

Boesen, J., et.al. Ujamaa - Socialism from Above. Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala 1977. 183 pp with maps.

Introduction:

This is yet another publication of Tanzania socialistic development trend. This time it is a case study from West Lake Region. The book is divided into three main sections with nine short chapters dealing with the theme of the book from a micro to macro level of the rural development problems.

Ever since Tanzania decided to transform the rural areas through the introduction of Ujamaa policy in 1967, several books, monographs articles and conference papers have been written on the subject from various perspectives. The authors of this book who happened to be working in Tanzania as expatriates and researchers have come out with an observation that Tanzania's ideology puts much emphasis on rural development (pp 11 ff). At the same time the authors are of the opinion that Tanzania's road to socialism is weak. They note:

One of the weaknesses of ujamaa ideology....is its under-estimation of the need for a thorough analysis of class structure and class formation as the basis for a socialist rural development strategy in post-colonial Tanzania (p.19).

The approach:

The authors approach their study from class analysis, taking West Lake Region as the case study. In order to achieve their end, they divide the book into three main sections with nine short chapters; with different titles related to specific problems of rural development.

In the first section which they call the setting, they try to review the Ujamaa policy in relation to the region under study. They see the Ujamaa ideology operating in an inherent national social structure, which, according to their analysis, becomes a hindrance towards better social development. This social structure which has been inherited from the colonial regime includes the national bureaucratic machinery; that is government administrators, Party leaders and parastatals' administrators. All these make up the national bureaucracy, whose outlook is bourgeois.

In the second section, the authors discuss ujamaa village development in West Lake. They look into various aspects of the Ujamaa policy implementation process in the region. They look at the process from case studies of successful ujamaa villages and traditional peasant economy in general. In this way they apply their analytical framework of class and class formation.

It is also in this section that the dialectical relationship between bureaucracy and peasant economy is looked at closely. According to their findings, they do not see a laid-down solid foundation for the peasant economy development. The policy is not being implemented due to the bureaucratic blockade. This is what they say in this regard:

'The leadership, who were responsible for the implementation, rather interpreted the policy as a means they could use selectively to change the living conditions of certain strata in the society' (p. 156).

In the third section, which comprises two chapters only, the Tanzania social formation is looked at in the light of the Ujamaa development. The emergence of new class structure and the entrenchment of bureaucracy in the Ujamaa development in Tanzania is being looked at with the eyes of West Lake experience. It is the opinion of the authors that,

'In this peasant economy there is no built in demand for profit maximization, capital accumulation or continuous growth. The key concepts are security and equilibrium' (pp. 159-60).

They recognize, however, that the social formation in this part of Tanzania is characterized by a high degree of mobility across very diffuse boundaries between the classes and strata'.

The value of the book:

The book adds more literatures on ujamaa development in Tanzania. It is a great contribution which should serve as a case study of one particular area of the country and how the ujamaa policy is developing.

Although one cannot take all what is said in this book to be true of the whole country, there are some major points which can be said to have portrayed a somehow true picture.

The problem of bureaucracy and rural social development in Tanzania has been discussed by other writers as well. People like Hyden, Shivji, Finucane and Omari, to mention a few, have dealt with this problem in their writings. They have noted, for example, that there is a tendency of bureaucracy entrenching in every aspect of social development not as a service hand but as a stumbling block. When the technocratic elite and the political elite join their hands together, the social development of the peasants get stifled. This point is very important when analysing the Tanzanian social development especially in the rural areas.

This, in any case, has nothing to do with the policy itself as a written document. On that level, there is nothing so revolutionary comparable to ujamaa policy which has ever been produced in developing countries, especially Africa. The problem which the authors show clearly, however, is at the implementation level. Such problems were experienced during the mass campaigns to move people to permanent villages in the early seventies.

Boesen and his colleagues' approach to the rural development has some weakness. Although they look at the problem from class analysis, they fail to establish the nature of dominating economy structure. Perhaps this is due to the methodological problem. They **have selected a case study for their analysis** hoping that from such a case study **they can generalize about the Tanzanian situation**. That has become **a problem for them as far as I can figure out**. They happened to show that the dominant **class is the bureaucracy which mediate** between the peasant economy and international capitalism. It would have been of great help if some thoughts on international agencies who work in Tanzania in the name of peasant development were analysed adequately. In this way a good relationship (structure) between peasants and international capitalism could have emerged. More on how the peasant economy is being incorporated into international capitalism could have been realized as people like Lionel Cliffe and Samir Amin have shown in their writings.

The last point I would like to mention, that arises from this section, is that the idea of eliminating trade relationship between capitalism and peasants cannot be solved adequately if the bureaucratic class is the one which controls the fate of peasants.

In conclusion, the book, as a case study gives a good analysis of the West Lake Region, with regard to the peasant economy. It is a worthwhile reading. The book, if it were written in the post-1975 era, would have exposed a different picture with regard to the bureaucratic class, especially at the operational level. The nature may have remained the same but not the operational aspect of bureaucracy, especially after the appointment of village managers.

C.K. OMARI