet this condition. This can be demonstrated based on and elaborating upon Ake's arguments.

Historically, capitalism (like any other system) has grown or expanded both 'intensively' and 'extensively', the former usually preceding the latter. The period of 'intensive' growth was marked by an attempt to create unified national markets, as distinct from the fragmented markets of feudalism, under a centralized state structure. As such, the unification of the market (the creation of a national market) coincides with the unification of domination (unity of state power and the creation of the centralized-national state structure). Therefore, this period saw the convergence of the nation (a large market constituted by agents within a contiguous geographical territory, sharing an identity of language, history, culture etc) and the state (a specific system of domination of one class over others). The process of national homogenization in Europe which Zolberg documents (1983; 1985), is in fact the process of establishing a unified national market as the 'intensive' growth of capitalism progressed.

The period of intensive growth of capitalism, which took place in what we would today call the 'center' of the world capitalist system (as against the periphery), then moved into a phase marked by the concentration and centralization of capital and a rapid growth in the organic composition of capital. It was a phase which culminated in the traditional free market competition giving way to monopoly capitalism as the dominant form of economic organization of capitalism.

During this period of 'intensive' expansion, at the ideological level, the creation of the unified national market called for solidarity with the new entity (the nation-state) that emerged. This required the diversion of sentiments of the social agents of the formation away from the institutions of the precapitalist formation to those of the capitalist formation. Note that the feeling of solidarity by social agents towards the institutions of the social formation in which they live, did not arise with capitalism. However, capitalism transformed it by situating it within the locus of the nation-state. Thus, this feeling is correctly termed nationalism. This transformation under capitalism occurred in a number of ways:

- 1) The locus of the formation was greatly expanded beyond what was known as pre-capitalism, this being in line with the 'intensive' growth of capital (economy of scale). This is not to suggest that some form of political control over an extensive geographical territory did not exist before capitalism - note that empire building existed before capitalism. What was at least relatively unknown before the period we are talking about was a unified national market extending over a large geographical territory, with members of the formation owing allegiance to a national state and sharing common ideological symbols. We can say that what separates the pre-capitalist empire from the capitalist nation is twofold: (a) strong allegiance to the central authority (legitimization of the central

authority) and (b) value consensus among its members called citizens rather than dependants. This may be loosely termed national unity.

- 2) The basis of the new solidarity became the new entities created (nation-system) rather than primordial, pristine ties.
- 3) This new solidarity is achieved initially through a state which forcefully 'binds' the agents of the social formation together and, with time, increasingly by ideological means. This movement away from force towards ideology is made possible by the perfect competition commodity form; the impartial market. Gradually, the state also appeared as impartial.

We must note that there is no particular attachment of the bourgeoisie to the nation-state. Just as it has no attachment to any one form of commodity relations. The nation-state is simply what was most feasible and useful under the concrete historical situation. Its size, ethnic/racial and religious composition etc, depend on a configuration of forces which include the 'vision' of the hegemonic fraction of the power bloc as to how bloc interests are to be better served, and the possibilities available to capital at the given conjuncture.

On the other hand, the period of 'extensive' expansion of capitalism has been the period of imperialism and the various forms it has taken - colonialism and neocolonialism. It has been a period of globalization of production and transnationalization of policies. If the period of 'intensive' growth corresponds to colonial empires, neocolonial empires and supra-colonial organizations such as functional unions and other regional and sub-regional organizations.

At the phase of 'extensive' expansion, a unified national market is no longer a desideratum. In fact, it sometime becomes a fetter on expansion. The 'intensive' national market unified under a central state, becomes less important than the 'extensive' international market whether unified or not. This is the phase of internationalization rather than nationalization of capital. Note, however, that the two tendencies are not mutually exclusive. The situation is better understood in terms of which trend is dominant.

