Résumé
C. Rossetti — Anthropologie et pouvoir colonial: Malinowski et l'École de Manchester.
Réexamen des idées défendues par Malinowski au sujet de la situation coloniale : contrairement à certaines critiques actuelles, il refusait de mettre l'anthropologie au service de la colonisation mais, tout au contraire, lui fixait pour but la protection des peuples assujettis et de leurs cultures contre l'arbitraire de l'expansionnisme européen.

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B. Malinowski, the Sociology of ‘Modern Problems’ in Africa and the ‘Colonial Situation’

I

Interwar anthropology emphasized the ‘integrated’ character of the ‘body politic’, the web of rights and obligations between rulers and ruled established on the basis of the rulers’ political authority and administration, and upon the inherent efficiency of the traditional government system in giving every legitimate interest its due representation. South African society raised new questions and set new theoretical challenges. The analysis in terms of reciprocal rights and obligations appeared patently inadequate.

In his study of South African society, Malinowski (1938) showed that the idea of ‘harmonious co-operation’ between rulers and ruled did not fit the structure of the situation nor the realities of domination and subjugation. He pointed out that the two groups, Whites and Africans, were divided by ‘irreconcilable differences and interests’. He emphasized (ibid.) that Africans had no voice in this setting. He saw the origins of this deeply divided society in the processes of world expansion of imperialism and colonialism, and in the policies of the governments Whites had established in Africa. He was led to see the problem of the recognition and protection of the rights of Africans as the main concern of an ‘anthropology of modern problems’. I intend to show that his anthropological analyses of the ‘colonial situation’ can be interpreted as a sociology of African rights as against White domination.

This theoretical and ethnographical orientation was crucial because it opened the way to a strand of anthropological work which examined how African societies were subjugated, how new collective actors, and identities, new conceptions of authority and rights emerged, and how these actors asserted their national, social and political rights, attempting to safeguard the traditional local ones in the modern setting created by urbanization and industrialization.

This work was important because, by exhibiting the hierarchies of

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domination and subjugation dividing races and cultures, it reversed the vision of the hierarchy of moral superiority on which White domination and subjugation were founded, claiming that Africans were entitled to the same generalized rights and individual and collective freedoms Europeans enjoyed. By studying Africans as belonging to the modern world and as active actors shaping their own historical fate, this interpretation transformed the traditional ethnological Fragestellung. In this respect, anthropology has contributed greatly to the comprehension of the nature and contradictions of European civilization and its imperialist expansion. It has widened our moral and historical horizons by questioning our categories for understanding modern civilizations. In a sense, anthropology has opened the way to a comparative analysis of civilizations.

II

The scramble for Africa had already begun when Malinowski and his students turned their interests to the continent. European penetration and occupation were accomplished facts. The establishment of private enterprises, the process of conquest and settlement, the introduction of a money economy, the role played by foreign commercial agents and labour recruiters, by White-owned and -managed plantations, by the institution of monopolies, by piracy and land expropriation, had already brought very far the systematic dislocation and destruction of the symbolic integration of local African societies, of their economy, of the safeguards of their individual and collective liberties and rights from encroachments by foreign groups and nations.

European interests demanded a maximum of land, labour, and of natural resources. Rights of conquest, historical ‘prerogatives’, stipulated by ‘treaties’ with ‘native chiefs’, were claimed by these interests which demanded a carte blanche, ‘free hand’ in Africa (Malinowski 1930). The process of destruction of local societies, robbing and ensnaring populations, had gone so far and on so massive a scale that there was no question of safeguarding autonomous national identities. It was thus urgent to protect African peoples from the vexations, extermination and other effects of colonial domination (Malinowski 1929: 35-38).

The historically specific trajectory of capitalist penetration led to the subjugation of Africa within a dominant world system and a world empire, based on modern public law, and on an economic and financial organization of social and political relations which were unknown to African traditions.

The centre of interaction between Africans and Europeans had shifted from the port of trade, at which representatives of the separate societies met, to the administrative offices, in which governors and governed met. This is what Balandier (1966) meant by ‘colonial situation’. Conquest
incorporated a variety of social and political institutions, with different traditions, into a single administrative and legal framework, under a new jurisdiction. In this encounter, tribal institutions were radically inadequate and too weak to exert a counterbalancing power (Epstein 1958; Banton 1957; Eisenstadt 1964) and safeguard African interests and societies from capitalist policies of exploitation and piracy.

Paradoxically enough, in ‘British Territories’ it was the administration which began to play the role of control vis-à-vis private entrepreneurs and speculators, and to check some of the most abusive vexations. Africans being at the mercy of colonial conquerors, and not disposing of any effective protection of their own bodies, properties and traditions, only a superior force, that of the administration, restrained by the law and its own rules, could check the worst exactions that they were suffering.

In this matter, the British administration was significantly different from the Belgian or the Portuguese ones, which protected and legalized many crimes. It did establish a tradition of meeting discontent by reforms associating the subject peoples more closely with their own government (Smith 1978), such as, for instance, the introduction of elective processes for the appointment of chiefs and parliamentary representatives (Middleton 1971).

In 1949, in Northern Rhodesia, a commission of inquiry issued a document known as the ‘Dalgeish report’, which made important recommendations on the advancement of Africans (Epstein 1958: 101). In fact, the Colonial Office, which took over the administration of the territory from the British South Africa Company in 1924, provided a check against the Europeans’ attempt to keep the colour bar and defend their economic and political privileges. As Epstein (ibid.: 158) remarked, the move for independence from Downing Street went hand in hand with that to amalgamate with Southern Rhodesia to get the political power to protect the ‘White Man’s Rights’.

Moreover, political officers were incorruptible even on the Copperbelt, and many district officers were deeply concerned for the welfare of the people they ruled (Galbraith 1977: 139). It seems that the outstanding virtue of British administration was its honesty (Cerulli 1933: 49). The Colonial Social Science Research Council, established in 1943, mainly to deal with human problems in the colonies, offers us another important example of this general attitude (Richards 1977).

