This review is published with the express intent of providing a counterweight to that mass of literature on Africa which holds: that Africa's continuing chronic poverty is primarily an internal problem and not a product of her colonial history and her present dependence; that the successful attraction of foreign capital and the consequent production within the confines of the international market will bring development; and that the major role in achieving development must be played by western-educated, 'modernizing' elites who will bring progress to the 'backward' masses. We hold these perspectives to be inaccurate and mystifying and with regard to the last it should be clear that while the African revolution needs leaders and cadres, the record suggests that the leaders who inherited power at independence have all too often borne out Fanon's description of them as 'spoilt children of yesterday's colonialism and of today's national governments, [who] organise the loot of whatever national resources exist' — primarily on behalf of foreign interests, of course.

As a counter to this perspective, our task will be to examine the roots of Africa's present condition. In simple terms, we propose to ask: why is Africa's productive potential not realised? Why are most of its people still poor? Why is the continent still dependent, its future still controlled by outside forces? But merely providing an alternative analysis could be just as emplyly 'academic'. It is hoped therefore that our contributors will also address themselves to those issues concerned with the actions needed if Africa is to develop its potential. Though we are aware that these questions of tactics and strategy can be answered finally only by those struggling in Africa itself, we hope that this journal will provide a forum which will assist in sharpening analysis and in facilitating the fruitful accumulation of experience.
The task at hand calls for analysis of the crucial issues and in this we can propose no better guiding principle than Mao's dictum: 'No investigation, no right to speak'. But analysis requires a method, and the method must derive from a theory of social change which focuses on the agents of change. Amilcar Cabral understood how this kind of theory was a necessary 'weapon' and echoes Lenin's phrase that 'there can be no revolutionary struggle without a revolutionary theory'. These two tasks of acquiring the tools and applying them to make an analysis should not be seen as an end in themselves or the separate task of full-time intellectuals. They are necessary in the practical business of working out a strategy for carrying on the struggle.

The analysis of Africa is in its early stages though the revolutionary practice of the struggle in Guine-Bissau and Mozambique is beginning to yield valuable insights about the tactics of armed struggle, about mobilisation and about patterns of grass-roots development. Saul's piece on the peasantry in Africa brilliantly sets out some of these points.

In spite of such promising beginnings it cannot be said that even among radical students of Africa there is a consensus about the diagnosis of the ills, much less about the appropriate cure. Hence one point of departure of this Review is that it does not presume to offer a 'line'. Appropriate analysis and the devising of a strategy for Africa's revolution must be encouraged and we hope that the provision of this platform for discussion will assist that process. Ultimately the specific answers will emerge from the actual struggles of the African people, on the continent and throughout the world. A periodical prepared at a distance can at best hope to perform a small holding operation by initiating debate, until the political climate in at least one part of the continent allows enough of an opening for a radical journal to 'come home'.

The Ideological Perspective
Having said that this Review will not be given over to the narrow promotion of some dogmatic formula or be a mouthpiece for any political faction, we should stress that we do have an ideological perspective. We are not content to be merely eclectic, mixing collections of bits and pieces of wisdom from all parts of the political spectrum. Though we do not have at hand a completely worked out analysis we do have a common starting point. We are not neutral about the kind of method that offers the best chance of coming to terms with the realities of African underdevelopment. The perspective of the Review will be in this sense Marxist — not in offering a blueprint for some future society, nor in supporting a particular type of regime, as popular usage mistakenly might indicate, but in using a method which analyses a situation in order to change it. This approach sees the changing patterns of production as holding the key to changes in all societal relationships. It analyses the changing relations of production and the role of state power in reproducing them in order to identify the emerging contradictions. Identifying these contradictions indicates not only the essential character of the social formation requiring to be changed, but
equally the opportunities that will have to be seized in order to transform society.

There are two major components to such analyses. Identification of the social relationships, especially the class relations, associated with certain modes of production highlights the systemic roots of the problem: whether it be the general nature of Africa's underdevelopment or something as specific as the presently raging famines. But class analysis involves a second stage: the identification, on the basis of the particular position and interests of the different classes and the strata within them, of the likely allies and opponents in the struggle to transform an underdeveloped society, and it is here that Saul's piece in this issue makes its contribution.

