
A CRITIQUE IN SOCIALIST POLICY DIRECTION DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

**Evaluating Professor Ansa K. Asamoah's
Depeasantization Policy Proposals**

Lang T. K. A. Nubuor

AUTHOR'S PRELIMINARY NOTE

AN EDITED APPRECIATIVE RESPONSE TO A COMRADE'S CONTRIBUTORY CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THIS ARTICLE PRIOR TO PUBLICATION

Comrade,

Looking at your markings in the article we can understand the direction of your critical comments. The essential issue has to do with evolution and revolution. Evolution is the quantitative process that leads to the qualitative process of Revolution. By the dynamics of history a process of evolution of an emerging mode of production generates political and other superstructural institutions in aid of it. Revolution is the crowning moment of an evolution when these new institutions come into conflict with and emerge in dominance over the old ones together with their mode of production. Not the other way round. A 'revolutionary process' entails an initial evolution that culminates in a revolutionary change. Evolution and revolution are dialectically and historically connected.

Within the conditions of feudal Russia where the system is at the verge of collapse and the emergence of capitalism, as the new mode of production, is fast approaching, the political struggle becomes the immediate concern. Are forces of capitalism to be allowed to take over power as a matter of course? Lenin says 'no'. He approaches the issue from the reversed angle of assuming political power first to initiate the process of evolving the construction of an alternative mode of production – socialism. Following the process of the evolution of a new mode of production from the womb of the existing now-reactionary system and alongside it, Lenin understands that left to the historical process alone the capitalist system takes over upon the demise of Russian feudalism.

This means giving capitalism some centuries to develop and pass off on its own just as happens to feudalism. Lenin, upon seeing what havoc capitalism is creating in Europe, refuses to wait. He sees political power lying in the streets. He takes it for the redirection of the historical process to initiate and develop the new socialist mode of production to avert the imminent ravages of capitalism. The seed of socialism at this time, unlike capitalism, has not yet been sown. Hence, it has to be sown after the capture of political power.

That is a bold attempt to intervene in the historical process. It becomes the norm of socialist revolutionary practice. If the seed of socialism is already sown Lenin will be left with the easy task of just developing it. But the force of capitalist evolution cannot be just gotten rid of. Lenin is forced, therefore, to tactically give in to it within the framework of the New Economic Policy with the socialist orientation as the guide. Unfortunately, he dies too early. Stalin fails

him later through pragmatistic policies that turn the tactical move into the norm – a strategic reorientation.

Comrade, in other words, every mode of production evolves before it attains the moment of its assumption of dominance if it should endure and be permanent – with its winning of state power. That moment is marked by violent eruptions consequent upon and proportional to the resistance of the ruling class to retain power when its usefulness elapses. That is the revolutionary moment when the rising class assumes the place of dominance in the realm to advance the development of its newly-evolving mode of production.

In this article, we take consideration of the fact that our communal system is increasingly giving way to the emergence of capitalism where what is communally owned is now being converted to private individual ownership. The youth are, consequently, being ejected from the land which is then released to transnationals and local forces of capitalism. Difficult as this situation is, it provides socialist forces an opportunity to begin the process of socialist evolution in preparation for the revolutionary moment in contention against capitalism – not just at the political level but more importantly at the economic roots.

That is the moment when we, the working people, have in our hands not only political power but more significantly what we are already, upon our own efforts, developing. To defeat us at that moment will require defeating the people-in-arms. Spread across the continent of Africa such people-in-arms, simultaneously rising in unison to defend their own property and life, cannot stand aloof in the event of a reactionary resurgence of a few whose imperialist and capitalist neo-colonialist intentions and evil acts are well understood by a people conscious of their best interests. That is the moment of exhibition of the indefatigable spirit of African resistance and resilience.

Imperialism and capitalist neo-colonialism cannot defeat a whole continent of people ready to fight for themselves. Qaddafi stands today defeated because that whole continent of people looks on, innervated by pre-occupation with trying to eke out a living in a system wherein they have nothing to defend, while the Qaddafi forces hold out alone for months against the full force of international imperialism in collaboration with internal forces of reaction. The Soviet Union similarly crumbles, by other means, with the people looking on.

Never again should the people of Africa be defeated as happens in Libya. This calls for the fullest mobilization and organization of African working people on a continental scale in defence of what they truly have – their own newly-evolving mode of production wherein they have real, not bogus theoretical, control. This is why, Comrade, we insist that placing the means of production in the hands of the people, who also increasingly exercise state

power in defence of their socialist mode of production, is the only way to enduringly consummate the African Revolution and defend it.

The only ideologico-programmatic framework for that endeavour is Marxist-Nkrumaist Revolutionary Pan-Africanism as Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah elaborates it and is being developed by Marxist-Nkrumaists across the world within the context of unfolding reality. Let's look at the African reality of our days, dialectically analyse it historically and ensure victory over imperialism, neo-colonialism and capitalism for the permanent fulfilment of the socialist aspirations of our people in this century - sooner than later.

In this struggle, we need our mutual open-mindedness to appreciate our chances and possible difficulties as well as resolution of petty internal differences. Posterity might appreciate our effort and not condemn us. Let's create the condition that posterity, in reflection over it, will stand dumb-founded as to how easily we could achieve the freedom they enjoy in the face of the apparent formidability of the world imperialist machine.

Comrade, we are aware of the novelty of the direction we map out in this article in its apparent reversal of Lenin's century-old strategy within the conditions of Africa and in accord with the dynamics of history. Hence, we are also aware that a lot of explanation will need to be made. Our main consolation and assurance rest in the conviction that we operate within the framework of Dr. Nkrumah's ideological, philosophical, theoretical and action system – Marxism-Nkrumaism and its programme of Revolutionary Pan-Africanism.

Thanks for raising these critical issues on strategy. Rest assured that we remain in readiness to accept correction made in consistence with the principles of Marxism-Nkrumaism. Good night.

Lang

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By

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Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah provides us with a possibly pioneering model for the depeasantization of rural Africa to free productive forces in that community. As a pioneering model, we can expect oversights. We have here tried to locate such oversights together with our critical appreciation of formulations that we deem can promote the ends of freeing the said productive forces. In the process, we find ourselves uncomfortable with the prospect of peasants losing their communal lands should his proposals be implemented.

For which reason we strongly suggest a comprehensive reformulation of those proposals to take account of the need to contextualize them in the process of the total liberation and unification of Africa under the direction of Marxist-Nkrumaist Revolutionary Pan-Africanism for the destruction of neo-colonial capitalism and realization of socialism in Africa. Our reformulation restores privatized land and land in the process of being privatized to the individual through a collective co-operative¹ wherein land is owned and developed collectively for the depeasantization of Africa's rural economy and industrialization.

Introduction

Certainly, a crying need for a clear statement of socialist policy direction development in and for Africa calls for independent collaboration of African socialist forces. Prof. Ansa Asamoah could surely have made such a call in 2001. In his *Depeasantization of Africa's Rural Economy – The Ghanaian Experience*, he makes a strong case for the modernization of the African countryside within the context of a long-term national development policy. Written in a clearly accessible language, what he calls either an 'essay' or 'paper' or 'article' appears to him to be a possible pioneering effort based on field research.

¹ Our concept of a 'collective co-operative' is distinguished from the current co-operative type where land resources are *pooled*. With our concept, a revolutionary organization acquires the land and makes the workers effective collective owners of it within its organizational framework. The land is subsequently *not* inherited though expandable; hence indivisible. A member shares in its ownership for a lifetime only.

That suggests that he is not aware of any other work with similar concern for rural Africa. Theoretical discussion is intentionally avoided in that paper.

In its essence, Prof. Asamoah's paper is directed at *official policy makers* of the neo-colonial states in Africa and those who influence such policy-making but not singularly and pointedly at socialists. Hence, he calls for a platform that assembles both the Establishment elite who run the neo-colonial states and those seen as progressive academicians at our universities to discuss matters of policy. He is all the same pessimistic that his proposals might find reception among those whom he calls 'the right-wing political elite' who currently have a field day in Africa. He also suspects that such politicians prefer foreign experts to African experts though the latter understand African issues better and can easily handle them than the former who come to lecture Africans.

With respect to policy strategy formulation, Prof. Ansa Asamoah brings to bear the experiences of depeasantization processes in the United States of America (USA), Europe and Southern Africa on the one hand and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba on the other hand. In the process, he exhibits a preference in favour of the humane and pragmatic depeasantization strategies of the socialist countries as against the naked bloody brutalities that characterize the strategies adopted in the West and Southern Africa. Hence, in Africa he *cautiously* sees the possible adoption of the socialist alternative to free the forces of production in the rural sector for a symbiotic relationship between depeasantization and industrialization to unfold.

Although certain turns of speech tend to suggest that Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah envisages a period of transition that accommodates the co-existence of the capitalist mode of production and the development of State enterprises, he expects a development direction that leads ultimately to an evolved 'national mode of production' wherein State enterprises and co-operatives assume a place of *dominance* in the economy. There is no doubt, however, that he places the initiative of this process of change in the hands of the existing neo-colonial states' elites who are expected to co-operate with each other in certain areas in service of the mutual interests of their peoples. Hence, existing political relations appear reproduced – an elite and a mass.