I am not suggesting that the top priorities of the Colonial Office were the safeguard of ‘native rights’, African land and labour, local individual and collective liberties. In many ways, the British followed Burke’s sage counsel to reform in order to preserve (Smith 1978: 73). Nevertheless, a sincere commitment to the welfare of the African peoples and full recognition accorded to ‘native law’ and custom (save where these were deemed to offend the ‘fundamental notion of justice’ or morality,
or to be inconsistent with the law in force in the territory) were typical of British civil servants (Epstein 1951). An historical comparative analysis of the various systems of colonial administration would be illuminating in this respect, as Smith (1978) suggested. Nevertheless, colonialism meant European rule and the subordination of African interests to the foreign exploitation of local resources. The colonial situation set the general pattern of social relationships in any case.

Until Africans were in a position to form their own modern institutions to protect themselves vis-à-vis foreign rulers, there was no question of leaving them at the mercy of cynical plunderers. The example of the Belgian Congo was there to show the paradigm of what might happen if all forms and structures of administrative control withdrew from Africa or became associated with the forces which demanded carte blanche for the fullest exploitation of African resources (Malinowski 1930: 424; 1945: 122-123, 126, 131, 137; Mair 1934). In a sense, at this early stage, the colonial problem was a quest for order in an Hobbesian sense.

In fact, to assert the right to African independence, self-determination and self-government implied a fundamental transformation of traditional African societies in such a way as to allow the formation and consolidation of modern national institutions and of a government system able to effect a real ‘Africanization’ of the emerging nations. A struggle for independence implied the construction of new centres of political gravity, with an appropriate ‘Africanized content’. It also implied the institutionalization of new basic patterns of political organization and centre-periphery interaction, the inclusion of symbolically integrative solidarity groups, the opening up of equal access to the centres, the formulation, at the centre, of a locally rooted political cultural model (Chazan 1978; Eisenstadt 1964).

These transformations were a conditio sine qua non to allow Africans to exercise some measure of control on the penetration of capitalism, modern markets, wage labour, financial and industrial mechanisms, and on the processes of subjugation and exploitation that they brought with them. No effective form of government or effective resistance to the encroachment on African rights could emerge without an adequate solution to the problem of ‘Africanization’ and African national reconstruction.

But this conditio was lacking in colonial Africa, and it is an open question whether it has ever been fulfilled in post-colonial years (Chazan 1978; Gluckman 1971). Even today the ‘Africanization of political change’ (Chazan 1978) remains a fundamental question, and the inability of most African States to find a political form compatible with the exigencies of independence is well known (Zolberg 1968; Diamond 1983).

After the attainment of independence, a quest began to give the centres an African content as well as an African form. This search was
hampered by a number of often insurmountable obstacles. In many cases, the leaders of the centres did not propagate an alternative model to the colonial one. So, for instance, many countries adhered to what Ghai and McAuslan (1970) called an 'administrative view of law', inherited from colonial regimes, whereby courts are not regarded as counter-weights to governmental actions. In this respect, colonial legacy has been maintained, and even strengthened by African elites.

Much of the political instability in post-independence African societies can be related to the immobility, inability or failure of leaders of the centre of these societies to provide African-rooted models, as Chazan (1978: 26) has suggested in a very important article (see also Geertz 1977).

Although colonial administration provided a framework of legal order, criticisms of colonial rule were looked upon as a serious threat. The Communist label was generally attached to all who appeared to harbour any sort of radicalism. The terms of 'Loyalty' and 'Communism' were equivalent to the fundamental cleavage line between the races, and were utilized to categorize social alignments, with the corresponding rights and duties assigned and denied to the two racial groups. This categorization in terms of right to command and obligation to obey—the latter pertaining to the lower races—entailed more than a racial discrimination pattern. It involved the very foundation of the colonial system of domination. Racial classifications, with their boundaries and hierarchies, were thus a representation of the dominating position of Europeans, of their right to rule, of their superior civilization providing a justification in terms of the civilizing mission of the White Civilization. Any infringement of the barriers and delineated boundaries was regarded as an act of subversion.

In 1936, for instance, a talented African lawyer of liberal nationalist opinions was appointed as a district magistrate in the Gold Coast after considerable official opposition. What apparently disturbed the political police and others more than anything else were the allegedly subversive activities of the magistrate's wife, whom the colonial attorney described as a Polish Jewess of 'definite Red sympathies'. Mrs. Hayford's real subversion was, of course, that she had married a Black man (Shaloff 1974: 496-497). The border between the two categories—'Loyalty' and 'Communism'—corresponded to the dichotomy civilized-uncivilized, delineated by the colour bar.

Anthropologists, and Whites in general who associated with the 'natives', broke the colour bar. They were considered 'disloyal' to their own civilization and regarded as 'Communists', as enemies of the State, of la patrie, of civilization, as potential sources of troubles and revolts.

Ethnographic ideas and concepts were deeply shaped by this dichotomic categorization of the world into a civilized and superior culture and an uncivilized inferior demi-monde. For decades, ethnography
denoted an appeal to the exotics, the unusual, and museum-collecting for the anthropological zoo. We can never grasp, for instance, how daily life is conducted, how the circumstantial political decisions are actually made (Douglas 1967), what forces underlie the obedience to the king, to his ministers, or the political constitution of the primitive tribes (Malinowski 1929: 25). At best, such informations, says Malinowski, had been supplied as a by-product of antiquarian study of institutions, not through the direct mechanisms of primitive politics. As Mauss (1968: 116) aptly remarked in 1898, ‘l’anthropologie est une science vague, sans grande précision, où la comparaison n’est pas gouvernée par des canons rigoureux, où la recherche du fait contraire n’est nullement capitale. . . . Quand on a rapproché les règles du tabou et les lois de l’association des idées, quand on a rapporté l’origine des cultes et de la magie à une notion primitive de la causalité, le but est atteint’.

