

BOOK REVIEWS

The State and the Working People of Tanzania, Issa G Shivji (ed), CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal, 1986 (194pp, price not stated).

Tanzania seems to be less in the limelight of late as a model in development debates, whether as a model of the ideal African socialist, self-sufficient, one-Party participatory democracy, or, on the other hand, as a terrible object lesson on the damage bureaucratic doctrinaire socialism can do to an otherwise healthy economy. This collection of essays should give proponents of each of these views reason to rethink their positions.

The contributions cover many aspects of Tanzanian life over the years since Independence: Parliament and the electoral process; the State and the Party; labour legislation; the State and the peasantry; agricultural marketing; and the State and student struggles. Each contributor argues to the same position, best summed up by taking the more negative of the two images above and answering: 'bureaucratic, yes; socialist, no.' The overall picture is one of growing Party and State bureaucracies extending their power into every level of national life, and into the remotest parts of the country. In this process they are alienating the majority even as they restrict the people's power to organise their own lives, their control over the fruits of their labour, and even their freedom to discuss political issues.

The case is, on the whole, cogently argued. Some of the facts presented are so readily available elsewhere, and speak so directly, that it is amazing that previous commentators, whether supporters of what they believed to be happening in Tanzania or not, did not advert to them. For example, there has never been an election which chose all the members of parliament by 'one person, one vote': the pre-independence parliament was chosen on a franchise which was qualified on grounds of property, race and education, while subsequent parliaments have contained a high proportion of indirectly elected or appointed MPs, who were, in fact, in the majority from 1970 to 1985. This devalued parliament was declared in 1962 to be subordinate to the Party, a position which was written into the 1965, and subsequent amendments, Constitution, and is included in the new 1977 Constitution. Whatever view one might hold on the classical Leninist 'leading role of the Party' ideal, it is clear enough, as Shivji argues in his introductory chapter, that wherever a vanguard Party containing hardly any socialists is going to lead its country, it will not be along the road to socialism.

The introduction of a strong executive presidency shows, it is argued, that the leadership of independent Tanganyika, and later of Tanzania, preferred the style of government they had grown up under, with the President taking the place of the colonial governor, and parliament taking the place of his biddable and largely appointed legislative council. The main difference is that in an independent country the bureaucracy is larger, and thus not so easily controlled by the new president as it was by the colonial governor. It must be very difficult for the philosopher kings of modern Africa to resist the temptation to become king, even if that is against their

philosophy; but now they run more risk of being little more than figureheads.

The history of workers' and students' movements is traced through legislation and salient events. This history is one that moves from something fairly free, maybe becoming more radical and eventually facing banning to, in the end, the establishment of a tame and docile national organisation, easily manipulated by the government administrative machine. This process is outlined, sometimes by participants in the key events, and backed with convincing arguments.

An area in which conclusive proof is, in the nature of things, more difficult to offer is that, it is argued, in which growing bureaucratic control of producer prices, selling conditions, choice of crops to plant, supply of inputs and even how the crop is cultivated, is a direct cause of the decline in Tanzania's agricultural production. Figures are massed in support of the argument, which is plausible enough, and they undoubtedly show a more or less steady decline from 1966 to 1981 in agricultural production per head of population for both food and cash crops. Growing bureaucratic control, first by eliminating the middlemen in favour of co-operative unions, then by dismantling the co-operative movement, and now by a return to State-controlled co-operatives, has accompanied the decline in production. The tables showing the simultaneous decline in the price paid to the peasant producer and the total marketed amount of cotton and cashew nuts would be more cogent evidence if they were extended beyond the 5-6 year periods (different periods for each crop) given by Mapolu. It might then be easier to identify particular changes in amounts grown and marketed with particular changes in producer prices or with the introduction of further government control over the whole process of peasant production.

In addition to arguing their cases effectively as regards developments in Tanzania over the past 30 years, the authors have given us an analysis of a case that is not too different from most countries in this part of Africa. The book, therefore, needs to be widely read.

This reviewer prefers to avoid nitpicking about typographical errors, but it needs to be pointed out that one of the lines enumerating 'total non-agricultural use' in table III, ch 5, should be 'total agricultural use'; on page 164, paragraph 2, 14th line would make more sense in the overall context if the word 'liberal' were changed to 'illiberal'; and the second sentence of the second paragraph on page 89 makes no sense; presumably a line is missing.

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The State and Agriculture in Africa, Thandika Mkandawire and Naceur Bourenane (eds), CODESRIA (Dakar), London, 1987 (385pp, price unknown).

Hazarding a philosophical synopsis of independent Africa's transition to sovereign nationhood, one journalist once stated, "While it may have taken 100 years to put colonialism on a sound footing in Africa, it will probably take twice that time to eradicate its effects on the continent". Indeed, most independent African governments soon discover, to their frustration, that the profound processes and mechanisms used to entrench colonialism are not so easily dismantled or replaced by those purporting to promote the lofty ideals of freedom and independence that characterise nationalist campaigns for popular support.