

Two Prophets of Regional Integration: Prebisch and Adedeji

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Abstract

Raúl Prebisch and Adebayo Adedeji are regarded as intellectual fathers of regional integration in Latin America and Africa. Both challenged conventional wisdom, championed the idea of home-grown development, and demonstrated a keen understanding of what regional governments would support. Their role, vision, and impact are placed within a historical context, to illustrate how individuals promote the implementation of ideas through institutions. Both Prebisch and Adedeji were public intellectuals who appealed directly to audiences ranging from universities to the private sector, yet they were ultimately tragic prophets whose visions for regional integration went largely unfulfilled. Nonetheless their respective leadership of the United Nations' Economic Commissions for Latin America (ECLA) and for Africa (ECA) converted these institutions into intellectual think-tanks that addressed the acute disadvantages of their respective continents. They shaped these institutions through their intellect, character, experiences, and personality, creating new opportunities to disseminate ideas to the practical realm of policy.

Keywords: Raúl Prebisch, Adebayo Adedeji, regional integration, public intellectuals, economic development, United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Introduction

Raúl Prebisch and Adebayo Adedeji are regarded to have been the contemporary intellectual fathers of regional integration in Latin America and Africa. Even though their ideas did not translate into practice, they were important institution-builders. I focus on the impact of the ideas of Argentina's Raúl Prebisch (1950–63) and Nigeria's Adebayo Adedeji (1975–91) on the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) – which became the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in 1984 – and the UN Economic for Africa (ECA) respectively. This chapter is thus not concerned with providing a history of the intellectual evolution of the ECLA and ECA, but rather with assessing the impact of two powerful individuals in promoting ideas on economic development and regional integration within these two institutions during their tenure in office. The chapter places their role, vision, and impact in historical context, highlighting the role that individuals with vision and forceful personalities can play in driving institutions to adopt ideas, but demonstrating the institutional, regional, and external constraints on the implementation of these ideas which still rely on the decisions and vested interests of powerful national governments and other important actors. The essay will further assess the personal, intellectual, and professional background and influences that shaped the development of both men into crusading prophets.

Raúl Prebisch and Adebayo Adedeji were trained as economists, taught at universities in their respective countries, and occupied important economic positions in the national governments of Argentina and Nigeria. Both were prodigies who were propelled into prominence and achieved professional success at an early age. They helped to restructure national economies after cataclysmic events (the Great Depression of the 1930s; and the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970). Prebisch and Adedeji were head-hunted to lead the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Both contributed to important policy debates on unequal terms of trade between the industrialized North and the global South; as well as national and regional self-sufficiency and people-led development. Both surrounded themselves with bright young economists from their regions to promote their ideas.

Both Prebisch and Adedeji also opposed the neo-classical policies propounded for their respective regions by the Western-dominated World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Both men faced incredible political odds in their policy battles which were opposed by powerful Western governments. The two Bretton Woods institutions would eventually change course on some of their economic orthodoxies in Latin America and Africa and heed the warnings of Prebisch and Adedeji, but often after much socio-economic damage had already been done. Both men rejected neo-classical economic theories and were often erroneously depicted by critics as “dangerous radicals.” They were, in fact, pragmatists who

opposed Marxist economic policies (Adedeji 2004: 253; Pollock 2006:13–14). Prebisch and Adedeji both accepted the role of the market economy and an activist state in promoting economic development and integration. Both enjoyed the trust of powerful actors on their respective continents, and used skilful political manoeuvring within international institutions to promote their goals. Both were, however, ultimately frustrated in their efforts to unite Latin America and Africa, as national, regional, and/or external constraints largely obstructed the implementation of their ideas.

Prebisch and the Building of Latin America

Raúl Prebisch was born in the Argentinian province of Tucumán in 1901 to a German immigrant father and a local Argentine mother. He studied economics at the university of Buenos Aires and taught political economy at the university before serving as Undersecretary of Finance and Agriculture. He later advised the country's ministers of finance and agriculture, thus gaining influence among powerful political actors. At the age of thirty-four, Prebisch became the first Director of Argentina's Central Bank, having been one of the architects of its creation. He served a conservative military-backed Argentine oligarchy which later became discredited. Prebisch's worldview, at this time, was heavily influenced by European economists, particularly John Maynard Keynes. (Rosenthal 2004: 181). Following a military coup in 1943, he was eventually dismissed (apparently for his pro-Allied views during the Second World War, and his stout defense of the central bank's autonomy) and

ostracized by the regime. Almost like an intellectual Che Guevara whose legendary motorcycle travels across Latin America transformed him into the world's most famous guerrilla leader, Prebisch spent six years in the wilderness traveling rather more comfortably than his famous compatriot across Latin America as a banking consultant while teaching economics at the University of Buenos Aires.

