

## ECONOMIC RELATIONS AFTER AMALGAMATION: THE SEEDS OF DISCORD IN COLONIAL POLITICAL ECONOMY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*The term 'Amalgamation' of the Northern and the Southern Protectorates laid more emphasis on the geographical and political structure of the country than the economic aspects, which played significant role in determining the actions of Lugard and that of the British government. This paper seeks to examine the economic relations after amalgamation, which reflected the sowing of the seed of discord among various groups in Nigeria throughout the period of colonial administration. The economic grievances were handled poorly and nearly unresolved by the British colonial officials. The seed of discord planted through amalgamation, germinated into the colonial political economy and bore fruits in the post- independence Nigerian politiceconomy. This paper is theoretical and it has adopted the use of secondary sources and qualitative analysis of facts. Suggestions were made in the form of regional/zonal empowerment and development for equal opportunities of all segments of the country and particularly, resolution of all economic grievances through the National Conference for restructuring.*

**Keywords:** Amalgamation, Economic Relation, Political Economy, Economic grievances, and Nigeria Polity

### **Introduction**

Nigeria as a country, came into being with the amalgamation of the Northern and the Southern Protectorates by Sir Frederick Lord Lugard in 1914, this event, however does not spell the beginning of the existence of the diverse people of the country. But before 1914, the presence of the Europeans had been felt, especially as traders, travelers, explorers and missionaries, having dealings with the indigenous people, until the creation of the Consulary and the bombardment of Lagos in 1851, followed by its subsequent annexation in 1861. The nineteenth century Yoruba civil war gave the British the much-desired opportunity to venture into the hinterland and eventually, Oyo was also bombarded in 1893<sup>1</sup> (Kola Aderoju and Folaranmi, 2010). From there, other areas were also conquered through the combination of force, cajolery, persuasion and deceit. While 1914 only marked the official period of British effective control and manipulation of the affairs of the people in the country, the amalgamation started even before 1900. Gradual amalgamation had taken place in

1898, 1906, 1912 and finally in 1914 when the process of amalgamation was concluded. The major concern of this paper is to delve into an area that has enjoyed oversight from scholars in the discourse of Nigerian amalgamation, which is economic relations after the event. Economy had been a salient factor in the process of merging Nigeria together as this was categorically stated by Lugard that “it was for economic and administrative reasons”<sup>2</sup> (Riddick, 1966). The pertinent question is what was the nature of the economic relations of different ethnic groups after the process? It should be noted that the process was meant for the economic benefit of the Europeans in the first instance, but how did Nigerians from the two protectorates relate economically after the process? A number of economic grievances had been identified by the people from the two protectorates. There is, therefore, the need to examine how colonial administrators managed the situation and how the various grievances were resolved. Major sub-headings of the paper reflect introduction, preliminary steps towards amalgamation, reasons for amalgamation, amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, economic relations after amalgamation and effects on Nigerian political economy.

### **Theoretical Application**

The adopted theoretical framework for the study is the theory of ‘Power Relation’ From the perception of Yaqing Qin in *A Relational Theory of World Politics*, it is believed that power can come from relation.<sup>3</sup> The initial relationship of the colonial officers and the Northern Nigeria in terms of administrative integration between Northern Caliphate system and Colonial system of Indirect rule is seen to have been premised on the success recorded by colonial administration in Northern Nigeria in comparison to the Southern Nigeria. Such relation may be one of those factors that instigated power concession given to the North over the South. Conceptualizing the theory further, one discovers that the features of the theory are identified as “Sharability, Reciprocity, Intimacy, Contact and Communication.”<sup>4</sup> The co-empowering process afforded the relinquish of power to the perceived less- educationally advantaged that lent credence to the Power Elite Theory of Wright Mills.<sup>5</sup> The small group in charge of bureaucratic control, who adapt the same ideology and they are increasingly united in militarisms, capitalism and authoritarianism. While elaborating this idea, Mills identified three groups: Government Elite, Military and Corporate Elites whereby the Educated Elites can only occupy the middle level. The above discussed theories are appropriate for maintaining Nigeria as an Extractionist State in the colonial political economy and beyond.

