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Chapter 8

Lenin in East Africa

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and Dani Wadada Nabudere*

ZEYAD EL NABOLSY

Introduction: A Response to the Charge of Eurocentrism

With the contemporary global resurgence of interest in Marxism, including its Marxist-Leninist form(s), as a theoretical framework that can orient contemporary struggles against capitalism and its attendant depredations, it has become even more urgent to address some of the key criticisms that were leveled at Marx, Engels, and Lenin when they came to be treated as “dead dogs” toward the end of the twentieth century.¹ One key criticism was the charge that alleged that Marxism as such, including its Marxist-Leninist form(s), was and is irredeemably Eurocentric in character. While there have been attempts to counter such charges by excavating and reframing Marx’s writings on the “non-Western world,” this essay proposes to take another approach toward the charge of Eurocentrism in relation to Marxism (and Marxism-Leninism in particular).² One should take seriously Salah M. Hassan’s methodological insight that an adequate response to the charge of Eurocentrism in relation to Marxism must take into consideration the ways in which Marxism was adopted, adapted, and refined by “Third World



1 Marxists.”³ This essay proposes to contribute to responses to the charge
 2 of Eurocentrism, by taking seriously the theoretical contributions of two
 3 African Marxists to the development of Marxism-Leninism. The focus is on
 4 Marxism-Leninism because it is primarily in this form that Marxism came to
 5 play an important role in the anticolonial and anti-neocolonial struggles on
 6 the African continent.⁴ The question of “influence” is treated in a manner
 7 that demonstrates that African Marxists were never mere passive “adopters”
 8 of Marxism-Leninism. Thus, while it is true that they were influenced by
 9 Marx, Engels, and Lenin in specifiable ways, they also contributed to the
 10 development and refinement of Marxism-Leninism, through the formulation
 11 of insights that are of contemporary relevance both in relation to the African
 12 continent and beyond. This essay shows the specific ways in which two
 13 prominent East African Marxists, namely Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu
 14 (1924–1996) and Dani Wadada Nabudere (1932–2011) were both deeply
 15 influenced by Lenin and made important contributions to Marxism-Leninism.

16 Babu was born and grew up in Zanzibar, where he came to play an
 17 important role in the anticolonial movement. In 1964, he attained the
 18 position of foreign minister in the revolutionary government headed by
 19 Julius K. Nyerere, which was formed after the Zanzibar Revolution.⁵ His
 20 revolutionary Marxism was seen as a threat by U.S. officials, who attempted
 21 to neutralize what they perceived to be his attempt to turn Zanzibar into
 22 an “African Cuba” by engineering the unification of Zanzibar with Tang-
 23 anyika in April 1964.⁶ Babu’s critical attitude, formulated from a Marxist
 24 standpoint, toward Julius K. Nyerere’s “African socialism” led to tensions
 25 between them. Eventually, Babu was imprisoned by Nyerere’s Tanzanian
 26 government from 1972 to 1978.⁷ In 1979, Babu left Tanzania to teach in
 27 the United States, and in 1984 he moved to London. In exile, he continued
 28 his quest to develop a version of Marxism that was suitable to conditions in
 29 East Africa through contributions to journals such as *The Journal of African*
 30 *Marxists*, *Review of African Political Economy*, and *Africa World Review*.⁸ He
 31 also served as an adviser to progressive movements from Eritrea, Uganda,
 32 Ethiopia, and Rwanda.⁹

33 Nabudere, despite his stature as a key figure in African Marxism and
 34 an important revolutionary figure in Uganda’s political history, has been
 35 described by some of his friends as “not very well known outside the circle
 36 of people who crossed his path.”¹⁰ Nabudere was active in the Ugandan
 37 struggle against British colonialism as a member of the executive committee
 38 of the United Kingdom Uganda Students Association. Nabudere was also
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a member of the youth wing of the Uganda People's Congress, although 1
he was expelled and then accused of organizing a "communist plot," and 2
eventually he was arrested in 1969.¹¹ Nabudere would later be released and 3
would work for Idi Amin's government, until he became disenchanted and 4
left in 1972 to Dar es Salaam where he participated in the famous Dar es 5
Salaam debates.¹² These debates had to do in part with the assessment of 6
Tanzanian "African socialism" from a Marxist standpoint. Nabudere would 7
also go on to play an important role in the founding of the Uganda National 8
Liberation Front (UNLF) which came into power in April 1979. After the 9
overthrow of the UNLF on May 1, 1980, the UNLF, which was renamed 10
UNLF (Anti-Dictatorship), with Nabudere as a leading figure, launched a 11
brief armed struggle. Nabudere would eventually leave to teach in Denmark 12
in 1982, where he continued writing works on Marxist political economy. By 13
the mid-1990s Nabudere was back in Uganda, where he eventually founded 14
the Marcus Garvey Pan-African Institute (later to become a university).¹³ 15

Both Babu and Nabudere were preoccupied with the formulation of 16
a Marxist-Leninist critique of the theory and practice of "African social- 17
ism" as developed by Julius K. Nyerere. They also both contributed to the 18
Dar es Salaam debates.¹⁴ This essay seeks to demonstrate the relevance of 19
Marxism-Leninism to anticolonial and anti-neocolonial struggles in East 20
Africa by focusing on two aspects of Lenin's thought which were influen- 21
tial on the theoretical outlooks of Babu and Nabudere. The first aspect is 22
Lenin's theory of imperialism and his account of the significance of national 23
liberation struggles in light of this theory. The second aspect is Lenin's 24
critique of the Narodniks in Russia. Furthermore, the essay demonstrates 25
how Babu, through adopting Lenin's understanding of national struggles 26
against imperialism as part of the global struggle against capitalism, was 27
able to provide a theoretical basis for the endorsement of Pan-Africanism 28
from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint, by arguing that Pan-Africanism is the 29
expression of African nationalism vis-à-vis a racialized imperialism. This 30
essay also shows how criticisms from the proponents of African socialism 31
to the effect that Marxism was a foreign ideological import into Africa were 32
met by Babu and Nabudere through a Leninist analysis of the class basis 33
of African socialism, and through a critique of the view of African history 34
that was endorsed by proponents of African socialism, a critique that was 35
consciously modeled on Lenin's critique of the Narodniks' view of Russian 36
history. In sum, Marxism-Leninism was not merely adopted in East Africa; 37
it was also further refined and developed. 38

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1 The Significance of Lenin's Theory of Imperialism
2 for East African Marxism