The ECLA and the "Structuralist" School

Prebisch eventually found succor in the Chilean capital of Santiago where he served as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America's Executive Secretary from 1950 to 1963, having joined the organisation in 1949 as its research director. The United States (US) had been determined to shut down the ECLA - which it regarded as an unwelcome rival to the Washington-based Organisation of American States' (OAS) Economic and Social Council - by 1951, after only three years of the organisation's existence. Prebisch mobilized political support across Latin America for its governments to take ownership of the body and to stare down the US juggernaut. His ECLA produced country studies of such high quality and usefulness that Prebisch successfully convinced regional governments (strongly supported especially by Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Guatemala, and Cuba) to embarrass Washington into keeping the organisation alive. The US eventually conceded that Prebisch represented for many Latin American governments an "unusually able champion of their economic views." (Quoted in Dosman 2008: 262).

Before joining the ECLA, Prebisch had achieved regional and UN prominence through an influential document *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems* which was presented at the newly-established UN Economic Commission for Latin America's Havana session in 1949. Due to opposition by the US and other Western states (though France would become a key supporter of the ECLA), this document carried the name of the author: a rare exception within the workings of the UN. Prebisch rejected neo-classical international trade theories that argued that such trade benefited all countries due to the comparative advantage that each enjoyed, and was unconvinced that these interactions would eventually reduce the income gap between rich and poor countries. (Rosenthal, 2004:169; 181-183). As Prebisch noted: "The forced march of the first countries in the Industrial Revolution has created an economic firmament with a sun composed of the developed countries of the center around which the peripheral countries rotate in their disorganized orbits." (Dosman 2008: 276). He urged Latin American countries toward revisionism by overturning the international division of labor in which the Northern "center" exported manufactured goods to developing countries, the price of which continued to increase, while the Southern "periphery" exported agricultural goods and minerals to the North, the price of which continued to decline.

These ideas represented Prebisch's main theoretical contribution and were adopted in emerging departments of development economics across Latin America. They also came to be known as the "Prebisch-Singer" thesis on the terms of trade between developing and industrialized countries. (Hans Singer was a German-born British economist working with the UN, who provided the historical price data used by Prebisch to reach the conclusions in his 1949 presentation.) According to this view, long-run trends suggested that prices of primary products continued to deteriorate relative to manufactured goods, forcing countries in the periphery to export even more raw materials to import the equivalent industrial products. This thesis also noted the differential effect of the global economic cycle on the center and the periphery. During economic upswings, the terms of trade generally move in favor of primary products, while during downturns, they swing against raw materials to a greater degree, resulting in a long-run deterioration of the periphery's terms of trade, with downswings also lasting longer than upswings. These factors are explained by the differential behavior of prices, profits, and wages in the center and periphery during economic cycles. During economic upswings, wages and prices increase greatly in the center, but hardly rise in the periphery which has surplus labor. During a downturn, the decrease in wages and prices in the center is constrained by trade unions and the oligopolistic structure of industry. The periphery in contrast suffers substantial reductions in prices and wages, lacking strong trade unions (Kay 2006: 200–2).

Under Prebisch's leadership, the ECLA sought to refine the core-periphery model. This concept consistently argued that the global economy was divided into an industrial center and agrarian periphery, with the core possessing a homogenous structure of similar levels of productivity in diverse sectors, and the periphery having a heterogeneity based on different levels of technology. Led by "Don Raúl"—as Prebisch was fondly known by his admirers—ECLA "structuralists" proposed a strategy based on import-substitution industrialisation (ISI), employing protectionist measure of high tariffs on manufacturing imports and a tax on primary exports to encourage the creation of a larger industrial sector based first on the domestic market and then on exports. Prebisch also advocated stronger trade unions in the primary export sector to increase wages, defend prices, and push against protectionist measures in the industrialized countries (Kay 2006: 202–3). His thoroughly-researched two-yearly *Economic Surveys* sought to push Latin American governments to break the vicious cycle of low productivity, low income, and low savings by increasing industrialisation through restructuring domestic imports and production. (Dosman 2008: 263).

Prebisch's credibility was boosted by the fact that his ideas—widely embraced by governments in the region—were based on actual practice as head of his country's central bank, and not just on theories devised in an ivory tower. The ruinous effect of the Great Depression of the 1930s on Argentina and other Latin American economies was a particularly formative experience, as Prebisch had until then been an orthodox neo-classical

economist. His approach was to find “historical moments” in order to use new ideas to transform institutions into movements for structural change. (Pollock 2006: 14). He believed fervently in the role of the state in social engineering as well as national planning to promote development and industrialisation. By 1954, in the still-born *International Cooperation for a Latin American Development Policy*, Prebisch was calling for greater international credit for the region’s development involving an annual \$1 billion for development financing to accelerate industrialisation; the creation of a regional development bank; greater taxation and agrarian reform; and the stabilization of commodity exports. A surly United States—the obvious paymaster of these ideas—rejected them out of hand (Dosman 2008: 291-294; Rosenthal 2004: 176).

