

Yassin El-Ayouty(ed.), The Organisation of African Unity After Ten Years, Praeger Publishers, 1975, p. 250.

This book is a collection of twelve articles on various aspects of the Organisation of African Unity. Of what value is it for a scientific understanding of this Organisation and the environment in which it functions?

A scientific understanding of the OAU requires at least three things. First it requires an accurate and precise analysis of the OAU's political context. A principal element in this is the character of imperialism in its specific manifestation in Africa. In their various forms all African states are still linked with imperialism, and perform a necessary function to aid the process of capitalist accumulation in the imperialist countries. What function they perform is decided in its essence not in Africa itself, but in the imperialist centres, and according to a rough division of labour by which Africa's role is confined to the production of only certain types of commodities for the world economy. But imperialism cannot exist without its opposite, namely, the nationalist and democratic aspirations of the masses in Africa. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the character of these aspirations. For example, what is the main force behind these aspirations and what is the leading force? Would it be correct to say, for instance, that the peasants in Africa who constitute the vast bulk of the population, constitute the main force behind the revolutionary aspirations of the people of Africa, and that the working proletariat, though small in size, constitutes the leading force?

Secondly, one must understand the OAU at its organisational level, which means only one thing. How does the OAU reflect and crystallise the contradictions between imperialism and the nationalist-democratic aspirations of the people of Africa? Crudely put, whose instrument is the OAU? What is the class character of the regimes whose interests are reflected in the decisions or lack of decisions of its executive organs, and how does the OAU reflect the democratic and anti-imperialist aspirations of the masses of Africa despite the basically conservative, or at best reformative, character of most its member states?

Thirdly, one must understand both the nature of imperialism and the challenge posed by African masses and the role the OAU plays in this, historically. The situation in 1976 is not the same as that which existed in 1962. That America has been defeated by the masses of Vietnam and Cambodia for example, has repercussions for the nature of the class struggle in Angola. The substance of imperialism remains the same, but the form changes, the instruments imperialism wields become more subtle, the nature of the contradictions that become dominant at a point in time changes, and so on. One only has to examine in some detail the kinds of arguments put forward

in the conferences of the UNCTAD or of discussion on the future of, say, South Africa, or to look at the kinds of activities undertaken by the World Bank in Africa to realize the necessity for an historical analysis of the developments in Africa. To know where we are and what we are now, we have got to know what path we had traversed and what the forces were that influenced the course of our journey.

How does the book measure up to these demands? One must take into account the fact that the book professes to cover only the first ten years of the OAU's life, and also that it is a collection of papers, which read rather like half-finished conference papers that did not have the benefit of a group discussion before publication.

But the book has more serious limitations. Its authors appear to be sworn enemies of both historical analysis and class analysis. The pace-setting theoretical essay on "The Development of Norms in the African System" written by two American professors, Scott Thompson and William Zartman, is, and there is no better description for it, a ridiculous essay. The authors set out a list of these "norms" - for example, "The first of the African norms we have chosen for consideration is the predominance of national independence over continental unity" - and then go on to give samples of verbatim records of the speeches made in the OAU meetings to illustrate these "norms". These norms, for these professors, exist up in heaven, abstract and eternalised. How are these norms related to political struggle, how do they become rationalisations for certain political decisions, and how do the norms, at certain times, transform into their own opposites (like continental unity becoming more dominant than national independence) the authors have no conception, because they do not relate ideas to material reality. The "norms" exist as Platonic ideas.

This essay, together with five other essays, constitute Part I of the book with the pretentious title of "Theories and Institutions". The theories that emerge from these essays, if "theories" they must be called, are superficial empiricist observations about various aspects of the OAU. The second essay is a comparison between the Arab League and the OAU by Boutros-Ghali, one of whose "theories" is that whereas African states have attempted to resolve most of their problems within the African regional arrangement, the Arab League has tended to take its problems to the United Nations. One knows that this is an incorrect observation but even if it were true, it renders an extremely complex situation into something very simple, and for all practical and theoretical purposes meaningless. Even if we leave aside problems such as the Congo (1961-64), Rhodesia (since 1965) and South Africa which have been the daily meal of the United Nations, and consider

a problem such as the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) which was not taken to the UN, to what extent can we really say that the problem was resolved within African confines? A later essay on the Nigerian Civil War by Cervenka, however, analyses the Nigerian conflict in total abstraction from the global inter-imperialist rivalry. So does Boutros-Ghali. And in this refusal to incorporate the international context in their analysis of the OAU, the authors make serious errors of analysis.