### **Preliminary Steps towards Amalgamation in Nigeria.**

The entrenchment of colonial administration was facilitated by a number of factors: the slave trade, legitimate trade, European Adventurers, Travelers and various Traders along the coast and in the hinterland. Trade had always been carried out by various European traders in the region around the Niger. One of the foremost

European traders, whose activities made a landmark on the soil of Nigeria, was Sir George Tubman Goldie.<sup>6</sup> His desire for this arose from the unhealthy rivalry and competition among the various European traders that tended to undermining the status of his trading firm. He realized that politics could be used as an instrument for economic consolidation. Hence, he undertook the merging of the companies in 1876, 1877, 1879 and 1882. Thereafter, he requested for a royal charter which was granted in 1886.<sup>7</sup> According to J.E. Flint, the royal charter was meant to acquire privileges, monopolies, licences, concessions, patents and other rights over trade. Even before the charter was granted, there had been cases of negotiations and signing of treaties that proved the effectiveness of the company's administration of the Niger area.<sup>8</sup>

This move was accentuated by the subsidies given by the Europeans to the local chiefs and the promise to protect them against aggressive neighbours. All these made the chiefs to sign away their rights. Apart from the offer of gifts and persuasion, imperial nations pursued their ambition through the use of deceitful means in some cases.<sup>9</sup> This was the case when the Company went further to organize military men for punitive expeditions in order to sustain administrative and economic control of the Niger Region. Also, the judicial arm of the company constituted another administrative instrument used by European traders towards the attainment of political ambition.<sup>10</sup>

Gradually, through a combination of force, diplomacy, persuasion, negotiation and deceit, the different parts of Nigeria fell one after the other especially, as a consequence of the Berlin Conference which was held between 1884 and 1885. It was at the Berlin Conference that real significance was attached to the various treaties and agreements signed by the Royal Niger Company.<sup>11</sup> After the Berlin Conference, it was urgently important for the British to effectively occupy Nigeria; this was well justified by the occurrence of various raids, riots and revolts that led to the revocation of the royal charter in 1899 and the appointment of Frederick Lord Lugard as the High Commissioner, who in January 1900, hoisted the Union Jack at Lokoja to mark the beginning of the British effective occupation of Nigeria<sup>12</sup> (Flint, 1960).

Flint gives a succinct description of the revocation thus:

The date is January 1, 1900, the place is Lokoja on the Niger. It is morning and men have gathered round the flag staff at the barracks. Most of them are uniformed Africans of the Niger company's constabulary or of the West African Frontier Force, with a sprinkling of British Officers in full dress uniform, among them was Frederick Lugard. The Niger Company's flag with its emblem, each foot bearing a word 'Ars Jus Pax' is handed down, the Union Jack slowly rises in its stead. The African Military band strikes up "God saves the Queen" and "the men

cheer". So passed away the Royal Niger Company limited chattered.<sup>13</sup>

The new political arrangement had a great effect on the colonial history of Nigeria. It was due to this arrangement that the Lagos Colony was merged with the Southern Protectorate in 1906. This was referred to by Akinyemi as the first time ever that the different people who inhabited those areas were brought together under the same authority.<sup>14</sup> Right from 1901, colonial officials had been undertaking the project of railway construction, and hence the British government felt that the extension of this project would involve a lot of capital. In 1906, Lagos Colony was merged with the Southern Protectorate with the aim of using the better financial endowment of the Southern Protectorate to cover the cost of administration and development in the financially weak colony of Lagos.<sup>15</sup>

The Legislative Council in 1906 had its jurisdiction extended over the South but after the amalgamation in 1914, it was limited to Lagos colony by Lugard. Constitutionally, the protectorates were united but only the departments of Treasury, Railway, Survey, Judiciary, Military, Post, Telegraph and Audit were centrally administered. In all other services, the Lieutenant-Governor was responsible for each protectorate.<sup>16</sup>

### **Reasons for Gradual and Eventual Amalgamation**

Despite the fact that the British administration had been felt in Nigeria right from 1898, when they sought to maintain a colonial state, there were oppositions or resistances from the people and the usual methods were adopted to curtail these moves. The successive British officials made use of coercion, diplomacy, force and deceit methods to remove all visible African opposition. Summarily, there was imposition, expansion and consolidation of British central authority.<sup>17</sup>

