

## INTRODUCTION:

If there is a common theme that unites the various articles put together in this number of *Utafiti*, it is the theme of class struggles in Africa and the applicability of Marxist analysis to the African situation. We have long gone past those days, at least at the University of Dar es Salaam when it used to be argued either that there was something "European" about Marxist analysis and hence inapplicable to Africa or that the peculiarity of the African situation demanded categories of analysis that were unique to Africa. Such obscurantists as attempted to place Africa somewhere outside the world, and outside history, have now retired into relative obscurity.

Drawing mainly from Soviet and East European sources Frank Mbengo gives us the basic essentials of the Marxist theory of classes and class struggle, stretching his analysis to the changes in the character of different classes in the contemporary world situation, and offering us empirical data to substantiate his arguments. He shows, for example, how a dwindling number of financial oligarchy control an increasing proportion of wealth in the capitalist countries. "Thus, for example, in Britain, roughly 1% of the inhabitants own 50% of the national wealth". He argues that the "national bourgeoisie" in former enslaved countries play a progressive role in the struggle against imperialist bourgeoisie". And he argues that the circumstances that gave birth to the rise of the aristocracy of labour in imperialism are changing, so that this particular stratum within the ranks of the working class is now declining. Finally, he shows how the very character of the working class itself has changed in developed capitalist countries, since an increasing proportion of the working class now consist of intellectual workers.

While the relevance of class analysis to the African situation is more or less generally accepted, another type of critics of Marxism criticise the tendency among some Marxists to absolutise classes to the neglect of all other aspects of political struggle in Africa. They are critics not of Marxism as such but of one particular breed of its adherents, those who have gone overboard in their excessive zeal to prove that they are Marxists. These, one of our authors Opoku Agyeman,

calls the "African Super Marxists". He takes them to task for positing a contradiction between Marxism and Pan-African nationalism, and goes on to use the authority of Nkrumah and Du Bois, among others, to show that the Marxism and nationalism were not in contradiction but in harmony, and that this is true even in the practice of socialist countries such as the USSR and China. "In thus advocating a nation-less universalism" Agyeman argues, "the purists go several steps better in their Marxism than the Soviet and Chinese Marxists, for instance, who think in terms of proletarian internationalism presupposing the firm and solid existence of viable proletarian nations". We must thank Agyeman, even if we may not agree with his manner of presenting the problem, for warning Marxists that they must not overreach Marx-himself in their zeal to prove that they are Marxists, as indeed some have done, Agyeman argues, by ignoring the great importance of the national question in Africa. Super Marxists do exist in our time as indeed they existed in the life-time of Marx himself.

Jacques Depelchin, who was among those who came under attack from the scathing pen of Agyeman, comes to a spirited defence of himself and of his colleague Mishambi. He accuses Agyeman of attacking Marxists from a position of ignorance about Marxism, and through misusing the authority of among others, Du Bois, Angela Davis, East Ofari, and Amilcar Cabral. Agyeman, Depelchin argues, is not really interested in showing the complementarity between Pan-Africanism and Socialism, but simply in vituperating against Marxists generally. If Agyeman was all committed to socialism, how could he defend the idea of Africa turning into a Japan? And how could Agyeman make a statement such as: "But I will go even further to assert the advantages of a 'bourgeois' black achievement over an unrealisable global proletarian revolution?" Agyeman's many assertions, Depelchin argues verge on racism; his Pan-Africanism is no more than "petty bourgeois intellectualism".

Depelchin quotes at length from Samora Machel and from the experience of Mozambique to show how practising Marxists do not luxuriate in visions but in the here and now struggle against capitalist domination. Turning back on Pan-Africanism, Depelchin seems to reject both the Pan-African aspect of the ideology (it is he says, a visionary ideal in any case) and the aspect of nationalism that is inherent in Pan-

Africanism which is what appears to be Agyeman's main concern, for Depelchin argues: "No amount of playing down class difference will demonstrate that black workers and black peasants will gain anything by allying themselves to their bourgeoisie on the basis of a Pan-African ideology". In other words there can be no united front with the national bourgeoisie, for they are themselves the enemy, and Depelchin gives example from Zaire to demonstrate his argument.