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4 In order to understand the historical significance of Lenin's theory of impe-
5 rialism for Marxists in Africa in general and East Africa in particular, we
6 should note that Lenin posited imperialism as the noncontingent outcome
7 of the logic of accumulation of the capitalist mode of production in its
8 monopolistic phase (characterized by the dominance of finance capital, i.e.,
9 the merged capital of the big monopolistic banks with the capital of the
10 monopolistic industrialists).¹⁵ This theory allowed Marxists in the colonies
11 and neocolonies to identify ties between national liberation struggles and
12 the struggle against capitalism. Lenin, insofar as he had argued that impe-
13 rialism, and the "territorial division of the whole world among the biggest
14 capitalist powers" that is associated with it,¹⁶ was not a policy that the ruling
15 classes of the capitalist powers could choose to pursue or not to pursue, as
16 Karl Kautsky had claimed,¹⁷ was essentially arguing that for the colonized
17 or semicolonized peoples of the world the struggle for self-determination
18 cannot come apart from the struggle against monopoly capital. In other
19 words, the successful pursuit of the struggle against monopoly capital may
20 not be a sufficient condition for the emancipation of African peoples, but
21 it is nonetheless a necessary one. Lenin himself was clear that the triumph
22 of socialism was a necessary condition for overcoming national and racial
23 oppression, but he never claimed that it was sufficient: "To abolish national
24 oppression a foundation is necessary, namely, socialist production; but on
25 this foundation a democratically organized state, a democratic army, etc.,
26 must *also* be built. By transforming capitalism into socialism, the proletar-
27 iat creates the *possibility* for complete abolition of national oppression; this
28 possibility will become *reality* 'only'—'only'—when complete democracy
29 is introduced in all spheres, including the fixing of state boundaries in
30 accordance with the 'sympathies' of the population and including complete
31 freedom of secession."¹⁸

32 Moreover, Lenin's theory emphasized the significance of colonies,
33 semicolonies, and what we would call neocolonies for the accumulation
34 of capital in the so-called advanced capitalist countries. This was import-
35 ant, because it allowed East African Marxists such as Nabudere and Babu
36 to argue that contrary to prevalent discourse (and this discourse is still
37 prevalent today), the "Global South" (if I may use this anachronism) was
38 not and is not marginal to the processes of capitalist accumulation in the
39 advanced countries. They argued that the problem of African countries was
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not that they are not integrated enough into the global economy. In fact, 1
 the problem is that they are too integrated into the world economy in the 2
 wrong way. As Babu puts it: “It is clear that foreign investment is the cause 3
 and not a solution, to our economic backwardness.”¹⁹ The issue for Babu 4
 is that African economies are export-oriented and internally disarticulated 5
 (i.e., lacking complementarity between different sectors of their national 6
 economies, i.e., agricultural production does not serve the needs of industrial 7
 development in most African countries, insofar as agricultural production 8
 remains oriented toward the cultivation of cash crops for export): “Our 9
 economies are rendered always responsive only to what the Western world is 10
 prepared to buy and sell, and hardly responsive to our internal development 11
 needs.”²⁰ Thus, in postindependence East African countries, the agriculture 12
 sector insofar as it was geared toward the production of crops that could be 13
 exported was articulated with the industrial sectors of Europe, the United 14
 States, and Japan, and not with local industrial sectors.²¹ 15

Babu and Nabudere understood Lenin’s theory of imperialism as 16
 suggesting that while racism was a factor in the “Scramble for Africa” 17
 (1881–1914), one should not attempt to explain it solely or even primarily 18
 in terms of racism.²² Instead, one should understand it primarily in terms 19
 of the economic requirements of monopoly capitalists, even if one must 20
 recognize that racism informed the manner in which control over African 21
 resources was exerted, namely, direct colonial control.²³ This was significant 22
 for them (and especially for Babu) because it gave them a vantage point 23
 from which to criticize those whom they referred to “as petty-bourgeois 24
 intellectuals,” who attempted to provide explanations of societal phenomena 25
 and intersocietal interactions from a *purely racial standpoint* in a manner 26
 that obscured the managerial role of many of the ruling African elites in 27
 facilitating the continued exploitation of the African continent.²⁴ 28

It is important to recognize that Babu and Nabudere were not satisfied 29
 with simply adopting Lenin’s theory of imperialism and “applying” it to the 30
 African context. They were also interested in updating it and defending it 31
 from the objections that had been raised against it. For example, in response 32
 to the objection that Lenin overstated the importance of overseas investment 33
 to the accumulation of capital in the imperialist centers, and that this is 34
 shown by the fact that “the major part of the direct investments of the 35
 major capitalist countries takes place amongst themselves,” Nabudere answers 36
 that “such profitable investment in the imperialist countries is dependent 37
 on the investments in the Third World neo-colonies, since production in 38
 the center is dependent on raw materials from these countries.”²⁵ In other 39
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1 words, Nabudere points out that it is not simply a matter of the value of
 2 capital exports, because other factors come into consideration, such as the
 3 potential future use of resources and cutting off potential competitors from
 4 supplies of raw materials.²⁶ It is interesting to note that some contemporary
 5 theorists who think of themselves as working within the Marxist tradition
 6 continue to raise this objection against Lenin's theory of imperialism, without
 7 being at all aware that Nabudere had responded to this objection.²⁷ One
 8 way in which Eurocentrism has been detrimental to the development of
 9 Marxist theory is that it has hindered the diffusion of important theoret-
 10 ical advances that have been made by Marxists in the Global South/**third**
 11 **world**. The "rediscovery of imperialism" by the Western Left,²⁸ should be
 12 accompanied by the rediscovery of the theories of imperialism that were
 13 developed by **third world** Marxists.

14 Moreover, Nabudere makes an original contribution to Marxist polit-
 15 ical economy insofar as he updates and extends the argument Lenin made
 16 in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. In this text, Lenin starts out
 17 from the fact of the existence of monopolies as a response to the crisis of
 18 1873, and the consolidation of cartels by 1903.²⁹ Lenin then notes that Marx
 19 (at a time when free competition was the rule rather than the exception) had
 20 argued that free competition leads to the formation of monopolies.³⁰ However,
 21 Lenin does not provide a rigorous argument that connects imperialism with
 22 Marx's account of the workings of capitalism in *Capital*, and specifically he
 23 does not explicitly connect imperialism with Marx's account of the tendency
 24 of the rate of profit to fall in chapter 13 of the third volume of *Capital*.³¹ This
 25 is what Nabudere sets out to do in his *The Political Economy of Imperialism*.³²
 26 Nabudere, following Marx, argues that the tendency of the rate of profit to
 27 fall is a function of the increase of the rate of constant capital in relation to
 28 variable capital, assuming that the rate of surplus value (the intensity of the
 29 exploitation of labor) remains constant.³³ Nabudere argues that this tendency
 30 explains the rise of monopolies and imperialism: "The tendency of the rate of
 31 profit to fall at home could only be reversed by increased supplies of cheap raw
 32 and auxiliary materials, expanding markets, and lower wages, which implied
 33 an intensification of the exploitation of labor."³⁴

34 I have used the word *neocolonies* deliberately in my description of
 35 Lenin's theory of imperialism, even though Lenin himself did not employ
 36 this term (instead, he referred to "colonial" and "semi-colonial" peoples, and
 37 of course, he published his book in 1917, before the post-World War II
 38 period and the end of the direct colonial rule in Africa and Asia). However,
 39 the important thing to note is that *Lenin's definition of imperialism does*
 40 *not imply that imperialism always involves direct political control* (by **direct**