In our critical evaluative appreciation of Prof. Ansa Asamoah's effort here, we acknowledge the innovative ideas therein and seek to strategically suggest their enhancement which trims off them affectations of ideological caution and inexactness. In this regard, we seek to question his uncritical adoption of the *structure* of co-operatives of the former socialist republics; that is, without his raising and addressing the cause of the disintegration of many socialist systems in spite of the existence of the co-operatives. We call a spade just that – a spade – and nothing else.

In our effort, we place the initiative of the process in the hands of *African socialist* forces with the Marxist-Nkrumaist orientation operating essentially *outside* the existing neo-colonial state structures. The said African forces evolve as a nascent continental state from a politically-directed continental co-operative movement wherein the workers collectively own the means of production and defence and increasingly *exercise state power*. For, as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah says, neo-colonialism *cannot* programme its own demise. History entrusts African and internationalist socialist forces with that task.

Methodology

A prior consideration of the methodology that Prof. Ansa Asamoah adopts helps to appreciate the profundity as well as the problematics of his thoughts; for, it provides the theoretical framework within which he situates his policy proposals. Of course, he does not consciously state the methodology since he intentionally avoids that kind of discussion. All the same, he gives a gist of it in his references to those used by others which he disapproves of. From those disapprovals we glean the nature of his own methodology. This is particularly so when he traces the failure of our African economists, agro-economists and agricultural scientists to their false theoretical and methodological premises.²

In this respect, he accuses that group of adopting 'a purely economic approach to economic problems of development'; by which he means the exclusion of non-economic issues in the formulation of development policies. In a more powerful use of language he pointedly accuses them of using 'false, if not reactionary, theoretical and methodological premises' in their 'analyses of economic situations and in economic planning'. This leads to a situation whereby they apply economic theories that reflect *not* the African reality but rather 'the highly sophisticated economies of the capitalist industrial societies' to formulate strategies for economic planning and development.³

This methodological list of 'don't dos' includes the practice of initiating projects 'from the national instead of the village level'.⁴ Hence, from the methodological perspective, Prof. Asamoah projects a development approach that is not economic but all-embracing; and, of equal significance, that approach needs to proceed from the *village* to the *national* level. The result of this is intended to be 'the systematic development of a national mode of production' that is calculated to lead to the 'expansion of state-owned and co-operative enterprises at the expense of the individual and private enterprises'.⁵ The initiator of this process is the government.

² See Ansa K. Asamoah, *Depeasantization of Africa's Rural Economy – The Ghanaian Experience*, p.51.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p.73

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p.55

In this latter respect, Prof. Asamoah is convinced that ‘the whole peasant question in Ghana (and, therefore, Africa) would remain basically unsolved unless it is approached on the national level within a progressive political framework’.⁶ We should here be mindful not to mix up ‘*from* the national level’ with ‘*on* the national level’; for, they are not the same. Hence, he does not contradict himself here. What should rather engage our attention is the need to clarify the reference to ‘a progressive political framework’ in a situation where he asserts that ‘the right-wing political elite of Ghana *currently having a field day* in Ghanaian politics are allergic to anything socialist’.⁷

The note of caution here is that what is *progressive* is not necessarily *socialist*. Development of the capitalist mode of production is considered progressive insofar as it tends to free society from the restrictions on the productive forces of feudal or non-feudal society. Prof. Asamoah’s turns of speech might tend to confuse the reader as to whether he projects an *initial* stage of the development of the capitalist mode of production to free society from the said restrictions *in preparation* for a socialist mode of production or that he projects a *direct* entry into the socialist mode of production. For, what he calls a ‘national mode of production’ is *not* socialist. The dilemma is discussed.

The nature of the dilemma is such that we have difficulty in determining from his paper exactly what type of a progressive political system he envisages for the adoption and implementation of his policy proposals – the existing neo-colonial political system run by progressive bourgeois politicians or a newly-evolving or evolved socialist political system that develops simultaneously with the development of a socialist mode of production and run by socialist forces involved in the socio-economic-political building-up process? There is no doubt that these alternatives find expressions in the paper at hand where they appear to co-exist. If so, which of them should be dominant?

In the next two sections, we exhibit this difficulty with citations from the paper and attempt to resolve it.

Prof. Ansa Asamoah’s Characterization of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Development Orientation

Prof. Ansa Asamoah states that ‘Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was quick to realize that without building a strong reproductive sector *within* the inherited capitalist mode of production, Ghana could never take off economically’.⁸ Significantly, he clears all possible doubts about what that citation means when, with reference to the Nkrumah regime, he refers to ‘the capitalist economic sector

⁶ Op. cit., p.53

⁷ Op. cit., p.90 Italics added.

⁸ Op. cit., p.49 Italics added.

where *all* attention was concentrated'.⁹ In accordance with this focus, he says, Dr. Nkrumah undertook the Volta River Project, built a number of industries and research centres like the Atomic Research Centre in conjunction with such infrastructural development like the Kwame Nkrumah Motorway, etc.¹⁰

In his view, the CPP, and, therefore, Dr. Nkrumah, 'committed a very serious strategic blunder, which over the years systematically developed into complicated socio-economic contradictions, which finally negated the Nkrumah government.'¹¹ In continuation, he explains that 'The blunder, in terms of economic planning, was the total exclusion of the peasant sector of the economy from the strategies for economic development'.¹² In this respect, Prof. Asamoah holds that consequent upon this blunder, possibilities of capital formation within the peasant economy were either intentionally ignored or they escaped authority attention¹³.

In spite of this alleged neglect of the peasant economy, Prof. Asamoah says that in tune with Dr. Nkrumah's synchronization of 'a gradual development of the scientific and technological basis of reproduction with infrastructural and agricultural diversification ... hundreds of new feeder roads (and) hundreds of acres of rubber and palm plantations and other agricultural ventures by the state farms'¹⁴ were undertaken by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Setting the claim of neglect of the peasant economy aside, we hear Prof. Asamoah contend that all these concrete pursuits 'bear testimony to this contention'¹⁵ of Dr. Nkrumah 'building a strong reproductive sector *within* the inherited capitalist mode ...'

Talking about resources of labour, according to Prof. Asamoah, 'Nkrumah's vigorous educational policy, his determination to have several Ghanaians educated in all parts of the world including the socialist countries, a practice which till independence had been regarded as an abomination, all were a well-meant attempt to create a permanent local manpower reservoir to feed all branches including the infant industrial sector of the *dominant capitalist mode of production*'.¹⁶ Our author describes these efforts, that he alleges were directed at single-mindedly building a capitalist mode of production, as 'positive economic ventures'¹⁷ and *commends* Dr. Nkrumah 'for his intelligent distribution of capital in the modern sector of the national economy'.¹⁸ Surely, that 'modern sector' is 'the capitalist economic sector'.¹⁹

⁹ Op. cit., p.50 *Italics added.*

¹⁰ Op. cit. p.49

¹¹ Op. cit. p.50

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Op. cit. p.49

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ Op. cit. pp. 49-50 *Italics added.*

¹⁷ Op. cit. p.50

¹⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁹ *Ibid*

Just a paragraph after this huge commendation, Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah includes Dr. Nkrumah's regime among all governments whose agricultural policies have failed due to 'unwise distribution of government revenues'.²⁰ This is exactly how he puts it: 'The failure of agricultural policies of all the governments we have had so far has been caused to a great extent by the unwise distribution of government revenue.' To emphasize the capitalist orientation of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Prof. Asamoah adds on the same page that 'Almost all government revenues from the cash crop industries, for example, are invested by the state in projects in the capitalist sector of the economy, in state-owned and private mechanized farming.'

This latter citation brings both state-owned enterprise and private enterprise in the era of the Nkrumah regime under the capitalist sector of the economy. For the avoidance of doubt, Prof. Asamoah specifically refers to that state sector of the economy as 'the state capitalist sector'.²¹ The other sector, as opposed to the entire capitalist economic sector, is the peasant sector or peasant economy. Hence, in the entire paper under scrutiny not for once is the economy under the Nkrumah regime ever described as a socialist economy or at least as a socialist-oriented economy developing *alongside* the inherited capitalist mode of production. That regime, simply put, is just as capitalist-oriented as any other regime succeeding it, according to Prof. Asamoah.

In the light of Prof. Asamoah's mixture of commendations and condemnations of the Nkrumah regime and his bundling it together with subsequent regimes, some of which he explicitly describes as right-wing, it becomes still difficult to characterize that regime from his perspective. Certainly, Prof. Asamoah is, without doubt, convinced that the Nkrumah regime is a capitalist-oriented entity. But as such an entity, he does not specifically categorize it either as a *neo-colonial* or *progressive bourgeois* regime – a categorization required for the determination of implicit dialectical differences that he finds between the Nkrumah regime and the others although he bundles all regimes together.²²

For sure, he has difficulties here since his position, as we would see presently, seems to us to be that *progress* is measured by the extent to which a regime undertakes a *depeasantization project* to usher the peasantry into the 'modern economy'; and that is exactly what he accuses Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of not doing²³ in addition to the absence of any suggestion, on his part, that the

²⁰ Op. cit. p.51 Italics added.

