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## STUDIES IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

by

Kyalo Mativo

Barongo, Yolamu, ed.: Political Science in Africa: A Critical Review, London, Zed Press, 1983. 254 pp., Index.

O'Keefe, Phil; Raskin, Paul; Bernow, Steve, eds.: Energy, Environment and Development in Africa, Vol. I: Energy and Development in Kenya: Opportunities and Constraints, Stockholm, Uppsala, Beijer Institute and Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1984. 185 pp. Tables, Charts, Index.

Recent developments on the African social scene have reproduced themselves in the intellectual sector. It is now being admitted openly that that used and abused continent fares less well today than in the past. If there is no consensus on the reasons for this general deterioration of the social well-being of the African people, there is no dearth either of the theories to account for the causes of this phenomenon, or the means of remedy.

The two works under review here typify this intellectual effervescence. The one analyses the political set-up giving rise to African social problems, in the whole continent, while the other examines the efforts being made by one country to solve its lion share of the problems. There is an agreement in both works, that the present economic and political conditions in Africa militate against any realistic solutions being found. 'Agreement' here is to be understood in the objective sense of analysis, not necessarily conscious conclusions of the authors to that effect. But, as we shall see below, some of the more ideologically clean contributors stand up to be counted in their most anti-imperialist pugnacity. This is clearly evident in Political Science in Africa, which can be considered as a classical case study of the best and worst of the African political mind.

### I

Divided into three parts, Yolamu Barongo's Political Science in Africa defines itself as "A Critical Review," comprising 17 chapters. Part One deals with "Content and Relevance" of the subject matter. The section is covered in six chapters, each of which addresses one or other of the various aspects of the theme. The issues addressed in this division include the legacy

of American political liberalism in African political science (chapter 1); the dichotomy of science and philosophy in the subject of relevance (chapter 2); the manner of teaching political science (chapter 3); the question of the African peasantry in the context of political science (chapter 4); the class nature of political science (chapter 5); and Development as a subject of political science (chapter 6).

Part Two entitled, "Scope and Approaches" analyses political processes, such as elections (chapter 7); policy making and application (chapter 8); political and economic interconnections (chapters 9 & 10); imperialist motives behind case studies (chapter 11); and alternative methods to African politics (chapter 12).

"Theory and Methodology" is the theme of Part Three, making up the last five chapters. These deal with concepts, premises, assumptions and hypotheses of African political science. Various ideas and notions, with their concomitant flaws are analysed in chapter 13; their specific application in the African reality discussed in chapter 14; general purveyors of these theories and their ideological affinities exposed in chapter 15; the role and place of consciousness in the formulations of theories defined in chapter 16; and the Nigerian experience and experiment with different 'paradigms' and ideas investigated and conclusions drawn in chapter 17.

"Content and Relevance," "Scope and Approaches" and "Theory and Methodology," that is the structure within which "political science in Africa" as a cover theme finds expression in this work. Before we look at the different and occasionally disparate points of departure taken by the contributors, it should be said from the outset that this book is one of the very few works on African Studies that emphasize the African voice. This is a very commendable thing. Whether or not western Africanists accept it as a fact, the point remains that the African intellectual has for too long been stifled and intimidated by the boisterous posture of his western counterpart. Apart from its humiliating effect, this Euro-American stance vis-à-vis the African intellectuals tends to breed intellectual clones in the person of the latter, who then proceed to imitate the reproductive behaviour of the whiptail lizard (genus *Cnemidophorus*) to propagate western bourgeois ideas in the African social reality. With Swai and Temu's critique of Historian and Africanist History (Zed Press, 1981), Barongo's contribution to the criticism of conventional African studies is a welcome new recruit on the African ideological battle scene.

