

UTAFITI NOTES

As the problems of building socialism in an underdeveloped country daily beleaguer Tanzania, as Tanzania's original experiment in developing socialism without class struggle daily faces challenges arising from simmering class contradictions, dependence on the capitalist world market forces, collaboration with international finance and institutional difficulties within parastatals and cooperatives, two distinct themes emerges from the academic concerns of the members of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science as reflected in their writings and seminar presentations.* One theme, the minority voice, is that socialism cannot be built without class struggle, that class harmony is utopian; and the other is that it can be done, and, therefore, we need to look at the problems besieging Tanzania in a practical way and to suggest positive measures to resolve these problems.

This latter theme, critical but also positive, analytical but functionalist at the same time (in the sense that it sees analysis in terms of its practical function) is the dominant refrain of the very active Economic Research Bureau which held weekly seminars during the 1974/75 academic year. "Problems of Ujamaa villages in Handeni District" discussed by Mr. Suleman Sumra at the ERB seminar on 4th March, 1975, is prototypical. Let us look at some of its contents.

The performance of Ujamaa villages in the Handeni District is evaluated and found to be seriously wanting. The author goes on to explain what went wrong, and what might be done to remedy the situation. Some of the problems appear to stem from purely bad planning and/or poor administration—inadequate soil analysis, inadequate marketing and transport facilities, non-use of cattle manure for fertilisers (why?), linear hut arrangements when a circular arrangement might be more functional for safeguarding cassava from the rampage of baboons and pigs, irregular and unplanned government help, and so on. The prescriptive implications of these are obvious.

But there are kinds of problems which appear to be, if you like, "genetical", deeply rooted in the socio-economic conditions of the peasants' material existence. The author notes that there is a marked predilection in the Ujamaa villages for the peasants to work in their individual plots rather than in the communal plots, a tendency that is the very antithesis of co-operative farming. And the reason for this is not, as one might superficially argue, that it is in "human nature" to prefer private property. In a striking

*These *Notes* are compiled in order to provide the readers not with an exhaustive coverage, but with a sample flavour of the kinds of issues that have been discussed on the Hill during the last six months. Readers must go to the papers cited here or their authors for further clarification. The function of these *Notes* is simply to act as an information channel.

paragraph in which the author explains where a possible reason might lie for this predilection, he says:

People attend the clearing work on the communal plots after their own plots have been cleared.... As soon as the rain falls, the number attending decreases considerably as work on their individual plots increases. There is always a conflict between work on communal farms and work on individual plots. *Unless there is famine relief provided, work on the individual plot is given preference.* (Emphasis added.) This attitude is mainly as a result of peasants being still unsure of obtaining sufficient production on the communal farms.

What, indeed, can the peasants do if the communal farms do not inspire confidence as a source for obtaining the basic means of subsistence? In one village, the members earned the incredibly awesome amount of one shilling and five cents per person for their *annual* labour on the communal farm. The highest any village earned was shs. 77 per person per year, while the average for the 33 villages studied was nearer shs. 10 than 15. Of course, the problem might be a vicious circle. If only the peasants would put all their labour into the communal farms.

One reason why the distribution of the earnings from the communal plots to individual members comes to so low a figure is that part of these earnings is reserved as "village fund". But what happens to this village fund? "In most cases the fund is used for consumptive (*sic.*) purposes. As 1972 was a year with food shortages in the district, travelling allowances for members to go to Handeni town to inform the authorities that food for famine relief was finished, consumed a substantial part of the communal fund. These expenses may have been unavoidable but money spent for entertaining guests or on feasts could have been put to better use."

