

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Issa Shivji, ed., The State and the Working People Tanzania (Dakar, CODESRIA Books Series, 1986) pp. 194.*

*Ibbo Mandaza, ed., Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition (Dakar, CODESRIA Books Series, 1986) pp. 430.*

These books represent collaborative efforts by academics resident in Tanzania and Zimbabwe respectively to provide informed and critical analyses of contemporary developments in their own societies. The books represent solid evidence if any was required, of the seriousness of purpose, academic integrity, self-sacrifice and frustration which are the lot of a small, probably dwindling, but truly committed group of African scholars who are looking askance at the saddening pace and direction of social change in Africa. At this point in time, the two books represent some of the most critical, incisive and comprehensive evaluation of the socio-economic change in the two countries. Mandaza's book in particular has no serious rival in the market by sheer dint of depth and range of subjects covered. Yet for all their many virtues the books symbolize a crying need for African social science to break from the theoretical shell of received explanations of the African predicament - and in particular those associated with 'dependency' and unrefined definitions of 'neocolonialism'. But this criticism is one which ought to be addressed to the African social science community as a whole and we shall return to this issue at the end. For the moment, suffice it to note that the editors and contributors in these two books set themselves more modest goals: an exposé of true state of the nations.

The blurb on Issa Shivji's book in fact proclaims that the contributors to the State and the Working People of Tanzania were determined to show that "the emperor is naked" by exposing the true character of the state in Tanzania and its relationships with ordinary people. In doing so the authors have left no stop unpulled. The picture which emerges from all the chapters in this book is one of an increasingly authoritarian state riding roughshod on the political rights and economic interests of the people, in the Trojan horse of a

"Peoples" one-party, one-policy regime. The recurrent explanation for this state of affairs is one which Shivji has made on occasion, notable in Tanzania: The Silent Class Struggle: the "neo-colonial state" in Tanzania is depicted as a vehicle for advancing the petit-bourgeois interests of the state bureaucrats and the party apparatchiks, and of repressing peasant, student and working class aspirations. "Neocolonial" interconnections between the Tanzanian state and international capital are said to have intensified notwithstanding the policies of "socialism and self-reliance" enshrined in the Arusha Declaration of 1967. Although the contributors refrain from a wholesome embrace of dependency theories, the overall impression created is that the real culprit is a hapless national petit bourgeoisie caught in the swirling vortex of a scheming western imperialism, which can stand neither development nor democracy in the Third World. There is a sense of déjà vu to all this.

The opening shot in the Tanzanian volume is the introductory chapter by Issa Shivji arguing that political independence facilitated the internal realignments with imperialism making for an "authoritarian neo-colonial state", with peasants, workers and now students as its principal victims. From here the other contributors - mostly from Dar-es-Salaam's Law Faculty - take the cue armed with a passion and facts.

H. G. Mwakymbe traces the eclipse of parliamentary democracy in Tanzania beginning the mid-sixties, and argues that one party system was not all the consensual and peaceful affair that Tanzaphilics make it.

Parliament lost power to the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ruling party and a strong executive presidency. NEC has usurped policy-making, legislative and quasi-judicial powers over the years, and the 1977 constitution has enhanced these. This theme is reiterated by A. K. Mlimuka and P. J. Kabudi in their chapter on state-party relations. Contrary to the conclusion by Professor Granford Pratt that NEC is a democratic forum, real power rests in the hands of a selected few. And this power has risen inversely with the input of popular participation in party affairs, co-operatives and local government. Centralized power is also a contributing factor to the economic crisis now facing the country.

State policies towards labour and the peasantry are considered to be hardly benign. Wilbert Kapinga details the emasculation of free, militant trade unions in 1964 and the reconstruction of trade unions

as official organs of the party, subservient and beholden to it. The result is familiar elsewhere in Africa; real wages have fallen dramatically and working conditions have worsened. Mapolu arrives at similar conclusions on the state of the peasantry following what he calls "chaotic" villagisation in the 1970s. Production fell as a result of the demoralization, force, and indifference visited on peasants by bureaucrats and 'Kulaks'. Peasants in the end even lost control of co-operatives as Naali shows. Yet the basic problem as Mapolu sees it is that the "neo-colonial situation basically continues the colonial policies in the economic area... and attempt to incorporate the peasantry... into the ambit of world capitalism". This is exactly the opposite of Goran Hyden's proposition in Beyond Ujamaa but neither Mapolu nor his compatriots seem keen to debate this important issue.

Before leaving the Tanzanian volume, it is worth noting the absorbing and pioneering chapter on student struggles by Chris Peter and S. Mvungi. Though polemical in places, it manages to bring out the history of the student movement in mainland Tanzania and its physical and ideological confrontations with the party. As was the case with the trade unions, state power was brought to bear against student militancy producing a timid student organization enjoying a clientage status with the party. With this died the vigorous academic debate on socialism.

