

Book Reviews

Erratum: Volume 9 No 1 (1994) page 91:

Book Review on **The Politics of Africa's Economic Recovery** by Richard Sandbrook, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1993 was mistakenly credited to Prof Kwaku Osei-Hwedie. The book was reviewed by Dr Bertha Zimba Osei-Hwedie, Lecturer, Political and Administrative Studies Department, University of Botswana. The error is regretted by the editor.

Revolution and Political Change in the Third World, Barry M Schultz and Robert O Slater (eds), Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, Colorado; Adamantine Press Ltd, London, 1990, ISBN 0-7449-0025-5 (h/b), 0-7449-0026-3 (p/b). Price: £14.50 (p/b)

The authors explain occurrence of revolutions in the Third World. The central thesis presented is that revolutions in the Third World are caused by lack of legitimacy of governments in power due to lack of satisfaction of economic needs and denial of political rights to the general population.

Part One of the book is devoted to outlining the theoretical framework for analysing revolutions in the Third World: the concepts of revolution and legitimacy are clarified and the authors acknowledge the fact that revolutions also occur in societies where governments enjoy legitimacy. They further acknowledge that mere existence of economic deprivation is not a sufficient cause of revolution or else all Third World countries would have undergone revolutionary change by now; rather, when poverty becomes unbearable by the masses, the revolution is set in motion.

More important, the first part of the book is enriched by the four authors who present four different, yet complementary approaches to understanding revolutions in the Third World. Chaliand's historical approach highlights issues of nationalism, ideology and the state, as well as the fact that the Third World has borrowed western conceptions of legitimacy which are difficult to uphold under Third World conditions once the revolutionary movement forms the government. Mason stresses internal factors as causes of revolution by focusing on political conflict among groups over unequal distribution of economic resources which causes government to lose mass support, leading to revolution.

However, such political conflict and resultant revolution against the government is as a result of Third World integration into the world economy which causes

dependent development and unequal income and wealth due to disruption of the traditional subsistence economy. Therefore Mason's "internal factors" are closely linked to external factors making it difficult to clearly demarcate between the two, since the internal factors are a product of the external ones.

Foltz analyses four external causal factors of revolutions, namely instigation by big powers, primarily the Soviet Union; contagion from a neighbour who has waged a successful revolution; imitation by a local group of a revolution that has occurred elsewhere; the effects of structural changes in the world, ie changes in international distribution of power among the big powers, and changing economic and ideological factors. The last approach by Laidi argues that the ideology and institutions of Marxism-Leninism have been internalised by Third World groups to launch revolutionary movements and consolidate their power once in government.

In Part Two the case study approach provides a detailed analysis of diverse revolutions, each unique in its own way with common characteristics of nationalism and abhorrence of foreign domination, primarily western. The case studies are representative of different regions of the Third World, offer successful, on-going and stalemated revolutions, and are examined from different perspectives by various authors. The Ethiopian revolution is a classic illustration of interaction of Mason's internal-external factors, Foltz's external sources and Laidi's Marxism-Leninism as causes of the revolution which overthrew the Emperor's regime. The revolution was due to modernisation through commercial agriculture which deprived peasants of land as a means of subsistence. This was compounded by drought, famine, inflation and the government's inability to satisfy the needs of the poor.

Iran and Libya are examples of revolutions based on Islam, rejection of monarchical rule and subordination to the West or East. Therefore both internal and external factors explain the revolutions here. However, Marxism and Leninism as per Laidi are not relevant to these cases. Religion is not entertained in Marxist-Leninist ideology, yet in the case of Iran and Libya religion has been instrumental in the revolutionary transformation of both societies.

Sendero Luminoso in Peru is another case of a successful revolutionary movement instigated by internal conditions, primarily poverty. It has sustained itself without material support from external powers. However, although it has borrowed and successfully utilised the Maoist strategy of guerrilla warfare and adopted radical Marxism as its ideology, it has not been able to overthrow the incumbent regime.

The central American case studies of Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala represent revolutionary movements caused by social and economic inequalities and oppression by undemocratic governments. Here again internal and external

factors come into play, plus the influence of Marxism-Leninism. But more important is the struggle between Cuba on the one hand, a role model of revolution for Latin America, supporting revolutionary movements, and America on the other hand, preventing establishment of radical governments. The Philippines revolutionary movements also stems from acute poverty among the masses and the oppression of the Marcos government. The legitimate government of Marcos was overthrown when it lost mass support.

The ANC of South Africa and PLO represent special cases of revolutionary movements. Their aim is not to transform the whole social structure but only the political system by giving power to the majority Africans and Palestinians respectively.

The case study of UNITA in Angola highlights an anti-Marxist rebel movement challenging the legitimate Marxist-oriented government. However, it has no revolutionary goals.

The main argument of the authors in their analysis of revolutions in the Third World is that incumbent governments create conditions conducive to revolutions because of their exploitative policies and oppression—but more important the use of force in response to protests and pressure for change by groups in society. In view of mass poverty and misery arising from structural adjustment programmes undertaken by most Third World governments and declining export revenues of the Third World, the potential for revolutionary upheavals are tremendous. Definitely, the authors offer a rich, collective effort on revolution and political change which is of considerable interest to students of politics and political economy.

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Benyamin Chetkow-Yanoov, Social Work Practice: A Systems Approach, The Haworth Press, Inc, New York, 1992, ISBN 1-56024-175-6 (h/b), 1-56024-176-4 (p/b), 149 pp inc index. Price: \$24,95 (h/b), \$14,95 (p/b).

The main purpose of the book is to offer a systems approach as a tool for social work and other helping professionals. Through the use of the systems-based model, Chetkow-Yanoov believes that practitioners have a chance not only to develop sensitivity and an ability to create links, but also to sharpen the understanding of how sub-units interact within a large unit. Further, the author demonstrates how practitioners in the field of social work, equipped with the principles of systems, can influence social policy through various processes. He also provides an opportunity to test the applicability of the systems concept to "a variety of micro and macro practice situations". Unlike other authors, Chetkow-Yanoov presents the