The view of ‘primitives’ as inferior races had a part in preventing the development of an ethnography which would grasp the full complexities and historical originality of preliterate societies. The non-Europeans were, in Kipling’s phrase, ‘half-devil-half-child’. The devil had already made an appearance in the great majority of 17th-century travel texts. There was a body of demonological theory which could provide the ethnographer with conceptual tools for understanding the otherwise inexplicable, often terrifying behaviours of exotic peoples (Surdich 1980: 61–75; 1982). As Ryan (1981: 53) aptly remarks, though Satan lost much of his ontological appeal by the end of the 18th century, and in the 19th century was reduced to an episode in the psychopathology of mankind, the conformities he helped to establish outlived him and became enduring features of European ethnography.

‘Le caractère général des peuples primitifs’, says Mauss (1969: 654), was viewed as ‘primitif et cruel’. Primitive legal institutions were interpreted accordingly as an expression of this fundamental cruelty, which set savages below the law, as Naturvolk, and deprived them of all rights of natural reason, of the lumen of ratio naturalis. This conception legitimized the view that they had to be neither regarded nor treated as legal persons. In this respect, a non-White was considered ‘non comme un homme, mais comme une chose possédée (κατάμετελον), comme un instrument animé (βίωσεν ἐν'τιμήσει), comme un corps (σώμα), avec ses mouvements naturels, mais sans raison propre, comme une existence entièrement absorbée par un autre’ (Vaccaro 1898: 267). These words, written to portray the ancient slaves, depict well the image of natives.
Malinowski (1929: 35-38) perceived the situation clearly; he wrote that the 'gradual expansion of one form of civilization over the whole world was one of the greatest crises in human history'. He was aware that this process was leading to a fundamental and irreversible transformation of rural societies:

'The functional anthropologist (and only for him do I feel responsibility), studies the white savage side by side with the coloured, the worldwide scheme of European penetration and colonial economics, as the essential setting of semi-tribal and detribalized life' (Malinowski 1930: 419). He went on: 'When groups of people are rapidly developing new commercial and industrial ventures there is much room for abuse, for maladjustment, for the creation of conflicts and dangerous prerogatives' (ibid.: 424).

As Audrey Richards remarked, Malinowski and his students felt 'they were the ones to stop' these processes. Malinowski rejected the doctrine of the 'community of interests' between the African workers and the Europeans, which was put forward mostly by the vested interests which demanded a 'free hand'. Sarcastically, Malinowski (1930: 424) wrote:

'In a way there is a community of interests between the tax-payer and the tax-collector, between the burglar and the policeman [...] if we left them to work out this community of interests without the aid of the judge and of the magistrate, without the whole social framework of laws, rules and sanctions, to act as impersonal arbiters, we should obviously merely create chaos. And, to repeat once more, in Africa there is one element which is largely deprived of voice and immature in its own judgement, that is, the native'.

Malinowski is not taking a racist stance here. His analysis is not grist to the mill of oppressive colonialism. He is simply stating a fact: the Africans had no voice, no rights in the colonial situation (Malinowski 1945: 127-129). No rights which should be recognized in principle and protected in practice. No rights as a collective body invested with political authority, with their independent jurisdiction over their own territory, their human and natural resources as well as over the great issues of change aroused by colonial penetration, involving the order of African societies and their status as autonomous 'integrated' bodies (Malinowski 1929: 34-35; 1930: 415-416).

In his analysis of South African society, Malinowski (1945: 11, 127) showed that the idea of an 'harmonious co-operation' between White
rulers and African ruled ‘was hardly plausible’ in terms of reciprocal rights and obligations, upon which legitimate authority and power stand.

‘We know that these groups, far from having any “community of interests”, are divided by profound, indeed irreconcilable, differences’ (Malinowski 1930: 422). ‘Whenever Europeans plan the settlement of large portions of any colony, segregation and colour-bar become inevitable’ (B. M. 1945).

As Frankenberg (1978: 26) remarked, Malinowski was concerned with the effect of the colour bar in Africa and the contradictions between the ‘things promised’ by the colonial administrations and the ‘things given’. But Malinowski’s argument, that policies should be co-ordinated and harmonized, aims to show that there will be no political stability in South Africa unless African interests are recognized and African rights protected in the ‘dual society’ created by conquest (Malinowski 1945: 120-122).

Malinowski analyzed the Glen Grey Acts and their effects in terms of European hunger for African wage labour and of African hunger for land, that is, in terms of a fundamental structural opposition of interests and in the context of a fundamental unbalance of social and political forces. White predominance impeded the recognition of African rights and liberties in the colonial situation. The expulsion of Africans from their lands and the transformation of land-tenure patterns dictated by White ruling groups were an outcome of White rule.

In this setting, ‘the aid of the judge and the magistrate’, the ‘framework of laws’, ‘rules and sanctions’, acting as impersonal arbiters, were crucial to check the arbitrary powers of the White minorities and to impose the rule of law and a minimum of justice.

The analysis of South African society is decisive for understanding Malinowski and his interpretation of the role of knowledge and anthropological research. His idea of studying ‘modern problems’ in colonial areas was, in fact, an attempt to contribute to the construction of a multi-ethnic social and political order, where Africans would be left free to develop their own civilization and assert their rights.