²¹ Op. cit. p.55

²² In his 1996 publication, *Socio-Economic Development Strategies of Independent African Countries – The Ghanaian Experience*, Prof. Asamoah's references to Dr. Nkrumah's 'socialist orientation' are replete in Chapter 4. Surprisingly in his paper under discussion not a single such reference is made. More significantly, even in the 1996 work he does not connect the references to Dr. Nkrumah's economic policy.

²³ At p.51 of the paper under consideration, Prof. Asamoah states that 'since the military take-over in January 1972 ... the top men in the Ministries of Economic Planning and Agriculture have not learnt enough lessons from the socio-economic contradictions *our past governments* have created by their *failure to start* synchronizing the modern and peasant sectors of our national economy.'(Italics added) To be directly

Nkrumah regime is a neo-colonial entity. We are saying that in case Prof. Ansa Asamoah is correct in projecting the Nkrumah regime as a capitalist-oriented entity he all the same fails to *specifically* categorize it either as a neo-colonial government or a progressive bourgeois government. It is left to guesswork.

A capitalist-oriented regime is necessarily either of these, given that African economies are peripheral capitalist or, what might be the same thing, neo-colonial entities. While Prof. Asamoah sees 'the present neo-colonial capitalist order'²⁴ in Ghana he indeed says that 'Ghana is a peripheral capitalist country terribly allergic to the socialist idea.'²⁵ The question is: since when?

Resolving Asamoah's Difficulties

Prof. Ansa Asamoah's dilemma or difficulty in his ideological categorization of the Nkrumah regime stems from the fact of his mistaken assumption that Ghana *opts* for capitalism and is consequently *allergic* to socialism. Apart from our last citation from his paper concerning the said allergy, he also talks about 'capitalism, which Ghana has opted for'.²⁶ In the light of this unfortunate unwarranted and mistaken assumption he misunderstands the direction of state policy under the Nkrumah regime. Hence, though Dr. Nkrumah's initiatives after independence in Ghana are *essentially* akin to certain policy initiatives made by the Soviet Union and the other socialist states immediately after their socialist revolutions he fails to see the former initiatives as *socialist* in character while the Soviet and the others' initiatives are seen as such.

Curiously, while he alleges neglect of a depeasantization process under the Nkrumah administration he also concedes that the depeasantization process *therein* is rather slow. He makes this concession tangentially when he states that 'Restricted only to light industrialization, the industrial sector cannot absorb significant labour released through *the rather slow process of depeasantization*'.²⁷ One would wish that Prof. Asamoah explains the *restraining* circumstances, internal and external, that ensure the slow rate of the process. For, just as he states that the depeasantization process in the socialist states does not come easily²⁸ the *restraining* circumstances in Ghana need to be also highlighted in the context of Dr. Nkrumah's assertion of a socialist direction.²⁹

specific, he states that 'the CPP government miserably failed to explore the natural and human resources in the peasant economy and the extent to which they could be used to accelerate the development of an integrated modern economy.' (p.50)

²⁴ Op. cit. p.53

²⁵ Op. cit. p.32 At p.84, he also makes reference to 'Ghana's peripheral capitalist economy'. Back at p.62 he refers to 'Ghana's neo-colonial capitalism'

²⁶ Op. cit. p.33

²⁷ Op. cit. pp.31-32 Italics added.

²⁸ Op. cit. p.27 Here, he states that 'Of course, the process was not so smooth. A lot of patience was needed to get the peasants involved in the co-operative system.' That system was the central focal point of the depeasantization process.

²⁹ In his inaugural Republic Day broadcast to the nation on July 1, 1960, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah declares and we quote at length in respect of his socialist orientation: 'Countrymen, the future ahead of us is full of

That Ghana opts for capitalism cannot be found substantiated either through the evidence of a national referendum to that effect or a constitutional provision to the same effect. What we can be sure of is Dr. Nkrumah's assertion in 1960 that 'our approach to this new life shall be a socialist pattern of society'.³⁰ But such references are inferior to the evidence on the ground that economic policy implementation under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah is in the *nature* of a *transition* to socialism. The fact of Prof. Asamoah knowing that 'Even socialist depeasantization in Russia and Eastern Europe was *preceded* by capitalist depeasantization'³¹ should inform him that the socialist transition is a *phase* of contradictory trends well managed to guarantee ultimate socialist *dominance*.

It is this contradictory scenario that appears to confuse our dear professor. He, thus, cannot tell us the exact ideological orientation of the Nkrumah regime. That is why he sees subsequent regimes to be right-wing and pro-West but remains mute as to what the Nkrumah regime is – left-wing, pro-Soviet or non-aligned, progressive, anti-neo-colonialist? He is excellently mute on these. He still sees the inherited colonial capitalist mode of production and its being developed in accordance with its native logic. He does not see the new development of the economy *away* from the inherited system and *alongside* it as a programmed gradual *replacement* of it. He does not see that the new process of change requires a *parallel state apparatus* that actually emerges.

Prof. Ansa Asamoah's list of initiatives consequent upon the Cultural Revolution in the socialist countries only reminds one of Dr. Nkrumah's initiatives in Ghana: mass literacy campaigns, establishment of technical training schools and polytechnics, emancipation of cultural minorities in northern Ghana from colonially-enforced labour reservoirs through preferential allocation of resources, the Kwame Nkrumah Institute for training and retraining of new and old staff respectively in the spirit of scientific socialism³² as well as the

promise but not the sort of promise which ensures the exploitation of other men's labour for the enrichment of a few individuals. Ghana has a duty to her people; a duty to prevent the exploitation of man by man. I personally do not and cannot believe that all our efforts have been undertaken for the purpose of enabling a few persons to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority. For that reason our approach to this new life shall be a socialist pattern of society and it shall be based entirely on Ghanaian conditions and circumstances, in order that our endeavours shall result in the greatest good for the greatest number of our people. We must develop our country to meet the needs of our people so that the ordinary man and woman may be well fed, well clothed and well housed. We must operate a planned economy for use and abundance.' See Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah, Vol. 1*, p.89. With regard to the restraining circumstances he explains, on the occasion of laying the foundation stone and inauguration of the first course of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute on February 18, 1961, that 'the circumstances of the Convention People's Party ... made it practically impossible to organise any consistent party ideological education. Our party was in death-grips with imperialism and colonialism, and it was a grim fight every inch of the way. The objective of independence was so precious that everything else, including party ideological education, had to be pushed aside in the interim.' See Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah, Vol. 2*, p.5

³⁰ Ibid. p.89 This appears in his broadcast on Republic Day 1960.

³¹ Ansa K. Asamoah, *Depeasantization of Africa's Rural Economy*, p.28 Italics added

³² In his speech at the laying of foundation of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute, Dr. Nkrumah states clearly that 'The structure of the Convention People's Party has been built up from our own experiences, conditions,

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for the development of science and its application.³³ Surely, Dr. Nkrumah does not run about shouting that he is on the path of a Cultural Revolution by these actions. But we can see the raging of a Cultural Revolution.

Prof. Ansa Asamoah's difficulties are, therefore, resolved in acknowledgement of the fact of Ghana being in a specific state of *socialist transition* which the subsequent acts of negation by successive regimes systematically abort to our collective chagrin. The process of socialist transformation in Africa necessarily takes a different form from that of the socialist countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America which, as Prof. Asamoah shows, have the opportunity of destroying the political system before embarking on its replacement. In Africa, the process of socialist change involves more demanding thought and action to *simultaneously* build the new and destroy the old inherited colonial capitalist system that serves interests other than those of Africans.

The history of socialism in Ghana exhibits no allergy to socialism. Through the resistance to the neo-colonial capitalist system by generational stalwarts, from the likes of Johnny F.S. Hansen of the People's Revolutionary Party to Kwesi Pratt Jnr. of the Socialist Forum of Ghana from the 1960s to date, there is nothing to show off as allergy to socialism in Ghana. Certainly, there is that section of the Ghanaian compradorial and national bourgeoisie that is truly allergic to socialism. And that is a matter of course. But the generality of Ghanaians is receptive to socialism in point of the fact that when explained to them Ghanaians appreciate it from the standpoint of enduring communal thoughts and practices. Well, perhaps, Prof. Asamoah harbours that allergy.

Whatever the case might be, he provides food for thought by socialists of the Marxist-Nkrumaist orientation. In the following sections we examine his proposals for a depeasantization process within the context of his conception of a national mode of production. Our critique is located within the context of the history of socialist reconstruction in Africa with special reference to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's efforts at socialist transformation. We conclude with a slight but strategic adaptation of Prof. Asamoah's model. Further improvements can be expected from other critical Marxist-Nkrumaist thinker-strategists.