While Agyeman resurrects for us the memory of the old Nkrumah, the Nkrumah in power who envisioned an African revolution based on Pan-Africanism, Omafume Onoge brings us uptodate with the new Nkrumah, the Nkrumah of Conakry days, whose restatement of African revolution gave the pride of place to the peasants and proletariat of Africa. It was no longer nationalist struggle that the new Nkrumah stressed but class struggle. African masses had to settle matters with their own bourgeoisie first. Onoge quotes Nkrumah as saying: "It is a struggle between socialism and capitalism, not between a so-called 'Third World' and Imperialism". Could it be that in reassessing the political realities in Africa, Nkrumah too had gone somewhat overboard? Was he forgetting the importance of nationalist struggle against imperialism? It is not the task of the proletariat, we would argue, to isolate its own struggle against imperialism from that of the struggle of the "national bourgeoisie" against imperialism, but to lead the latter. It cannot at this stage of the struggle afford to throw the "national bourgeoisie" in the laps of imperialism. But Nkrumah makes no distinction, nor for that matter does his reviewer Onoge, between comprador bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie, and therefore for him the struggle against the entire local bourgeoisie and hence the struggle for socialism is already on the agenda of African revolution.

Nkrumah talks about the "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" as the enemy of the masses. So do I.G. Shivji and M. Mamdani in their writings of East Africa. Shivji was taken to task by D.W. Nabudere for his neo-Trotskyism in Utafiti's Vol. II, No. 1 Omwony-Ojwok pushes the argument one stage further in the present issue. He quotes, with approval, Mwalimu Nyerere's characterisation of our countries as "neo-colonies", and of who the enemy is of the African masses. "Some of our people identify their own personal interests with the existing neo-colonial situation".

Mwalimu is quoted as saying. "They are to be found", he adds, "among the local agents of foreign capitalists and among the local capitalists who have developed in the shadow of large foreign enterprises". Comments Ojwok:

"Does this not constitute a correct identification of the enemy of the Tanzanian and East African people as a whole? We submit that it does. We further submit that any attempt to play in the hands of imperialism by weakening the ranks of the anti-imperialist struggle through talk about the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' or even identifying all local bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements (including small traders, handicraftsmen, rich farmers or capitalist farmers as the 'immediate enemy') without concretely analysing their links with foreign monopolies and therefore with imperialism is Neo-Marxist, unscientific and reactionary".

Ojwok however goes a stage further. He accuses Shivji of having degraded the role of the Tanzanian proletariat in the struggle for Uhuru by suggesting, first, that the workers kept themselves out of the mainstream of national anti-colonial movement and that it was not until 1958 that they threw in their lot with the nationalist movement, and by suggesting secondly, that the working class is so small and relatively undeveloped in Tanzania that the task of leading the struggle against capitalism must es ipso be taken by the petty bourgeois revolutionary strata working under a "proletarian ideology". Ojwok shows how seriously mistaken Shivji is on both counts, and how Shivji misuses the authority of Amilcar Cabral and misrepresents the revolutions in Guinea-Bissau and in China to give "strength" to his Neo-Marxist views on the role of the proletariat in East Africa. Ojwok ends by saying that this petty-bourgeois "Marxism" of Shivji must be resolutely rejected.

In his criticism of Shivji, D.W. Nabudere had given notice that he would subject M. Mamdani's work on Uganda to a similar critique. This is what he does in this issue. He accuses Mamdani of not understanding imperialism, especially the fact that imperialism is that highest stage of capitalism at which finance capital rules supreme over the world economy. Speaking of Mamdani, Nabudere writes: "He explains events about colonialism as if Marx and Lenin did not exist... Sunk in 'neo-Marxist' jargonery, he cannot comprehend the laws of motion of capitalism at its highest stage. Having no concept of finance capital he has dual vision about the 'territorial economy', otherwise he would not be telling us about

merchants and traders in the colony - a 'commercial bourgeoisie' - dominating production at the level of the 'territorial economy'! ... He reduces the financial oligarchy into a meek creature allowing its colony to be dominated by 'Indian bourgeoisie' - commercial at that!"

Nabudere also shows how, lacking in understanding of the national question, Mamdani is unable to comprehend the principal contradiction in Uganda. "His analysis of events on the basis of 'class formations' is as petty as the mind of the petty-bourgeois whose outlook the book reflects". He also demonstrates serious theoretical flaws in Mamdani's understanding of the state and the ruling class. "Suffice to say", Nabudere concludes, that his characterising 'the nascent commercial bourgeoisie' as the ruling class and his explanation that imperialism is 'external' to Uganda which cannot become an immediate enemy until Uganda is 'invaded' by imperialism proves conclusively Mamdani's theoretical weaknesses and class position, and (his book) is ... a 'Manifesto to Adventurism'".

Utafiti hopes that Shivji and Mamdani would pick up the gauntlet thrown at them by Nabudere and Omwony-Ojwok. The issues raised are not trivial, and it would not do to take a liberal "let-it-be" attitude towards these issues if they think that Nabudere and Ojwok are misleading. Marxism demands that debate on fundamental theoretical issues be carried out openly and democratically, and Utafiti has offered its pages to this debate precisely because it is in the tradition of the University of Dar es Salaam to encourage contending views so that readers can judge for themselves the correctness of various positions.

