

BOOK REVIEW: *Towards Socialist Planning*, Rweyemamu, J. F., Loxley, J. et al. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972. 199 pp. \$2.24.

*The Silent Class Struggle*, Shiviji, I., Rodney, W., et al. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1973. 137 pp. \$2.00

*Tourism and Socialist Development*, Shivji, I., ed. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1973. 97 pp. \$2.00

The books reviewed here are available from Tanzania Publishing House, P.O. Box 2138, Dar es Salaam. Add \$1.00 each for surface postage.

One of the best things that could happen to politically-conscious black folks in the States is the end of myths about two African countries: Tanzania and Guinea. The end of myths, *not* the end of intense interest, support or the forging of relationships based on struggle, would expand black political awareness. I have never been to Guinea, but I know from personal experience how the image of Tanzania--built on three 'magic' phrases *Ujamaa*, *Nyerere*, and liberation movement headquarters--has sometimes served to distort, intentionally or not, the development of black political consciousness in the U.S.

It is not enough to read the series of *Uhuru na.... (Freedom and Unity, Freedom and Socialism, Freedom and Development)* books compiled from collected speeches of Tanzania's dynamic leader, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, or just to have a mimeographed copy of "Education for Self-Reliance" or "The Arusha Declaration"--although these are a helpful beginning. It is not enough to know that *Ujamaa* (a Kiswahili word) translates to 'familyhood' or socialism, or that liberation movements from FRELIMO to PLO have offices in the Capital City, Dar es Salaam. There is a danger that Tanzanias value for black folks in North America is taken to be only as an outlet for technical skills, or a refuge for political prisoners, or a place where new bourgeois romances about going to an *ujamaa* village or riding the Tan-Zam Railway replace old ones about Masai and wild animals. These are some serious mistakes!

Tanzania is a vast country where a struggle as important as any other in Mozambique or Vietnam or Cuba is taking place: a struggle to build socialism. That struggle is not romantic, smooth, short or guaranteed to succeed. It takes place amidst the principle world contradiction between imperialism and the people; as well as within the scope of the internal contradictions between, on the one hand, non-socialist Tanzanian bureaucrats and members of the local bourgeoisie who have allied themselves with international capitalism, and on the other hand, the workers and peasants of Tanzania.

Perhaps the chief contradiction inside Tanzania, resulting from the major international contradiction, is glaring underdevelopment. There is a struggle not just to alter the shape, content and magnitude of *consumption*, but to radically transform the shape and content of *production* in Tanzania--without which there can be no distribution of real material benefits along a socialist direction.

Like many other people, I had once formed two neat mental columns for African states: reactionary and progressive. Tanzania stood as a strong entry in the latter. Such a glib lack of analysis masks the reality of a country whose people share contradictions and possibilities with the rest of Africa, with the entire Third World, with the black people in the very U.S. neighborhoods where we grew up!

The process of de-mystifying Tanzania through study/reading does not replace practice and work wherever we are, nor can it substitute for interaction and discussion with Tanzanians who are active in the struggle, embodying living, concrete experience. But critically studying Tanzania--the tactics, strengths, and weaknesses of the Party (TANU), the real, changing conditions of the people--*can* be one more step in deepening scientific understanding of our world in order to change it.

Which brings us to the subjects of this review, the Tanzania Studies Series, whose first three volumes have just been reprinted after sell-out first editions.

The first volume of the series, *Towards Socialist Planning*, brings us face-to-face with one of the principle tools (and biggest headaches) of a society attempting to build socialism: planning. A socialist economy is by definition a *planned* economy. In the words of J. F. Rweyemamu, one of 8 contributors to this essay collection, 'it does not develop in a spontaneous manner, its development being guided and directed by the conscious will of organized society'. The key here is to be sure that it is the organized *masses* of Tanzania whose will is reflected. The reality of socialist planning is a long way from the ideal in a nation severely underdeveloped and mis-developed, with colonially-inherited ideas about bureaucracy, and nascent class antagonisms even in rural areas.

The authors take their raw data from Tanzania's First and Second Five Year Plans, and from the actual experiences during the years encompassed by the plans.

The same vital theme is hammered in all the essays, that planning is not just technical and mechanical, the work of technocratic experts and Civil servants; but *contextual*, within a political framework. In other words, what's in the heads of the planners is key----

what they see as their interests, who they see themselves answerable to, how their consciousness has developed, who their allies and enemies are, what patterns of consumption, production and distribution they wish to encourage and protect. The fact that not all those involved at the highest levels, and at the implementation level, are socialists has been a telling experience for Tanzania; but it has also been an experience from which the socialists in the country have learned.

For the reader not well-versed with planning economics, perhaps the best essay in *Towards Socialist Planning* is the one by Dr. Malcolm Segall, a physician who practiced and taught at Muhimbili, the largest hospital. He argues the case for planning mass, preventive, rural-based *socialist* health services, against the present urban elite-centered, wasteful, curative medicine system copied from Europe.

The second book in this series, although virtually unknown in the U.S., is the widest read in Tanzania and Africa. The 5 essays contained in *The Silent Class Struggle* evolve from the lead essay, first written in 1970, from which the book takes its title. That essay sparked ideological debate and re-thinking among TANU party member, the government bureaucracy, and secondary school and University teachers and students all over Tanzania. This may seem a rather narrow base for discussion, but in the Tanzanian context, the debate's importance shouldn't be minimized.