Applied to the African context, our method first requires recognition of the existing relations for what they are: whatever populist myths about 'African socialism' may be in vogue, Africa is dominated by capitalist relations. Moreover the development of its capitalism has two critical peculiarities. Unlike the national capitalist systems that emerged, driven by indigenous forces in Europe, North America, and Japan, in Africa the process was initiated from outside, when capitalism had reached the advanced and expansive stage of imperialism. But the capitalist relations that thus developed were not simply those between the African people as a whole and the external powers or specific exploiters. Africa's integration into the global system of capitalism brought about changed internal relationships which have developed into the characteristics of 'peripheral capitalism'.

We must therefore seek to comprehend African reality at a number of levels. We must reject the orthodoxy of bourgeois social science which sees each national economy, state and society, and often even each of their separate problems in isolation; in this view international forces are at most the 'context' for national development and never the source of exploitation and dominance. However, we must not simply see Africa as the reflection of imperialism. There is a need to develop theoretical insights into the specificity of the social formations that underdeveloped capitalism gives rise to, in response both to the pre-capitalist history of Africa and to its integration into the international capitalist system. Such an approach sees the dynamic of African societies as a complex result of internal and external forces which distort and limit the development of the forces of production under capitalism. In this we are, at least initially, at odds with a position, claiming the mantle of Marxist orthodoxy, which holds that the distortion of so-called peripheral capitalism is no more than the natural and inevitable concomitant of all capitalist development, and that the potential of peripheral capital is only as limited as the potential of capitalism itself. Our profound disagreement with this position does not mean, however, that we reject it out of hand and we hope that this position will be the subject of a critical debate in these pages. Certainly the increased internationalisation of capital does at least open up the possibility that peripheries can in future no longer be geographically defined.

In this issue Samir Amin's paper offers us in outline a summary of
his basic model of the workings of the international system as a whole, presented at length in his recent two books. It provides us with an ideal starting point: a general view of international capitalism, identifying the crucial differences in the dynamic of accumulation at the centre and at the periphery: Differences which promote development in the metropoles and inhibit it in Africa. It is our hope that his work, which represents the most significant African contribution to the debate on underdevelopment, will be studied widely and discussed critically.

Though committed to the analysis of Africa in a global context, we do feel that this involves more than a discussion of alternative general theoretical frameworks of how production and accumulation occur at the centres and extremities of capitalism. We therefore hope to encourage contributions which explore this international dimension of Africa at a more detailed and historically specific level. As a journal published outside Africa, it is appropriate that among the questions on our agenda should be: What is Africa's changing position in the international division of labour and between the shifting spheres of influence of different capitalist and non-capitalist states? What are the strategies of imperialist powers and of monopoly capital towards the continent?

Africa & Imperialism in the 1970s
It is often forgotten that work on African problems can be done in Europe and North America, and not only by burrowing into colonial archives. Investigating the economic, political and military initiatives of the metropoles is of vital importance and we will seek out such work for publication in future issues of the journal. Indeed the second issue will concentrate on one new crucial dimension that is having a critical impact on Africa — the emergence of the Transnational Corporation. The very rapid spread of these corporate giants is just one of several related trends that are changing the terms of Africa's involvement with the capitalist centres and also changing the expectations, aims and methods of the power holders of capitalism towards the continent in the 1970s.

In Africa the 1960s were a period of dramatic change — even if the limited consequence of 'flag independence' is acknowledged and if the continuation of economic dependence is realised. Nor was the basic change in the political economy a mere change in the ties to the colonial power from a direct to an indirect, neo-colonial one, or the mere acquisition of a share in state power by certain privileged indigenous classes. The achievement of independence involved the exposure of African economies previously closely tied to the old metropolis to competition of capital from other centres. In particular, there was a strong assertion of American investment and influence throughout the continent. At the same time, capital from the US and increasingly from transnational corporations did begin to cast a few of the more well-endowed African countries in a new role within the international division of labour: as a base for some limited extractive and manufacturing industrialisation instead of
the mere supplying of raw materials.

But the 1970s are bringing further changes in the forces bearing on Africa, the consequences of which have still to be seriously assessed. The specific new forms through which the centres of economic and political power will now impinge on Africa have to be studied in order to flesh out the skeleton of centre-periphery relations that is obtained from an analysis like Amin's. The world as a whole seems to be entering a different phase whose dimensions are still only taking shape. Here, we can only indicate some of the main directions of change, whose implications for Africa it will be one of our major tasks to explore.