Defining the Asamoah Depeasantization Process

Prof. Ansa Asamoah strongly projects a depeasantization process whereby 'the systematic development of a national mode of production through *the decay of the peasant pattern of production* (is) accompanied by a well calculated

environments and concepts entirely Ghanaian and African in outlook, and based on the Marxist socialist philosophy and worldview.' See Samuel Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah*, Vol. 2, pp.11-12

³³ Ansa Asamoah, *Depeasantization of Africa's Rural Economy*, pp.23-24 Here, Prof. Asamoah provides a list of some achievements of the Cultural Revolution in the socialist countries similar to those listed herein in respect of Dr. Nkrumah's achievements in the socialist transition.

expansion of state-owned and co-operative enterprises at the expense of the individual and private enterprises.³⁴ Unlike the co-operative movement led by the Nkrumah regime's Ghana Farmers' Co-operative Council which pursues its organization of co-operatives *from the national to the village level*, the organization of this co-operative movement is undertaken *from the village to the national level*.³⁵

He urges 'progressive circles *in the academic and government administrative institutions*' to advise government³⁶ to undertake this process of change. In this respect, the burden lies on the government to *lead* the process of organizing and massively investing in co-operatives and collectivized unions 'in all branches of the peasant economy'.³⁷ Hence, the said progressives are to depend on *the existing neo-colonial state* through whose agency their policy proposals are channelled and applied. The *independent* development of an *alternative* state system does not come to attention as the *only* possible instrument for the implementation of such policy proposals, consequently.

And this is explainable in terms of Prof. Asamoah's conviction that Ghana opts for the capitalist system and is allergic to socialism. So that in spite of the socialist *form* that the policy proposals take the latter are capitalist in *content* as the next section brings out. In its essence, therefore, the proposed set of policies constitutes a capitalist *reform* of the neo-colonial capitalist system. It is, therefore, not accidental that Prof. Asamoah shies away from the anticipated emergent mode of production as *socialist* and prefers to accord it the vague terminology of 'national mode of production'. Thus, he conclusively states his optimism 'that *foreign stakeholders* might be *more* interested in our study'.³⁸

Of course, his researched paper under our consideration was prompted by an invitation from *such* foreign shareholders who found a previous publication of his relevant to their concerns. And they had to discuss his subsequent research proposal and a key thesis in it before they accepted and endorsed it. Those foreign shareholders are the international capitalist organizations: Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) (West Africa), an NGO, and the Ford Foundation (West Africa). Excerpts from Prof. Asamoah's Preface and Acknowledgements to his paper *Depeasantization of Africa's Rural Economy – The Ghanaian Experience* read thus:

What has gone wrong? Why is the [African] continent still in a mess three decades (on average) after independence? What about the future? In their search for answers, and prompted by the relevance of my latest publication on Africa's development problems (Asamoah,

³⁴ Op. cit. p.55 Italics added.

³⁵ Op. cit. p.73

³⁶ Op. cit. p.54 Italics added.

³⁷ Op. cit. pp.54-55

³⁸ Op. cit. p.90

1996) to Ghana's quest for better life for the citizenry, Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) (West Africa) invited me to submit a research proposal which should address the crucial aspects of social change in Africa. At a meeting to which Dr. Akwasi Aidoo, Director, Ford Foundation West Africa, was invited, the research proposal was discussed and endorsed...

We agreed that the research should be in two parts. Part one should establish a general methodological trend of social change in Africa as a guide to university students and other stakeholders such as politicians, NGOs which are well disposed to Africa's problems as well as donors, who in one way or another help or will help Africa. The report of Part One of the research was published recently.

Part Two, it was agreed, should address grassroots mobilization potentials in rural Africa, using the Ghanaian experience as an example of the general African rural economic situation. CAF and Ford Foundation accepted a key thesis in the author's research proposal that a systematic, scientific grassroots mobilization of human and natural resource potentials in rural Africa in well-defined institutional or organizational settings would rapidly depeasantize the countries' economy and that the omission of sustainable models in this regard in economic planning in Africa is a chronic hurdle in agricultural transformation.

So that the paper is not the product of an independent intellectual work by a self-financed researcher but one carefully *guided* by well-known international capitalist organizations operating in the interest of international capitalism. They clearly do not just discuss and endorse a key thesis of the paper before research work but also their acceptance of its elaboration is a predetermined conclusion. Prof. Asamoah's optimism can, therefore, be appreciated. For, those organizations are not simply allergic to an essential socialist process but very much resist its emergence. A depeasantization process that transforms the peasant economy in aid of capitalist development qualifies for their *largesse*.

Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah, in his policy proposals, provides us with just that type of a depeasantization process that serves just that type of purpose.

The Capitalist Essence of the Proposed Depeasantization Process

Prof. Ansa Asamoah observes an alignment of existing production relations in Ghana. In the main, he sees pre-capitalist production relations (within which the peasant economy subsists) and capitalist production relations. The two are independently animated by dynamic laws specific to them and therefore each appears as a closed separate system. In spite of this there are dialectical processes of reciprocal influence and interpenetration between them. This is

facilitated by the fact that both relations of production develop in conditions of growing commodity-money relations between them. That leads to a process of *decay*, on the part of the pre-capitalist relations, and *development*, on that of the capitalist mode of production within which capitalist relations subsist.³⁹

Commodity-money relations emerge with the development of the capitalist mode of production out of the womb of feudalism. Prof. Asamoah shows that in the absence of the feudal mode of production in Ghana, where the communal mode of production characterizes the peasant economy, capitalism comes as a *superimposition* on communalist relations.⁴⁰ The process of superimposition involves 'patterns of primary capital accumulation which are scarcely understood in the context of classical primitive accumulation.'⁴¹ In this regard, private individuals, taking advantage of their right of use in communal land as specified by custom, undertake plantation farming without paying rent.⁴²

This goes together with insignificant State compensation for land seized for various purposes. In the colonial era, large mining concessions were also acquired for a pittance. In addition to these land expropriations, urban retail traders buy surplus agrarian products from the peasantry so cheaply that they resell them at 100% or more profit.⁴³ Prof. Asamoah observes that although these expropriations are not as physically outrageous as in America, Asia and Southern Africa the 'democratic form of land ownership is vulnerable to private capitalization'.⁴⁴ This is enhanced by land fertility and low population density as well as possibility of all-year round food production.⁴⁵

While he discerns that this situation 'will sooner or later whet the appetite of both local and external capital in the course of the development of the capitalist forces of production',⁴⁶ he warns that private capitalization and private capital-intensive farming could respectively unleash untold hardships 'in the absence of labour absorbing non-agrarian enterprises.'⁴⁷ Hence, he suggests government involvement in agro-industrial projects in the countryside aimed at boosting local initiative in depeasantization, among other things⁴⁸. This goes in tandem with *de-neo-colonization* of the extractive

³⁹ Op. cit. p.52

⁴⁰ Op. cit. p.31 In his comparative study of the historic experiences of American Red Indian and Southern African communal systems on the one hand and those of the Ghanaian communal system on the other hand he sees common features such as 'the super-imposition of alien capitalism on the communalist non-class order'. This proceeds with internal disintegration of the communalist system.

⁴¹ Op. cit. p.32

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Op. cit. p.33

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Op. cit. p.86

industry through value-added activities like financially supporting small-scale jewellery manufacturing workshops to free Ghana from foreign exploitation.⁴⁹

This suggests the employment of *industrialization* and *de-neo-colonization* as instruments of a humane⁵⁰ depeasantization process. In these processes, while foreign investment is 'strictly controlled and directed into areas of growth potentials in the national economy'⁵¹ the dominance of the private sector in the economy is reappraised⁵² to ensure not only state control of movement of capital between the peasant economy and the modern capitalist sector for the expansion of production in the non-private enterprises⁵³ but also for 'a well calculated expansion of state-owned and co-operative enterprises at the expense of the individual and private enterprises'.⁵⁴

In this regard, Prof. Ansa Asamoah discourages the 'present system whereby the state capitalist sector allocates generous credit facilities and sophisticated means of production at low interest rates to private enterprises both in industry and agriculture'.⁵⁵ He leaves the moment of *disappearance* of private enterprises and private participation in state-owned enterprises to a future date when 'the escalating class struggle in Ghanaian society ... decide(s) at the appropriate time'.⁵⁶ His exact statement in whole says that:

Whether or not the private enterprises as well as private participation in the state-owned enterprises should have to disappear in the fully developed national mode of production of the future, is a matter for the escalating class struggle in Ghanaian society to decide at the appropriate time.

This leaves Prof. Asamoah's 'national mode of production' appropriately in the character of a *transition*. But the question is: a transition to where? Is it a *socialist* transition or a *capitalist* transition? For, his characterization of the present economy as a 'neo-colonialist capitalist order'⁵⁷ which is weak⁵⁸ suggests that the economy is yet to develop into a full-fledge capitalism. We can be certain that his leaving the disappearance of private capital as an open question indicates that the construction of the 'national mode of production' is *not* undertaken under *conscious socialist direction*; since, from the word 'go', the class struggle *already* determines that direction – capitalist or socialist.