At the UN ECLA, Prebisch—working eighteen-hour days—assembled a young team of dynamic, ideologically-diverse Latin American economists (several recruited from the World Bank and the IMF) to help build their own continent. By 1953, the ECLA had 130 full-time staff. Prebisch provided inspirational leadership in championing the gospel of the Latin American “structuralist” school of development. Structuralism represented one of the earliest efforts to develop a theory of development and underdevelopment. Prebisch (particularly after 1960) also questioned whether growth would necessarily result in improved income distribution, and called for greater external savings to support regional development. (Rosenthal 2004: 184, 191). The increasing number of National Planning Offices throughout

Latin America at least demonstrated that the ECLA's ideas were being taken up by national governments, even if their implementation did not always match the ambitions of their initiator.

Regional Integration and Global Development

At the request of regional governments, Prebisch helped Central American countries to establish a Regime of Integration Industries which would consist of regulated monopolies among the five countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Costa Rica. This effort at regional integration, however, failed as a result of opposition from the public sector as well as US hostility. Nevertheless, a General Treaty was signed between the five countries in 1960 to achieve generalized trade liberalisation, and eventually a customs union, and a secretariat was established in Guatemala City. The seeds of regional integration in Latin America had been sown (Rosenthal 2004: 185-186).

In his second term as ECLA Executive Secretary between 1956 and 1963, Prebisch focused on trying to create a Latin American Common Market, an idea given impetus by the creation of the Jean Monnet-led European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, and the European Economic Community (EEC) six years later. Prebisch had often complained that Latin America's twenty states operated in "water-tight compartments," and from 1956, he prepared a *Preliminary Study of Inter-American Trade*. Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay,

and Paraguay were the most enthusiastic supporters of this integration agenda. The ECLA co-sponsored a meeting of Experts on Iron and Steel in Brazil in 1956, with large private sector interest. Regional trade was a derisory seven percent at this time, and consisted of \$350 million worth of largely agricultural products. Prebisch thus preached specialization based on regional planning as a way of industrializing, benefiting from the economies of scale of a larger market, and eliminating protectionism in regional trade and perennial trade deficits. He also sought to provide a better livelihood for Latin America's rural masses in an era of economic stagnation. (Dosman 2008: 321-345).

The ECLA strove to promote its regional integration agenda through four key strategies: establishing a system of multilateral payments; developing an inventory of existing industries; creating a regional market in manufactured goods; and stabilizing traditional markets in intra-regional trade. Prebisch's efforts ultimately ran into opposition from Washington as well as from two American-dominated institutions: the IMF and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The U.S. was particularly concerned that a common market not reduce foreign trade or create domestic monopolies. Prebisch had consistently insisted that the Latin American Common Market would be open to trade, and noted that the EEC had been granted exceptions by GATT for its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and continuing privileged access in trade relations with its former European colonies (enshrined in the Yaoundé Convention of 1963). However, no such special

treatment was to be granted to Latin America by patronising American officials, some of whom argued that the region's citizens should not get ideas above their station by trying to manufacture cars or aeroplanes, as Prebisch was urging. At the ECLA summit in Panama City in 1959, Washington ensured the rejection of the Latin American Common Market, and a watered-down free-trade area was eventually agreed by Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Ecuador in February 1960. As a final act of humiliation, the U.S. peevishly excluded Prebisch from the creation of a new Inter-American Development Bank which the Argentine technocrat had earlier championed and which Washington had rejected at the time. (Dosman 2008: 321-345)

After leaving the ECLA in 1963, Prebisch served for two years as Director-General of the UN's Santiago-based Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) which he had also played a key role in creating. Between 1964 and 1969, Prebisch then became the founding Secretary-General of the Geneva-based UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He had thus broadened his vision from *national* to *regional* integration before championing the interests of developing countries at the *global* level in a four-decade career of committed public service. At UNCTAD, Prebisch continued to champion ideas developed over several decades about a rich Northern center dominating international trade to the detriment of a poorer Southern periphery. He called for a fairer global trading system to help developing countries industrialize through the adoption of tariff

preferences by rich countries as part of his 1970s advocacy for a “New International Economic Order (NIEO).” Prebisch also championed increased South-South trade and focused more attention on the responsibilities of developing countries in promoting internal reforms and exporting manufactured goods rather than becoming too dependent on external assistance. His one success at UNCTAD was negotiating a general system of preferences in which rich countries provided tariff-free access to the developing world. But in the end, Prebisch tired of the UN bureaucracy as well as the frustrations of a political body sometimes derided by its critics as standing for: “Under No Conditions Take Any Decisions.” He resigned as head of UNCTAD in 1969.