Capitalism took roots in Nigeria during the phase of 'extension' in which the nation-state was no longer that invaluable framework for capital expansion that it used to be. As such there was really no urgent incentive to push imperialist capital into destroying the sentiments of the peoples of Nigeria towards institutions of the pre-capitalist formations in their totality either by forceful homogenization of the pseudo nation-states it created or by generating shared ideological symbols to facilitate value consensus. Such a policy was only pursued to the extent that it helped capitalism gain dominance over the precapitalist modes of production. Otherwise, the tendency was towards their preservation to foster imperial capital's policy of 'divide and rule'. The

ideological force of the rule of the free 'market ethic' has not applied for two related reasons. First, that perfectly competitive market (free market) did not exist in Nigeria since we are speaking of a period of the rule of monopoly capital. As such, there has been the predominance of preservation (rather than dissolution) effect by capitalism on the pre-capitalist formations especially their ideological instance. Secondly, the colonial capitalist economy and its postcolonial successor were constituted and maintained by force. As a result, the state in places like Nigeria has not been able to make a 'clean break' with 'civil society', in essence, the economy. Such a break being the hall-mark of the 'ideal-type' capitalist state and the basis for the autonomization of class domination. Thus, the capitalist economy in Nigeria continues to thrive basically on forceful (primitive) accumulation.

The problem of ethnicity in Nigeria is then to be understood in terms of the nature of the existing social formation as dominated by the capitalist mode of production. The problem arises out of the specific manner of articulation of that mode to the precapitalist modes that it met in Nigeria. What we observe is generally a distorted form of capitalism based not on the commodity relations of perfect competition (the free market). As a result, there has been a concomitant low level of atomization of society and of individualism as would generally result from the classical free market society. The consequence of this state of affairs is that a majority of Nigerian people vacillate between the relations of the capitalist market society and the relations of the precapitalist formation. Thus, old ways persist. A historical characteristic of these relations is the importance of communal ties which form the basis of ethnic consciousness. Attachment to such structures as the family, village, clan, town and ethnic group is therefore very pronounced. In the face of an extremely exploitative and imperfect market society, these ideological formations become highly politicized and even part of the accumulation process.

Consequently, the ideological gets represented with 'pertinent effects' at both the political and economic levels of the present day capitalist formation in Nigeria. For instance, at the political level, their pertinent effect can be seen in the emergence of strong ethnic political parties, leaders and the free manipulation of ethnic symbols in politics. While at the economic level, it can be seen in the high level of intervention of ethnicity in the production process and in accumulation. On the whole then, these ideological ensemble become social forces, that is autonomous categories and, therefore, part and parcel of the class struggle in Nigeria.

Viewed in this way, we see that ethnicity is neither a natural phenomenon (although it is deep-seated and lasting) nor simply the manipulative acts of the 'elite' (although it serves clear class purposes). These are the two main ways in which the issue has been explained. The

former is unscientific and the latter, as Ake rightly points out, is voluntaristic and not fundamental (1985b:11).

Concluding Remarks

Once again, the lucidity of Ake's analysis cannot be in question. There is no doubt that his analysis of the peripheral capitalist state sheds a lot of light on a number of unresolved issues. In addition, he places a number of issues in Nigerian politics in their proper perspective. From electoral contests to coups d'état, from indigenization to the peasant question, Ake demonstrates an unparalleled analytic ability.

What we have tried to do is much less to show the weakness of his argument as it is to suggest alternative explanations to some of the issues and to elaborate upon his own position. No doubt issues surrounding the nature of the peripheral capitalist state, the peasantry, ethnicity, etc. will continue to be topical for a long time. They will become even more so, particularly for observers of the Marxist persuasion, in the light of events taking place in the socialist bloc at the moment. It seems to us that debates on the nature of the state in the periphery will take the center stage when *glasnost* and *perestroika* have run their course. However, if the socialist countries abandon theory, as they appear to be doing at present, the proper stage for this debate may, unfortunately, be lost. The present overwhelming hype about the end of Marxism may foreclose a proper inquiry into the changing character and dynamics of the state in the periphery.

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