⁴⁹ Op. cit. pp.85-86

⁵⁰ Op. cit. p.89

⁵¹ Op. cit. p.85

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Op. cit. p.55

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Op. cit. p.53

⁵⁸ Op. cit. p.62

A directionless transition indicates a directionless leadership. But the history of class struggles has no example of such a leadership. Prof. Ansa Asamoah's 'national mode of production', run on principles that guarantee the survival of private capitalist participation *within* the state *beyond* that transition, can only be capitalist-oriented. And that state cannot but be capitalist.⁵⁹

Socialist Policy Direction Development

Essentially, Prof. Ansa Asamoah's paper gives us an idea of how *not* to structure out a socialist policy direction development right from the initial phase of the socialist process while it suggests elements of strategy that could be incorporated in such a policy development. In the development of socialist policy, we set our immediate horizons on an organic ultimate emergence of the working people in socio-economic-political class dominance. This steady pursuit of working people's class dominance *begins* as an *independent* development of new economic organs of production whereby the working people continually control the means of production in land and other such resources *alongside* the neo-colonial system. It is a multi-faceted simultaneous pursuit.

Set within the framework of the general process of liberation and unification of Africa away from neo-colonial capitalism, the development of socialist forces of production takes the form of a *transcontinental* counter-strategic pursuit. African states are rendered unviable as single entities through an imperialist neo-colonial continental strategy designed to keep each of them dependent on the West. These states are so organized that rather than facilitate intra-African interactions they simultaneously restrict them and obstruct African access to Western markets. Infrastructural development in African countries continues to follow the colonial pattern which connects each of them not to the other but as parallel economic appendages to the Western capitalist systems.

In Prof. Ansa Asamoah's presentation we find a *neglect* of this fundamental significance of the liberation and unification of Africa as the framework within which to struggle in aid of de-neo-colonialization. The best advance he makes in this direction is his call for Ghana to link up with other West African countries with similar undertakings in heavy industrial development to

⁵⁹ It is interesting that in spite of the profuse use of Marxist and socialist terminologies as well as objections to capitalism in his works, Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah does not *really care* whether Africa's industrial development takes place within a capitalist or socialist framework. In his *Socio-Economic Development Strategies of Independent African Countries – The Ghanaian Experience* (1996), p. 204, he recommends that 'Autonomous industrialized Africa either within a capitalist or socialist framework (or both) should be aspired to in the light of the new international situation.' Only an Establishment academician talks like this. Such might be the first winner of the title 'Directionless Leader'. But that might be meaningless because, in fact, the direction of his recommendations to the capitalist neo-colonial state, one of which he considers might 'be useful in the SOE (State-Owned Enterprises) reform efforts' (Op. cit. p.199) tells it all; that is, his veritable capitalist reform orientation and capitulation to the neo-colonial state and singular anxiety to resolve the crises of that state. On the same page, he discourages 'workers' management of the ineffective state enterprises'. Oh! No, there is nothing like 'Directionless Leadership', ideologically speaking.

address the need for heavy capital therein within the framework of Africa's economic integration. The problem here is that this call is occasioned by Ghana's particular need. It is opportunistic. Let us quote his exact formulation thus:

Because of the heavy capital necessary for heavy industrial development Ghana's efforts in the area have to link with similar developments in the rest of the West African sub-region in the context of economic integration in Africa. It is an area where the state must be fully involved.⁶⁰

It is this unnecessary duplication and multiplication of African development efforts that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah seeks to negate through his advocacy of conscious continental planning. This planning-type situates particular industries in particular parts of Africa where the advantage is optimal in the collective interest of Africa. Talking about continental planning he states in his book *Africa Must Unite* that

Africa, it is frequently maintained, is poor. Yet it is widely acknowledged that its potentials provide tremendous possibilities for the wealthy growth of the continent, already known to contain vast mineral and power resources. The economic weakness of the new African states has been inherited from the colonial background, which subordinated their development to the needs of the colonial powers. To reverse the position and bring Africa into the realm of highly productive modern nations, calls for a gigantic self-help programme. Such a programme can only be produced and implemented by integrated planning within an over-all policy decided by a continental authority.

The superstructure of colonial particularism upon Africa's subsistence economies has resulted in a highly uneven regional development of the continent...⁶¹

What economic possibilities will be opened up as our whole continent is surveyed and its economic exploitation tackled on a total basis, there is no telling.⁶²...

The necessary capital for all these developments can only be accumulated by the employment of our resources on a continental extension. This calls for a central organization to formulate a comprehensive economic policy for Africa which will embrace the scientific, methodical and economic planning of our ascent from poverty into industrial greatness...⁶³

⁶⁰ Op. cit. p.86

⁶¹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, Panaf Books, 1963, p.150

⁶² Ibid. p.152

⁶³ Ibid. p.157

In the face of forces that are combining to reinforce neo-colonialism in Africa, it is imperative that the leaders should begin now to seek the best and quickest means by which we can collectivize our economic resources and produce an integrated plan for their careful deployment for our mutual benefit. If we can do this, we shall raise in Africa a great industrial, economic and financial power comparable to any that the world has seen in our time.⁶⁴

In his characterization of the current African economy, Dr. Nkrumah states categorically that

It is purely and simply a trading economy. *Our trade, however, is not between ourselves. It is turned towards Europe* and embraces us as providers of low-priced primary materials in exchange for the more expensive finished goods we import. Except where we have associated and formed a common selling policy, we come into *competition* that acts to force down the prices we receive to the profit of the overseas buyers.⁶⁵

Writing about the separatism that generates this unhealthy competitive spirit and national isolation in planning, he proceeds to comment that

In the isolation of purely national planning, our rate of progress can only be halting, our individual developments doomed to slowness, no matter how intensive our efforts or careful our projects. Expansion of extractive industries, extension and diversification of agriculture, establishment of secondary industries, some infra-structure, the building of a few key industries – this is what we may expect within the confines of our national planning, and even this is not assured. Certainly not without the most careful trimming and austerity, and an uneven struggle at all times against coercive pressures, both external and domestic.

Each of us alone cannot hope to secure the highest benefits of modern technology, which demands vast capital investment and can only justify its economics in serving an extensive population. *A continental merging of our land areas, our populations and our resources*, will alone give full substance to our aspirations to advance from our pre-industrial state to that stage of development that can provide for all the people the high standard of living and welfare amenities of the most advanced industrial states.

It may, of course, be argued that any economic integration at this time would be like a pooling of poverty. But this ignores the essential core of integration: that it will co-ordinate all the existing resources, economic, agricultural, mineral, financial, and employ them

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.172

⁶⁵ Op. cit. p.160 Italics added.

methodically so as to improve over-all surplus, to assist a wider capital development. Further, a co-ordinated survey of the continental resources, actual and potential, human and material, will permit planning to eliminate the present imbalance in identical forms of primary trading economies and provide for the erection of a *complementary* pattern of development which will give the fullest opportunity for progressive capital formations...

Separatism, indeed, cuts us off from a multitude of advantages which we would enjoy from union... The Inga dam, a blueprint dream for the Congo, may not get beyond that stage without the co-operation of other African states, for no single state could afford to build it. Yet if it were built, the dam would provide 25 million kilowatts of electricity, which is estimated to be four-and-half times the output expected from the largest hydro-electrical plant in the Soviet Union: the Bratsk Dam. The Inga project could go a long way towards electrifying the whole of the African continent.

If the independent states had a united, integrated economic policy, the building of the Inga dam could be carefully planned to support an extended industrial growth, catering for a far larger population. Its cost would, therefore, be economically spread. *This is only a single illustration of what African integrated economic planning might do. Extend it to all sectors of our economies, and its possibilities are infinite.*⁶⁶

These excerpts from Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's book *Africa Must Unite* provide a clear statement of a continental strategy for Africa's development policy. Other sections of the book indicate Dr. Nkrumah's ideological preference for socialism – in an instance, he puts it this way: 'The planned industrialization ... must be geared to the *social objective* of the highest upliftment of *the masses of the people*, and presupposes the elimination of those *acquisitive tendencies* which lead to sectional conflicts within society. By these means alone can Africa maintain the popular support without which the planned programme cannot succeed, and arrive at that economic freedom which is the intertwined goal of political independence.'⁶⁷

Previously, he states that 'The greatest single lesson that can be drawn from the history of industrial development in the world today is the uncounted advantages which planning has in the first place over the *laissez faire* go-as-you-please (capitalist) policies of the early pioneers of industrialism; and secondly, how *immensely superior* planning on a continental scale, *allied to a socialized objective*, has proved for the giant latecomers into the realm of modern statehood over the fragmented discordant attempts of disunited

⁶⁶ Ibid. pp.168-170 Italics added.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p.171

entities, as on the South American continent'.⁶⁸ Continental planning allied to a socialized objective – that captures Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's socialist strategy for advancement of socialist policy development. He is socialist oriented.⁶⁹

It contrasts with Prof. Ansa Asamoah's narrow separatist strategy that leaves African neo-colonial states in their pigeon-holes. It explains why though it was 'regarded as an abomination'⁷⁰ to have Ghanaians educated in the socialist countries before independence Dr. Nkrumah, whose Marxist credentials⁷¹ date back to the 1940s, does just that with the attainment of independence.⁷² The separatist stance in Prof. Asamoah's paper is one element that is avoided in socialist policy development in Africa.⁷³ But other elements enhance socialist policy development on the continent. His concept of co-operative development, critically appraised, is one. Let us get down to its content.