This orientation is manifest in Malinowski’s interest (1945: 75-76) in the processes of reinterpretation of African traditions, tribal patriotism, tribal nationalism, regional nationalism, African nationalism and racialism. As he put it (ibid.: 80), social change presented a new type of culture, a type highly dependent on the character of European impact but always embracing the reaction of old tribal values and attitudes to this impact. He saw that change was leading to a reinterpretation of local tribal traditions and to the construction of a new culture, of a new national identity, tribal, regional and African. Like other anthropologists, he believed in the integration of Africans and Whites—and other ethnic groups—within a single social system based on equality of all men.
Malinowski's anthropology of modern problems did contribute to set the conditions for allowing African peoples to participate in modern economic, social and political life on equal terms, enabling them to express as a collective body their own identity, values, choices and preferences, that is, to emancipate themselves from the bonds of colonial subjugation and segregation.²

Malinowski's attack (1930: 413-423) upon the doctrine of the 'practical man' in the colonial administration of every-day affairs, his criticism of the German Tropenkoller system, of the draining of able-bodied men from the villages, of the upsetting of the routine of tribal life, of the demoralization of communities, of 'Black Bolshevism', can all be taken as examples of his humanitarian, liberal and theoretical attitudes, of the critical duty he assigned to knowledge, social anthropological theory and research as rational instruments for the protection of justice.

Although Malinowski believed that colonial administration had a crucial role to play in this juncture, he did not hesitate to criticize it, depicting 'practical men' and 'practical policies' as the 'pathogenic elements of the disease' (ibid.: 421) for their lack of interest in the outcomes of their own policies as well as in the conflicts and contradictions that they generated.

Perhaps Gluckman (1963) overstates the case when he writes that Malinowski would seem to 'consign' Africans to 'a more attractive compound'. As Malinowski (1939: 39) wrote, 'the scientific outlook favours invariably long-run policies as against hasty, predatory, or over-enthusiastic movements'.

Malinowski saw anthropologists as an élite of 'champions of native rights'. He saw anthropology as a discipline professionally concerned with the transformation of local cultures, within a framework of justice and right, and seeking to make public opinion see the dignity of non-European institutions vis-à-vis the tragedy of predatory incorporation and subjugation of African peoples to White society. This program was explicitly stated, and very clearly indeed:

'The contact anthropologist has to study the methods of recruitment and the wage system, the effects of the colour-bar administration, and of the anomalous contract of African labour [. . .] a system which produces inevitable impoverishment in a

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² As Lucy Mair remarked (in a private letter to the Author, 1983), the essence of his message was that 'we must see "native society" from their own point of view'. This was part of an effort to make his pupils and 'public opinion in general see [. . .] that non-European institutions had a meaning for the peoples who had evolved them and could be rationally defended by those peoples against the arguments of Europeans'. I believe that Lucy MAIR (1957: 232) is right when she writes that Malinowski's own experience—as a Pole under Austrian rule—of the situation of ethnic minorities in Europe was never far from his mind when he was considering the problems of the imposition of change by external authority.
native reserve must lead through malnutrition, disorganization and demoralization to gradual demographic decay' (Malinowski 1938: xxxviii). Anthropologists must study 'the balancing of budgets, the equivalence of the loss to tribal economy, the possible gain in money income, and the limits of legitimate recruitment of labour in terms of tribal enterprise. Such field-work bears directly on the question as to whether the future of European enterprise does rest on firm foundations of a new, balanced economy, or whether in its essence it is predatory' (Malinowski 1939: 38).

In this respect, Malinowski supplied analytical tools for uncovering a dramatic reality and for transforming it into a public problem of general interest. In the preface to Facing Mount Kenya, written under his supervision, Jomo Kenyatta (1959: xviii) gave shape to these ideas:

'I could not do justice to the subject without offending those "professional friends of the Africans" who are prepared to maintain their friendship for eternity as a sacred duty, provided only that the African will continue to play the part of an ignorant savage so that they can monopolise the office of interpreting his mind and speaking for him [. . .] [The African's] power of expression has been hampered, but it is breaking through, and will very soon sweep away the patronage and repression which surround him'.

This passage reflects well Malinowski's attitude towards the emancipation of African peoples and the colonial system. Most notably, his concern at 'native rights' meant a critical breakthrough. His mode of analysis of the colonial situation, in terms of the rights of local peoples, as active agents, creators of culture, vis-à-vis White civilization and, in a sense, as 'part' of it, was new. It presented the colonial system from the vantage point of the oppressed, thereby reversing the then current interpretation which depicted Africans as savages and proclaimed that they were tools of White interests.

In this respect, the Malinowskian anthropological study of modern problems came to be linked with the great theme of the safeguard of natural or human rights. The connection with the International African Institute led him to be interested in political questions. That organization was founded with the intention of studying contemporary African problems in order to formulate an enlightened policy which would give priority to African interests as was required by the League of Nations mandate system.

Malinowski's ethnography, which presented savages as identical to civilized men ('civilized savages'), meant a crucial shift from previous paradigms of exotic societies (Malinowski 1922). As Paul Jorion (1981: 31) remarked, 'le tour de force de Malinowski dans Argonautes du Pacifique occidental fut de nous présenter un sauvage identique au sujet de toute économique subjectiviste'.

In contrast to the ethnocentric and racist tradition, Malinowski tried to make his pupils and the general public see that non-European institutions had intrinsic value, that great harm could be done by arbitrarily suppressing them, that they had meaning for the peoples who had
volved them, and that they could be rationally defended against the arguments of the Europeans. He saw primitive societies as living civilizations, with their own languages and arts, their own creative autonomy, founded upon a specific and coherent universe of meanings and on various traditions of technical, moral, religious, scientific and political knowledge, founded on reason (Leach 1954), which had not exhausted their potential transformation from tribes into nations. He never regarded rural societies as mere primitive and remote provinces of a vast and superior empire, nor as fossils of past ages of the evolution of mankind.

This view of anthropology, and the anthropological practice that it entailed, called into question the classification which gave moral and legal legitimation to a system of rule resting upon the segregation and exploitation of inferior races and 'savage cultures'. In this respect, Malinowski's anthropology called into question the very premises of Western civilization.

IV

Malinowski's Fragestellung left a deep mark on the subsequent development of the so-called sociology of African societies. His fieldwork methods, his criticism of the 'boundaries' or 'lines of segregation' dividing social groups, of the system of rule, and his interest in modern problems influenced the development of a tiny group of scholars who devoted their efforts to the analysis of segregation and domination, of the African struggles for rights and liberties.