“political control,” I mean a form of control that takes the form of direct annexation, the carrying out of a mandate, or the establishment of a protectorate). Lenin himself warned against the possibility that imperialist states when confronted by a rising tide of nationalism might resort to “creating, under the guise of politically independent states, states which are wholly dependent upon them economically, financially and militarily.”³⁵ He also argued that “[f]inance capital is such a great, such a decisive, you might say, force in all economic and in all international relations, that it is capable of subjecting and actually does subject, to itself even states enjoying the fullest political independence.”³⁶ However, this does not mean that independence is insignificant or that it is not worth fighting for political independence given the dominance of finance capital over the global economy, because there is greater room for maneuver when a hitherto colonized society has attained juridical sovereignty.³⁷ Moreover, if one argues that one should not struggle for political independence given the domination of finance capital over the global economy, because under such conditions independence is only achievable in a mutilated form, then one must also commit oneself to the claim that one should abandon all other demands of political democracy, since, as Lenin pointed out, all the other demands of democracy can only be achieved in a mutilated form under the dominance of finance capital.³⁸

Moreover, it is important to recognize that the fact that imperialism implies control and not always occupation or colonization (occupation and colonization being only two possible modes of control that are resorted to under certain historical circumstances) does not imply that imperialism is not “in general, a striving towards violence and reaction.”³⁹ For the recognition of the juridical sovereignty of former colonial states does not imply that they are not vulnerable to the use of organized violence by former colonizing powers under various pretexts (e.g., intervention on humanitarian grounds and so on). For example, we can point to the various military coups that have been orchestrated by the French state in its former African colonies since the 1960s: coups in the Central African Republic, Mali, Chad, Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, and Togo.⁴⁰

If we look at the five features that Lenin took to be the essential characteristics of imperialism: (1) the creation of monopolies, (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital (finance capital), (3) the increased importance of the exporting of capital as opposed to the exporting of commodities, (4) “formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves,” and (5) the “territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers,”⁴¹ we can note that strictly speaking those five conditions can obtain without there being

1 direct colonial rule. As Walter Rodney put it: “Imperialism is essentially an
 2 economic phenomenon, and it does not necessarily lead to direct political
 3 control or colonization.”⁴² The fifth characteristic should not be understood
 4 in terms of direct political rule per se, but rather in terms of the ability
 5 of the biggest capitalist powers to acquire the raw materials that they need
 6 and to carve up markets and secure investment opportunities.

7 This point is important because it allowed East African Marxist
 8 theorists such as Babu and Nabudere to make a conceptual distinction
 9 between colonialism and neocolonialism on the one hand, and imperialism
 10 on the other hand. Colonialism (involving direct political control) is only
 11 one way in which imperialism takes form. Depending on historical condi-
 12 tions, imperialism can also take the form of neocolonialism (whereby the
 13 juridical sovereignty of a specific territory is recognized, but mechanisms
 14 are implemented that allow for the exploitation of its raw materials and its
 15 cheap labor reserves, etc.). Imperialism is a genus, of which colonialism (of
 16 the kind that was manifested in the “Scramble for Africa” for example) is
 17 a species. This conceptual distinction allows Babu to argue in his *African*
 18 *Socialism or Socialist Africa?* that “direct colonialism is not suited to the
 19 post-war [WWII] economic needs of imperialism. Colonies could not have
 20 supported the enormous debts which are currently being contracted by the
 21 neo-colonies, because ultimately the responsibility for such heavy financial
 22 burdens would have fallen on the colonial power itself.”⁴³ In fact, Babu
 23 takes the well-known Leninist remark that “politics is the most concentrated
 24 expression of economics”⁴⁴ and creatively applies it to the situation of the
 25 formerly colonized countries in order to argue that the actualization of the
 26 right to self-determination (insofar as it requires more than the attainment of
 27 juridical sovereignty) requires the transformation of the economic structures
 28 of the formerly colonized countries.⁴⁵ Babu emphasizes this point when he
 29 notes that there can no solution to the problem of underdevelopment by
 30 way of shifting trading partners (i.e., trading with the socialist bloc), without
 31 transforming the internal structure of the inherited colonial economies.⁴⁶

32 33 34 The Justification of Pan-Africanism 35 from a Marxist-Leninist Standpoint 36

37 Lenin’s theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism led him to
 38 emphasize the significance of national liberation struggles from a Marxist
 39 standpoint. As Horace B. Davis has noted, prior to Lenin’s interventions on
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the significance of the “national” and “colonial” questions, the principle of the right to national self-determination had not been formally recognized by Marxists (Davis 1967).⁴⁷ In fact, some prominent Marxists such as Rosa Luxemburg had opposed the formal recognition of the right to national self-determination.⁴⁸ Lenin, on the other hand, was uncompromising in his recognition of the right to national self-determination (including the right to form independent national states). As Nabudere puts it, “The Bolsheviks widened the scope of the national question from the limited question of combating national oppression in Europe to the general question of emancipating oppressed peoples, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism in general.”⁴⁹ This extension of the scope of the national question was based on Lenin’s recognition of the importance of supporting the struggles of an oppressed nation seeking self-determination, even if that nation did not have a significant industrial proletariat and even if its struggle for liberation was led by its bourgeoisie.⁵⁰ As Lenin put it in his polemic with Luxemburg: “If the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights against the oppressing one, we are always, in every case, and more resolutely than anyone else, *in favor*; for we are the staunchest and most consistent enemies of oppression”; he also argued that “the bourgeois nationalism of *every* oppressed nation has a general democratic content which is directed *against* oppression, and it is this content that we support *unconditionally*.”⁵¹

Babu draws on this characterization of nationalism in the colonies and neocolonies in order to argue that Pan-Africanism insofar as it represents a nationalism that is hostile to imperialism is a progressive nationalism that must be supported and cultivated by African Marxist-Leninists and other Marxist-Leninists.⁵² Babu refines Lenin’s approach by arguing that due to the fact that the African nation-states that came into being with independence were the result of various compromises between different imperialist powers, and “had been artificially created without regard for homogeneous ethnic, cultural, or even (in some cases) linguistic identity,”⁵³ expressions of African nationalism should not be exclusively sought at the level of the African nation-state.⁵⁴ Instead, Babu argues, expressions of African nationalism should be sought in Pan-Africanism:⁵⁵ “African nationalism and Pan-Africanism are one and the same thing.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, he suggests that Pan-Africanism is a more reliable vehicle for bringing about what he calls the “African Revolution” (perhaps in a nod to Fanon) than the nation-state.⁵⁷

Babu also makes a conceptual distinction between “cultural” Pan-Africanism and “political” Pan-Africanism. He does not explicitly favor one over the other, regarding them as complementary forms.⁵⁸ However, he does

1 note that these two forms have historically been distributed unevenly across
 2 Africa and the African diaspora. In particular, he argues that the cultural form
 3 of Pan-Africanism “is more common in the Diaspora where Africans are a
 4 minority,” whereas on the African continent “the political tendency is more
 5 common.”⁵⁹ In conceiving of Pan-Africanism as the most developed form of
 6 African nationalism, Babu made an important contribution to Marxist-Le-
 7 ninist theories of nationalism. If we look at Stalin’s famous definition of
 8 nationalism (and of nations), which he advanced in his influential *Marxism*
 9 *and the National Question* (1913), we will notice that it does not provide a
 10 foundation for conceiving of Africans and members of the African diaspora as
 11 members of one nation.⁶⁰ Stalin defines the nation as “a historically evolved,
 12 stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological
 13 make-up manifested in a community of culture.”⁶¹ It is significant to note that
 14 Stalin thought that the nonexistence of any single one of these features was
 15 a sufficient reason for not characterizing a given set of people as a nation.⁶²