If the case studies on Tanzania recount the story of "Ujamaa" as socialism gone astray in the landscape of neo-colonialism, the chapters on Zimbabwe strike a pessimistic note on the prospects of transition to socialism in Zimbabwe against the bastion of the colonial settler-dominated institutional set-up which the Mugabe government has inherited. While Tanzania rhetorically and officially sought to avoid Kenya's development model - acceleration on the rails of colonial capitalism - many of the Zimbabwean authors fear that their country may be poised in that direction. There are major differences between Zimbabwe and Kenya of course but the Mandaza volume brings out many painfully striking parallels.

Mandaza's "Introduction" and his opening chapter "The State in Post-White Settler Colonial Situation" sum up this anxiety, and the latter chapter is one of the best I have seen on the state in Zimbabwe after independence. Mandaza is keen to delineate the weakness and cleavages of African nationalism and the durable character of the state apparatuses of the ancien régime underlined by western capital. His only omission is to address the class of ethnic resurgence in Zimbabwean politics, which is addressed at length by Masipula

Sithole in his analysis of the 1979, 1980 and 1985 General Elections.

The chapters dealing with the economy reiterated the fact that the Zimbabwean economy has not experienced any fundamental structural change since independence. Xavier Kadhani argues that even SADCC has not substantially altered the situation, while Theresa Chimombe demonstrates the shifting dependence from private capital flows to official development aid especially after ZIMCORD in 1981. But one of the most outstanding chapters on the economy is Daniel B. Ndela's on industrialization policy. Although once again the accent is on the lag in structural change, the industrial sector is shown to be mineral and consumer-goods production oriented. Like elsewhere in the developing world it has low rates of labour absorption and in spite of efforts over the UDI period - it is still dependent on imported intermediate inputs. By way of a solution, Ndela proposes greater state intervention in the industrial sector and backward linkages favouring inputs of local raw materials.

But it is land and white-settler agrarian policy which was at the heart of Zimbabwe's independence struggle. The inchoate character of land reform comes through the three chapters devoted to the "Agrarian Question". Sam Moyo indicates that the dominance of the large-scale commercial farmers in overall marketed production and policy-making has not yet been broken, despite the settlement schemes, increased share of peasant production in maize and the new co-operative schemes in the old Tribal Trust Lands. Like in Kenya in 1960s and 70s, African capitalist farmers making inroads into large scale farms have made common cause with the erstwhile settlers and the African yeomanry which emerged from African Purchase Programme going back to the 1950s. Moyo concludes that Zimbabwe has "an essentially unchanged agrarian structure five years after independence"; a view echoed with variation in the two other chapters on agriculture.

The question of working class absence in the fighting front (despite its long anti-colonial record), which has puzzled Zimbabwe watchers is dealt with by Lloyd Sachikonye. Industrial unrest became endemic only on the eve of independence and after it (1980-81) and the major causes were higher wages and better working conditions, not structural reforms, much less a proletarian takeover of power.

There are an additional four chapters: one on human resource constraints to development by Raftopoulos; education by Zvobgo; health care delivery systems by Samuel T. Agere, and the women issue by Joyce Kazembe which portrays Zimbabwean women as both

underprivileged and complacent.

Throughout this book, the integration of Zimbabwe in the world capitalist system and her continued, subordinate role in it is seen as the primary cause of its continuing underdevelopment and inequalities. But since Zimbabwe was colonized from South Africa, international capital made its inroads from there as is evidenced by Zimbabwe's continuing industrial and commercial relations with South Africa. The absence of a chapter on the evolving situation in the sub-continent and of the implications of South Africa's liberation is a glaring omission in the Mandaza volume even though the editor claims the book was written by and for Zimbabweans. Zimbabweans happen to be on the frontline.

As we mentioned earlier most contributions in both books have laid blame on "neo-colonialism", the myopic character of the national petty bourgeoisie and the constraints imposed on Africa by international capitalism. There are at least two main reasons why African scholarship must seek to transcend this paradigmatic mould. Firstly, it is highly unsatisfactory to ascribe development experiences as diverse as those of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda or Ghana principally to the functioning of international capitalism as if any outcome was satisfactory to the latter. Not all the contributors are of course guilty of this. The balance must now be tipped in understanding the domestic power base and decision mechanisms of Africa's ruling elites, rather than merely depicting them as petty-bourgeois compromisers with imperialism. Finally, for most of the authors some form of detachment from international capital and the building of genuine (scientific?) socialism are seen - though somewhat obliquely - as constituting a way out of the present quagmire. It now needs to be clearly spelt out what this involves in practical terms given recent experience with socialist economies not just in Africa but in Cuba, the Soviet bloc and China.

These two books will be useful to African students, scholars, informed readers and others. The authors, editors and CODESRIA must be congratulated for demonstrating that good academic products can be made in Africa by Africans. These two books are a challenge to scholars in other African states which could do with similar readers.

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