The elaboration of symbolic-institutional boundaries which delineate the relations between any single system of belief and activities, other systems and their environments, implying the construction of cultural, political, social, ethnic and religious hierarchies, is a continuous process inherent to the human condition (Eisenstadt 1974). This process is associated with the dominant position of an élite, a civilization or a religion (Ellero 1912: 457-470). Whoever crosses such boundaries and establishes new forms of social relationships, founded on mutual understanding, with individuals and groupings who are 'out', is looked upon as a 'traitor' of his own civilization. As Voltaire (1864: 139) wrote, commenting on Beccaria's Dei delitti e delle pene, 'gli eterodossi erano stimati più delinquenti e pericolosi degli stregoni'.

Anthropologists, breaking the demarcation line between Whites and Africans, called into question the ethnic legitimation of the exploitation of land and labour. The anthropological investigation of labour migration, urbanization and land-tenure patterns impinged directly on the main axis of the power system of colonial society. Ethnography was here an efficient critical analysis. This was clearly the case in colonial
industrial areas, where the biggest financial and commercial interests were at stake, and where Africans had become part, as industrial workers, in the social relations of production of a new society, divided by class and ethnic lines of segregation.

In this setting, sociologists were regarded as a potential challenge to the actual order of social, economic and political hierarchies. It does not come as a surprise that what worried most colonial administrators, White settlers, industrial and commercial communities, raising indignation, fears and suspicions, was the 'intimate contact' with the Africans, touching issues of great economic and political relevance. Significantly enough, White interests and the colonial administration reacted fiercely against this type of social research (Brown 1973, 1979).

In Northern Rhodesia, the White mining and business community greatly disapproved of Godfrey Wilson's familiarity with the workers he was studying and his and Monica Hunter's habit of having Black friends to meals. The administration wanted them to work in the country and give no trouble. The official line was that no urbanization of Africans was taking place. This was stated by the chief secretary in Kawbe (Broken Hill) just at the time the first part of Wilson's Economics of Detribalization (1941b) was published.

In opposition to the official view, G. Wilson (1941a, b; 1942) showed that urbanization was in fact taking place. His memorandum (1941a) presented to the board of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in 1937 proposed the systematic analysis of urgent social problems, the stimulation of general public interest in 'native life', as the aims for the first three years (1938, 1939, 1940) of the Institute's work. It entailed an open violation of the symbolic-institutional boundaries established by colonial rule and by the White mining and commercial communities. In this respect, anthropology challenged the principled intolerance concerning the basic premises and institutional results of these boundaries, which circumscribed the scope and limits of interaction of White civilization. Wilson soon broke with the lay trustees over a proposal to use amateur researchers, over his desire to choose his own research topics, and over his determination not only to do urban research but to do it on the Copperbelt.

Wilson's determination to bring economic and administrative factors into his analysis of central African societies (Brown 1973: 187) and to analyze the political economy of the Copperbelt clashed with the admin-

3. J. Boissevain (in a letter to the Author, 1984) writes that 'colonial authorities had no interest in the research [I was doing], except to see that it was not politically provocative [...]. This was made clear to me from the moment I thought of a Colonial Social Science Research Council Grant, that the research design should appear inoffensive'. J. C. Mitchell remembers that 'he had very acrimonious confrontation with a senior government officer precisely on the point of academic freedom' (personal communication, 1977).
istration and the mining company's policy of limiting the scope of anthropological analysis to non-political issues. There was a governor's veto, and choices had to be made on problems to be studied, but Wilson decided to break the demarcation line. According to Monica Wilson, he was forced to resign.

The new director, Max Gluckman, was under constant pressure. He followed Wilson's lead and tried to make his main field of enquiry the 'economic integration' of Central Africa into the modern industrial and agricultural system which dominated the social structure. He did not produce an ideology appropriate to the needs of the ruling class of the period. In his analysis of the effect of modern conditions on African land-holding, Gluckman (1943: 62) wrote that 'there must be a radical change in the economic system which presses on the African peasant to go out to work, as well as in agricultural techniques, if African land is to be saved'. This was the line set by Godfrey Wilson, who had studied the consequences of the labour-migration and land-resettlement policies (Wilson 1941b: 67-69), by Audrey Richards (1939), by Lucy Mair (1936), and pioneered by Malinowski.

Clyde Mitchell (1961: 70) showed that the missionaries were 'instrumental [. . .] in helping to set in train the progressive collapse of the tribal order', and that the introduction of taxes on tribal life had an indirect but far-reaching effect, insofar as it helped to stimulate labour migration: sooner or later land was set aside for European settlers, and this restriction of the amount of land available for the traditional slash-and-burn techniques of cultivation helped to hasten the deterioration of vegetation and soil structure in tribal areas (ibid.: 72).

It does not come as a surprise that Mitchell, while he was director of the Institute (1952 to 1955), had constant problems with the Northern Rhodesian government because of the latter's misgivings about the 'political trustworthiness' of the research staff, which included Epstein and Turner. At that time, the African National Congresses in both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and the African trade unions in Northern Rhodesia were establishing themselves as foci of Black protest against White domination in both government and industry. It was natural that the research staff, who were in direct and fairly intimate contact with the Black population, should have understood and sympathized with their fears about the proposed Federation.

The hostility of the White population is well illustrated by the leader which appeared in the Central African Post (quoted in Mitchell 1977: 316). It states:

'Such sociologists can disturb the political atmosphere of the country [. . .] and they teach them [the Africans] to hate and resent the Europeans in the country whom

they represent as their exploiters. They may not be complete communists, but
they are uncommonly near being so. We do not ask sociologists to be
Tories. They can be communists if they like, but they should not sow the seed
of social and political discord.