16 This definition is problematic, however, from the standpoint of
 17 somebody who is attempting to articulate the theoretical foundations of
 18 Pan-Africanism as the most developed form of African nationalism. For it
 19 is clear that, to take just one of the aforementioned elements, Africans and
 20 the members of the African diaspora are not united by a stable community
 21 of language, nor, given the historical fact of uneven development on the
 22 African continent, can one say that all Africans have historically shared the
 23 same form of economic life. Moreover, Babu does not believe that “there is
 24 a community of culture” among Africans and people of African descent in
 25 the diaspora. As he puts it: “There is no single ‘African culture’ any more
 26 than there is a single Asiatic, Europe[an] or Latin American culture.”⁶³
 27 Instead, Babu argues that “it is the common history of oppression and its
 28 modern manifestations and the common struggle against them. This is the
 29 foundation on which the theory and practice of Pan-Africanism is based.”⁶⁴
 30 In other words, Pan-Africanism is understood by Babu to be a nationalist
 31 movement that responds to the **deprivations** of racialized capitalism (or
 32 perhaps more accurately, capitalism as such) in its imperialist stage of devel-
 33 opment. If classical Marxist theorists in Europe maintained that capitalism
 34 (in its developed phase) creates its own gravediggers by creating an indus-
 35 trial proletariat, Babu argues that capitalism (in its imperialist monopoly
 36 finance phase) creates its own gravediggers by creating a common history
 37 of oppression that allows Africans and peoples of African descent to act
 38 as a collective historical subject that will play an essential role in bringing
 39 about imperialism’s demise.
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African Socialism as African Narodism

The claim that Marxism-Leninism is Eurocentric and not suited to the interpretation of social reality in other parts of the world is not new. On the African continent, this claim was advanced by adherents of a rival ideological framework and guiding theory for development, namely, “African socialism,” during the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁵ The theory of African socialism, in particular the version developed by Julius K. Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania,⁶⁶ maintained that the development of African countries is “dependent on the rehabilitation, reactivation, and modernization of pre-colonial communalism, which imparted to the continent a unique humanity based on classless and conflict-resolving communal relations.”⁶⁷ Nyerere proposed that the foundation of African socialism lies in the extended family and used the Swahili term *Ujamaa* (meaning “familyhood”) to refer to African socialism.⁶⁸ *Ujamaa* was thus seen as an indigenous framework that was more suitable for African conditions than Marxism-Leninism. Nyerere proposed that “traditionally we [Africans] lived as families, with individuals supporting each other and helping each other on terms of equality” based on communal ownership of land.⁶⁹ He argued that insofar as this was true, “traditional African society was a socialist society.”⁷⁰ At times, Nyerere suggested that there were no real social classes in Tanzania and that, consequently, it did not make any sense to adopt a theory that emphasizes the role of class struggle in bringing about structural social transformations.⁷¹

Babu and Nabudere devoted significant efforts to their criticism of “African Socialism.” Babu interpreted Nyerere’s doctrine as a form of African Narodism, based on a conception of development that aims to protect the peasantry’s communal village systems from the corrosive influences of the expansion of capitalist relations of production.⁷² Babu drew explicitly on Lenin’s critique of the Narodniks in Russia, (and especially the “old Narodniks” of the 1860s and 1870s who argued that there could be noncapitalist socialist development in Russia based on the traditions of village communes, and who were regarded by Lenin as being more principled and consistent than their epigones). In his *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve’s Book* (1895), Lenin had characterized Narodism in the following terms: “The essence of Narodism is that it represents the producers’ interests from the standpoint of the small producer, the petty bourgeois.”⁷³ In thinking that development was possible on the basis of the protection of the small and middling peasantry (and the undermining of the accumulation and concentration of land in the hands of rich peasants),

1 Nyerere, his East African Marxist critics suggested, essentially formulated
 2 a theory of socialism that in reality represented the interests of the small-
 3 commodity producers.⁷⁴ Babu explicitly characterizes the defenders of African
 4 socialism as petty-bourgeois intellectuals, that is to say, intellectuals who
 5 represent the point of view of the small commodity producer: “By looking
 6 backward, our petty bourgeois intellectuals idealize our backwardness, for
 7 example communal life.”⁷⁵

8 One of the fundamental issues that was the subject of dispute between
 9 Lenin and the Narodniks, namely, the characterization of life in the village
 10 communes of the peasantry, therefore resurfaces in the dispute between
 11 East African Marxist-Leninists on the one hand and proponents of African
 12 socialism on the other. Both the Narodniks and Nyerere thought that the
 13 values of the peasants who lived in village communes should be preserved.
 14 Lenin, on the other hand, argued that the development of capitalist relations
 15 of production in the countryside is positive insofar as it tears “the peasant
 16 from the patriarchal, semi-feudal family, from the stupefying conditions of
 17 village life.”⁷⁶ Likewise, Babu and Nabudere maintain that capitalism plays
 18 a progressive role at a certain point in its development and that there is
 19 something essentially incoherent about the attempt to bring about socialism
 20 while attempting to preserve or resuscitate “social values corresponding to a
 21 pre-feudal mode of production [the village commune]” (Babu 1981, xv).⁷⁷ It
 22 is important to recognize that the dispute is not about the “moral character”
 23 of the peasantry. Instead, the main issue is whether one can bring about a
 24 socialist transformation of society without at the same time bringing about
 25 a transformation in the outlook of peasants through the transformation of
 26 the objective socioeconomic structures that condition that outlook.

27 For both Lenin and Babu (as well as Nabudere), socialism in the
 28 Marxist theoretical framework presupposes the emergence of the modern
 29 individual subject, and this modern individual subject is the product of capi-
 30 talist relations of production that historically play a progressive role insofar
 31 as they emancipate the individual from various ties of personal dependency
 32 that encumber the individual in precapitalist societies. Lenin is quite clear on
 33 this point: “It was capitalism alone that created the conditions which made
 34 possible this protest of the individual.”⁷⁸ Similarly, Babu recognizes that the
 35 concept of the individual as the bearer of rights (prior to the specification
 36 of any duties) is a modern concept that came to be with the rise of capi-
 37 talism.⁷⁹ This view of the individual as the product of capitalism was also
 38 adhered to by Marx and Engels.⁸⁰ Babu therefore maintains that a Marxist
 39 position that deals with its subject matter objectively does not allow one
 40

to uncritically romanticize the past. In fact, a Marxist must point out that “to idealize the ‘equality’ or ‘right,’ ‘freedom’ or ‘democracy’ of that past is to play right into the hands of our imperialist oppressors; it is to idealize tyranny and oppression.”⁸¹ A Marxist should also be able to point out to their opponent that the individual protest, based on the moral conscience of a subject that can think of itself as standing outside its given social context, which their opponent is engaged in by comparing the oppressive conditions of the capitalist present with the purportedly idyllic life of precapitalist societies, is itself the product of capitalist relations of production.⁸²

