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***Class Struggles in Tanzania* by Issa G. Shivji  
London, Heinemann, 1976. Pp. ix + 182.  
£4.50. *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945–  
1968: Nyerere and the emergence of a socialist  
strategy* by Cranford Pratt Cambridge  
University Press, 1976. Pp. x + 309. £7.50.**

Robert Martin

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to make little difference as far as student attitudes, aspirations, and expectations are concerned. I would, however, have liked him to consider this issue in more detail. As it is, a discussion of possible cross-national differences sets the stage for this inquiry but is not reflected in the bulk of Barkan's analyses. Maybe the right questions were not asked. One wonders, too, how political considerations may have affected the reliability of the views expressed by students, especially since a response rate of only 52 per cent was obtained in Dar es Salaam.

STANLEY J. MORSE

*School of Social Sciences, The Flinders University of South Australia,  
Bedford Park*

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A disturbing event occurred in Tanzania in 1970. A law student at the University of Dar es Salaam, Issa Shivji, produced a cyclostyled pamphlet called 'Tanzania: the silent class struggle'. Its effects were immediate. Since independence, Tanzania, and particularly Julius Nyerere, had basked in the seductive glow of academic approval which was fanned into devotion following the adoption of the Arusha Declaration in 1967. Tanzania was clearly the nicest place in the Third World. Her leaders had eschewed both the bourgeois veniality and the 'socialist' excesses of other countries. Shivji's pamphlet shattered this serene vision: he suggested that instead of assessing Tanzania's socialism solely in terms of Nyerere's pronouncements, analysis could profitably be directed towards the extent to which these were being realised in a transformation of Tanzanian society. His rather haphazard study concluded that not only was there little evidence of the development of socialist production, but that, in fact, capitalist production was being strengthened.

Despite the presence of A. M. Babu in the Cabinet, serious Marxist analysis of Tanzanian society did not begin to develop until about 1966. It originated at the then University College and was largely the work of foreigners, a phenomenon which seems unlikely until one reflects on the peculiar historical conditions of Tanzania. Years of research and study by both teachers and students served to fashion abstract principles into concrete analysis. By the mid-1970s a significant Marxist tradition had taken root and it was possible to speak about an indigenous Tanzanian Marxism.

The highest expression of this Marxism so far is found in Shivji's writing. At the same time, his work has played a central rôle in determining the limits of academic writing about Tanzania. Much of what has appeared since 1970 can be characterised as attempts either to refute or qualify his analysis, or to clarify and expand it. It is from this background that the two books presently under review must be approached. Although not explicitly intended for this purpose, they can be read together as statements of opposing views in a

great debate. They define a dialectic that has both methodological and practical significance.

What exactly does Shivji say? That what has been accepted as socialism in Tanzania is largely a fraud. He analyses his country's recent history in terms of the interests of competing classes, and instead of dealing in the grand generalisations which many hopeful Marxist academics prefer, embarks on a careful study of real conditions in Tanzania. He describes the emergence of T.A.N.U. (now *Chama cha Mapinduzi* – the Revolutionary Party) in terms of the social background of its early leaders. Here was an alliance between the two major elements of the *petite bourgeoisie*: an urbanised intelligentsia and small African traders jealous of Asian control of commerce. Although T.A.N.U. was able to elicit mass peasant support in its campaign for independence, its leadership was, and remains, *petit bourgeois*. The subsequent policies followed by T.A.N.U. have, therefore, to be seen in the context of the needs of the groups which make up this class.

Crucial to the whole analysis is the question of state power. Thus, since independence, the *petite bourgeoisie*, relying on its control of the bureaucratic machinery, has used state power to create a firm economic base for itself. Nationalism and socialist rhetoric have been manipulated in order to obscure the true nature of the policies being followed by this dominant class. To paraphrase a complicated analysis, Shivji is arguing that in concrete terms those ruling Tanzania are no different from those ruling Kenya – what sets them apart is that they are slightly less venial and far more skilled at mystification. But to Shivji, the Arusha Declaration, the nationalisations, *ujamaa vijijini*, the *Mwongozo* – all these have been stages in the ongoing process whereby a new indigenous class has consolidated its domination.