These and similar issues are the recurring themes of the papers presented at the ERB seminars, analysed with varying degrees of perspicacity and depth, and with greater or less concern for showing possible ways out of the various dilemmas facing Tanzania. The titles of the papers presented in the seminars are in most cases self-explanatory, and here we can do no more than list some of them:

Is Farm Work unselectability and the selectiveness of Wajamaa a problem in the Strategy of Tanzania's rural development? (Sam Ndawula Kajumba)

Agricultural Credit and the Development of Ujamaa Villages in Tanzania. (R.B.M. Mabele and L.A. Msambichaka)

Herd Composition and Farm Management Data on Smallholder Milk Producers in Rombo and Moshi Districts. (T.M. Zalla)

Some comments on Rural Development Finance with reference to Tanzania. (S. Rugumisa and C. Barnes)

Problems presented by Land Policy and Agricultural Credit. (J.W. Murisi)

Technology and Factor Proportions in Investment Decisions: African Aspects. (Z. Svejnar)

The Political Economy of Marine Fisheries in Coast and Dar es Salaam Region. (C. Barnes)

- Functional Literacy, Economic Behaviour and Productivity: the Case of the Cotton Programme of the Mwanza Literacy Project. (Y. O. Kassam)
 The choice of Techniques in the Textile Industries in Tanzania. (D. Williams)
 The Development of the Sugar Industry in Tanzania: Study in the Choice of Technology in Industrial Development. (D. Phillips)
 The Evolution of Rural Policies in Tanzania. (A. Coulson)
 Industries in Zanzibar: the Post-Revolution Period. (I.A. Khamis)
 "We Must Run While Others Walk"—Policy-making for Socialist Development in the Tanzania-Type of Politics. (G. Hyden)
 The Impact of Rural Credit in Ismani. (A.T. Mohele)

Of special note, because they represent approximately the two themes referred to above and because they touch on the wider issues of strategy and policy rather than on narrower or purely regional aspects of development, are the papers by Andrew Coulson on "The Evolution of Rural Policies in Tanzania" and Goran Hyden's on "We Must Run While Others Walk...".

Coulson's paper represents the theme of no socialism without class struggle. The class contradiction he sees emerging in the rural areas of Tanzania is that between the poor peasants and "Government staff"—i.e., the bureaucracy. He analyses the evolution of rural politics, ending on the sardonic note that the implementation of "ujamaa" (his quotation marks) has gradually evolved towards the use of more and more force to compel the peasants to meet bureaucratic targets. In a section sub-titled "Are Peasants Lazy?", he comes out strongly in defence of the peasants. ("Why should they work harder? ... Presumably if he (the peasant) could see *some point* in working harder, he would do so. So if he does not work terribly hard it is presumably because he sees little point in doing so. If he works harder he notices that somebody else gets most of the benefit—the corrupt co-operative official, the salaried staff member, or, very correctly, the foreign consumer who buys his crops. He thus does not think that more work can *significantly* change his life."), and against the bureaucracy ("In fact a staff member who complains that peasants are lazy is a typical petty-bourgeois—sitting in security supported by a salary, not dependent on his own labour, and complaining about other people. Paradoxically, if anybody is lazy, it is the staff...").

And Coulson's solution? "The alternative is to build socialism from below, which means starting with small groups of politicised peasants who will have to march largely on their own. The groups of co-operating farmers have to be small enough to trust and discipline each other. The bureaucracy will have to be drastically reduced to size..." etc., etc. The paper ends with an almost eschatological, and, in the light of his own analysis, forlorn note: "... the only immediate hope for socialism in Tanzania is a cultural revolution". But how do you go about it?

Goran Hyden's long (48 pages) paper, stripped to its essentials, has

a simple theme. It is a theme basically in sympathy with the efforts of the Government bureaucracy to build socialism in Tanzania against heavy odds, and in the absence of adequate models of development which might serve as a guide. "When Tanzania is attempting to run while others walk she is not... proceeding on a smooth and well-paved track. Running in this context is more like a rough cross-country contest where the problems are not only unknown but all the time pressing themselves on the competitors. Tanzania... does not have its development problems, so to speak, at arm's length. Her race is a constant fight against heavy odds with little or no breathing space. Bugged down by these hurdles there is rarely time to plan the next move."