But unlike Swai and Temu's work, Political Science in Africa is an amalgam of contending views about the character, content and aims of the subject of political science in Africa. Dif-

ferences of opinion are as extreme as desert weather, and like this, reflect the aridity of the terrain. There we find ideologically uncertain writers pleading for "creative speculation about society," (Henry I. Ejembi) p. 17, as a philosophical basis for doing business with political science; or advocating the socialist order for the solution of African social ills, while simultaneously condemning socialism for its "inadequacies in the incentive system and in the character and scope of the fundamental liberties" (Eme O. Awa) pp. 30-31. To be encountered is also an out and out Yankee intellectual bankruptcy characterised by this statement: "My contention has been that Marxism has protected itself against the onslaught of 'reality' by denying the validity of bourgeois scientific method." (Otwin Marenin) p. 233. There is little or nothing to say about such an ignorant utterance. The empty ring of it is enough of a condemnation. More worthy of attention is another contributor who finds "Marxism" inadequate as a means of social analysis in Africa. 'More worthy because at least he has the intellectual respect for another viewpoint while disagreeing with it. We refer to J.T. Lee, who, claiming to see the necessity for a dialectical analysis of the African social conditions, questions "marxist" efficacy in the endeavour. He writes:

*. . . marxist pre-questions have not been answered, the conceptual apparatus is not efficiently developed and there is no consensus with regard to the precise meaning of historical and dialectical materialism in the present African context . . . (p. 184).*

No matter that there is no indication as for whom the "consensus" is required or why there should be any in the first place. There is so much one can say about this African intellectual confusion, but the constraint of space does not allow it here. What a pity, J.T. Lee lets it be known of himself to be a black South African with at least three working languages: English, German and Spanish. It can be assumed therefore that he has read Marx in the original language . . . and found him wanting! That's one for the bourgeoisie.

The rest is ours. For instance, there are pleasant surprises in this book. In the opinion of this reviewer, Eskor Toyo, Okello Oculi, Bjorn Beckman and Wang Metuge stand out as the most ideologically clear contributors to this work. Obviously the "opinion" is an ideological statement and must be expressed as such. To explain how this "judgement" has been passed, it is necessary to look at the execution of some of the topics.

In the introduction, the editor points out at the need to synthesize available information material on African politics in order to draw generalised conclusions pertaining to the con-

crete social reality of the African people. In his own words:

*What has become evident in recent years has been the need for a critical review and assessment of the role and contribution of political science to the understanding and solution of the problems that face African societies. (p. 3)*

Toward this end, a theoretical framework has to be defined. This effort entails employment of concepts and premises which can only be adequately expressed in philosophical terminology. And in the expression, fundamental questions of ideological character pose for exposure in relation to the aims and purposes of the discipline. Political science, then, has to justify its existence by the extent to which it is involved in tackling the social problems of the African people.

But an investigation into the vocational character of political science reveals the unsurprising fact that the discipline is an extension of the colonial system. As such it replicates the ideas and values of that system, concealing them under the cloak of "objectivity." Writing on "Teaching Political Science as a Vocation in Africa," Omu Omoruyi complains that

*we have . . . consistently laboured under the system of colonial or neo-colonial 'objectivity', sometimes masquerading as 'scientists', 'empiricists' or 'behaviourists', and consequently shying away from the issue of liberation which, properly speaking, falls under the category of political act. (p. 6)*

The author argues that, unlike western political scientists, the African has not reached a consensus on the concept of society whose values should be propagated. The American political science is given as an example where a consensus about the liberal nature of the American society has been accepted. Applied to the African context, says the author, this American tradition functions in a reformist form. The ideal "objectivity" governs the philosophy of the reproduction of pre-existing ideas as propounded by professors, which is why "professors tend to recruit into the profession individuals who share the basic assumptions of their professors about the nature of the discipline." (p. 7)

The theme of 'consensus' on the nature of society recurs in Chapter 2, with Henry I. Ejembi writing about "the need for a relevant political science." Ejembi justifiably deplores the lack of a philosophical foundation on which to rest African political thinking. He reiterates the point that the present criterion governing political science as it is taught in Africa is a mere confirmation of western social values. For instance,

referring to the stages described by the American political science he says:

*. . . there is very little in political science as we know it today that does not originate from its practice by the Americans. (p. 18)*

This sad fact, therefore, accounts for the American ideological dominance in the field. This dominance is based on the American claim to "technical expertise" in matters of science and technology, which they regard as "value free." Consequently, political science, as the Americans see it, is also supposed to be "value free." Which leaves fact-finding 'free' as the sole basis of African political thought. Yet facts take place within definite points of reference, these being products of reality. So that to give a fact is in essence to judge the validity of the reality on which that fact is based. What is needed, therefore, says Ejembi, is a philosophy of political science to determine what he calls the 'Great issues':