Prof. Asamoah makes co-operatives the basis for the depeasantization of the peasant economy. He urges progressive circles in academic and government institutions to advise the government to this effect. He projects co-operatives that are devoid of 'unscrupulous principles of exploitation'. He further projects individuals with capital investing in these co-operatives. Profit-sharing among such individuals is, however, not to be determined solely by the size of capital invested but also by the individual's labour input, family size and degree of poverty. Whatever this means readers are better helped with a direct quote thus:

... government must be advised by progressive circles in the academic and government administrative institutions (i) to organize ... the units of production in all branches of the peasant economy (fishing, farming, handicrafts, livestock rearing) on the basis of co-operation... Within the co-operatives unscrupulous principles of exploitation must not be allowed. For example, the size of the capital invested by an individual should not decide solely the percentage of

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.165 Italics added.

⁶⁹ In a speech, captioned 'Building a Socialist State', to the CPP Study Group on April 22, 1961, Dr. Nkrumah states that 'as I have asserted time and again, socialism is the only pattern that can within the shortest possible time bring the good life to the people ... At this juncture Ghana is not a socialist state. Not only do the people as yet not own all the major means of production and distribution, but we have still to lay the actual foundation upon which socialism can be built, namely, the complete industrialization of our country.' See the full speech at pp. 69-82 of Samuel Obeng's *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah, Vol. 2* for his full exposition of his socialist thrust.

⁷⁰ Ansa Asamoah, *Depeasantization of Africa's Rural Economy*, p.49

⁷¹ As already quoted in a footnote above, Dr. Nkrumah is categorical in 1961 that the building of the CPP from local experiences and conditions etc. was 'based on the Marxist socialist philosophy and worldview'.

⁷² The blogs *consciencism.wordpress.com* and *marxistnkrumaistforum.wordpress.com* have this author's *On the Question of Who Founded Ghana*. It explains Dr. Nkrumah's pragmatic Marxist politics from the 1940s.

⁷³ Dr. Nkrumah declares, 'The dimension of our struggle is equal to the size of the African continent itself. It is in no way confined within any of the absurd limits of the micro-states created by the colonial powers, and jealously guarded by imperialist puppets during the neo-colonialist period'. Kwame Nkrumah, *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, p.48

profit. Labour input and family size as well as the degree of poverty should be equally decisive as far as profit sharing is concerned.⁷⁴

The centrality of private individual capital in this type of co-operative is not in any possible doubt. To use the current neo-colonial state phraseology, it is *the engine of growth* of the co-operative system. These individuals, who bring in their own *labour-power* and *capital*, could be seen as *worker-capitalists*. But that would be a misnomer based on an oversight. For, they do not employ *anybody* whose surplus-labour *they* could appropriate in the surplus-value created – *exploitation* is guarded against. They cannot be said to be capitalists. They are effectively workers with their own capital. This neatly projects a re-enactment of conditions exhibited within the communal mode of production wherein labour and means of production are united in the worker or, which is the same thing, the working collective.⁷⁵

It might be in this light that Prof. Asamoah projects that ‘Communal ownership of land ... would tremendously facilitate co-operative production’.⁷⁶ For, the fact of land availability means that the level of capital requirement from the individual is drastically reduced. To complement this facility he suggests the adoption of a labour-intensive pattern of production since ‘the advantage of the co-operative labour-intensive methods of production at the early stage of rural economic transformation of a developing country is that it guarantees higher productivity and rapid capital formation without much state subventions or capital investments.’⁷⁷

In fact, he distinguishes between labour-intensive production based on the family and that based within the co-operative framework. He asserts that the latter increases production at a faster rate than does the former. This is due to the fact of pooling different skills and experiences as well as less expensive sets of tools or implements within the co-operatives. Additionally, unlike the family, division of labour in the co-operative is not exclusively determined by sex but by experience, skill and age as well.⁷⁸ On the whole, all this suggests that the invested individual capital is minimized within co-operative settings. Hence, the *main* individual input is one’s own labour-power.

⁷⁴ Op. cit. pp.54-55

⁷⁵ We should also note that significantly in Prof. Asamoah’s projections here in spite of the implied proposal that levels of capital invested could vary among the individuals that does not constitute the over-riding measure for determining benefits. Labour inputs and family needs are *equally* important. So that it is the social needs of these workers that determine access to benefits. But one might be confused since at page 71 he restates that ‘The peasants of the ... villages could pool their individual farms (and even fallow land) for co-operative production. Other individual inputs (labour, implements, experiences) have to be pooled and rewarded *in proportion to quantity and value of inputs.*’ An apparent doublespeak occurs but resolved here.

⁷⁶ Ibid.p.33

⁷⁷ Ibid. p.54

⁷⁸ Ibid. p.72 It might be useful to also see another statement of the model advocated here in his *Socio-Economic Development Strategies of Independent African Countries – The Ghanaian Experience*, 1996, p. 77-78. Although that is less elaborate, it explains aspects of the presentation here more adequately. Reading the two publications together might prove more beneficial to the reader.

From this premise, Prof. Asamoah projects that after the end of the gestation period in order to forestall exploitation 'all individual shares have to be bought out by the co-operative'.⁷⁹ This is called for due to the circumstance that during the period of gestation individuals are 'rewarded in proportion to quantity and value of initial inputs'.⁸⁰ That paves the way for the elimination of the level of capital input as a measure of benefits from the co-operative. And the end of the gestation period, during which the profit margins of the co-operative grow, marks the end of the transition to the capital-intensive method of production. This transition is managed to absorb redundant labour.

The introduction of machines occasions this labour redundancy which is then channelled into the field of secondary industry like food processing, opening of workshops for repairing farming machines and tools of the co-operatives as well as cultural ventures like schools and entertainment facilities. This means the *simultaneous* training of technical manpower *during the period of the introduction* of the machines into agriculture.⁸¹ At this stage Prof. Asamoah calls for massive government investment aid (p.55) to the co-operative process. This whole process begins from the village level towards the national level.⁸²

The attraction of this format for building co-operatives along *socialist* lines is its initial start-up from the grassroots or village level on the basis of *local initiative* virtually without government participation.⁸³ Prof. Asamoah refers to certain instances where villages in Ghana, like Taviefe, build schools 'through local initiative'⁸⁴ and 'raise funds to support government electrification efforts'.⁸⁵ Within the conditions of neo-colonial governance what distracts from this positive line of thought is the *hijacking* of the co-operative process by the government in its *second phase* when capital-intensive methods are introduced. That leaves the process to neo-colonial exploitative incursions.

It appears out of sync that Prof. Asamoah – having admitted that the 'present political system is a reactionary one; it is capitalist oriented with comprador and national bourgeois elements (in collaboration with a corrupt neo-colonial army and multi-national co-operations (sic)), systematically taking control of

⁷⁹ Ibid.p.71

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.p.72

⁸² Ibid.p.73

⁸³ In point of fact, Prof. Asamoah holds in a previous work that 'Till the co-operatives become self-sufficient, government support for them in terms of input, technical advice, cultural education, credit etc. must be sustained. This is necessary because of teething problems which face them during the period of gestation.' See Ansa Asamoah, *Socio-Economic Strategies of Independent African Countries – The Ghanaian Experience*, 1996, pp.77-78. So that, during the period of gestation the government actually plays a *significant* role in the process and as such controls it through such sponsorship.

⁸⁴ Op. cit. p.67

⁸⁵ Op. cit. p.63

the national economy'⁸⁶ and that 'the whole peasant question in Ghana would remain basically unsolved unless it is approached on the national level within a progressive political framework'⁸⁷ – should get out of his way to *surrender* the local initiatives to neo-colonial parasitism. Placing the development of the co-operative process in the hands of neo-colonial government is self-defeatist.

Prof. Ansa Asamoah appears to us to have taken the correct line of thought in his tactic of looking for opportunities *within* the neo-colonial order to advance the cause of developing productive forces in Ghana.⁸⁸ The aberration here is that such opportunities, when explored and *utilized within* the same neo-colonial system, can only lead to a reform of that system to strengthen it in favour of the same parasitic comprador and national bourgeois classes. In our considered opinion the *utilization* of those opportunities must be 'outside' the neo-colonial system and *within* an evolving anti-neo-colonial system being developed *alongside* it to *replace* that constricting reactionary system.