This breathless race towards "socialist development" has four main strategic features. "The first is the strong urge to do everything and to do it at once. The effort is to maximise as many social valuables as possible... (like) the fisherman who when throwing his net out is aware that while pulling it back some of the catch may escape... The second is that policy-makers often decide without having obtained full and detailed knowledge of possible consequences of their decisions. They start running and take the consequences as they occur... The third... is the unwillingness of policy-makers to use the past as a source of guidance for the future... (And) the fourth... is that employees in the public sector are compelled to work in a context where public expectations constantly supersede what can actually be attained by the incumbent officers."

But why is this kind of strategy necessary for Tanzania? Because in the absence of a revolutionary situation in Tanzania ("Socialism in Tanzania is not originally a product of a domestic class struggle, but induced primarily by the contradictions at the international level, interpreted and developed as an ideology by one man and finally taken to the people through a mass political organisation by what is essentially an emerging bourgeois class"), the revolutionary spirit has to be created by artificial means. "By adopting the notion of 'We must run while others walk', the impression of a revolutionary atmosphere is created. Every policy change is dramatized so as to make people feel that the country is making great leaps forward."

Does the author approve of this strategy? Yes, he does, because, he argues, there is no alternative. Neither "the conventional planning economists" nor "Marxist social scientists", Hyden argues, have shown a practical alternative. "It is not an exaggeration to say that when social scientists Marxists and non-Marxists alike, have assessed Tanzania's efforts at planning for development they have usually arrived at the conclusion that the outcome is at best a 'poor imitation' of their respective ideal, the Western efficiency model or the Chinese socialist model." And then he asks a question which can equally be asked of the author himself though in a reverse order. Of the Marxist and non-Marxist critics of Tanzania's development strategy, he asks why they adopt ideal models against which to measure Tanzania's efforts?

UTAFITI "The answer is that academics, and particularly social scientists, want to assume the position of social critic and reformer. In fact, he (*sic*) needs the goal model to legitimize his own position and career in society." What then is the author's reason for going along with the reigning official ideology? Whatever his motivation, for this is an area of worthless speculation, the author's ideological thrust is unmistakable:

... in a situation like that in Tanzania, where the revolutionary basis was not laid through a protracted struggle but has to be laid by political means through organisations, notably TANU, recruitment of resources to strengthen the polity itself may be highly instrumental. A case in point is the villagisation policy, against which virtually all Marxist observers have expressed deep reservations on the assumption that it is not socialist, i.e., not clearly aimed at maximising the objective socialist goals. But what is there to say against the interpretation that the villagisation is a necessary investment in strengthening the polity (does this mean the ruling class?) so that in the long run the transition to socialism can be accelerated?

Coulson's and Hyden's papers thus juxtaposed are a good reflection of the vivacity of intellectual life on the campus, of how sharply polarised views exist on the development of socialism in Tanzania.

The History and Sociology Departments had their own fairly active programme of seminars. The Sociology seminars were thematically divided into two series. The first examined the position of the working classes and the Left in three European countries—Britain (Hugh Beynon of Manchester University and R. Frankenberg of Keele University), Italy (B. Morosini), and France (G. Phillippon). The second series was more eclectic—on Frelimo (B. Munslow), Medicine and Capitalism (M. Segall), The Social and Economic Organisation of Ujamaa Villages (Henry Mapolu), Prison in Tanzania (George Hadjivayanis) and Utani (S. Lucas).