*. . . without the prior settling of the 'Great issues', without the 'good' and the 'bad' in the life of any nation having been settled beforehand without philosophy having taken root, I doubt that political 'science' can make much meaningful contribution to political development in any country.*

What Omoruyi and Ejembi are saying in polite language is the obvious fact that western prescriptions of African political science have hindered African originality in political analysis. The initiative remains in non-African hands, with the African role relegated to the services of the pawn. Many an African political scientist has not yet come to the realisation that, unlike manna, political thought does not fall down from heaven; it is based on the solid ideological values of its progenitor. Take Max Weber, for example, and his idea about "democratic" and "non-democratic" social systems. The weberian thinking, as Omoruyi points out, assumes ideological neutrality as a means of arriving at a decision for a "democratic" social order. But how does one arrive at the decision that this or that social order is "good" or "bad"? This is the crucial question the authors fail to advance against western ideological assumptions.

But the realisation that a philosophical foundation for African political thought is wanting and should be established, is a great service the authors have rendered to the discipline. Whether this is described as a "consensus" or the concept of society, as Omoruyi does, or referred to as settling, 'Great issues,' according to Ejembi, the substance of the idea is one of a lack of ideological clarity on the part of African political scientists. For Omoruyi, the solution to the problem lies in

reaching a consensus on what kind of social values to perpetuate on the African continent. For Ejemi, it is a matter of enlisting philosophy into the political science. There is a grain of truth in each of these pronouncements, inasmuch as they project a state of intellectual comprehension of the African social reality. But the authors' grasp of the forces behind the political act in Africa, is incomplete. In the first place, what appears to be a "consensus" by American political scientists about the 'liberal' character of their society, is but a direct product of the social backgrounds of the individuals making up this corps of political thinkers. American political scientists are largely middle-class in origin. Their political "thinking" is therefore determined for them in the process of their education, so that their ideas as they later come to express them are only affirmations of the social values they have come to regard as 'true' and valid for everybody else. By contrast, the African intellectuals, whether political scientists, economists, historians, etc., are more diversified in their social backgrounds. Some of them are sons and daughters of former colonial chiefs; others hail from the African peasantry; yet a few can be traced to the urban workers, especially from civil and domestic servants of former colonial administration. What is common about all of them is that, by virtue of their education, they are all adopted by the great bourgeois foster parent. Some of them adopt to the particular needs of the bourgeoisie and gain from the act; others reject the offer and suffer the indignity. A significant number of them straddle astride the bourgeois and the anti-bourgeois paths, like the proverbial hyena; their fate is usually not unlike that of the predator.

It goes without saying, that against this background it is futile to seek a "consensus" on the concept of society. None can exist outside ideological viewpoints. Unlike North America where the ruling ideology is middle-class in function, in Africa, the 'Great-issues' are only now being settled through what Micere Mugo calls "The Battle of the Mind." (See Micere Mugo's article in this issue.) Ideological positions have to be defined, taken and defended "to the last syllable of recorded time," to borrow a Shakesperian expression. It should always be borne in mind in this regard that what is at issue in any analysis of any topic on African studies is the ideological content of the subject matter. Within the confines of bourgeois political science, for example, there can be no agreement on undefined "values" or "concept of society" constituting the criteria for propagating a certain type of society. Rather, the matter has to be reformulated to put the validity of concepts and premises under analysis. The larger question here, therefore, addresses itself to the ideological bent of the African political science as it is taught today.