The term ‘communist’ connotes here an interest in the situation of
Africans, in a territory where strikes and shooting of miners had occurred
various times. Anthropologists were ‘blethering too much about political
matters and thereby creating difficulties between Europeans and Afri-
cans’. This led to the ‘extraordinarily bitter attack on sociologists for
the political views they held’. Mitchell (1977: 313) ‘was visited in London
by the Secretary of the Chamber of Mines and asked to withdraw Epstein
from the Copperbelt, because of [...]. his alleged interference in trade
union affairs’. It was clear that his study was seen as constituting a
threat, since his previous work on the urban courts (Epstein 1951, 1953)
treated African legal traditions as law, and discussed conflicts be-
tween African and European laws. Moreover he saw the urban courts
as the focus of the formation of a new modern African collective identity
(Epstein 1951, 1958) which demanded new rights. In this respect, the
‘social drama’ is a drama enacting the struggle for rights (ethnic, religious,
union, political and national ones). Actors are portrayed as subjects
of rights struggling to break the barriers of domination and ties of
exploitation.

Working in towns, and supposedly close to African leaders and
opinions, Epstein was seen by Special Branch as a source of information.
But, when approached, he felt obliged to reply that he was not in Africa
in the role of a police spy. This was one strand of a complex of events
which led some time later to his exclusion from the mine compound on
the grounds that he had told a meeting of the African Mine Workers Union
(AMWU) that he had come to help them in the matter of the strike then
under active consideration. For much of the time he was under police
surveillance, and the net of inquiry extended to the town where his parents
were then living. His record as a ‘subversive’ followed him to Australia,
so that initially he was refused a visa to enter New Guinea to do research.

The Central African Post was particularly worried about fieldwork and
wrote: ‘The proper study of mankind may be man, but there is no need
to labour this study unnecessarily, and it is not necessary to drop to the
African level of village life in order to get Africans to talk and unburden
themselves’. The writer of the editorial maintained that the method of
participant observation was ‘not necessary’. This is a significant point.
V. W. Turner and M. McCulloch answered that ‘ever since Malinowski’s
classical studies of Melanesian life in the Trobriand Islands anthropol-

ogists have utilised and developed his field technique of participant observation. Then they added: 'Familiarity with people may give rise to genuine respect and understanding founded on character rather than on colour.'

It is interesting that the White community identified the close association of anthropologists with the Africans and the fieldwork method as a potential threat. But it must be borne in mind that the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute research programme involved the dimension of land and urbanization policies in the context of an industrial, class society. This was the crucial feature which explains White hostility and the critical position of anthropology.

Most notably, in his work, Epstein treated Africans as active subjects, rather than as objects of colonial policies. His analyses of urban courts show how Africans reconstructed their own conception of their rights and duties, public authority and representation against colonial power and White oppression, thereby entering into the political scene as collective actors, as 'articulators' of a new political, social and economic independent order.

The structure of colonial administration afforded a centre for the articulation of a new nation. As Epstein's splendid case-study shows so well, on the Copperbelt the unitary structure of the mine society provided the framework for the articulation of the AMWU. This analysis offers a clear example of Malinowski's reconstruction of the African tradition in the context of the colour bar, of modern economic enterprises, of labour migration.

The AMWU utilized the framework already created by the organization of the mining company to give shape to a national party which overcame the problem of tribal differentiation and fragmentation by elaborating new categories for identifying social and political relationships and formed a new set of alliances (Epstein 1958, 1978; Gluckman 1961; Mitchell 1956). That is the crucial lesson that Gluckman, Mitchell and Epstein's urban anthropology has taught us. The African nationalist parties and groups developed within the agricultural, commercial, administrative and industrial context of colonialism, and used it to attain a new independent State. But the precise pattern of this structure was determined in part by the historically specific patterns of the colonial administrative system which the nationalist parties used to attain a new political organization and a new independent State.

9. Ibid. Interestingly enough, L. Mair explains Malinowski's protection of African rights by referring to the 'longer and intimate contact with a native population than any previous anthropologist had had' (private letter to the Author, 1983). G. Wilson worked for three years among a people who still lived very isolated and were largely self-sufficient except for tax and clothes for men.
Mitchell, in his *Kalela Dance*, had already begun to treat Africans as active actors, constructing their own identity, involved in a process of remodelling the social and political structures, their collective 'modern' identity, in the context of class and ethnic opposition and boundaries as well as of the exploitation of African labour (Mitchell 1956, 1960, 1969).

Watson (1959: 221) showed that the Mambwe were engaged in a system of industrial relations 'which added new dimension to their lives'. Most notably, he showed that Africans desired to take part in economic and political activities, and that they were consciously working to free themselves of their poverty and backwardness, and to achieve social and political equality with Europeans. He showed that in the industrial labour market, African experienced discriminations and unequal treatment by comparison with White workers (*ibid.*). He showed that Africans preferred to work locally for wages, if the labour market was large enough, and stressed that a policy bringing industry to the neighbourhood of Mwambe country would undoubtedly have gained their support. Thus Watson was able to show that the superimposition of the colonial industrial framework, with its labour-migration and urbanization policies, had 'distorted' the local economy and society, by impeding a set of choices and strategies which Africans might well have pursued at their own advantage. Nevertheless, Watson gives us a picture of the Africans' strategies to overcome these obstacles and depicts Africans as autonomous actors struggling in a new situation and searching for a new identity.

The critical theme of 'representation' is crucial in this anthropological tradition. Mitchell, Epstein, Watson, Gluckman all saw the problem of the articulation of a genuine modern African 'representation system', of a new concept of political authority, which was the real key of contemporary history in industrial Central Africa, in the context of White-Black ethnic and class cleavages. This theme is closely related to the notion of rights, of 'rights of a commonalty', or a nation, and to the quest for their actualization as perfect rights, that is, those we have a title to demand and, if refused, to compel others to perform. Interestingly enough, the Manchester School treated this problem of African rights, of the articulation of a new conception and system of representation in close association with the problem of the formation of a new, modern African collective identity and solidarity, as well as of the principles which regulate the specific modes of integration of the collectivities in the political, economic, social and kinship spheres of interaction (Mitchell 1969; Epstein 1978; Rossetti 1979).