The History seminars included papers on the following themes:

Colonial Ideological Apparatuses in Tanganyika under the Germans (K. Hirji)

Markets and Marketing in Tanganyika (R. Zwanenberg)

The Basiya of Shinyanga (J. Madaha)

The Health of the Colonised: A Political History of Medicine in Tanganyika under German and British Rule (E. Ferguson)

A History of Agriculture in Handeni District up to 1967 (S. Sumra)

The Impact of Islam on African Societies (M. Kaniki)

Wild Life and Ecological Control: A Tanzanian Historical Perspective (H. H. Kjekshus)

Prophets, Diviners and Prophetism: The Recent History of Kiganda Religion (P. Rigby)

The Political Science Department organised a three-day seminar on Southern Africa, which was most opportune, coming at a time when the radical changes in Portugal and Portuguese colonies in Africa have raised the tempo of both political and speculative activity. The conference addressed

itself to various themes including the balance of class forces in Angola and Mozambique, the strategy of liberation, the Indian Ocean and the Great Power rivalry there, the role of South Africa and Multinational Corporations, an assessment of the revolutionary situation in Azania and Namibia, the state of negotiations on the future of Zimbabwe, and a comparison between the Southern African revolutionary situation with the situation in Palestine. The dominant theme to emerge out of the discussions was a sense of deep concern about the dangers of a possible detente between imperialism and the various interests who speak on behalf of the African revolution. How else can one explain the out-of-character role of *apartheid* South Africa as a "mediator" between Smith and the revolutionary forces in Zimbabwe? Despite this reservation, there was a definite sense of revolutionary optimism that permeated the discussions. An important feature of the conference was the spirited participation in it by several representatives of liberation movements based in Dar es Salaam. It is expected that the proceedings of the conference will be edited by Nathan Shamuyarira and shortly published.

The Economics Department had, as its guest, Professor Joan Robinson from Cambridge, England, who gave a series of lectures and seminars on a Critique of the Neo-Classical economic theory (to the considerable joy of the Neo-Ricardian, Kalecki-Sraffaian economists in the Department), and another series on the Transition to Socialism strategies, discussed both at a theoretical level and in terms of their application to China and Cuba (this one, not so joyously received by the Marxist social scientists on the Hill). The seminars and lectures were well attended and provided a lively spark to the usual academic disputations on the Campus.

The Literature Department had as its guest the novelist George Lamming from the West Indies (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 1953, and *Water with Berries and Natives of My Person*, 1972, among others). He gave a series of brilliant seminars on radical and black literature, and was interviewed by the *Daily News*. "What do you consider," he was asked, "to be the writer's responsibility?" Lamming: "The responsibility of the writer is fundamentally no different from that of any other worker... If he bears honest witness to the social forces at work, and the result is a critical evaluation of those forces as they affect the daily lives of people, then he is aiding the process of change which is a fundamental law of life..."

Question: "*In the Castle of My Skin* shows that you have taken a proletarian line in your works. Did you consciously decide to champion the cause of the oppressed or did this come about spontaneously?" Answer: "*In the Castle of My Skin* is largely autobiographical. I came from the lowest social and economic stratum of my society. It required no effort of conversion for me to write for and on behalf of that group." How much of this can we say of how many African writers on the continent?

The Education Department continue to be interested in the larger community in Tanzania, especially the community's attempts at evolving

UTAFITI an educational system best suited for a socialist aspiring Tanzania. The old questions persist: is education a worthwhile investment? or is it only a service? Who gets into formal schools? Can education be used as an effective tool in changing old attitudes to the role of women in society? How do the older citizens fare in the whole educational bargain? These and similar questions have been discussed in seminars organised by the Department of Education together with others interested in educational matters. Titles of these seminars indicate the spirit of the discussions: "School, Community and Class" led by Dr. (Mrs.) Mbilinyi; "Political Education vis-à-vis Adult Education in Tanzania, the Dynamics of their Interaction" by Y. O. Kassam; "Grandparents and Grandchildren in Traditional Education" led by Miss Mazala, Mr. Okuttah and Dr. S. Lucas; "Student Activism: a Historical and Sociological Profile" by Dr. A. Ishumi; "Women and Education in Tanzania" by a collective of third year students; "The Methodology of Teaching" by Mrs. M. Mvungi.