

ferred from either minimal or negative rates of expansion. The minority have benefited from the higher prices of oil and uranium, coffee and tea, while the majority have become more dependent on foreign food and finance. Growth, which has always been elusive in Africa, has recently become highly problematic for all but a few resource-rich states. And even in many of these – Gabon, Ivory Coast, Libya, Nigeria, Zaire – growth has not necessarily led to development but rather to the emergence of a new class more interested in immediate consumption than in saving. Different growth-rates and uneven development both within and among states have produced on the continent a diversity of ideologies and development strategies.

The basic choice facing African leaders is whether to continue with the orthodox outward-looking development strategy or to disengage by pursuing a more inward-looking strategy. These two approaches largely coincide with either (1) the perpetuation of the essentially capitalist economic structure inherited at independence or (2) the attempt to transform the established political economy by adopting some form of socialism. The former strategy consists basically of continuing integration into the world economy (which is still dominated by Western countries and corporations), whereas the latter involves a greater degree of national self-reliance. One supplementary form of the second type of strategy is collective self-reliance, or an attempt to increase trade, financial, communications and cultural links within Africa and the Third World rather than along traditional North-South, European-African lines.

Most African regimes have chosen some form of association with the capitalist world, and several have enjoyed high rates of economic growth because of their openness – Gabon, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal in particular. Any attempt to introduce socialism becomes difficult and protracted, involving simultaneous confrontations with both internal *entrepreneurs* and external forces. Nevertheless, a few African leaders have pursued a non-capitalist path with determination – in Algeria, Guinea, Somalia and Tanzania and now in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. This expanding group has preferred a slower but surer rate of development to a more unstable, export-led growth, in which a country's role and riches are largely determined by the international division of labour.

Different growth-rates, resource-endowments and international associations have intensified the ideological differences both within and among African states; and

the need for external support, both political and economic, has served to make many of them even more vulnerable to foreign pressure. "Neo-colonialism" through Western agencies is a familiar condition, but dependence is no longer a capitalist monopoly. Economic and strategic crises on the continent have led to growing reliance on the Eastern bloc as well – particularly the Soviet Union and its allies. But the definition and implications of "Afro-Communism" still remain in doubt. And, just as several African regimes have terminated their links with the West, others are now experienced in breaking ties with the East. Friendship treaties are rarely eternal.

No coups

Despite the growth of internal inequality and ideological diversity, the era of *coups* in Africa seems to have passed, though perhaps only for the time being; at any rate, the number of successful *coups d'état* has recently decreased. This seeming paradox may be explained in part by the trend towards political monopolies on the continent, exercised by one-party, no-party, military or one-man regimes. Authoritarian rule, which discourages participation, has served to control or suppress ethnic, racial, religious and regional differences inside many African states, as well as to contain the results of social stratification and ideological factionalism. Political order may be a prerequisite for, but is no guarantee of, economic and social justice; stability has sometimes been achieved at the expense of some individual freedoms, in Africa as elsewhere.

As President Nyerere noted recently in a speech entitled "Destroying World Poverty":

In poor countries, if there is a clash between individual freedom and economic development, it is generally not possible to give priority to the former. . . . The most basic human right of all is the right to life itself, and a life which is not made miserable by hunger, ignorance or preventable disease. So the notion of human rights has to be redefined in the context of underdevelopment, basic (physical) needs being accorded a greater emphasis than others. Moreover, African states have been generous in their treatment of the world's largest group of refugees – over one million scattered throughout the continent.

The relative absence of late of *coups* may also be related to some innovative political experiments taking place in a few African states. These involve essentially a return to limited democratic practices without undermining either political stability or

*Association
with capitalist
world system
chosen by most*