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**Title**

Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: The Dialectics of Mass Poverty

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6845307h>

**Journal**

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 14(3)

**ISSN**

0041-5715

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**Publication Date**

1985

**DOI**

10.5070/F7143017031

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Peer reviewed

Bade Onimode, Imperialism and Underdevelopment in Nigeria: The Dialectics of Mass Poverty. London: Zed Press, 1982, 258 pages.

The persistence of mass poverty, food shortages, military interventions and constant requests for aid in Africa is worrisome to the casual observer and, more importantly, the intellectual constantly engaged in the exercise of understanding. A book which addresses the structural sources of these persistent problems is therefore gladly welcome. Bade Onimode's book is one of these. He attempts to show the structural sources of Nigeria's underdevelopment. He argues that Nigeria's underdevelopment must be understood in the historical context of imperialism and international capital in its various stages and forms.

The book, composed of fifteen chapters, is divided into three parts. The first part outlines the nature of imperialism and its effect on precolonial Nigeria. In a characteristic relationship, imperialism is characterized by domination, inequality, and exploitation. Violence, trade, foreign direct investment and aid constitute the mechanisms through which imperialism is established. In its earliest form, mercantilist imperialism produced several baneful effects on precolonial Nigeria, such as expropriation of economic surplus, depopulation, interruption of the development of indigenous technology and cultural alienation.

The second part outlines the major characteristics of the colonial period, 1860-1960, and their effects on Nigeria's development. Here the author attempts a systematic analysis of the nature of colonial economy, the infrastructural, industrial, and fiscal policies of colonial rulers, the philosophy and objectives of colonial development plans, as well as class formation. In each of the above respects it is argued that the British were advantaged while Nigeria was disadvantaged. The dominant motive which informed the organization of the colonial economy was the encouragement of Nigerians to produce raw materials for British industries. Hence Nigeria became a primary producer of raw materials in the international division of labour. The provision of infrastructural network by the colonial administration was dictated by the desire to advance trade and accumulate surplus.

Nigeria's industrial backwardness was the result of a deliberate imperialist economic policy to have monopoly over raw materials, technology and markets for manufactures. Most of the industries established are related to processing of agricultural products and minerals, and are foreign owned. It is argued that British colonial planning in Nigeria was "a strategy for containing the worsening crisis in British

colonialism in order to sustain its exploitation" (p. 114). The general style of colonial planning was bureaucratic, technical and directed at promoting a capitalist private sector. These characteristics still shape post-colonial plans.

One consequence of colonialism is the intensification of class contradictions. The author demarcated three major classes in Nigeria and their sub-categories: the imperialist-bourgeoisie, the indigenous-bourgeoisie, and the masses of peasants, students and workers. It is argued that British colonialists created a domestic petty-bourgeoisie at the service of imperialism.

There is nothing novel in the first and second parts of the book which consist of a restatement of platitudes of underdevelopment theory in a Nigerian context. The major strength of the work is the broad range of data (though dated) on the various aspects of the economy which the author has assembled to buttress his arguments.

Perhaps more illuminating is the analysis of developments in the post-independence period in the third part of the book. The author argues that the development policies of the various regimes have been structured by the objective interest of the ruling class in alliance with imperialist-bourgeoisie and multinationals. Agricultural policies, import-substitution industrialisation strategy and the indigenization scheme have all benefited the ruling class, including the military elite, in spite of the latter's redemption rhetoric. The post-independence period has been characterised by the dominance of multinationals in the economy, decline in agricultural production, rise in food imports and military dictatorships.

As most of what is contained in the book has already been published by the author in one form or another, this reviewer expected the author to devote himself to an enlarged study of a specific issue, for example, multinationals in Nigerian economy or agricultural policies and beneficiaries. Preoccupation with generalized studies by Nigerian intellectuals prolongs "academic imperialism". Many writers have pointed at the same factors which Onimode is still pointing at in 1982. In addition, the subtitle of the book is superfluous as the author does not directly address the question of poverty.

There are obvious omissions which appear significant to this reviewer. The author gave credit to the 1968-69 Agbekoye movement in then Western Nigeria as part of the resistance of the oppressed classes but failed to mention several of such phenomena in other parts of the country, such as the 1981



Bakolori riot in Sokoto state. Isn't this an element of parochialism? That notwithstanding, the military seemed to have fared better by all criteria than civilian regimes of the first and second republics. This does not imply fan acceptance of military rule.

Regarding style, the book is unnecessarily loaded with Marxist verbiage and rhetoric. At various points of the analysis the author allowed his ideological leaning to colour an objective assessment of the Nigerian situation. Besides typographical errors, one-sentence paragraphs, there are many wrong references, some of which are not listed in the bibliography provided at the end of the book.

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Robert A. Hill, ed. The Marcus Garvey and Universal Improvement Association Papers, vol. III (University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1984), lviii + 811 pp., \$39.50 hardcover.

Scholars of Black political movements are now beginning to reap the fruits of Robert Hill's massive documentary survey of the Garvey movement. The extent of Hill's research was aptly illustrated in volumes I and II of The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers. With the appearance of volume III, one comes to realize, once again, just how vital such documents are to the history of the Black freedom struggle of the twentieth century.

Volume III covers the period from September 1920, beginning with the first International Convention of the UNIA, and ending August 1921 when the second International Convention was held. The documents are arranged in chronological order, the majority of which are made up of correspondence. The vast array of documents dispell the myth that the "Garvey Movement" was a monolithic movement revolving solely around the personality of Marcus Garvey. Materials are included which document the growth of the UNIA in major cities, including Los Angeles; and correspondence is included to and from lesser-known representatives of the UNIA and the Black Star Line in particular.

For students of Black radicalism and the American Left, the Marcus Garvey Papers contains some valuable finds. Correspondence between Cyril Briggs, founder of the African Blood Brotherhood, and Garvey are most revealing. In fact, The Marcus Garvey Papers happens to be one of the few places