Babu makes an explicit analogy between those who claimed that Marxism was not suitable for conditions in Asia and Africa and those who advanced the same claim in relation to Russia pre-1917.⁸³ Babu’s key point is that *the claim to uniqueness is not itself unique*. As Nabudere also points out, it is the product of underdevelopment in the neocolonial world, which leads the petty bourgeoisie there to abandon the arena of political and economic struggle against imperialism and to attempt to wage a struggle exclusively in the cultural field. “Neocolonial culture as expressed in the writings of the neo-colonial intellectual reflected this depressed culture. Appeal to the past instead of the future dominated so-called ‘Black culture,’ ‘Arab culture’ or ‘Asian culture’”. This reflected generally backward conditions in the neocolony.⁸⁴ Thus, underlying the claims to uniqueness was in fact a more or less uniform condition of underdevelopment and domination by finance capital.⁸⁵

This does not imply that the cultural sphere is an unimportant arena for struggle against imperialism. Nabudere’s point is that it is a mistake to wage a struggle against imperialism *solely* through cultural contestations, especially when “African culture” is presented in monolithic terms, thereby obscuring the fact that “culture is a class product. There is no such thing as human culture devoid of class bias.”⁸⁶ Nabudere argues that given the dominance of finance capital, to claim that there is something uniquely African is to underemphasize the manner in which Africa has been successfully (from the point of view of imperialist exploiters) integrated into the capitalist world system: “There is nothing uniquely African in an era where finance capital has united all the peoples of the world under its rule. An African proletariat is no less international than an Asian one or a European one. They are all exploited by the same monopolies, the same class, the same capital, only in different measure. There can therefore be no different general solution to the problem of imperialist exploitation.”⁸⁷

This is not to say that Nabudere and Babu were opposed to the development of a concrete analysis of specific sociohistorical situations and

1 contexts. However, they made a conceptual distinction between the demands
2 for a concrete analysis of specific historical contexts and claims that uphold
3 what Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò has described as the “metaphysics of difference,” that
4 is, the thesis that there is an essential difference in kind between Black
5 African peoples and other peoples.⁸⁸ For instance, some of the proponents
6 of African socialism argued that there is something uniquely African in the
7 manner in which individuals support one another in African communities,
8 namely, the claim that “traditional” African societies were historically socialist
9 societies.⁸⁹ Babu does not deny the existence of strong bonds of solidarity
10 in many African societies at various points in African history. However,
11 he argues that such bonds of solidarity were a characteristic of all human
12 societies that were at a similar level with respect to the development of
13 their productive forces: “The qualities which our petty-bourgeois intellec-
14 tuals describe as essentially African are really human qualities which find
15 expression when a community is at a certain level of productive capacity.
16 When a community does not have the capacity to produce social surplus,
17 there is simply no means of becoming unequal.”⁹⁰ The emergence of indi-
18 viduals capable of asserting themselves in relation to their communities in a
19 manner that can undermine communal ties of solidarity is thus contingent
20 upon the existence of sufficient levels of surplus that would allow for the
21 emergence of inequality. Babu’s point is that when we adopt a historical
22 materialist approach to the study of African history, we do not need to
23 rely on “the metaphysics of difference” in order to explain African realities.
24 By contrast, fidelity to the realities of African societies is compatible with
25 denying that there is anything uniquely African that requires a specifically
26 African theory that expresses a specifically “African culture” understood in
27 essentialist ahistorical terms.⁹¹ As Babu puts it, “In Africa, as everywhere else,
28 survival entailed exploitation and class struggle; the greater the development
29 of productive-forces, the sharper the struggle.”⁹² A true historical materialist
30 approach to African history, Babu asserts, would undermine the thesis that
31 there is something uniquely African that sets African history apart from the
32 rest of human history. Moreover, we should add that it has been pointed out
33 by some scholars that the concept of “traditional” African societies that was
34 employed by proponents of African socialism was, at least in part, derived
35 from colonialist anthropology.⁹³

36 In contrast to proponents of African socialism who asserted that
37 there might be a path toward the construction of socialism on the African
38 continent through political projects that rejected class struggle,⁹⁴ Babu
39 and Nabudere argued that such approaches were inadequate even if they
40

were carried out in good faith. They criticized the thesis that there was no class-based stratification in African societies before the advent of colonialism. Babu argued that different social formations have existed throughout African history, including tributary empires: “Since Africa, like the rest of the world, is subject to uneven development, it is not difficult to find, from its very rich past, evidence of various levels of social development.”⁹⁵ In his historical account of the colonization of East Africa by the British and the Germans, Nabudere points out that many societies in East Africa were characterized by the existence of an aristocratic ruling class, for example, in areas such as “Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Kigezi, Toro, Buhaya and Barwanda-Burundi.”⁹⁶ In sum, Babu and Nabudere were able to successfully draw on Lenin’s thought in order to counter claims that Marxism was an essentially foreign theoretical framework that was being foisted onto Africans. More importantly, these East African Marxists were able to make important contributions to Marxist-Leninist theory by refining and developing the Marxist-Leninist research program in African contexts.

A Concluding Methodological Plea

Returning to this essay’s opening remarks on the need to come to terms with the charge of Eurocentrism that has been leveled at Marxism-Leninism, the success or failure of this essay should be judged not in relation to whether it has adequately answered the question: Is Marxism-Leninism Eurocentric? For it is obvious that a fully adequate answer to this question would require a much longer discussion. Instead, the success or failure of this essay should be judged in relation to whether it has adequately answered the following question: With what must the attempt to respond to the charge of Eurocentrism begin? The answer offered in this essay is that it must begin by a serious and critical examination of the writings of those intellectuals in the “third world” (or the “Global South,” in current parlance), who have found Marxism-Leninism to be a useful theoretical framework in their anticolonial and anti-neocolonial struggles.⁹⁷ Methodologically speaking, it must be recognized that it is absurd for Marxist-Leninists (or Marxists in general) in the Western world to attempt to grapple with the charge of Eurocentrism, while at the same time continuing to systematically ignore the intellectual contributions of Marxist intellectuals from the “third world.”⁹⁸ For example, it is only by engaging in a serious critical study of the work that has been produced by Marxist theoreticians from the African continent, that

1 any progress can be made regarding questions such as whether historical
 2 materialism is an adequate theoretical framework for studying the history
 3 of African social formations. When viewed from the perspective of the rich
 4 intellectual history of Marxism in the **third world**, the specter of Eurocen-
 5 trism appears rather old and frail.

Notes

10 I wish to thank Afifa Ltifi, Charisse Burden-Stelly, the editors of this volume, and
 11 two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on earlier versions of this
 12 manuscript.

13 1. In 1873, Marx famously remarked that it had become fashionable to
 14 treat Hegel as a “dead dog” and he vehemently criticized this superficial treatment
 15 of Hegel; Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books,
 16 1990), 102. This very same fate also befell Marx, Engels, Lenin, and other Marxist
 17 thinkers **toward** the end of the twentieth century.

18 2. For an attempt to counter the charge of Eurocentrism that has been leveled
 19 at Marx by excavating his relatively unknown writings on the “non-Western world,”
 20 see Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western*
 21 *Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). For an attempt that focuses on
 22 Marx’s scattered references to the African continent, see Stefan Kalmring and Andreas
 23 Nowak, “Viewing Africa with Marx: Remarks on Marx’s Fragmented Engagement with
 24 the African Continent,” *Science & Society* 81, no. 3 (2017): 331–47.