It is of primary importance to locate the centre of power within the changing capitalism system itself and to assess the significance of shifts that are taking place in it. The US's hegemony of the capitalist world, established firmly in 1945, has been undermined by the successes of the Vietnamese people in resisting US imperialism and by the emergence of Europe and Japan as alternative centres seeking to gain their own privileged access to strategic raw materials, overseas markets and new fields of investment. This shift in power relations among capitalist states together with the related detente with the Soviet Union and China, have led to a redefinition of spheres of influence. While the consequences of this process on some areas of the world are relatively clear — thus US monopoly over Latin America remains unchallenged, while some economic and military role for Japan in South East Asia is clearly assumed — where Africa figures in the calculations and deals between the US and Europe and between the western and socialist powers is still difficult to discern. The American build-up in Africa since independence has by no means given them the kind of monopoly they have in Latin America. The stake of American investors in Africa went up almost four fold during the 1960s to reach $3.5 billion in 1970, but the flow of private and public capital from the US was still less, than that from Europe, while the Common Market's trade with Africa was almost ten times greater than that between the US and Africa.

Some see in this multipolarity a chance for African states to play off different powers against each other. Economically there may be a prospect of getting better terms for investment and trade by playing off Japan, Europe and America. Militarily, there is a hope that a weakened US may be forced to maintain a low profile and allow a neutral zone to emerge in Africa and the Indian Ocean. However at first glance it seems more likely that the emergence of Europe and Japan as viable alternative centres in the capitalist world will lead to an intensifying struggle, which may be played out most brutally in Africa, precisely because it is not exclusively tied to one of the centres. The US is unlikely to give up its foothold in Africa while the prescription for its national economic ills, offered by many experts, calls for an aggressive campaign for overseas markets and investment to produce a larger surplus and consolidate the country's balance of payments. At the same time, there are signs of increasing American (and even European) military interest in Africa, especially
its Eastern coast, and in the whole Indian Ocean area, which will remain vital throughout the 1970s as a supply route for oil supplies.

Sub-imperialism
It is in a military context that another fundamental change in the shape of the contemporary world can be noted. One strategy that is being employed by a US state that wishes to avoid becoming over-extended again as with Indochina, is to look to local medium-sized powers to keep trade routes and fields for future investment open against the threat of internal disorder or of radical regimes. A pattern of sub-imperialism appears to be deliberately fostered where the provision of military advice and training plus massive supplies of weaponry will largely, but not exclusively, take the place of direct intervention by a US force. The candidates for this role of 'deputy peace-keeper' are those larger countries, often with mineral riches, that are proving capable of some semi-industrialisation through foreign capital. On Africa's borders, Israel has played this role vis-a-vis the Arab countries, but Iran, recipient of two billion dollars of military equipment last year, is increasingly cast in this role in the Middle East and Indian Ocean. Brazil's assumption of this role in Latin America is not irrelevant to Africa for that country has developed political and military links with Portugal and South Africa. Within Africa the fact that South Africa presents such a suitable possibility for maintaining the economic and military status quo in the Southern half of the continent has led the Nixon government to move towards closer support of the white regimes. But black regimes can serve the same purpose; Nigeria and Zaire have the size, the developed natural resources, and strong American influences to make them ideal for these purposes, while Kenya economically, and Ethiopia militarily, have been the target on a much less significant scale, of similar developments in Eastern Africa.