Co-ordination of railway construction polices throughout Nigeria provided another reason for the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914, which gave the North and the South a common political administrator. However, between 1914 and 1939, the country resembled a federation of two provinces. Not all major departments were merged together. For instance, Education, Police and Prisons were amalgamated between the 1920s and 1930s. In April, 1939, the government split the former Southern Protectorate into Western and Eastern Protectorates.<sup>18</sup> Under colonial administration, the policy of indirect rule was adopted and the policy makers were British officials up till the 1950s. The British parliament effort and the British public opinion as well as representation made to British government by Nigerian pressure groups shaped the course of events in Nigeria colonial administration in terms of indigenous political participation. Hence, the beginning of gradual decolonization in reaction to nationalist leaders' criticism.

The political mistrust and economic gap between the North and the South after the amalgamation were symptomatic of the lack of trust between the North and

the South. Fundamentally, the political and social system of the North had been protected from what was considered to be subversive influence through the ban of missionary activities whereas, the South took much advantage from western influences to the extent that it drew its nationalist elements from among the educated elites. The Northerners' Eastern/Islamic religious inclination did not allow the breeding of adequate number of western educated elites. This gave the North the feeling of insecurity and the southerners were regarded as more alien than the British due to their exposure to western education.<sup>19</sup>(Nkedrim, 1975)

The amalgamation of the two protectorates was, indeed, purely on economic and administrative grounds. One of the first reasons was to use the resources of the South for the development of the North. Also, the amalgamation was to achieve administrative convenience in the management of the two protectorates. A sharp contrast existed between the finance realized from export in the North, which was a meagre sum of £200,000 while the Southern protectorate export jumped to £4,320,000 in 1910 as compared to £3,094,175 in 1908 and the imports also jumped to £5,122,000 from £3,076,36 (Okwudiba, 1981). The British Imperial Grant aid of about £300,000 per annum was used to meet the needs of the North, which was actually against the declared colonial policy of making each territory self-sustaining.<sup>20</sup>Really, there was a marked difference in the value and volume of import and export trade in the Northern and the Southern protectorates. The difference determined the economic prosperity of the areas and consequently influenced the distribution of amenities and spatial patterns of economic development between the North and the South.<sup>21</sup>

### **Political and Economic Relations after Amalgamation**

The colonial political economy sowed the seed of political, economic and constitutional discord that led to the tripartite political arrangement. For instance, in the 1940s from among the Yoruba, there was the formation of the 'Egbe Omo Oduduwa', which later metamorphosed into Action Group (AG) in March 1951, founded by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, as a pan-ethnic organization against external regional force. In 1944, the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC) was formed with Herbert Macaulay as the chairman and Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe as the secretary. After the death of Macaulay, the NCNC tended to take the form of Igbo nationalism. The parallel political development that consolidated the ethnic-based political arrangements was established in the North. These were the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) in October 1951 and Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU)<sup>22</sup> pioneered by Aminu Kano (Olaniyan, 1972).

Ethnic-based political arrangement created a lot of suspicions and a deep feeling of insecurity among the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Clifford Constitution of 1922 after a lot of criticism, was replaced by the Richards Constitution in 1946. In this constitution, regionalism was fully entrenched, members of the South and the North met as members of the newly created legislative council in what was

the first political contact between the North and the South.<sup>23</sup> Not long thereafter, in 1950, a general conference was held in Ibadan, in which the Northern delegates demanded parity in the membership of the central legislature. The resistance from both Westerners and Easterners over the number of seats led to the compromise of voting to give the North 45 seats while the East and the West were given 66 seats. This was naturally rejected by the Northerners. To address this problem, there was the McPherson Constitution in 1951 that accommodated consultation of the Nigerian political leaders<sup>24</sup>(Olaniyan, 1972).