Much 'radical' writing about African reality had, prior to Shivji, been more or less explicitly racist. The best known example of this *genre* is undoubtedly Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London, 1972). Despite its use of Marxist jargon, this book is a diatribe wherein all whites are villains and all blacks are victims – a sort of middle-brow *Roots* – and this, as readers of the *Review of African Political Economy* (London) will be aware, is the central concept of certain contemporary writers. Shivji has avoided these pitfalls. He has correctly grasped that Marxism is a methodology and not an attic in which one searches around to discover weapons for use in academic polemics. He sees that specific historical conditions exist in Tanzania and proceeds to their systematic analysis. He perceives that these conditions have been shaped by struggles among classes, and not simply by bogeymen enforcing their whims against passive objects. Imperialism is not a dirty trick played by evil white men. These are not idle or abstract questions. 'Radical' writing which rehearses these fantasies serves simply to strengthen the hegemony of the African national bourgeoisies. The only conclusions which such writing can reach are nationalistic. Shivji draws class-based conclusions. His analysis leads logically to revolutionary practice.

The real question is whether Shivji's analysis is accurate. In trendy academic circles it is now almost obligatory to be a detractor of Tanzania. Those who originally created Tanzaphilia have become its most vociferous critics. There was a time when romantic euphoria substituted for analysis;

its place has now been taken by cynicism. Shivji is clearly not of this ilk, and yet his arguments are not wholly convincing.

The basic technical difficulty involved in bringing Marxist analysis to bear on contemporary Africa lies in getting the social classes properly defined, in both material and hegemonic terms, and in relation to one another. Shivji posits that state power in Tanzania rests with a group which he calls the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie'. The phrase is either tautological or misleading. It must be the case everywhere that state power is exercised directly by the bureaucracy. The important question is, therefore, in the interests of what class do the bureaucrats manipulate the machinery of the state? Marxists have always argued that the state functions on behalf of the economically dominant class. But what, then, is this in Tanzania? Apparently, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. How did it come to be economically dominant? Through its control of the machinery of the state. The circle is complete. In Tanzania there is, or was, also to be found a *petite bourgeoisie* and a 'commercial bourgeoisie'. Up until recently at least the 'class struggle' has, on Shivji's view, taken place predominantly between different sectors of the broader bourgeoisie. And all of these struggles, as Shivji recognises, have been prosecuted within the wider context of imperialism.

To say that his exposition becomes uncertain in places, or that his conceptual distinctions are not always entirely clear, is to deny neither the validity of Shivji's methodology nor the rigour of his analysis. Reality is, unfortunately, complicated. Marxist analysis seeks to eschew lies and fairytales and tends, as an attempt at explaining reality, to become rather complicated. Shivji's book has faults which might be less evident had the manuscript been subjected to thorough editing, and were the author inclined more to argument and less to the revelation of truth. But it is an extraordinary achievement. At the very least, *Class Struggles in Tanzania* should discredit forever the tired line that Marxist analysis is not relevant to Africa.

Cranford Pratt's book is more difficult to deal with. *The Critical Phase in Tanzania, 1945-1968* is not really about Tanzania but, as its sub-title indicates, about Nyerere. And herein lie both its major strengths and weaknesses. The author tends to see the writing of a history of contemporary Tanzania and a biography of Nyerere as essentially indistinguishable exercises. Tanzania is a vast laboratory within which the President's social and political thought is gradually defined. Thus, the Government embarked on a socialist path to development simply because Nyerere wished that it should be so. The President made his policy decisions in an historical vacuum unaffected by any popular pressure.

Now, in a sense, this view is correct, in that many policy initiatives have been devised by Nyerere, either as part of the elaboration of his own world-view or in response to the importunings of his more romantic advisors. There are, however, two serious criticisms which must attend such an interpretation. First, and this matter will be dealt with more fully below, it suggests that Tanzania is far less democratic than Pratt himself argues. If Nyerere does, in fact, propose and dispose, then the democratic aspects of both the party and state machinery must be seen as largely chimerical. Secondly, an analysis of this kind is far too reminiscent of colonialist/'radical'

historiography. The mass of people are, thereby, reduced to the level of passive objects of history.

None the less, it would be absurd to attempt to write about Tanzania without writing about Nyerere. His actions and thoughts have been central to the country's recent history. Pratt sees this in a way which Shivji's rather mechanistic – i.e. Leninist – Marxism precludes, and implicitly recognises that under another leader, say Rashidi Kawawa or Oscar Kambona, Tanzania would be little different today from Malawi or Lesotho. The trick lies in explaining this distinction, and neither Pratt's idealism, nor Shivji's economism, is adequate.