Transnational Corporations
This preliminary balance sheet of the major external trends at work in Africa would not be complete without some further mention of the phenomenon of the transnational or multinational corporation. The activities of these giants are so pervasive but so little understood that they make an appropriate focus for our second issue. But the current strategies they are employing and their overall political and economic influences on the African continent must be briefly assessed in relation to the changing power structure that we have been considering. In fact our previous discussion of the calculations of the different capitalist powers was an oversimplification. For when we talk about the USA or Japan in this context we are not referring to the intentions of a whole people so much as the actions of states which in turn reflect the interest of certain classes or interests based in the metropoles. Moreover, it has certainly been true that the more monopolistic sections of the bourgeoisie in the capitalist centres have an even more decisive influence over the state in foreign policy than in domestic matters. But here again, events are making for change. Part of the lesson of Vietnam for the large companies was that military intervention was a very cumbersome
and not always efficient tool for securing their freedom to operate. On the other hand, the penetration of the Soviet and Chinese markets by straight business deals, together with the growing size and international scope of corporate activity go to make the multinationals less committed, in every way, to using the metropolitan state as their sole instrument. The transnational corporations are in fact the major entities in the increasing international competition that we noted. But in their battle for control of the business environment they are becoming, as one writer put it, 'quite opportunistic about their associations with the nation state' — both that from which they originate and those where they are prepared to do business. Thus in Africa we may well be entering a period where centre-periphery relations, even in the realm of political power, may be much more mediated through dealings between international corporation and national states than between states or between international and local businesses. These giants have no racial or ideological compunction about carrying on business in the white dominated states of Southern Africa and in the countries that oppose them as well; about dealing with neo-colonial or nationalistic regimes; about joining forces with local businessmen or with state enterprise. The struggle for full liberation takes an open politico-military form in certain circumstances, but it also has to be conducted on a continuous economic plane in the specifics of dealing with the multinationals in all their guises.

The emergence of the transnationals, the slackening of US domination, growing intra-capitalist competition and the delineation of new spheres of influence between the capitalist and socialist powers — those are the major new contradictions at work in the present historical period which have to be grasped if Africa's future is to be understood in its full global setting. But these are also dimensions that have to be taken into account in analyzing more concrete local issues. The kind of combined insight gained from looking at specific national or local relationships against a backdrop of the broadest global trends that we are here advocating is necessary to grasp what is to be done about some immediate problem — even one due to seemingly natural causes like the famine that we feature in one section of this issue — or to decide what choices of economic and political strategy a given movement or national government should make, as well as for answering the grand question of 'which way is Africa going?' It is to this task of understanding, and countering, the debilitating consequences of a capitalism which stems from external domination and exploitation and is combined with internal, underdeveloped and equally exploitative structures that this Review is dedicated.

Class Struggle
We suggested earlier that the approach we wanted to foster should not stop short with the identification of the existing problem, even if seen in all its political and economic, its global and internal, its general theoretical and historically specific complexity. Class analysis should also be indicating the prospects for transformation and in particular isolating the class alliances that will have to be generated
and the approach to their struggle with the entrenched interests maintaining underdevelopment.

The answer to the question of what is to be done to change Africa’s capitalist underdevelopment, has appeared in the most straightforward manner in Southern Africa. There has been a broad consensus about the need for the mass of the African population to wage armed struggle against colonial or racist regimes. Out of that situation have emerged not only valuable lessons for the mobilisation of popular forces throughout the continent, but also a specific determination on the part of the liberation movements and the peoples, notably in Guine – Angola and Mozambique, not to settle for token independence and continued economic domination. Recent events however may be creating a situation more closely resembling that elsewhere in the continent where the need for armed struggle is not so generally accepted and the enemy is no longer simply a non-African colonial or racist regime. The coup in Portugal, itself clearly the result of the struggle of the peoples in the colonial territories, does not yet guarantee the complete independence for which the liberation movements have fought. The new regime may contain some progressive elements, but Spinola (whose very limited reformist intentions are made clear in our Briefings section) represents other national and foreign interests who will strive to salvage their stake in the colonies. In fact they can do little in the face of the popular solidarity and success of the movements in Guine – (although they will clearly try to hive off the Cape Verde islands with their air base and staging post for South Africa) or even in Mozambique (despite all the talk of a settler UDI in a partitioned southern corner). However, Angola – the richest prize for western capital with its oil, iron and other mineral potential — presents other opportunities. In seeking to promote a neo-colonial solution, such interests can work on the existence of nationalist movements whose commitment is not, like MPLA’s, to fight for economic liberation from capitalist domination. Chief stage director in this alternative scenario is clearly not some Portuguese colonial figure, but independent Zaire’s President, Mobutu Sese Seko. It is apparent that he is now prepared to play in Angola the sub-imperialist role for which he has been so carefully prepared by his US mentors, and this in order to promote some form of independence which will allow the continued exploitation of its people and resources. This transformation of a colonial war to an anti-capitalist class struggle serves as a reminder that liberation is still on the agenda for most of the African continent.