Legend and Legacy

Prebisch’s intellectual impact was evidenced by the fact that the ECLA – and later ECLAC – has consistently pursued five constant credos throughout its over six decades of existence: acting as a think-tank to policy-makers based on rigorous, empirical research; adopting a “holistic, integrated and multidisciplinary” approach to development; analysing development issues from a specifically Latin American (and later also Caribbean) perspective based on the region’s lived experiences; recognising that the international context often determines domestic structures, providing structural and institutional impediments to development; and maintaining a concern for social justice issues such as poverty alleviation and an equitable distribution of income (Rosenthal 2004:180).

Though Prebisch has often been criticized for promoting impractical “socialist” ideas, the concept of countries building up protectionist walls to industrialize was one historically championed by eminent figures such as Alexander Hamilton, the U.S. Treasury Secretary from 1789 to 1795, and the German economist Friedrich List (1789–1846). Prebisch was consistently anti-communist and promoted the role of the private sector throughout his career. Nevertheless, he was under constant surveillance by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Dosman 2008: 5). Prebisch was, however, not just an economic technocrat, but politically astute. He was careful not to antagonize the powerful US, realising the indispensability of the regional colossus to the success of his trade initiatives in Latin America. Prebisch had an American official, Louis Swenson (his effective deputy), brief the U.S. embassy in Santiago regularly; he maintained a small office in Washington D.C.; he visited the American capital often; and he sought to cultivate good contacts at the U.S. Treasury, the Federal Reserve, and the State Department.

Prebisch also never rejected the idea of international trade, nor did he ever advocate the delinking of the global South from the international system, an idea championed by *dependencia* prophets like the German-American, Andre Gunder Frank, and the Egyptian, Samir Amin. He thus preached reform rather than revolution. For Prebisch, international

trade and foreign capital were essential to Latin America's industrialisation efforts (Kay, 2006: 202). His success at the ECLA, though, may have contained the seeds of its own failure. Having sold structuralism as a theory for economic development, these ideas failed to translate into success in the real world of practice, leading to regional governments losing faith in the gospel of "Don Raúl."

By the 1960s and 1970s, military *caudillos*—often allied to the U.S.—proliferated in the region, and the World Bank's influence grew over Latin American economies. By the 1980s, a serious debt crisis and hyperinflation led to the introduction of adjustment programs backed by the Bretton Woods institutions. The post-Prebisch ECLA was unable to adapt its ideas effectively to these changes. Forced to abandon its holistic framework and to focus increasingly on short-term crisis management, its previous policy prescriptions lost credibility (Rosenthal 2004: 170–78). Prebisch was frank about the failures of his import-substitution strategies, though blaming these setbacks on ineffective implementation by incompetent governments in Latin America in contrast to the success of similar strategies promoted by more able governments in parts of Asia such as South Korea where internationally competitive export firms had been built. The ECLA has never regained its impressive influence over economic thinking in Latin America and the UN since the halcyon days of the Prebisch commission which remains the organisation's "golden age" of influence (Emmerij and Rosenthal 2009). In the last years of his life, Prebisch was a scathing critique

of the neo-liberal ideas of Reaganism and Thatcherism (Prebisch 1986: 16). By this time, his ideas had been largely neglected even on his own continent. Biographers had also ignored Prebisch's incredible career, until Canadian scholar Edgar Dosman's elegant and definitive work in 2008 (Dosman 2008).

Prebisch helped to transform ideas on international trade and the international division of labor, and influenced both dependency and world systems theories. While he was heavily criticized for his views on unequal terms of trade, the idea of international trade distributing its rewards unevenly between primary products and manufacturers still remains alive today. (Kay 2006: 202). But the increasing success of countries such as China, Brazil, India, Singapore, and South Korea in joining the ranks of the international *nouveaux riches* even as Western powers stagnated following the global financial crisis of 2008–09, rendered Prebisch's binary North-South divide somewhat anachronistic. By 2012, China had become the world's second largest economy after the U.S. and the new "workshop of the world," while Brazil had overtaken Britain to become the world's sixth largest economy. The creation of a Group of Twenty (G-20) major economies by 2009 involving more Southern representation, was another clear sign of the changing dynamics of the global economy. Prebisch died at the age of eighty-five in Santiago in April 1986. Cristóbal Kay described him as "the most influential Latin American development economist and probably its most eminent," (Kay 2006: 199); *the Economist* dubbed him "Latin America's Keynes"; while one

of his successors as ECLA Executive Secretary between 1988 and 1997, Gert Rosenthal, noted about Prebisch's stint at the organisation that: "It would be difficult to find another administrative unit in the UN that had such a decisive impact on so many member countries" (Rosenthal 2004: 170).