H. Bhagat and H. Othman, in their "Colonialism and class formation in Zanzibar", give a brief historical account of the colonisation of Zanzibar first by the Sultan of Oman and then by Britain. They argue, not unlike Shivji and Mamdani however, that up to the 1930's it was the "Indian commercial bourgeoisie" that was dominant in the territorial economy of Zanzibar, and that this class constituted the "national bourgeoisie" of Zanzibar. "The capital which this class accumulated through trade made it possible for them to become money lenders, givers of credit. It was their role as money lenders which eventually proved to be quite revealing". How? They show how: "As the plantation owners continued to get into deeper and deeper debt, the effective control over plantations progressively slopped into the hands of the Indian commer-

cial bourgeoisie". But the imperialist state could not allow the continued domination of this national bourgeoisie. Why? Because "the national bourgeoisie would challenge the markets of the metropolitan bourgeoisie. Therefore the destruction of the national bourgeoisie in the periphery was necessary for the interest of the British capitalist class". What did the British do then? They destroyed the Indian commercial bourgeoisie and put in their place a landowning class because "the landowning classes are usually the most pliant and reliable allies of imperialists". This class "could only produce commodities for export", and "for its survival depends upon exports to the imperialist metropolises". Also, this class "usually engages in lavish conspicuous consumption and the imperialists can hardly be expected to be opposed to that, for it provides them with markets". This is the core of the thesis of this article which, however, goes on to show briefly the social roots of the petty bourgeoisie and working class in Zanzibar, and the class bases of the rival political parties that fought for independence, and the subsequent January, 1964 revolution.

H. Goulbourne in his "Politics and Ideology - the Tanzanian case", attempts to draw our attention to what he regards as a rather one-sided emphasis on the "repressive apparatuses" of the state in the discussion hitherto on the nature of the neo-colonial state. He sets out to examine the importance given to the ideology of the Tanzanian state in the writings of John Saul, L. Cliffe, I.G. Shivji, and J.R. Nellis. As for the first two writers, Goulbourne argues that they have "no perspective on classes and of class struggle", and as such they have a purely "positivist" understanding of Tanzanian ideology. "They do not move from the stage of perception, as Mao would say, to that of logical and theoretical understanding". Shivji, while he introduces class struggle in his analysis, however, does no better on the question of ideology. "...because Shivji has no conceptual framework within which to analyse ideology in class society, he utterly failed to understand its function and therefore its importance in Tanzania". Towards the end, Goulbourne argues that even in his analysis of class struggle in Tanzania, Shivji's perspective is essentially no different from that of the Saul-Cliffe "School". "For both 'schools' the class struggle is largely a matter of the workers and peasants observing this intra-elite struggle and learning from it, but not that they themselves are involved in the struggle. Thus Shivji does not significantly rise above the Cliffe/

Saul perspective" - a point incidentally, reminiscent of Ojwok's critique of Shivji. J. R. Nellis, on the other hand, while he applies a purely bourgeois approach to analysing Tanzanian ideology, does have a specific theory about ideology. For him ideology is the "non-material substitute purchasing agent" for states that otherwise lack physical power to get what they want. Nellis too, however, comes under attack for his faulty methodology. Goulbourne leaves the discussion at this point. We hope that having whetted our appetite, Goulbourne would one day give us his own concrete analysis of the significance of ideology in the recent history of Tanzania.

Finally we have an old article written by Joe Slovo reprinted in Utafiti. We believe that its theoretical insights are of such great importance even today that it deserves a renewed exposure to our readers. The central question that Slovo addressed himself to is the question debated since the days of Marx and Engels, as to whether it is necessary for all nations to tread the pitiless path of capitalism. Slovo traces the history of this question to this day, passing through the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the famous resolution of the sixth congress of the comintern in 1928 when the phrase "non-capitalist road" was used for the first time, and the statement of the 1960 World Conference of 81 Communist Parties, when the concept was applied for the first time to the newly independent countries of the third world. It was believed for a long time and it still is in many circles, that a progressive national bourgeoisie in these countries can, through the instrumentality of their control over the state, lead their countries on the path towards socialism without passing through capitalism. Slovo analyses some of the problems associated with this formulation, and drawing from the practical lessons learnt in such countries as Ghana, Egypt, Algeria and the Sudan, concludes that "the concepts of the non-capitalist path and the national democratic state (especially when linked together) have proved to be extremely elusive and unwieldy as theoretical propositions either to describe existing structures or as guide to Marxist revolutionary groups as individuals in the continent of Africa". The struggle for socialism in Africa, Slovo argues, needs a revolutionary party based on Marxism-Leninism with real roots among the working people, "Such a force cannot be conjured up out of thin air".