These detailed case-studies provided a set of accurate data to assess the effects of European policies on African societies and the ways in which Africans reacted to them, as well as critical analyses of colonial policies and of the basic mechanisms of domination and exploitation.
Intimate contact with African peoples meant more than a romantic attitude. It implied a view of Africans as ‘persons’ entitled to a bundle of generalized rights, looked upon as fundamental for British citizens as well as for Africans, in terms of universal principles. The social, moral and political drama of the conquest of such citizenship rights in the modern urban industrial world is one of the key analytical framework which characterizes this tradition of learning and remains fundamental even today.

The fieldwork method afforded a very important tool for interpreting the process of articulation of a new African collective identity and of the African movements striving for the assertion of independence and conquest of new social, political, civil rights (Meebelo 1971). Fieldwork alone does not explain why, and how, this theoretical orientation emerged. The deep sensitivity for inequalities, rights and boundaries was connected to Gluckman’s South African background and to the fact that he himself and many of the anthropologists who worked with him were Jews (Kuper 1984).

Marxist influence played a part in these developments. Gluckman’s model of South African society resembles Marx’s conception of a class society, characterized by a form of cohesion grounded on the fundamental opposition (Trennung) between the classes, kept together by the superior force and power of the dominating class. In fact, Gluckman (1940, 1942) saw society as embodying a multiplicity of opposed articulating principles of organization, which remain relatively submerged until a fundamental, radical repatterning takes place (Gluckman 1968).

In his Social Situation in Modern Zululand Gluckman (1940) discussed political equilibrium, the social cohesion of its economic relations and the force of government in a similar vein. The attempts to reconcile divergent interests fail, the central conflicts persist, increase and generate an antithesis which challenges the pattern of social relationships and eventually leads to a radical change. In Gluckman’s view, the interpenetration of Europeans and Zulu into a single community generated conflicts which could not be resolved until a change of the principles of social and political organization would have taken place, affecting the structure of White domination, which was the foundation upon which the system of power rested. Gluckman refers to Strachey (1936: 393) and to the concepts of ‘negation’ and ‘contradiction’ to make clear his views at this very crucial point. The shadow of Marx is obviously dominating here.

Mitchell remembers that as soon as he arrived at the Institute, Gluckman gave him Lenin on imperialism, Feuerbach, Engel’s Anti-Dürhing
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and 'all the rest to read'.\(^{10}\) Gluckman was insistent that the main focus of attention should be society as anthropologists saw it before them, the exploitation of colonialism and the indignities that Blacks suffered under it, as well as what the Bisa called their mother's brother's second wife. The social anthropological problems created by hundreds of thousands of Africans could no more be overlooked by scholars than could the political and economic problems of their employment, their subsistence, their subjection, their change and development. The way people made their living, how and with whom they struggled and collaborated, how they thought about their past and present, in both urban and rural areas, were problems for anthropologists, not only as scholars but also as citizens.

Gluckman's Marxism or Marxist influences set him apart from Malinowski, who, perhaps, never fully understood that a radical transformation of power relations was indispensable to change the structure of the Africans' existence. Nevertheless, Malinowski's interpretation of the field of anthropological theory and research in terms of modern problems, of the role played by the extension of a new type of industrial and agricultural problems and activities to rural preliterate societies, provided, at least in part, a framework for the articulation of the anthropological Fragestellung of the Manchester School in the study of industrialization in Africa,\(^{11}\) in the interpretation of colonialism as an historical constellation, in the analysis of social, political, economic changes (Gluckman 1943, 1961; Mitchell 1959, 1961, 1969). Schapera and Hoernle were the first to set out to investigate fully how Africans had been brought into that complex society, how they lived within it as members of a single socio-economic system and how their indigenous cultures were affected by that situation (Schapera 1943). But Schapera's thesis that the missionary, administrator, trader and labour-recruiter must be regarded as factors in the tribal life in the same ways as the chief and the magician was presented in a book of essays collected by Lucy Mair with an introduction by Malinowski (Methods... 1938). He, therefore, saw Africans and Whites as members of a same social field, but stressed that Africans had, and should preserve, their own natural independent right vis-à-vis the dominant groups. In the setting of African land policies, this was an outspoken criticism of the Glen Grey Acts as well as of White rule. True enough, Malinowski never grasped fully the theoretical foundation of the field of social, juridical and political relationship linking African peoples to Whites. Nevertheless, he was acutely aware of the contra-

\(^{10}\) J. C. Mitchell's letter to the Author, 1977.

\(^{11}\) Monica Wilson wrote to me: 'Wilson and Gluckman discussed anthropological theory, particularly problems of social change and urbanization on which G. Wilson was then writing, at length in 1939, when Max joined the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute staff, and in fact stayed in our home for some weeks. '... ' The talk continued when I was at home, some months later' (private letter to the Author, 1977).
dictory interests binding these two groups. He reproached Schapera and Fortes for failing to understand that the ‘concept of Africans and Europeans, missionaries and witchdoctors, recruiters and indentured labourers leading a content tribal life suffers a taint of smugmess and a sense of irreality’ (Malinowski 1938: xiv-xvii). He criticized Schapera and Fortes for writing of a ‘single culture’ and ‘presenting a well-integrat-ed’ portrait of African societies in the context of European rule:

‘This type of simplification is not advisable. The treatment of the complex situations of change as one well-integrated whole, the one-entry approach as we might call it, ignores the whole dynamism of the process [. . .] The concept of well-integrated community would, indeed, ignore such facts as the colour bar, the permanent rifts which divide the two portions in change and keeps them apart in church and factory, in matters of mine, labor and political influence’ (Malinowski 1938: xiv).

The notion of a single field was too restricted to allow a full representation of the complexity of the lines of oppositions, of cleavages of interests and rights, of the dynamics involved in it.