Adebayo Adedeji and the Integration of Africa

Our second prophet, Nigerian scholar-administrator, Adebayo Adedeji, grew up in the small southwestern Nigerian town of Ijebu-Ode under British colonial rule. This experience would leave a fierce anti-colonial mark on Adedeji in his later professional exploits. His middle-class parents were farmers who worked on a cocoa and kolanut plantation and left him in the care of his disciplinarian grandmother "Mama Eleja": an enterprising, shrewd, and determined fish-seller and indomitable matriarch. The precocious Adebayo was an outstanding student who responded well to his grandmother's constant prodding. His father was also an important influence on the young boy, encouraging his son to study hard. Adebayo's father also made his son work on his farm during school holidays, stressing to the young boy the importance of the "dignity of labor" (Sanmi-Ajiki 2000).

After completing his primary and secondary education in Nigeria, Adedeji studied economics and public administration at the universities of Leicester, Harvard, and London, eventually

obtaining a doctorate in economics. He returned to Nigeria in 1958—two years before the country’s independence from British rule—to take up a senior post in the Western region’s Ministry of Economic Planning. Here, he put in long hours and was widely recognized as a rising star. In 1963, Adedeji—who had always described himself as a “reluctant civil servant” —left government service to take up an academic post at Nigeria’s University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). Four years later, he had become a full Professor of Economics and Public Administration at the age of thirty-six. He transformed the university’s Institute of Administration into an effective training ground for both Nigerian and African public servants (Sanmi-Ajiki 2000: 110-122).

Regional Integration and Development

In 1971 at the age of forty, Adedeji was appointed Nigeria’s Minister of Economic Reconstruction and Development by the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon. He would help oversee the country’s difficult post-war rebuilding efforts. Nigeria’s civil war of 1967-1970 had resulted in one million deaths and led to much destruction of the country’s infrastructure, particularly in the secessionist Eastern region. The discovery of large oil fields propelled Nigeria into the ranks of the world’s largest oil exporters. Along with other cabinet colleagues and powerful mandarins, Adedeji crafted and implemented a five-year national development plan (1970–74) that called for rapid industrialisation and resulted in the building of dual carriageways, flyovers, and electricity pylons across the country.

Adedeji is widely regarded as “the Father of ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States).” He had outlined a vision for regional integration in West Africa in an academic article published in the *Journal of Modern African Studies* in 1970 which identified six priority areas for subregional integration: building a regional road network; creating a regional airline; establishing regional infrastructure to facilitate trade and investment; facilitating the free movement of people, goods, and services; establishing a clearing and payments union; and abolishing foreign exchange controls (Adedeji 1970: 213–31). Adedeji then turned theory into practice by 1975. While serving as Nigeria’s Minister of Economic Reconstruction and Development, Adedeji convinced sixteen West African leaders to establish ECOWAS following tireless “shuttle diplomacy” across the subregion between 1972 and 1975 (Adedeji 2004: 21–49). He has since consistently argued that regional integration must be seen as an instrument for national survival and socio-economic transformation (Adedji 1993; Asante 1991; Cline-Cole 2006; Onimode and Synge 1995; Onimode 2004).

In 1975, Adedeji became Executive Secretary of the Addis Ababa-based Economic Commission for Africa. The ECA (which had over 1,500 staff in 2012) had been established in 1958 to tackle issues of economic integration; industrialisation; transportation; commodity

price stabilisation; human capacity development; social aspects and financing of development; and improving statistical data and research in Africa (Adedeji 2004: 234). Adedeji's sixteen-year tenure became the organisation's longest and most dynamic: he converted the ECA into a Pan-African platform to continue his efforts to promote economic integration, leading the creation of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA) in 1981 (which later became the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa [COMESA] in 1993); and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in 1983. (Adedeji, 2009: 373–98). Adedeji, who, like Prebisch, frequently worked eighteen-hour days, collaborated closely with successive Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Secretaries-General in Addis Ababa, and became a confidant and economic adviser to many African leaders whom he addressed at annual continental summits.

Similar to Prebisch's ideas, the foundation of Adedeji's intellectual beliefs was based on his analysis that Africa could not achieve economic development as long as it did not develop national self-reliance to transform radically the continent's inherited colonial production structures which had been built on the export of raw materials. He thus advocated an Africa-centered development paradigm with massive socio-economic transformation preceding and accompanying economic development and growth. Adedeji often focused on the need for Africa to rediscover a sense of cultural self-confidence in order to overcome its psychological dependence on its former European colonial masters. He criticized the discipline of

development economics as focusing excessively on economic growth rather than human development, and noted that its ideas were based on the experiences of industrialized countries, and thus not applicable to the African context. He condemned the obsession of the “two-gap model” (which observed that the lack of domestic savings or import purchasing capacity restrict foreign investment and development), arguing instead that foreign capital and foreign aid reinforced Africa’s socio-economic dependence and helped to create the continent’s debt burden. These ideas which were controversial at the time have since become more mainstream. Adedeji was also critical of African economists who championed what he regarded as the blind imitation of inappropriate Western models (Adedeji 2004: 253–56). The context for his analysis was one in which Africa had experienced shortfalls and negative growth in agricultural output and commodity exports between 1960 and 1975. He thus surmised that the continent’s embrace of orthodox economic theories had resulted in declining growth rates, lack of diversification, and negligible self-reliance (Adedeji 2004: 257–58).