In this light, the 'village-to-village campaign' in promotion of the co-operative idea must not be in the hands of neo-colonial government agencies and so-called experts who would misdirect the entire exercise in favour of neo-colonial reform.⁸⁹ That is the task for Marxist-Nkrumaists in the framework of Revolutionary Pan-Africanism directed at the total liberation and unification of Africa in destruction and elimination of capitalist neo-colonialism from the soil of Africa. This is an *independent* endeavour informed by a socialist direction zealously guarded and guided by the said African revolutionaries.

At this stage it becomes imperative to subject Prof. Asamoah's co-operative idea to further scrutiny. For, a scientific socialist initiative undertaken through the process of utilizing existing opportunities to develop an alternative system in replacement of the existing system stands the risk of taking things 'as is' and therefore falls to the temptations of pragmatistic applications. The need for pragmatic approaches cannot be gainsaid; but where they are not consciously directed *ideologically* they become entrenched and *reproduce the existing system*. As Explo Nani-Kofi correctly puts it in a conversation, the practice becomes the norm. That is what we mean in our reference to 'pragmatistic'. Prof. Asamoah's idea appears to us clothed in the pragmatistic garment which must be rendered off it.

There is to be found in his paper a tendency to take communal ownership in land 'as is' with respect to individual parcelling out of the land for individual

⁸⁶ Op. cit. p.53

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ Op. cit. p.55

farming. In his call for pooling of such individual farms into co-operative units he is concerned with the *economies of scale* to be derived therefrom. That essentially reproduces old practices on a larger scale.⁹⁰ He appears to realize this when he suggests that the co-operative buys out the shares of individual farmers at a certain stage of its development.⁹¹ Effectively, this amounts to the crafty *dispossession* of the former individual farmers of their land whose value cannot be quantified in terms of its lifetime benefits – it is priceless.

In reality, these individual farms are increasingly proving unviable and are being abandoned by the youth, as he points out elsewhere in the paper. They are increasingly left in the hands of growingly unproductive aged persons.⁹² In the process, they are increasingly sold out for purposes of ostentatious consumption or to meet lineage obligations, as he again points out.⁹³ At this moment of writing this piece, our own on-going investigations into land and its ownership and acquisition in Ghana show that local chiefs are no longer mere custodians of communal lands but have acquired the right to sell the lands and pocket the proceeds. All this points to new configurations in land ownership.

Given this development we see a trend towards not only youth vacation of farms on communal land but also a growing privatization of such lands which are then developed as individual plantations. And, interestingly, sections of these alienated youth are organized by so-called farm contractors into labour gangs to work on such plantations upon call across the country. This indicates an on-going dialectical process of depeasantization and proletarianization.⁹⁴ It is the environment or context of this dialectical process that should interest socialist forces. It provides these forces with an opportunity to take advantage of acquiring such lands for the permanent resettlement of the labour gangs.

Such an acquisition does not just restore the land to youth ownership but also more significantly to their *collective* ownership and development. In this way, the communal pattern of apportioning parcels of land for unviable individual development is simultaneously abolished democratically and rejuvenated at a higher level of land ownership wherein the collective manages development of agriculture and the secondary industries that arise therefrom. This form of

⁹⁰ Co-operatives are not necessarily socialist. In fact, those run on capitalist principles have the potential of developing into the like of transnational corporations. Talking about some five of them, *The Great Food Robbery*, published by GRAIN, reports that 'These five cooperatives are owned by around 70,000 farmer members in the US, Europe and New Zealand. While each produces its own dairy products, much of the milk their farmers produce goes to supply the multinational processors. In this, the interests of the big cooperatives and the processors are often closely aligned. Indeed, the big cooperatives are multinationals in their own right, most having established or taken over dairy companies overseas, and their policies can clash with the interests of the farmers that supply them, particular the smaller-scale dairy farmers.'

⁹¹ This suggestion does not arise in his 1996 publication.

⁹² Op. cit. p. 69

⁹³ Op. cit. p.62 At p. 62, he states that 'Here and there land has been privatized because of its commercial value and exigencies which need urgent collective lineage monetary response.'

⁹⁴ The Centre for Conscientist Studies and Analyses (CENCSA) intends to undertake a self-financed research into the movement and operations of the labour gangs in the proletarianization process as part of the depeasantization of the countryside.

land ownership and development with a directed socialist ideological thrust seeks to guarantee the workers' *instinctive defence* of the evolved mode of production which they control against resurgent capitalism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. This requires the framework of a revolutionary organization.

That revolutionary organization, emerging from the collective co-operative process, provides the progressive socialist political framework for planned implementation of development proposals collectively arrived at on the farms and in the industries. It sees to the collective development of the collective co-operative movement out of which a true socialist state evolves independently of the neo-colonial mode of production and reactionary political system. In this light, Prof. Asamoah's construct of a depeasantization process effectively under existing neo-colonial government direction and sponsorship falls short of the demands of socialist political economy. That is clearly and totally unacceptable. That construct can only land in the reproduction of capitalism.

No doubt then that Prof. Asamoah does not only consider that 'it is highly possible that foreign stakeholders might be more interested in our study'.⁹⁵ More importantly, he projects that, among other factors, the vulnerability of the democratic (communal) form of land ownership to private capitalization 'will sooner or later whet the appetite of both internal and external capital in the course of the development of the capitalist forces of production'. In this respect, he expects that the process of private capitalization 'would be preceded by bourgeois land reform'.⁹⁶ And, of course, his reform construct that *ultimately dispossesses* the individual farmers of their communal land through a co-operative system under government control does just that.

Conclusion

Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah provides us with a possibly pioneering model for the depeasantization of rural Africa to free productive forces in that community. As a pioneering model, we can expect oversights. We have here tried to locate such oversights together with our critical appreciation of formulations that we deem can promote the ends of freeing the said productive forces. In the process, we find ourselves uncomfortable with the prospect of peasants losing their communal lands should his proposals be implemented.

For which reason we strongly suggest a comprehensive reformulation of those proposals to take account of the need to contextualize them in the process of the total liberation and unification of Africa under the direction of Marxist-Nkrumaist Revolutionary Pan-Africanism for the destruction of neo-colonial capitalism and realization of socialism in Africa. Our reformulation restores privatized land and land in the process of being privatized to the individual

⁹⁵ Op. cit. p.90

⁹⁶ Op. cit. p.33

through a collective co-operative wherein land is owned and developed collectively for the depeasantization of Africa's rural economy and industrialization.

Processes of change in Africa for socialism cannot be on the pattern of socialist transformation in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. The emergence of socialist forces in dominance in these latter areas is through resort to armed struggles that end in the destruction of the existing political systems *before* reconstruction begins. In Africa the initial assumption to political power by progressive forces is by way of a process that leaves the political systems intact and inherited. Furthermore, the system of soviets does not emerge from the co-operative movement. A palpable dichotomy, therefore, exists in the Soviet arrangement between the State and the co-operatives. That guarantees working people's lack of interest in the survival of the Soviet State.

African processes are complicated by the fact that a multiple of fronts of struggle face the forces of change: finalization of the liberation process and de-neo-colonization, unification of the continent, socialist reconstruction. This presents Africa with the need to dialectically conceptualize its struggles in an integrated and multi-faceted manner. This is a situation unique to Africa and Latin America. It calls for the utilization of democratic opportunities to build a continental State from grassroots mobilization and organization for a socialist mode of production based on collective co-operatives. The inevitable moment of armed struggle to finalize the process calls for simultaneous preparation.

Hence, the forces of change in Africa do not have use in so-called capturing of neo-colonial power, which must be destroyed, though they need to infiltrate the entire neo-colonial state system with the clear intention to sabotage and weaken it progressively in anticipation of the armed struggle which must be minimally bloody, if at all. This is the calling of the progressive socialist youth of Africa on the continent and in the Diaspora operating in a disciplined revolutionary organization. It is the critical point in African patriotism. Let the African youth respond to this call without let and in absolute enthusiasm. Need we say more? Only this: Long Live Africa! Aluta Continua! Victory is Certain!

Postscript

Contrary to what socialists like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah believe and programme for, Prof. Ansa K. Asamoah finds it *absurd* that housing the people should be a government concern. All the same, he calls on government to assist the *individual* in an indirect manner through the democratic distribution of wealth to build their own houses. This is how he puts it: 'It is *absurd* to expect any government of Ghana to solve the housing problem both in the rural and urban areas of the country *through state intervention*. Improvement of housing

must be preceded by or synchronized with general economic development, high income and democratic distribution of wealth. These pre-conditions, combined with state *encouragement of individual efforts*, seem to be the best way to approach the housing problem.' See p.66 of his paper. Italics added.