The thesis of this book might be stated as follows. Tanzania has obviously not yet achieved socialism, but it is surely, albeit gradually, getting there. Contradictions exist, indeed abound, but these are being resolved in a practical manner which is conducive to the realisation of socialism. Pratt sees the development of socialism in Tanzania as a pragmatic process, and his view of this is also pragmatic. Above all he is aware that if Nyerere has failed to create socialism, he has undeniably put it on the agenda.

The rub is that there are those, Shivji included, who would regard Pratt's approach as unhistorical, because he views history as the actualisation of metaphysics, and not as both the arena and the result of the class struggle. What, in concrete terms, does the author see as the characteristics of an emerging Tanzanian socialism?

For Pratt, socialism in Tanzania originates in nationalism, in traditional African values, and in Nyerere's personal moral sense. He marshals very convincing historical data to demonstrate that the various initiatives which, taken together, constitute Tanzania's socialism, have arisen essentially as nationalistic responses to external pressures. Nyerere's own rôle in the creation of Tanzanian policy is clear. The part about African tradition, of which rather less is heard today in Tanzania than previously, is briskly stated and then abandoned, Pratt feeling more comfortable with the historical than with the mystical.

This is all very well, Shivji would reply, but you are talking simply at the level of ideas. What do these mean in concrete terms? And his own answer would be clear: 'nationalism' in the abstract is meaningless – one can only understand nationalism in class terms and in a defined historical instance. Pratt rejoins that indeed there are classes in Tanzania, but that one must be more pragmatic in historical study and not see reality only in terms of classes with fundamentally opposed interests. Nationalism provides the super-class unity that, in his view, renders Shivji's analysis untenable. And it is true that Shivji writes very much in the tradition of classical pre-Gramscian Marxism. History is about economics; ideas and consciousness are mere reflections of production relations.

What are we to make of the continuing conflict, which predates independence, between the Government and the unions? Shivji's conclusion is reached after lengthy analysis – there could not be a clearer manifestation of the class struggle. Pratt analyses this conflict in terms of what he sees as a fundamental element of socialism in Tanzania – a commitment to the growth of democratic participation. The trade unions were effectively abolished in

order to remove a divisive special interest group, and to ensure that all political activity in the country was carried out under the umbrella of T.A.N.U. Unfortunately, as Pratt concedes, this did not work.

Pratt recognises the importance of the democratic aspect of Tanzanian politics. It is undeniable that T.A.N.U. succeeded in engaging the mass of the peasantry in self-actualising political activity to a degree unknown in Africa prior to the revolutions against Portuguese colonialism. Pratt concedes that contradictions have existed, and that there are authoritarian tendencies in both the party and government hierarchies. Still, one cannot, as Shivji implicitly does, simply dismiss Tanzania's democracy as mystification. Democracy must be an essential element of socialist transformation. Indeed, the very fact that a book as profoundly critical as Shivji's is freely sold in Tanzania is worthy of some note.

While it is probably evident that my methodological sympathies tend towards Shivji, the accomplishment of Pratt cannot be denied. Shivji's book is laced with anger, Pratt's with affection and something close to shock. His admiration and liking for Julius Nyerere permeate his study; he is shocked that this man and his work could be so harshly criticised by the 'radicals'. But he also demonstrates scholarship of the highest order and a detailed knowledge of recent Tanzanian history. Very little has been written about the years between independence and the Arusha Declaration, the period before Tanzania was discovered by academics. Pratt's work fills this gap in a masterly fashion. He is particularly good at tracing the course of Nyerere's rather wistful relationship with the British. And, of course, his study ends in 1968, when many of the contradictions in Tanzanian socialism had not emerged clearly.

Fashion, whether in matters of dress or academic writing, is a most capricious phenomenon. It is not such a long time ago that Ghana was the intellectual and political focus in Africa. History unfolds and tastes change. Tanzania once occupied a limelight which has evidently moved south. Will Nyerere's Tanzania prove to be as ephemeral as Nkrumah's Ghana? The expectations that attended independence throughout Africa have now largely been denied. Nyerere kept the hope alive in Tanzania long after it had been crushed under oppression and corruption in country after country. He struggled unhesitatingly against the most appalling obstacles. As Pratt affirms, and as anyone who has lived or travelled in other parts of Africa is aware, Nyerere truly did 'light a candle and put it on top of Mount Kilimanjaro which would shine beyond our borders'. The fact that the storm centre of history has shifted southwards is itself Nyerere's greatest achievement. In the celebrations which marked the birth of the People's Republic of Mozambique, Frelimo recognised that that great victory belonged as much to Julius Nyerere as to any other person.

ROBERT MARTIN

*Faculty of Law, The University of Western Ontario, London*