Battling the Bretton Woods Institutions

Adedeji established a reputation as a pragmatic economist more interested in solving problems than being constrained by ideological strait-jackets. His most bruising intellectual battles were with the World Bank and the IMF. He led the ECA to develop a “Revised

Framework of Principles for the Implementation of the New International Economic Order” in 1976. This provided the theoretical foundation for the subsequent Monrovia Strategy of 1979, the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL), both of 1980. The focus of these reports—produced with teams of African economists at the ECA and in consultation with African policy-makers—reflected Adedeji’s core intellectual concern with the concepts of “economic decolonisation” and “self-reliance.” Like Prebisch, he firmly believed that economic growth must be accompanied by social justice and equity (Adedeji 2004: 258–59).

The ECA’s Revised Framework of 1976 called for more African expertise on how to promote socio-economic development, and a move away from orthodox prescriptions on the efficacy of international trade as an engine for growth and social change. Like Prebisch, Adedeji argued against African countries continuing to export one or two primary products and importing consumer goods, as this increased the continent’s external dependence. Both Prebisch and Adedeji also shared a passion for national planning as well as for a more effective and developmental state which could allocate resources more rationally. Adedeji criticized Africa’s failure to prioritize indigenous factor inputs, its overreliance on foreign exchange from exports for these inputs, and the lack of participation of Africa’s masses in production and consumption processes.

The ECA's 1976 Revised Framework advocated more self-reliance; accelerating internal processes of growth and diversification; and eradicating unemployment and mass poverty to achieve a more equitable distribution of income. Self-sustainment was meant to bring about processes of development in which different components would mutually support each other, become linked to internalising demand and supply processes, and generating its own internal dynamic. Domestic, subregional, and regional markets would replace foreign markets at the core of this approach. The four pillars of development under this framework were thus: self-reliance; self-sustainment; the democratization of the development process; and more equitable distribution of the benefits of development. "Developmental regionalism" was thus to be combined with "developmental nationalism" (Adedeji 2004).

Led by Adedeji's ECA, the Revised Framework was incorporated into the Monrovia Strategy in 1979 with input from African development and planning ministers. The "Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa 1980–2000" was then adopted a year later by African heads of state. Both documents stressed many of the same points as the Revised Framework and sought to flesh out the intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral linkages needed to develop Africa's agricultural and industrial sectors, as well as the need to involve Africa's evolving subregional bodies in development plans. The LPA identified seven strategic sectors for Africa's development: food and agriculture; industry; natural resources; human resources; transport and communications; trade and finance; and energy. The end-goal would

be an African Common Market resulting in an African Economic Community (AEC) (Adedeji 2004). Eleven years later, African leaders agreed in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1991, to establish an African Common Market by 2023.

The World Bank's report *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action* was published in 1981, a year after the Lagos Plan of Action. African finance ministers had curiously asked the Bank to prepare the report despite their leaders having endorsed the LPA. Adedeji described the World Bank document as the "anti-thesis" of his own plan, since its emphasis was on the external market and on continuing Africa's export-oriented trade, with agricultural export being perceived as the engine for Africa's economic development. Where Adedeji stressed *regional* interdependence, the Bank emphasized *global* interdependence. The *Agenda* blamed Africa's trade and exchange-rate policies for the continent's weak incentives for exports and did not place the same emphasis as Adedeji on the deteriorating external environment in which commodity markets had collapsed (World Bank 1981). Though African heads of state at the OAU rejected the Bank's *Agenda*, and insisted on implementing the Lagos Plan of Action, this process revealed the continent's powerlessness. African governments had agreed the first ever "home-grown" continental development plan in 1980, but then called on the main funders of the World Bank to abandon their own blueprint in favor of an African strategy. The failure of external donors to do so inevitably led to the demise of the LPA.

Adedeji used the ECA to launch the most sustained assault on the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) implemented from the 1980s by the World Bank and the IMF. African governments had accumulated massive debts following the oil crises and economic recession of the 1970s and early 1980s, forcing thirty-five countries to accept the tough conditions set by these institutions in order to obtain loans. These conditions usually involved deep cuts in social spending. Adedeji ridiculed the Bretton Woods institutions for their desperation to claim success stories from SAPs despite all evidence to the contrary. He noted that despite the implementations of the SAPs from 1980, Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had, by 1988, declined from 2.7 percent to 1.8 percent; investment ratios had fallen from 20.6 to 17.1 percent; budget deficits had increased from 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent of GDP; and the ratio of debt service to export earnings had risen from 17.5 percent to 23.4 percent (Adedeji 2004: 276). He scathingly criticized the World Bank for asking questions about the neglect of the institutional dimensions of development and the importance of domestic long-term visions and external factors only after its policies had failed. These policies caused widespread economic hardship across Africa (Adedeji 2004: 256–57), as the continent once again became a giant laboratory for Western-born socio-economic experiments.