The Ibadan Conference also erupted the conflicts over an important economic matter: The North tried to hold on to its economic advantage, which gave it about £300,000 a year from Britain as well as an indirect subsidy from the South. From the side of the Southerners also, the conference at Ibadan recorded the demand for Ilorin by the Yoruba and also the rework of the Northern frontier that included the people of Offa, Igbomina and Kabba areas, who are Yoruba but categorized as part of the North. This Northerners vehemently opposed this demand.<sup>25</sup> All these areas of conflicts were reported to the Governor-General because they were cases of offences and retaliations. The North retaliated on the issue of Northern frontiers by demanding that the status of Lagos should be defined. This did not go down well with the Westerners because of the economic advantage of Lagos. The Easterners in particular, who were immigrants in large numbers in Lagos, wanted Lagos to be "No man's land". Because of the divided opinion about the status of Lagos, the Colonial Secretary made Lagos a Federal Territory and the British government agreed to give the North 50 percent of the electoral seats through a selected committee in September 1950.<sup>26</sup>

Looking at the political economy critically, one would observe that some issues were resolved while others were left unresolved. The concession of 50 percent of the seats to the North shaped Nigeria's political culture to the extent that it contributed to the collapse of the First Republic sixteen (16) years later. As a consequential development of this political disagreements, Chief Anthony Enahoro, an Action Group member of the House of Representatives moved a motion for self-rule in 1956. The Sardauna of Sokoto opposed this motion by saying that:

The North would not accept the invitation to commit suicide. He further argued that 'if the British... had failed to give us the even development that we deserved and for which we craved so much... what are we to hope from an African Administration, probably in the hands of a hostile party. The answer to our mind was quite simple, just nothing, beyond a little window dressing'.

The above statement of Sardauna went further to testify to the fact that the Northerners considered the

Southerners more alien than the British. The argument over the issues reached a stalemate leading to the abrupt adjournment of the House.<sup>27</sup>

*Northern House of Assembly debate Official Report February to March, 1957 pp 76-77*

The above mentioned scenarios revealed the conflict between the North and the South, between the North and the West and between the West and the East. The population density in the East during the colonial era was put at 1,000 people per square mile compared to the North with 20 people per square mile. The West on the other hand had about 200 people per square mile and some areas of the MiddleBelt recorded 25 people per square mile.<sup>28</sup>Hence, a combination of the factors of population density and poor soil forced the Easterners to emigrate in large numbers to the North, which offered better opportunity for employment. In 1953, the Easterners held 82 per cent of the clerical jobs and most of the jobs in the modern sectors of the economy in the North.<sup>29</sup>The Northerners on realizing this trend attempted to replace the Southerners with Expatriates<sup>30</sup>. By 1961, of all the foreigners employed in the North, 67.2 per cent were British, 13.2% were Pakistani, 3.8 per cent were Indians 2.1 per cent were Egyptian and 1.5 per cent were from other parts of Nigeria.<sup>31</sup> In 1964, there were 451 Northerners, 198 other Nigerians, 1,112 expatriates in seven (7) key ministries at a time, when the percentage of unemployed Southern graduates was increasing.<sup>32</sup>. The explanation for this could be sought in the regional conflict aggravated by the tripartite arrangement and differences in political parties right from the colonial days. Between January 1954 and August 1958, 2,148 Southerners, mainly from the East were dismissed from the Northern Public Services.<sup>33</sup>The scheme was referred to as "Northernization".

### **Effects of Relations on Colonial Political Economy**

In the colonial economy, there was virtually no unity across the communal homelands in Nigeria. The nature of the colonial economy was import-export oriented and therefore, externally-oriented integration rather than internally oriented towards integrations of the various communities. In the real sense, there was no national economy, instead, there existed foreign-owned economic companies, whose activities were directed towards external needs. The companies were run in the interest of external financiers for whom national integration was not part of their principles. From the opinion of Nicolson, (1969), the system of administration afforded the colonial power the most efficient way to extract tropical produce from the strategic areas in the country. The major areas of economic activities emerged as:

- i. The Kano-Kaduna-Zaria-Jos complex.
- ii. Lagos metropolis area and
- iii. The Port Harcourt-Aba-Enugu-Onitsha axis and the surrounding rural environments of these major axis. Dominant colonial economic

activities in cash crop production and mining gravitated overwhelmingly in those core areas.<sup>34</sup>

Lord Lugard developed an economic blueprint which was equipped to provide cheap raw materials and ready markets for European factories and goods.<sup>35</sup> Both Lord Lugard and Sir William Macgregor in Lagos encouraged the traditional society to adapt to the changing economic patterns brought about by the extension of the railway and the development of better agricultural practices. The colonial policy of the British was hammered by Lord Lugard, when he stated that "the future development of this country must be done by its own people, through its own people and for its own people".<sup>36</sup> In fact, this policy was expressed before the full entrenchment of colonialism when the treasury and colonial office in London agreed initially to the colonial enterprises. Lugard was the dominant personality and the on-the-spot representative of the British Monarch who supervised the creation of the Nigerian state.