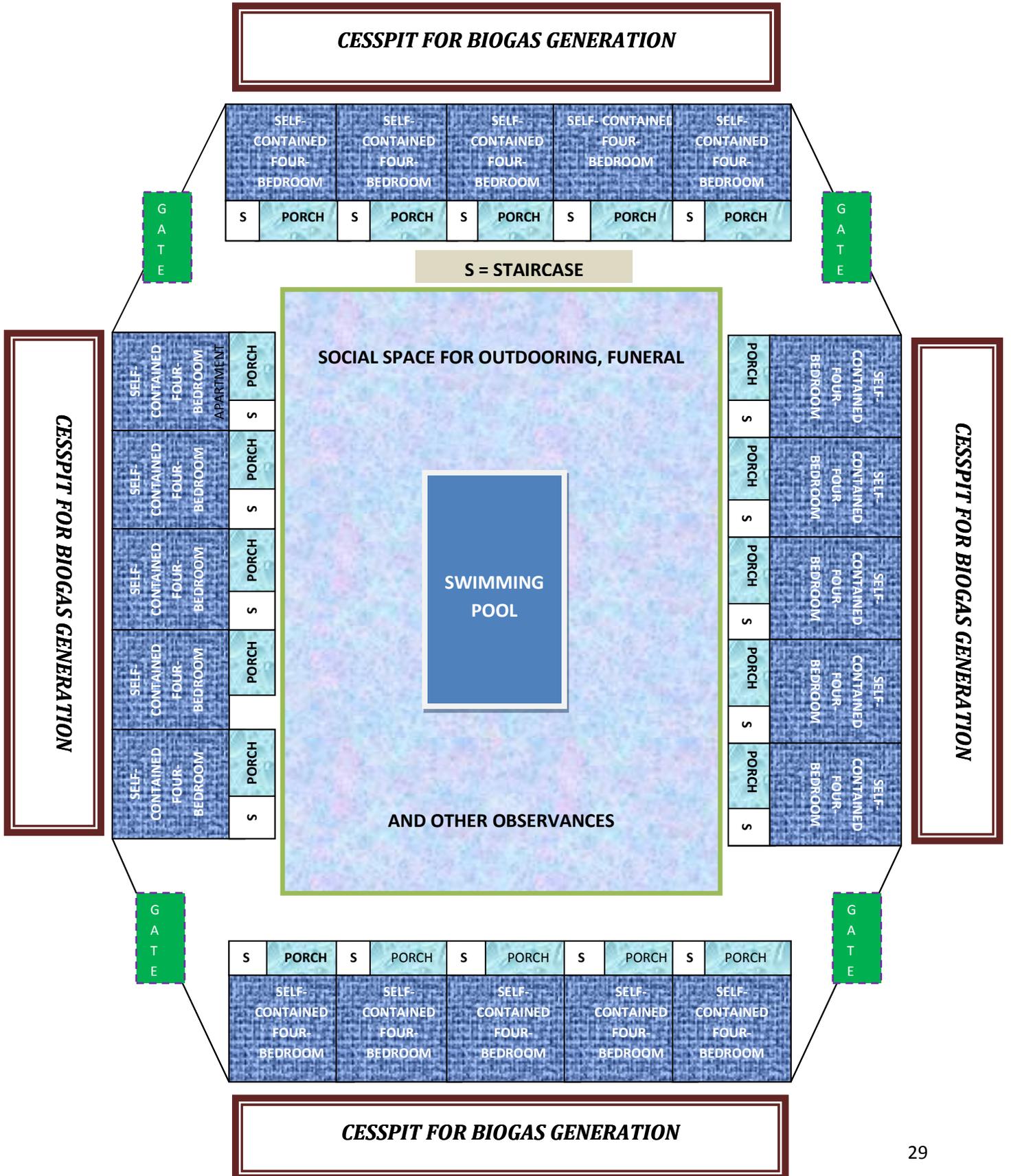
This tension-ridden contradictory statement, in itself, portrays Prof. Asamoah's 'national mode of production' concept more as a capitalist-oriented project wherein, contrary to his apparent rejection of capitalism, production is reorganized to make the poor majority more useful for the local development of capitalism to the benefit of the few. It is strange that while *discouraging* 'state intervention' in solving the housing problem he, in the same breath, suggests 'state encouragement of individual efforts' to the same end. Of course, *state encouragement* amounts to *state intervention* in a particular direction. Dr. Nkrumah's planned housing development at Tema in Ghana does not only put houses in the hands of those who would otherwise not have had their own houses but also shows how state intervention handles other problems like sanitation in an *integrated* manner.

In our projection of collective co-operatives, we perceive them as not just agricultural units of production but also providers of the integrated housing needs of their members; which needs include the handling of sanitation, availability of bio-gas-generated electricity based on community-generated sewage, health facilities, common spaces for social observances like funerals and child-outdooing ceremonies, etc. The haphazard handling of the housing needs of the people through individual efforts very well leads to the uneven scenario whereby mansions tower over miserable structures that pass for houses mis-accommodating the poor who line up at the public toilet facilities whence their sewage is removed by septic tankers to be deposited in the sea to provide unwanted lavender to the poor living near that sea. Prof. Asamoah sees *absurdity*; in his construct, we see *insensitivity* to humanity and environ.

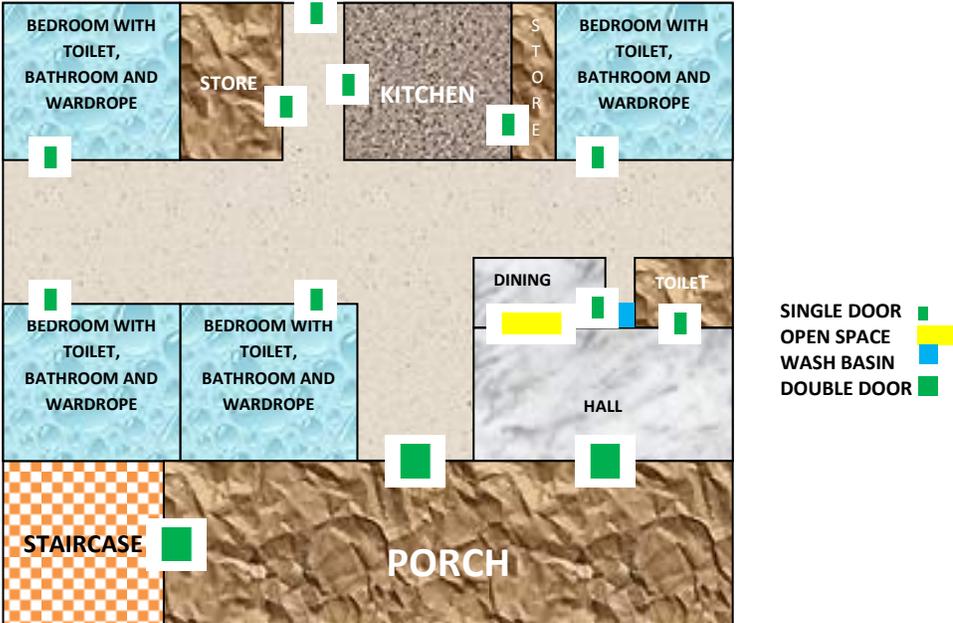
The attached Appendix below is on the drawing board of the Centre for Consciencist Studies and Analyses (CENCSA). It gives us an idea of what should be on the mind of a set of collective co-operatives within a district in terms of a housing policy.

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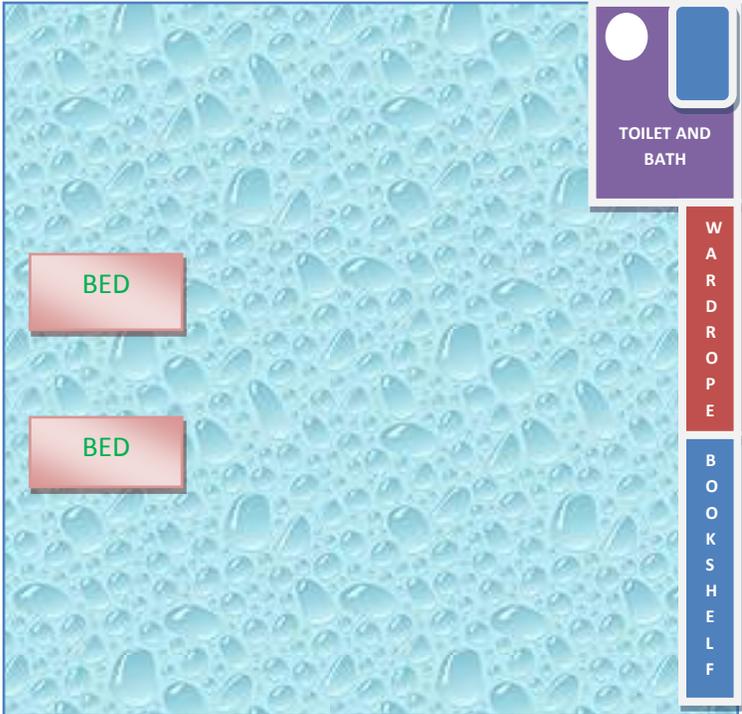
APPENDIX: CENCSA DIAMOND FOUR-STOREY FLATS COMPLEX WITH SELF-CONTAINED FOUR-BEDROOM APARTMENTS



STRUCTURE OF AN APARTMENT AND DETAILS OF A BEDROOM



AN APARTMENT



A BEDROOM

AT THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE DIAMOND COMPLEX