25 3. Salah M. Hassan, *How to Liberate Marx from His Eurocentrism: Notes on*
 26 *African/Black Marxism* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012), 4–7.

27 4. Badawi Riad ‘Abd al Sami’a, *Al-Ard we al- ‘ansuryia fe Itihad Janub Ifriqy-*
 28 *iah [Land and Racism in the Union of South Africa]* (Cairo: Matba’at Dar al-Kutub
 29 we al-Wathaeq al-Qumyia be al-Qahira, 2014), 268. Also see, James Morris Blaut,
 30 “Evaluating Imperialism,” *Science & Society* 61, no. 3 (1997): 382–93, and James
 31 Morris Blaut, “Marxism and Eurocentric Diffusionism,” in *The Political Economy of*
 32 *Imperialism: Critical Appraisals*, ed. Ronald H. Chilcote (New York: Rowman and
 33 Littlefield, 2000): 127–40.

34 5. For a biographical overview of Babu’s life, see Amrit Wilson, “Abdul
 35 Rahman Mohammed Babu: Politician, Scholar and Revolutionary,” *The Journal of*
 36 *Pan African Studies* 1, no. 9 (2007): 10–24. For a periodization of Babu’s political
 37 activities by one of his friends, see Samir Amin, “The First Babu Memorial Lecture,”
 38 *Review of African Political Economy* 25, no. 77 (1998): 475–84.

39 6. For a full account of this episode, see Amrit Wilson, *The Threat of*
 40 *Liberation: Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar* (London: Pluto Press, 2013).

7. Seth M. Markle, "Brother Malcolm, Comrade Babu: Black Internationalism and the Politics [OF??] Friendship," *Biography* 36, no. 3 (2013): 540–67. 1
8. Wilson, *The Threat of Liberation*, 97. 2
9. Wilson, "Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu," 15. 3
10. Yash Tandon, "Dani Wadada Nabudere, 1932–2011: An Uncompromising Revolutionary," *Review of African Political Economy* 39, no. 132 (2012): 335. 4
11. *Ibid.* 5
12. For a critical overview of the debates, see, Omwony Ojwok, "Review of the Debate on Imperialism, State, Class, and the National Question, University of Dar es Salaam, 1976–1977," *Utafiti: Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science, University of Dar es Salaam* 2, no. 2 (1977): 371–89. 6
13. For more biographical information on Nabudere see the obituary by David Simon 2012, "Remembering Dani Wadada Nabudere," *Review of African Political Economy* 39, no. 132 (2012): 343–44. 7
14. Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, "Introduction," in *The University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State, and Imperialism*, ed. Yash Tandon (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1982), 1–12; Dani Nabudere, "Imperialism, State, Class, and Race: A Critique of Issa Shivji's *Class Struggles in Tanzania*," in *ibid.*, 55–67; Dani Nabudere, "A Caricature of Marxism-Leninism (A Reply to Karim Hirji)," in *ibid.*, 83–127; Dani Nabudere, "A Reply to Mamdani and Bhagat," in *ibid.*, 133–47. 8
15. Vladimir I. Lenin, "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism," in *Imperialism and War: Classic Writings by V. I. Lenin and Nikolai Bukharin*, ed. Phil Gasper (Chicago: Haymarket Books 2017 [1917]), 101–102. Note that "imperialism" can also be used to characterize, for example, the Portuguese expansion into the Indian Ocean and the East African coast from the sixteenth century onward. However, this kind of imperialism was based on mercantilist accumulation techniques, that is, it was based on the accumulation of "surplus products" as opposed to "surplus value"; see Dani Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa. Volume 1: Imperialism and Exploitation* (London: Zed Press, 1981), 6. In other words, it is clear that there is a sense in which imperialism has always been an important feature of the capitalist world system. However, it is important to differentiate between different forms of imperialism, namely, mercantilist imperialism, "free-trade" imperialism, and monopoly capital imperialism. In this chapter I will be using the term *imperialism* to refer to the latter form of imperialism. 9
16. Lenin, "Imperialism," 102. 10
17. Karl Kautsky, "Imperialism," in *Discovering Imperialism: Social Democracy to World War I*, ed. and trans. Richard B. Day and Daniel Gaido (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012 [1914]), 753–74. 11
18. Vladimir I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination: Selected Writings by V. I. Lenin* (New York: International Publishers, 1951 [1915]), 90. 12

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- 1 19. Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, "Postscript to *How Europe Underdeveloped*
2 *Africa*," in *The Future that Works: Selected Writings of A.M. Babu*, ed. Salma Babu and
3 Amrit Wilson (Asmara, Eritrea/ Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002 [1971]), 4.
- 4 20. Ibid., 5.
- 5 21. Dani Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa. Volume 1: Imperialism and*
6 *Exploitation* (London: Zed Press, 1981), 129.
- 7 22. Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, *African Socialism or Socialist Africa?*
8 (London: Zed Press, 1981), 102. Dani Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa. Volume*
9 *1*, 21.
- 10 23. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC:
11 Howard University Press, 1982 [1972]), 141.
- 12 24. Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, *African Socialism or Socialist Africa?*
13 (London: Zed Press, 1981), 102–103. Babu's position on the issue of racism and
14 the analysis of its underlying socioeconomic causes is evident in his approach to
15 politics in Zanzibar on the eve of the revolution of 1964. Babu's Umma Party was
16 the only political party in Zanzibar that did not recruit on a racial basis, and it was
17 the most multiracial party on Zanzibar's political scene. In fact, Babu was able to
18 convince some of the "Arabs" that their class interests aligned with the revolution
19 against the sultan's regime, and some of the "Arabs" who joined the Umma Party
20 ended up fighting against the sultan. Walaa' Saber Al Busati, *Afariqah we Arab fe*
21 *Thawrat Zanjibar 1964* [Africans and Arabs in the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964]
22 (Cairo: Maktebat Gezirat al-Ward, 2016), 153–58. See also, Wilson, *The Threat of*
23 *Liberation*, 42.
- 24 25. Dani Nabudere, *The Political Economy of Imperialism: Its Theoretical and*
25 *Polemical Treatment from Mercantilist to Multilateral Imperialism* (London: Zed
26 Press, 1978), 190.
- 27 26. Ibid., 218.
- 28 27. For examples see, David McNally, "Understanding Imperialism: Old
29 and New Dominion," *Against the Current* 117 (July–August 2005): <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/atc/255.html>; Costas Lapavistas, *Profiting without*
30 *Producing: How Finance Exploits Us All* (London: Verso, 2013), 66.
- 31 28. John Bellamy Foster, "The Rediscovery of Imperialism," *Monthly Review*
32 54, no. 6 (2002): 1–16.
- 33 29. Lenin, "Imperialism," 42.
- 34 30. Ibid., 40–41.
- 35 31. Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. III* (New York: International Publishers, 1967
36 [1894]), 212. Lenin did of course discuss Marx's account of the tendency of the
37 rate of profit to fall in various other contexts, for example, in Vladimir I. Lenin,
38 "Karl Marx," in *Introduction to Marx, Engels, Marxism (Articles by V. I. Lenin)* (New
39 York: International Publishers, 1987 [1915]), 79. However, Lenin did not explicitly
40 discuss it in his *Imperialism*.
32. Ojwok, "Review of the Debate," 377.
33. Nabudere, *The Political Economy of Imperialism*, 59.

