

co-operatives as a means of improving the access and quality of housing to poor people. The lesson of the Eastern European and Soviet cities described in this book seems to imply that governments may not be the appropriate institutions to administer this process.

The concluding section of the book predicts the "future of the socialist city", describing the growing materialism evident in urban life and the increasing tendency of "Soviet and other socialist citizens...to ape their Western counterparts". Although the author acknowledges a "convergence" between the Soviet and the Western city, his prediction that "the socialist city, its past as well as the distinctive nature of its own changing society will ensure that it remains different", now seems questionable. Nonetheless, his book, along with its very useful bibliography, is a must for those interested in urban life in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union at the height of the socialist era.

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*Thomas Sankara Speaks. The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87*, Thomas Sankara (translated by Samantha Anderson), Pathfinder Press, London, 1988, 260pp, price #6,95, ISBN 0-87348-526 paper.

Coups have become part of Africa's crisis. While some coups have been condemned by the world in general, others have been celebrated by the citizens and in some cases the international community has been happy to see regimes fall. When Sankara came to power, the whole world took little attention of what had happened in Upper Volta. Sankara was virtually unknown outside West Africa hence the indifference he was greeted with. However, after a year "revolutionary minded people started to follow what was happening there (Burkina Faso)...a deep revolution was unfolding". The preface of the book tells us The August 4 coup was not just one of the numerous coups experienced by the impoverished nation during the year.

As the title says, *Thomas Sankara Speaks* is a compilation of 25 speeches and interviews which were delivered by Sankara between 1983 to 1987 just before he was assassinated. The first speech is a fiery attack by Prime Minister Sankara, on the enemies of the people both at home and abroad. He identified the enemies as the bourgeois, men in politics, people who keep the people in ignorance under the guise of spiritual guidance and tradition - all who are seen as furthering the interests of the imperialists. "When the people stand up, imperialism trembles" he

told the audience (this was to be his slogan/trademark later). Two months later he was arrested and freed on August 4 by troops loyal to Compaore after demonstrations which rocked Ouagadougou. Sankara emerged more powerful than ever. He took over power and became President. The deep revolution began to unfold. Committees for the Defence of the Revolution were created and these were to penetrate through all social facets of Burkina Faso. The August 4 speech is followed by another compelling speech, in which he warned the 1300 delegates against corruption and abuse of power, condemning those who glorified the President to cover up for their corrupt practices.

Sankara's commitment to honesty and integrity is reflected in several speeches. Speaking to his country-men he warns that "Honest citizens have no fear even if you own 1 000 villas. But you the dishonest, even if you own a two-roomed place in a rundown part of town... Start to tremble...". On the international arena he criticised the hypocrisy of many leaders who only paid lip service to the fight against apartheid, thus endangering the lives of the oppressed blacks in South Africa and the Frontline States. He asked the leaders at the Non-Aligned Movement 8th Summit in Harare, "Is it not criminal to exacerbate a struggle in which we cannot participate?" (p188) A month later Samora Machel of Mozambique was killed in a mysterious air crash inside South Africa.

Oppression of women by men in his country was a thing of the past, he reminded his fellow country men on the commemoration of International Women's Day. So wide were Captain Sankara's interests that he also attended the First International Tree and Forest Conference in Paris, where he outlined his government's strategy in the fight against desertification. The conscientization process of the fight against desertification was reinforced by the fact that all happy events in Burkina Faso were celebrated by a tree planting ceremony - marriages, christening services, awards presentations, visits by well known dignitaries. At the same conference he briefly outlined the achievements of the Revolution. (Burkina Faso was a French colony. Several economic measures were used by the French to frustrate the Revolution.)

The book helps the reader to know and understand Sankara the man better. Some of his critics said he was mad, to which Sankara answered with a retort on page 144, that this was a necessary ingredient for revolution - "for no fundamental change can be carried out without a certain amount of madness...". He saw himself "as a Third World youth, an African youth, a youth of Burkina Faso" (p 68). Sankara gives statistics to tell the world who this Burkinabe youth is (p118), he is one of the lucky survivors of the 500 children out of 1 000 who survived during the first three months, one of the 10 children out of 100 who went to school and 18

out of a 100 who completed high school and one of the two soldiers out of 100 who are privileged army officers. Probably this self-image and that of his country explains why he chose to receive diplomat's credentials out in the villages where he introduced them to the marginalized, for they were the people they were serving.

The all revealing "Dare To Invent the Future" interview is probably the most informative of all. He covers the achievements and hurdles met by the revolution, and states his country's position on international matters. He explains, albeit briefly, that he turned down the Soviet Union because it did not meet Burkina Faso's expectations. He adds, "we have our dignity to protect". He also explains the huge sacrifices the people had to make to improve the economy. Some of which he says helped to reduce government expenditure. Sankara was aware that he could come to a violent end (or end up as an old man somewhere in a library reading books). Knowing he had enemies he had accepted the reality of having to end violently. "It will happen today or tomorrow." All his major speeches ended with an emphatic : "Homeland or death, we will triumph".

*Thomas Sankara Speaks* in an interesting book for the reader who is prepared to labour through some of his long speeches. The cover is quite attractive and so are the pictures inside. The man had the image and charisma which African youths identified with, to such an extent that when he died students of the University of Zimbabwe joined the progressive world in condemning his assassination. The CDRs were dissolved immediately. He was buried in a mass grave which the people of Burkina Faso turned into a shrine, much to the chagrin of the coup leaders. Probably as the imperialists read his speeches they tremble... even in death Sankara triumphs.

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