Adedeji coined the widely-used term “the lost decade” to describe Africa's rapid decline in the 1980s as GDP per capita fell by 2.6 percent annually, the continent's share of world

output and trade stood at one percent, and armed conflicts proliferated. He argued against what he regarded as the Bretton Woods institutions' approach of "growth without development" and export-led integration of African states into the world economy on massively unequal terms. He stressed instead the need for Africa to use its own resources to promote greater intra-African growth, prioritising agriculture (Asante 1991).

Adedeji led the development by the ECA of Africa's Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programs for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) of 1989 which was the first comprehensive alternative to the SAPs and which all members of the UN General Assembly except the U.S. endorsed. The framework called for policy action in four key areas: strengthening and diversifying productive capacity; improving levels and distribution of income; changing radically patterns of expenditure; and creating appropriate institutional frameworks to support the adjustment of African economies in transformative ways (African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation 1989). The framework further sought to end the dichotomy between short-term crisis management through adjustment programs, and long-term development goals. Consistent with the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, the plan advocated a revision of the structure of production and demand, and urged African governments to focus on a radical refocusing on domestic development and optimal use of indigenous factor inputs (Adedeji 2004: 284–85).

This effort was different from the Lagos Plan of Action, in that rather than being solely a “home-grown” African plan, it sought international consensus and support, even including the World Bank and the IMF on an international advisory board. A critical lesson had thus been learnt: it was not enough to win the battle of ideas, Africa also had to have the power and resources to implement these ideas.

This time, the World Bank responded more constructively. Three months after the AAF-SAP was published, the Bank produced the 1989 report *Sub-Saharan Africa – From Crisis to Sustainable Growth: A Long Term Perspective Study* which sought synergy with the African Alternative Framework. Adedeji would later describe the World Bank report as “a major contribution to the emergence of common ground in laying the basis for concerted action in forging a brighter future for Africa” (Adedeji 2004: 285). Though there were still some areas of disagreement between the ECA and the Bank, the latter was now modest enough to admit that it may have been wrong in some of its assumption about SAPs and did not have all the answers to Africa’s development challenges. Despite the publication of this report, however, the operational and lending arms of the Bank and IMF still continued the implementation of the SAPs as they had before without properly considering its social costs (particularly on Africa’s health and education sectors), and without properly consulting African governments and other continental actors (Adedeji 2004).

Adedeji: An African Cassandra?

Adedeji also led efforts to craft the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation of 1990 (Adedeji 2009). Similar to Prebisch in his region, Adedeji often challenged what he regarded as Africa's "mindless imitation" of Western development models, and pushed instead for a human-centered view of development and integration which involved the full participation of Africa's 800 million citizens. S. K. B. Asante, the renowned Ghanaian political economist who wrote a book on Adedeji's development strategies in 1991, described him as an "African Cassandra": a visionary prophet who saw the future clearly, but whose prophesies often went unheeded until it was too late (Asante 1991). In the end, the Bank and the Fund reversed the large cuts in education and health spending that had decimated Africa's socio-economic sector in the 1980s and 1990s. Debt relief also became fashionable over a decade after Adedeji had warned about the unsustainability of Africa's \$250 billion external debt in the 1980s.

Critics have, however, noted that Adedeji's Lagos Plan of Action lacked a practical mechanism for achieving its objectives, as well as a time-table and a detailed assessment of the costs for implementing these ideas. The LPA also failed to provide quantitative linkages between sectors and sub-sectors (Browne and Commings 1984: 23). Adedeji's calls for self-

reliance were criticized as vague and impractical; and some critics regarded as foolhardy efforts to delink Africa from the global economy. The LPA also had African critics. During a Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) conference with the ECA in 1982, several authors castigated the plan for being quiet or ambiguous on such issues as: communal versus private ownership of land; the need to define how to prioritize agricultural and industrial exports; and the role of foreign investment in development. African scholars further criticized the LPA as having been naïve about state agricultural policies in Africa, for ignoring the class dimensions of governing regimes on the continent, and for assuming that African leaders were interested in promoting the welfare of their own citizens (Browne and Cummings 1984: 213-215). Other critics like the *Financial Times* dismissed Adedeji's ideas as "statist" (Adedeji 2004: 287). These criticisms partly reflected the fact that the LPA was a political consensus document adopted by all of Africa's leaders. While the plan was accepted by the OAU, it was, however, ultimately left to gather dust on the shelves of African development ministries, as the continent lacked the resources to pay for its implementation.