34. Ibid., 77. 1
35. Vladimir I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions (For the Second Congress of the Communist International)," in *Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions: Three Articles* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1967 [1920]), 28. 2
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36. Lenin, "Imperialism," 96. 6
37. Vladimir I. Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (Theses)," in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination: Selected Writings by V.I. Lenin* (New York: International Publishers, 1951 [1916b]), 74. 7
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38. Vladimir I. Lenin, "The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up," In *ibid.*, 75. 9
10
39. Lenin, "Imperialism," 104. 11
40. Demba Moussa Dembélé, "New Forms of Exploitation of Africa by Monopoly Capitalism: From Lenin's Imperialism to the Imperialism of the Triad in the 21st Century," in *Lenin's Imperialism in the 21st Century*, ed. Antonio A. Tujan Jr. (Manila: Institute of Political Economy, 2017), 50. 12
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41. Lenin, "Imperialism," 102. 16
42. Rodney, *How Europe*, 157. 17
43. Babu, *African Socialism*, 48. 18
44. CPSU, "On the Question of the Trade Unions and their Organization," in *Resolutions and Decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Volume 2: The Early Soviet Period, 1917–1929*, ed. Richard Gregor (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1974 [1920]), 101. 19
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45. Babu, *African Socialism*, 40. 22
46. Ibid. 23
47. Horace B. Davis, "Lenin and Nationalism: The Redirection of the Marxist Theory of Nationalism, 1903–1907," *Science & Society* 31, no. 2 (1967): 164–85. 24
25
48. Ibid., 164. 26
49. Dani Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa. Volume 2: Imperialism and Integration* (London: Zed Press, 1982d), 32. 27
28
50. James Morris Blaut, "Evaluating Imperialism," 386. James Morris Blaut, "Marxism and Eurocentric Diffusionism," 134. For a defense of the importance of the "national question" today, see Max Ajl, *A People's Green New Deal* (London: Pluto Press, 2021), 146–62. 29
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51. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," 24–25. 32
52. Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu, "Pan-Africanism and the New World Order," in *The Future that Works: Selected Writings of A. M. Babu*, ed. Salma Babu and Amrit Wilson (Asmara, Eritrea/ Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002 [1994]), 98. 33
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- It was Babu who was most concerned with providing a Marxist-Leninist account of Pan-Africanism, since Nabudere, unlike Babu, believed (at least in the early 1980s) that "the nation state is today the most revolutionary instrument in the majority of the countries of the world . . . for redressing the uneven development that has been exacerbated by imperialism"; Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa. Volume 1*, 181.



1 Babu, on the other hand, was a staunch advocate for Pan-Africanism throughout
 2 his life and he “was the driving force behind the 7th Pan African Congress held at
 3 Kampala in April 1994”; Wilson, “Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu,” 22. Babu was
 4 also instrumental in presenting Black radical struggles in the United States to an
 5 African audience; Seth M. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell Run: Tanzania, Black Power,*
 6 *and the Uncertain Future of Pan-Africanism, 1964–1974* (East Lansing: Michigan State
 7 University, 2017), 60. However, while Nabudere was not as interested in issues of
 8 race during the 1970s and 1980s, it should be noted that by the 1990s he came to
 9 show greater interest in Pan-Africanism; Tandon, “Dani Wadada Nabudere,” 335–41.
 10 For a critique of the absence of race as a category of analysis in Nabudere’s *The*
 11 *Political Economy of Imperialism*, see Corinna Mullen, “Insurgent Theory in Times
 12 of Crisis: Dani Wadada Nabudere’s *The Political Economy of Imperialism*,” *Liberated*
 13 *Texts*, May 2, 2021, <https://liberatedtexts.com/reviews/insurgent-theory-in-times-of-crisis-dani-wadada-nabuderes-the-political-economy-of-imperialism/>. In Nabudere’s
 14 later work, we can detect a kind of autocritique of his earlier approach. Since he
 15 seems to indicate that the political economy perspectives of the 1970s and 1980s
 16 did not sufficiently emphasize problems of culture and cultural identity (including,
 17 one assumes, racial identity); Dani Nabudere, *Archie Mafeje: Scholar, Activist, and*
 18 *Thinker* (Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2007), 34.

19 53. Babu, *African Socialism*, 101.

20 54. Babu claims that this situation is uniquely African: “The problem of
 21 nation states as an accidental offshoot of imperialist aggression was a uniquely
 22 African experience” Babu, *African Socialism*, 101. However, I think that this is
 23 not correct. A similar situation occurred in the “Arab World,” specifically in the
 24 Levant or “Greater Syria region,” see Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State:*
 25 *Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London/ New York: I. B. Tauris, 1995). In
 26 this sense, one can say that Pan-Africanism and Pan-Arabism emerged in response
 27 to structurally analogous (at a sufficient level of abstraction) circumstances. Babu
 28 limits the general applicability of his analysis of Pan-Africanism and its conditions
 29 of emergence in a way that is not justified.

30 55. Babu seems to have believed that ethnicity was inadequate as a basis for
 31 African nationalism because of the manner in which states in Africa were constituted
 32 in a way that cut across ethnic lines. However, it is not clear why one should not
 33 seek to construct multinational or multiethnic states, which, moreover, are the norm
 34 throughout the world.

35 56. Babu, “Pan-Africanism and the New World Order,” 97.

36 57. Babu, *African Socialism*, 101.

37 58. Babu, “Pan-Africanism and the New World Order,” 96–97.

38 59. Babu sees the political form of Pan-Africanism as more universalist in its
 39 orientation insofar as “it includes North Africans as an essential part of Pan Africa
 40 and as an essential part of Pan-African struggle”; Babu, “Pan-Africanism and the
 New World Order,” 97. In general, one can say that Babu was a staunch critic of

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the division of Africa into North Africa and Africa “proper” (Africa south of the Saharan desert): “Our enemy, therefore, is anyone who wants to disrupt that unity. In their attempt to divide Africa the imperialists tried to classify us into two groups. Africans North of the Sahara and Africans South of the Sahara. The creation of the All African People’s Conference [held in Accra, Ghana [in 1958] dealt a decisive blow to this imperialist scheme”; Babu, “Speech Delivered at the 4th PAFMECA Conference,” in *The Future that Works*, 60.

60. I should note that at least theoretically speaking, Lenin seems to have endorsed Stalin’s definition, with the caveat that a given set of people must wish to be considered a nation (this voluntarist element is absent from Stalin’s definition); Davis, “Lenin and Nationalism,” 171. For an example of Lenin’s emphasis on this voluntarist element, see e.g., Vladimir I. Lenin, “The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up,” in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, 89.

61. Joseph Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question,” in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question: A Collection of Articles and Speeches by Joseph Stalin* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1940 [1913]), 7.

62. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

63. Babu, “Pan-Africanism and the New World Order,” 95.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Kwesi Botchwey, “Marxism and the Analysis of African Reality,” *Africa Development/ Afrique et Développement* 2, no. 1 (1977): 9–16.

