

UTAFITI NOTES 1

In March 1979 a conference was held at the Motel Agip in Dar es Salaam under the chairmanship of Dr. Maliyamkono which was devoted to the theme "The impact of overseas training on development." This was a sequel to a conference bearing the same title which was convened at the University of Dar es Salaam in December 1977. The latter conference was held at a time when the proceedings of the former were published under the title *Overseas Training: its Impact on Development*, Arusha: Eastern African Publications, 1979.

The two conferences were dedicated to the issue of development and its relationship to high level manpower trained abroad. Since the end of World War II, a number of Africans have been given scholarships to study abroad, especially in countries bordering the North Atlantic Basin. These countries constituted the centre of the overseas colonial empire, and it was not accidental that the scholarship system to enable the would-be successors to colonial administrators was embarked upon. Scholarships were given to "promising" young people of the colonial empire to undertake studies in metropolitan Universities so that they could return home and assume the difficult task of administering their people and so on. Scholarships were made available by such generous bodies as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the British Council and individual governments. It is also some of these bodies which have financed the enterprise of assessing "the impact of overseas training on development."

Two notions seem to have dominated this enterprise: training and development. Training is intended to produce people who, it is assumed, will contribute to development. Metropolitan economic development has been explained in terms of entrepreneurs, and that the more they are trained the greater the chances for rapid development. Metropolitan economic development has been explained in terms of entrepreneurship, political development has been analysed with the notion of the role of elites in mind, the progress of Third World countries has been viewed in terms of training. If this was formerly perceived from the standpoint of colonial entrepreneurs, now it is from the vantage point of those who have been trained abroad, and hence the need to assess the impact of overseas training. But rather than assess this impact, it might have been of some use to look for the stimulus which induced the initiative to undertake overseas training in the first instance.

In the same month of March when the conference on "The impact of overseas training on development" was staged, the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam convened another conference to observe the "United Nations International Anti-Apartheid Year 1978/79". The conference was held in collaboration with the **Departments** of Political Science and Theatre Arts and Music. The focus of the conference was Southern Africa, particularly South Africa. The various papers which were tabled discussed such issues as the policy of apartheid in South Africa, the role of multinational corporations in South Africa, the Anglo-American initiatives and the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, the Organization of African Unity and the liberation of Southern Africa, and so on. Papers were presented, by, among others, Mbwiliza, Mlahagwa, Kisanga, Moshi, and Mpangala. The conference received wide coverage in the Tanzanian mass media.

A few months later, towards the end of June 1979, another conference followed: the Southern African Universities Social Science Conference. This is an annual academic affair which has succeeded the East African Universities Social Science Conference that collapsed following the disintegration of the East African Community. Following this incident, the three Universities of East Africa, Dar es Salaam, Makerere and Nairobi have decided either to hold conferences separately or to look to and collaborate with other universities in the South. This is what has happened especially with Dar es Salaam. Indeed, contacts with Universities like Madagascar, Maputo, Zambia, Bujumbura are on the verge of acquiring a more permanent form when the necessary protocols have eventually gone through. Such relations will not be restricted to annual academic jamborees like the Southern African Universities Social Science Conference. Rather they are intended to facilitate the exchange of teaching staff and students, as well as all kinds of teaching materials.

Many papers were read at the Conference. They ranged from History to Economics, Theatre Arts to Political Science. Representatives from Southern African liberation movements also attended the conference. Some participants from these organizations read papers pertaining to their own fields of specialization.

The Conference had two important papers relating to women, namely Marjorie Mbilinyi's "The social transformation of the Shambaa Kingdom and the changing position of women," and Patricia McFadden's "The proletarianization of women: the South African working woman." Mbilinyi's paper had been the subject for discussion as a Department of History Seminar Paper during the third term of the academic year 1978/79. There has been a sudden popularity of studies on the role of women in society. What started in the West in the 1960s following an intensified penetration of the family by capital has found its way into the Third World. The argument here is that the position of women in society is not natural. Rather it is historically determined, and thus needs to be problematized. When 1975 was declared a women's Year in Tanzania the argument then was that women had contributed enough to society and especially to the nationalist struggle and that this contribution had to be recognized. What these papers and many others are arguing is that at issue is not this kind of contribution but oppression and exploitation. This poses a challenge not only to liberal studies but also to the manner in which studies on the left have so far been conducted.

The popularity of sexist studies is on the ascendant at the University of Dar es Salaam in general and in the Department of History in particular. In 1975 one of the BA dissertations was devoted to women. In the 1978/79 academic year, a number of postgraduate discussions in the department were given to the "women question." Some three women students were inspired by this trend and so decided to write their term papers and dissertations on the "women question" in Tanzania. All of them have yet to finish writing their dissertations, but the titles of their studies will appear in the departmental bulletin, *Tanzania Zamani*, by and by. The "women question" also penetrated the undergraduate syllabus which was reorganized in the beginning of 1979. A special paper, "Women in Africa" will soon be offered in the department.