Describing Adedeji's tenure at the ECA, Kenyan scholar, Gilbert Khadiagala, argued that his leadership "did not entirely transform the institution into an autonomous source on African ideas on development." Khadiagala further noted that divergent national practices and

Africa's declining international leverage ultimately led instead to the widespread adoption of the World Bank's SAPs (Khadiagala 2010: 379). Even in terms of regional integration – the idea with which Adedeji is most closely associated – bodies like ECOWAS, COMESA, and ECCAS have failed to achieve their integration goals, and less than 10 percent of Africa's trade was still conducted among its own countries in 2012. Adedeji himself conceded in 2004 that “no effective integration has taken place in ECOWAS,” and argued that politics and not economics would ultimately determine the success of regional integration efforts in Africa (Adedeji 2004: 36, 46–47). Like Prebisch in his region, a frustrated Adedeji later lamented the inability of African governments to match their rhetoric with reality (Adedeji 2004: 252). African leaders provided political support to Adedeji's development ideas, but often lacked the domestic discipline to implement them, and more importantly, the external technical and financial resources advocated by the plans were not provided by foreign donors.

After retiring from the ECA in 1991, Adedeji continued his regional integration efforts in Africa: he served on a committee to review the ECOWAS treaty in 1992; he was on another body to transform the OAU into the African Union (AU) in 2002; and in 2007, he chaired the committee which audited the five-year integration efforts of the African Union. The December 2007 Audit of the AU called for an acceleration of regional integration on the continent, and made concrete recommendations for strengthening the AU and Africa's sub-regional bodies (African Union, 2007). The report further advocated strengthening national

mechanisms to accelerate economic integration; incorporating decisions of regional bodies into national institutions; adhering to the AU decision to recognize only eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs); focusing the RECs on activities to create an African Common Market and African Economic Community by 2028; and strengthening the AU's internal mechanisms for more effective coordination and harmonisation of the RECs. (African Union 2007). Adedeji retired from public service as chair of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2010 after five decades of committed service to his continent.

Concluding Reflections

While Adedeji was widely regarded as the intellectual “Father of African Integration,” Prebisch was the intellectual “Father of Latin American Integration.” Both men challenged Western-dominated conventional wisdom and won the support of their respective regions through their courageous policy battles with more powerful adversaries. They emerged as historic figures, but, in the end, were tragic prophets whose visions for regional integration and development went largely unfulfilled. Regional integration in Latin America and Africa were concerned with promoting economic development in countries with largely illiterate populations, weak infrastructure, and poor governance. Both regions lacked the requisite technical skills, with less than 10 percent of their trade being intra-regional, and with both continents lacking powerful external political and financial backing.

The Cold War's proxy wars also negatively affected both Latin America and Africa, creating difficult political environments in which to promote economic integration and development. While the perennial shadow of U.S. neo-imperialism hung over Latin America, that of European neo-colonialism cast a shadow over Africa. The Soviet Union also sought to exploit divisions on both continents and to recruit local allies to its own ideological camp. Both Prebisch and Adedeji, however, had a keen political understanding of what regional governments would support, and championed the idea of "home-grown" development and self-reliance theories built on the specific experiences of Latin America and Africa, as well as on regional ownership of development ideas. Even the most corrupt and venal governments in both regions saw the importance of the ideas being championed by both men. Prebisch and Adedeji consistently sought private sector participation in their regional initiatives. Both acted as public intellectuals who often wrote their own speeches and sought to appeal directly above the heads of government to audiences in universities, think-tanks, the private sector and other fora, employing impressive communication skills to explain complicated economic ideas. Both turned the ECLA and the ECA into intellectual think-tanks acting as secular monks in monasteries in which disciples were encouraged to dream up heretical plans to transform the global economic system in ways that addressed the acute disadvantages of their respective continents. If both prophets ultimately failed to achieve their goals, it was a heroic failure born not of lack of ambition or application, but of power.

Prebisch and Adedeji headed powerful international organisations—the ECLA and the ECA—through which they sought to promote their ideas. Prebisch appears to have enjoyed greater international influence than Adedeji, operating as he was at a time when development ideas were at the top of the agenda for the “global South.” Both traveled the length and breadth of their respective continents to try to understand the problems of regional integration and development through lived experiences. Both insisted on excellence and hard work from their bureaucrats and enjoyed generating new ideas. Prebisch and Adedeji, however, realized that they had to relate such concepts to practical action and muster political support to implement their visions. Both acted as technocrats operating behind the scenes in powerful bureaucracies. Both shared an aversion to the operation of blind market forces, and regarded politics as inseparable from economics. Both regarded regional integration as a means to promote peace and socio-economic development. Both were far-sighted visionaries who often saw the future more clearly than the leaders they sought to advise. In the end, however, both prophets failed to fulfil their visions: Prebisch’s dream of a Latin American Common Market remains unrealized; while Adedeji never saw his aspiration of an African Common Market fulfilled. Prebisch and Adedeji both turned out to be visionary Cassandras: their prophecies—on improved terms of trade between North and South; and for health and education cuts by the Bretton Woods institutions to be reversed—often turned out to be correct, but went unheeded until it was too late.

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