It was a cardinal principle of British colonial policy that the interest of a large population should not be subjected to the will of a small minority of educated and Europeanized natives who have nothing in common with them, and whose interests are often opposed to theirs.<sup>37</sup> Hence, 'Nigerianization' was underplayed during the era of Lugard because he did not have a speck of respect for the educated elite.

As 1946 constitution was characterized by regionalism, the 1951 constitutional arrangement was known for the emergence of ethnic-based political parties that eventually sealed the hopes of a national-based political party. There were regional legislatures at the expense of the unifying features.<sup>38</sup> The 1954 constitution continued in the same manner, but in the review conference of 1954, it had been resolved that the 1954 constitution would be reviewed after three years, stipulating 1956 as another year of review. However, the crisis in the Eastern Region between the Chief Whip of the Eastern House of Assembly, E.O. Eyo Ita and the Premier, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, which was resolved through the Forster-Sutton Commission report in January 1957 led to the dissolution of the Eastern House of Assembly in January 1957. So, this incident prevented the review of the constitution in 1956. The conduct of another election and the re-emergence of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe totally resolved the crisis.<sup>39</sup> Hence, another constitutional conference was held in 1957.

It was at the 1957 conference that a resolution calling for the appointment of a Prime Minister which was adopted in 1959. A new set of members of House of Representatives were elected through the Universal Adult Suffrage in the East, Lagos and the West, but, it was Male Adult suffrage that was adopted in the North. The senate was also to be established to consist of 2 members from each of the Regions and the Cameroon, 4 from Lagos, and 4 others to be appointed by the Governor-General at his discretion to represent special interest (Nicolson, 1969).

Another dynamics was the fear of domination of the major ethnic groups over the minority ethnic groups. The important political groups among such ethnic groups were the Calabar-Ogoja Rivers State movement in the Eastern Region; The



Benin-Delta or the Mid-Western movement in the Western Region and the Middle-Belt Movement<sup>40</sup> in the Northern Region. Based on the report of the Henry Wilkins Commission that was submitted on August 18, 1958, recommendations were made on the need to set up a council in each of the identified special areas for alerting the regional government of all matters relating to physical, socio-cultural and economic development and reporting all cases of discrimination. Provision was also made to guarantee the right to life, liberty, and freedom of movement, peaceful assembly and protection against retrospective legislation. In continuation of the 1957 conference, another conference was held between September 29 and October 27, 1958 to consider the report and recommendations of the commission. It was agreed that fundamental human rights be incorporated into the constitution as the Nigerian version of the Bill of Rights to placate the minorities and ensure their protection within the Nigerian state.<sup>41</sup> State creation was dropped for the attainment of independence, which eventually became a reality through the effects of the various constitutional conferences held in Lagos in 1957, London in 1958 and the 1959 conference, which was called to confirm the basic law in Nigeria between 1960 and 1963.<sup>42</sup>

The independence constitution of 1960 was introduced through the 1959 constitutional conference as the instrument of state administration. It provided for federal parliament, made up of the Governor-General, a Senate Chamber and a House of Representatives of 44 members representing each of the three Regions respectively. It granted political independence but obviously not the fact of Nigeria's sovereignty as the Governor General was only representing the Queen of England, who still exercised executive authority over the federation. The Prime Minister as the head, under the Independence Constitution, was a member of the House of Representatives and should be appointed by the Governor-General.<sup>43</sup> Hence, Nigeria was inserted into the modern global political economy, which occurred at a time that Nigeria was weak and subordinate in a manner that emphasized commercial exchange of primary products for finished goods. Effectively, Nigerian colonial state was fashioned in the mould of an "Extractionist" state, whereby the British aimed at exploiting the resources of the host economy. Until the 1950s, however, the local educated elite were excluded by and large, from the commanding heights of the local economy.<sup>44</sup>