66. While there have been different forms of African socialism, e.g., the version that was developed by Léopold Sédar Senghor, *On African Socialism*, trans. Mercer Cook (London: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964 [1961]), Nyerere’s *Ujamaa* has been described as “the most ambitious and sustained version of African socialism,” by Priya Lal, “Maoism in Tanzania: Material Connections and Shared Imaginaries,” in *Mao’s Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 99.

67. Robert Fatton, “The Political Ideology of Julius Nyerere: The Structural Implications of ‘African Socialism,’” *Studies in International Comparative Development* 20, no. 2 (1985): 4.

68. Paul Bjerck, *Julius Nyerere* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2017), 58–59.

69. Julius K. Nyerere, “Principles and Development: June 1966,” in *Freedom and Socialism [Uhuru na Ujamaa]: A Selection from Writings and Speeches, 1965–1967* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968 [1966a]), 198.

70. *Ibid.*, 199.

71. Julius K. Nyerere, “Education for Self-Reliance: March 1967,” in *Freedom and Socialism [Uhuru na Ujamaa]: A Selection from Writings and Speeches* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968 [1967a]), 276.

72. Babu, *African Socialism*, xiv–xv; the question of whether Babu was correct in his interpretation of Nyerere’s views is beyond the scope of this essay, although I will note that Nyerere also recognized some of the limitations of what he called

- 1 “traditional African society.” For example, in Julius K. Nyerere, “The Power of
 2 Teachers: 27 August 1966,” in *Freedom and Socialism [Uhuru na Ujamaa]*, 228.
 3 Julius K. Nyerere, “Socialism and Rural Development: September 1967,” in *ibid.*,
 4 339.
- 5 73. Vladimir I. Lenin, “The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism
 6 of it in Mr. Struve’s Book (The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature),”
 7 in *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works, Vol. 1: 1893–1894*. Moscow: Progress Publishers,
 8 1960 [1895], 396.
- 9 74. Issa G. Shivji, “The Village in Mwalimu’s Thought and Political Practice,”
 10 In *Africa’s Liberation: The Legacy of Nyerere*, ed. Chambi Chachage and Annar Cassam
 11 (Cape Town/Dakar/ Nairobi: Pambazuka Press, 2010), 123.
- 12 75. Babu, *African Socialism*, 53.
- 13 76. Lenin, “The Economic Content of Narodism,” 414.
- 14 77. Babu, *African Socialism*, xv. See also, Abdul Rahman Mohammed Babu,
 15 “Letter to Karim Essack,” in *The Future that Works: Selected Writings of A.M. Babu*,
 16 277. Nabudere, *The Political Economy of Imperialism*, 67.
- 17 78. Lenin, “The Economic Content of Narodism,” 415.
- 18 79. Babu, *African Socialism*, 172.
- 19 80. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Amherst, NY:
 20 Prometheus Books, 1998), 2. See also Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, 173. Marx’s understand-
 21 ing of capitalism as relatively progressive insofar as it undermines ties of personal
 22 dependence is discussed extensively in Derek Sayer, *Capitalism and Modernity: An*
 23 *Excursus on Marx and Weber* (London: Routledge, 1991), 17–37.
- 24 81. Babu, *African Socialism*, 53.
- 25 82. This mode of argument essentially mirrors Hegel’s critique of Romanticism.
 26 For a defense of this claim and for an account of the significance of Hegel’s critique
 27 of Romanticism for Marxist movements today, see Zeyad el Nabolsy, “*Nasserism*
 28 *and the Impossibility of Innocence*,” *International Politics Review* (2021): <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41312-021-00105-1>.
- 29 83. Babu, *African Socialism*, xiii.
- 30 84. Dani Nabudere, *Essays on the Theory and Practice of Imperialism* (London:
 31 Onyx Press, 1979), 86.
- 32 85. In fact, even under Nyerere, Tanzania’s educational policies in the
 33 1960s and 1970s were driven by the conditions set by foreign donors, Zeyad el
 34 Nabolsy, “African Socialism in Retrospect: Karim Hirji’s *The Travails of a Tanzanian Teacher*,”
 35 *Liberated Texts* (March 23, 2021): <https://liberatedtexts.com/reviews/african-socialism-in-retrospect-karim-f-hirjis-the-travails-of-a-tanzanian-teacher/>.
- 36 86. Nabudere, *Essays on the Theory and Practice of Imperialism*, 85.
- 37 87. *Ibid.*, 93.
- 38 88. Olúfẹ̀mi Táíwò, “Cabral, Culture, Progress, and the Metaphysics of Dif-
 39 ference,” in *Claim No Easy Victories: The Legacy of Amílcar Cabral*, ed. Firoze Manji
 40 and Bill Fletcher Jr. (Dakar and Montreal: CODESRIA and Daraja Press, 2013).

89. See, Priya Lal, "Africa," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Marx*, ed. Jeff Diamanti et al. (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 504; Marion Mushkat, "African Socialism Reappraised and Reconsidered," *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell'Istituto italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente* 27, no. 2 (1972): 154; Monique A. Bedasse, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, and Pan-Africanism in the Age of Decolonization* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 60; Bjerck, *Julius Nyerere*, 59.
90. Babu, *African Socialism*, 57. For example, many of the features that have been claimed to be uniquely African were found in rural communities in nineteenth-century Russia, as is evident from Dimitrii Ivanovich Rostislavov, *Provincial Russia in the Age of Enlightenment: The Memoir of a Priest's Son*, trans. and ed. Alexander M. Martin (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 86–96.
91. For a Cabralian elucidation of this point, see Zeyad El Nabolsy, "Amílcar Cabral's Modernist Philosophy of Culture and Cultural Liberation," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 32, no. 2 (2020): 237–38.
92. Babu, *African Socialism*, 59.
93. Asli Berkaty, "Negritude and African Socialism: Rhetorical Devices for Overcoming Social Divides," *Third Text* 24, no. 2 (2010): 210.
94. Tomáš František Žák, "Applying the Weapon of Theory: Comparing the Philosophy of Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28 no. 2 (2016): 150; Priya Lal, "African Socialism and the Limits of Global Familyhood: Tanzania and the New International Economic Order in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 6, no. 1 (2015): 21.
95. Babu, *African Socialism*, 60.
96. Nabudere, *Imperialism in East Africa. Volume 2*, 19. Also see Nabudere, "Imperialism, State, Class and Race," 67. This point was also made by other African defenders of the relevance of Marxism to the analysis of African history, e.g., Botchwey, "Marxism," 14, as well as Kwesi Kwaa Prah, *Jacobus Eliza Johannes Capitein: A Critical Study of an 18th Century African* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1992), 79–93.
97. For an example of recent work that takes this methodological point seriously (with respect to Marxism in general), see Max Ajl, "Auto-centered Development and Indigenous Technics: Slaheddine el-Amami and Tunisian Delinking," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46, no. 6 (2019): 1240–50; and Max Ajl, "Delinking, Food Sovereignty, and Populist Agronomy: Notes on an Intellectual History of the Peasant Path in the Global South," *Review of African Political Economy* 45, no. 155 (2018): 66–70.
98. For a further discussion of this point from the standpoint of African Marxism, see Claude Ake, "The Political Economy Approach: Historical and Explanatory Notes on a Marxian Legacy in Africa," *Africa Development/ Afrique et Développement* 2, no. 1 (1983): 9–16.

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