For as Walter Rodney underlines in his contribution to the volume:

*In the final analysis it is the peasants who have to disengage from imperialism. However, the ideological confrontation is neither directly between the peasants and imperialists nor within the peasantry itself. The battle of ideas is within the petty bourgeois stratum. Because colonialism cut the peasantry off from access to the positive aspects of bourgeois knowledge such as science, and it never allowed the peasant to gain a comprehensive view of the imperialist centres of production with its epicentres in New York, London and Zurich... the role of the progressive African intellectual is to go beyond the bounds which capitalism imposed and to penetrate the very essence of the system...the ideological struggle takes the form not only of contending against erroneous ideas at large in the society, but also that of constantly and critically analysing his (own) position.*

A unique article in *The Silent Class Struggle* comes from T. Szentes on 'status quo and Socialism'. He argues that it is a fact of history, discernible in part from analyses by socialists from Jalee to Nkrumah to Rodney, that imperialism underdeveloped Africa in order to create an environment for the economic development of Europe. That knowledge is wisdom, and must be spread among the people. But what must also be grasped in a dialectical analysis are the new forms of exploitation, the ongoing changes in the international division of labour and patterns of consumption (e.g. synthetic substitutes for raw materials), the changing positions of imperialist countries (e.g. the shifting of the Crown of imperialism from Britain to the U.S.), the increased technical dependence of the Third World on imperialism's gradual replacement of the habitual cognizance of them as simply suppliers of raw materials, to dumping grounds for surplus capital. Here lies a valuable insight, not only into Tanzania, but into why Detroit auto factories run away to South Africa or Carolina textile plants go to Singapore or Arab states 'buy' technology from France and Italy.

The same article also cautions against distorting the position of the new African elite. The controversial view advanced here is that this elite does not own means of production and

*cannot ensure its privileged material position except by regulating the distribution relation by political means...it is bound sooner or later to lose the political power.. the elite as it exists today will either merge with the bourgeoisie of an unfolding capitalist society, or will dissolve, losing its elite character in the process of socialist development...the crucial question is how and by what methods can the elite be transformed....how is the Party (TANU) able to control and fight against the bureaucratic tendencies and anti-socialist measures' of the economic bureaucracy?*

Szentes also suggests that, if workers in Tanzania are to really participate in management and creatively control production, the blockade erected by experts and managers (often expatriate) preventing them from *information* must be broken down by a socialist rationalization of management. For Tanzanian peasants and workers alike, full access to the accumulation of human knowledge is a must. Finally there is a warning that party cadres and the population at large cannot afford a separation between ideological development and the acquisition of skills.

The issues raised by *The Silent Class Struggle* help explain the ideological leap, often found perplexing and even enraging by committed black folks from the States, that many African

'progressives' have taken. Why are so many of those who are themselves members of the African petit bourgeoisie deciding to do as Cabral, by his own admission, did--break completely with the modes of thought and action nurtured in their social group and link their future with the masses. The answer lies partly in concrete, recent reality in post-colonial Africa, including Tanzania. It is a mistake, serving only the causes of ignorance and imperialism, to simply chalk up the turn to scientific socialism in Africa to 'foreign ideologies' or 'imitating Europe'. There is an ideological struggle raging in the Third World which has to be faced up to and joined, by committed black people in the West, who will make their own unique contribution. That is why it becomes important to penetrate myths about Tanzania, and about socialism in Africa.

The last volume in the Tanzania Studies Series is *Tourism and Socialist Development*. The book is composed of an original article by TANU Youth League members published in the local English-language daily newspaper, plus selected letters from a wide spectrum of Tanzanians who flooded the newspapers with their views, making for a lively, months-long debate. It is argued that tourism retards Tanzania's socialist reconstruction and perpetuates both cultural and economic dependency. This analysis might provoke an interesting view of the growing number of black folks from the States who frequent the Caribbean, as well as Africa for vacations. Of course European and Japanese tourists are by far the most economically important (read detrimental) because they epitomise the values and embody the system of international capitalism. They are the original ugly Americans, ugly Germans, and ugly Japanese. The cover of *Tourism and Socialist Development* features a picture photographed against a calm tropical sea, where a lazy hand reaches to a tray of gin and tonic offered by a white-uniformed black waiter. But *we* must not forget that, although the hand is white, these days it isn't *always* white.

While this series shows far too much of the outsider-looking-in perspective (reflecting the fact that, for a variety of reasons, not as many Tanzanian intellectuals have taken up the challenge to clarify and analyze their own objective conditions, as have European socialist working in the country, who have too many of their own problems and contradictions), the volumes, all of them very small, are highly recommended. In the future, I am told, this continuing series will stress more the experiences of socialist *production*, of answering now, little by little, the real needs of the people in Tanzania.

Even for those brothers and sisters who feel about scientific socialism, and the concepts of dialectical and historical materialism, like a friend of mine who is a veteran of the civil rights movement once told me---"I never read anything I don't agree with! ---the Tanzania Studies Series can be a consciousness-raiser.

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