The next essay by John Woronoff is preoccupied mostly with the question of whether regional organisations within Africa present a threat to the OAU - a problem that he analyses in purely institutional terms, as if institutions existed outside of politics. Yakemtchouk's next essay on the OAU and International Law takes up F. Borella's statement that the OAU is "dominated by political problems" and answers it with the argument "What regional organisation has not been dominated by political problems? There are hardly any. The difference lies only in the intensity of the political element within the regional legal order". That is where, in my opinion, the author goes wrong. He regards the legal order and the political order as two separate spheres so that one can compare regional organisations by the degree to which "the intensity of the political element (exists) within the regional legal order", which, presumably, leaves open the possibility of a regional organisation where the intensity of political element is minimal. Can one really compare regional, or for that matter even universal, organisations on that basis? Can we really say, for example, that there is a greater amount of legal order about the Organisation of American States or the United Nations than the OAU? Is it not really the case that the legal order is at the same time a political order?

The next two essays, one by Claude Welch on "The OAU and International Recognition: Lessons from Uganda" and the other by David Meyers on "An Analysis of OAU's effectiveness at Regional Collective Defence" are extremely poor sophomoric essays. They lack not only in theoretical insights, which they share with the other essays, but also in empirical depth.

The only useful part of the book is Part II that deals with the case studies. At least here one can get access to some empirical material even if there is no sound theory that knits the essays together. Especially useful for their empirical material are Leonard Kapungu's essay on the OAU's support for the liberation of Southern Africa, Cervenka's essay on the OAU and the Nigerian Civil War, and Mansour Khalid's essay on the question of the Southern Sudan. The next essay by the editor himself on the OAU's mediation in the Arab-Israeli conflict is a meticulous record of this mediation attempt by the OAU in 1971 but does not answer the tantalising question, why, if the

OAU mission was foredoomed, was it tried at all? The next essay by Andemicael concentrates on the relations between the OAU and the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, and has informative data on the mutuality and rivalry between these two bodies, but has no really worthwhile analysis of the forces that the two bodies represent, and the contradictions between these forces. Therefore the author ends with a pious and rather forlorn hope of bringing about a working compatibility between the two bodies based on some reformative suggestions that he has to make on purely the institutional aspects of the two organisations. The last essay by Galobawi Salih is simply a summary check list of the various bodies in Africa that are involved in public administration and management and brief descriptions of each of them.

In conclusion, the book should be used rather sparingly in African Universities, or anywhere. Basically, it does not know what question to ask about the OAU and African political economy and international relations. For the African masses in their present stage of anti-imperialist and national-democratic revolution, this book has very little of value to offer. For the petty-bourgeois students in African universities it has two things to offer: on the positive side, the second part of the book contains some useful empirical material neatly organised for further analysis; and on the negative side it offers, mainly in the first part of the book, examples of how bourgeois academics attempt to mystify reality.

YASH TANDON

Osita Eze, The Legal Status of Foreign Investments in the East African Common Market. Published by A.W. Sijthoff-Leiden Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internales Geneve, 1975, 353 pages.

The author of the book was a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1972 to 1976. The book is a revised version of a Ph.D. thesis on the same topic presented to the Graduate Institute of International Studies Geneva. The title reads legalistic, but the author attempts to be interdisciplinary in his approach. It can therefore be read and understood by any person without a legal training.

The book begins with a brief historical survey of the East African Common Market from its inception in the colonial period to the contemporary period. The author misses an opportunity in the first part of the book to identify and highlight the genesis of the current shortcomings of the East African Common Market. There is no attempt to relate the institutions and practice of the Common Market to the overall colonial and post-colonial political economy of East Africa. This approach would have permitted a deeper and a more critical analysis of foreign investments than presented.