As Gluckman suggested, perhaps Malinowski misunderstood Schapera and changed ‘integrated’ to ‘well-integrated’, misrepresenting his views. But Malinowski did not miss the fundamental opposition between Whites and Africans, which he saw clearly. In fact, he criticized Fortes and Schapera for failing to give adequate consideration to the realities of subjugation and domination. Indeed, Gluckman’s reply (1947) defends Schapera showing that his own theoretical orientation as applied to social change in modern Zululand can provide an explanation of the fundamental radical cleavages of South African society.

Interestingly enough, many years after this discussion, Schapera referred to the Malinowskian conception of the anthropologist in the modern setting as the ‘champion of native rights’.12 He thus admits Malinowski’s anti-colonialist stance. In fact, as we have seen, the critical topics of conquest and domination, land, labour, emigration, colour bar, industrialization and incorporation, the repatterning of traditions and collective identities are clearly delineated by Malinowski’s anthropology of modern problems. The historically specific form of the social, economic, political cohesion of colonial societies has become a central theme in British anthropology since Malinowski, and it has led to an ethnography of industrialization, change and domination. Malinowski’s work marked the beginning of an original tradition of learning, which departed from the Durkheimian ‘paradigm’ and remains one of the greatest achievement of contemporary social science.

12. I. Schapera wrote to me: ‘My attitude in general to “colonial anthropology” has been that the fieldworker’s task is to observe and report, and that he should not try to be a critic or a reformer, or what Malinowski called “the champion of native rights” ’ (private letter to the Author, 1977).
But it fell upon the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, and its Manchester connection, to offer us a comprehensive body of analysis of the nature of the colonial system in terms of class-colour structure, of a single political power system of exploitation and labour control, in terms of inconsistencies and contradictions viewed as integral, central parts of the system of colonial domination (Gluckman 1940, 1943; Mitchell 1969, 1970b; Epstein 1953, 1958; Wilson & Wilson 1945). In this respect, they built an anthropology of political economic power and political change. They analyzed the colonial constraints at the local level, and examined what was happening to the African peoples, how they reacted given a structure of this kind, how they formed new groups and articulated new categories of understanding in opposition to existing bodies. This analysis includes two fundamental dimensions: the political economy of the dominant system with its legal orderings, and the processes of articulation of the new categories to identify and order social and political relationships, leading to the construction of new principles of organization of social and political relations by the subordinated groups.

Most importantly, Africans and Europeans were studied as group members of a single field of social and political relations, as a single society composed of heterogeneous groups, linked together despite the development of the dominant cleavage.

This dominant cleavage cannot be resolved in the system and leads to a radical change of pattern (Gluckman 1940; 1971: 132; Mitchell 1960, 1969). Gluckman and his students showed how the processes of 'detribalization' led to the incorporation of African workers into a class system and industrial and urban organizations controlled by Europeans. They showed the crucial relevance of the organization of production and of social and political relations in the field of production. They showed that the co-operation in economic activities gave rise to a fundamental opposition, which was no longer directed backwards in time (as, for instance, Dinuzulu's early attempts to recover the independence of Zululand) but which led to the formation of a new collective actor which challenged the fundamental pattern of social relationships. Mitchell and Epstein showed that African industrialization and the incorporation of African workers into an industrial system and organizations dominated by Whites was leading to a struggle to break the barriers of White domination and assert a new set of aggregate national, social and political rights.

The analysis of the political economy of colonialism came to be strictly connected to the study of the formation of agents and institution building. It is a great achievement, which many of the critics of social anthropology have ignored in their analyses of the history of the discipline, as did, for instance, Kuper (1973). Paradoxically enough, the scholars who blame social anthropology for its failure to account for domination, exploitation, subjugation and political change in the colonial situation seem to neglect the body of work which has contributed most to the
study of this set of problems in the African context in terms of exploitation, radical cleavages, conflicts and contradictions. This ethnographic and theoretical work accepted as given the subjectivity of those it studied, and investigated the processes leading to the formation of new conceptions of collective and political and social identities and solidarity ties and models, and thus of 'ideology'. This work spelled out the conditions under which ideology is challenged and comes to be transformed, leading to new forms of social, economic and political organization. As Maurice Bloch (1983: 169) has written, these considerations would be crucial features of Marxist contemporary anthropology, due, in part at least, to the influence of Marxist historians such as Thompson and Hobsbawm. Bloch seems to forget the work done by the Manchester School, especially by Epstein, who showed how African urban courts became a locus and focus for the articulation of an original African jurisprudence, which in turn provided the framework of a new collective identity and a renewed conception of the universal rights to which Africans believed they were entitled, and should struggle for in the context of colonial oppression.

This body of work descends, in a way, from Malinowski's interest in the transformation of traditions and identities as well as in his vision of rights and struggle for rights, pertaining to the highest humanist tradition of learning. The way in which it came to be related to radical and Marxist influences, as well as to the outlook of an autonomous and original group of Jewish scholars has greatly contributed to its critical importance. On the one hand, the facts that anthropologists have collected, the interpretations they have offered of the subjugation of African societies, of colour bars, of the political economy of colonialism, of the exploitation of African workers, of the miseries they suffered, of the crises of kinship ties and traditional solidarity associations, of their public authority system, of the disarticulation of their land-tenure systems, of the rights and liberties they had elaborated, provided a powerful critique of the colonial situation and a detailed documentation of the ways in which colonial rule worked; of the oppression that it exercised, of the barriers that it set to the emancipation of Africans, of the nature of European society, culture and politics.

On the other hand, these monographs portrayed Africans as full members of our own world, deeply connected to it in various fields of interaction, constructing new identities, institutions and ideas in the setting of the European encounter, as active subjects, interpreters and re-interpreters of the new world.

This tension between different principles of social, political, economic and cultural interaction and organization is typically Malinowskian. And its offers a starting point for an historical comparative analysis of civilizations.

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