The interventionist colonial state often controlled and established ownership in such areas as agriculture, banking, commerce, manufacturing, insurance, mining, education, transportation and health. This led to the development of money economy, a diversion from peasant economy. In the context of the new money economy introduced by the colonial enterprise, "wealth soon began to compete with traditional status" as a major determinant of political appointment, with the emerging political elite nurtured in a context in which access to political office was clearly an avenue to private economic well-being. Despite the fact that there could be argument that Western economic forces cemented Nigerian unity; at the same time, one could put it forth that it planted the seeds of Nigerian future problems in the form of new multi-

ethnic urban centres, corruption and disdain for traditional checks.<sup>45</sup> The performance of the Nigerian economy in the colonial period was conditioned by the expansion and development of external industrialized economy. With increase in industrial growth that led to mass production of goods, which relatively saturated internal market of the industrial states, a number of industrial nations adopted the policy of colonial expansion in order to gain both the market and the raw materials.<sup>46</sup> This was achieved through the introduction of tax policy and selfish collaboration of a few dominant elites with the multi-national corporations.

The exportation of raw materials to Europe and other metropolis were duty-free but they erected tariff against manufactured products that were imported into Nigeria.<sup>47</sup> The effect of this policy was the placement of undue emphasis on production of cash crops at the expense of food crops thereby, putting the Nigerian economy at the mercy of the very unstable international market of agricultural products in terms of price. Colonial political economy impacted on post-colonial state in several areas negatively. At independence, the politics of resources and the resources of politics had left indelible imprints on the Nigerian post-colonial political economy. Securing resources for self-group and regions led to natural scramble and the beginning of ethnicization of politics. It was not surprising then that the First Republic 1960-1966 collapsed so soon after independence.

### **British Colonial Seeds of Discord and Its Implications in Post-Independent Nigeria**

The 'carry over' effects of amalgamation in post-independence Nigeria reflected the germination of the seed that were sown in the colonial period: The civil war, the unresolved problems of the minority, ethnicity, lack of patriotism, bad governance, problems of security, political instability, social and economic problem and lack of meaningful development, were all antecedents of the germinated seeds of discord. Surprisingly, the unresolved and mismanaged issues of those days continued to threaten the existence of Nigeria as a country, more than six decades after the attainment of independence. Nigeria in the contemporary times is faced with security issues due to unresolved problems that were of colonial creation. The British administrators did not have permanent interest and at the same time did not exhibit political ambition for its sake, without the economic undertone. There was no effort geared towards improving the economy of different parts of the country, characterized as weaker economy, but to use the better financial situation of a part to solve the problem of the other, a sensibility that was bequeathed to some parts, which prevails till contemporary Nigerian society. The unresolved minority issues developed into social threat and insecurity of high magnitude in recent times.

### **Conclusion**

Obviously, the relationship that existed between the two protectorates after the event of amalgamation exemplified that of rivalry and competition, and could not

be characterized as cordial; each region was out to protect her interest and to hold on to the supremacy of their political party and the advantages each had over the other. The British officials in the name of divide and rule, could not foster peaceful resolution of all economic grievances. This impression survived the period of struggle towards independence and several decades after. Forging ahead may be difficult without resolving the fundamental differences, hence a number of solutions are suggested thus: The adoption of "Regional Empowerment", which could be a viable means to resolving the differences at a round table conference; good leadership in order to cultivate good followership in the people from different regions; stricter security measures, sincerely financed by the Nigerian government; encouragement of zonal development by the central authority and the resolution of all structural imbalances constitutionally.

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<sup>44</sup>Gana J. A.:“The Impact of External Economic Forces on Nigerian Economy” in the *Nigerian Economy; A Political Economy Approach*, (NES) Lagos, Longman, (1986), pp. 142-155.

<sup>45</sup>Anell, L. and, Nygren, B.:*The Developing Countries and the World Economic Order*, London, Methuen, (1980), p. 61.

<sup>46</sup>----- . *The Developing Countries and the World Economic Order*, p. 61.

<sup>47</sup>----- .*The Developing Countries and the World Economic Order*, p. 62.