We mentioned earlier that the average African intellectual is a cowardly and confused entity. On the one hand he complains and even denounces the social wrongs of the western countries and contrasts these with the superiority of the socialist system. On the other he bemoans what his western mental mentors have made him conceive as "deficiencies" or "lack of freedom" in this system. We gave Eme O. Awa as a typical example of this confusion. Now, this contributor attempts to distinguish between "growth" and "development" and comes to the conclusion that the capitalist system is characterised by "growth" not development, while conversely, the socialist system, by virtue of its ability to solve pressing social problems, can be said to bring about social development if not growth. He explains:

*. . . the great advance that has taken place in the American and other western political systems may be labelled growth and not development since, in spite of this advance, poverty, unemployment, inflation and civil strife exist in their societies. On the other hand, the advance made by the major socialist countries has to a great extent relatively eradicated from their societies the constraints of poverty, unemployment and inflation . . . (p. 30)*

This leads him to the correct definition of development in terms of the capacity of society to solve both material and social problems:

*. . . any society in which all the people are liberated from the shackles of poverty, ignorance, squalor, and other forms of social and economic constraints, can be said to be developed. (ibid.)*

Then he goes on to contradict the very premise on which he predicates the argument about the socialist social system being better suited for social development:

*It is of course true that these socialist states are still plagued to a greater or lesser extent by the problems arising from what may be termed inadequacies in the incentive system and in the character and scope of the fundamental liberties. (pp. 30-31)*

Obviously it never occurs to this African intellectual that what he calls "inadequacies in the incentive system" and "fundamental liberties," are intrinsic properties of the capitalist system, and as such cannot be accommodated within the socialist order. These "incentives" and "liberties" refer to the individual needs of a system based on private property; they are anachronistic to the socialist system. Furthermore, the African intellectual fails to understand that it is precisely the con-



tinued existence of the capitalist system which is largely responsible for the material difficulties facing socialist countries. Whenever a country declares itself "socialist" or even innocuously "non-capitalist", capitalist countries declare economic war on it and impose all kinds of artificial obstacles to strangle its development. The U.S. economic and military blockade of Cuba, and the barbaric invasion of Grenada are glaring examples of this capitalist aggression. Thirdly, the capitalist military threat poised against socialist countries forces these to divert much needed material and human resources to the defence of their social system. This means expenditure of the resources of social wealth on non-productive activity; and the more resources spent on non-productive activities, the less on socially productive work. Capitalist countries, which get their wealth from exploiting the Third World, might afford the extravagance, at least for now; socialist countries, depending entirely on their own resources, cannot sustain easily any social waste. Socialism functions and thrives on peace, never on war and destruction. These are the essential factors to be brought into consideration before talking about "inadequacies" and lack of "fundamental liberties" in the socialist system.

In the face of these obstacles, how then can Africa achieve socialist development? Awa is very articulate about his own confusion in regard to this question. He argues that Africa can find socialism on the capitalist road. Precisely on the issue of the socialisation of the economic activities requisite for the socialist construction, and the question of the "fundamental liberties," he sets forth his views as follows:

*My position on the first issue . . . (is) that certain types of enterprise, especially agriculture, small partnerships and the sole-proprietor type of commercial industrial enterprises -- may be run on a private or co-operative basis without injury to the cause of socialism. (p. 31)*

As for the "fundamental liberties,"

*We can sustain the fundamental human liberties firstly by building an incentive system into areas like agriculture which cannot function with maximum efficiency without it. Secondly, we can give full play to dissent and criticism of the political system and political processes. (p. 31)*

These "solutions" are postulated in the absolute, i.e., not as an interim stage in the transition from capitalism to socialism, but as permanent features of this. What lacks in this analysis is the consideration of the concrete reality obtaining in any given country. The author's assumption is that socialism means

an automatic elimination of capitalism, which he correctly considers impossible. But then he stretches this impossibility to infinity. What the author does not understand is that any change is a process involving periods and stages of transition, during which the old order is given time to die. As long as the attainment of change remains the goal, the tactics for this purpose can be worked out according to the dictates of the actual problems found in the society undergoing change. In the realisation of this change, there can be no absolutes in relation to what should or should not be done. But there are certain immediate changes in the political and economic sphere which have to be accomplished to lay the basis for real change to be possible. One of these is the nationalisation of the strategic economic sectors of the society, such as the banks, the transportation and communication systems, the big industrial establishments and commercial set-ups. In other words, those sectors on which rests the economic life-line of the people. The second step in the process of change is the creation of employment as a matter of state policy. Socialism means nothing if not movement towards full employment. In this case, the kind of sole-proprietor entrepreneurs that Awa is talking about have to be curtailed and limited to small undertakings. The state becomes the guarantor of employment, and as such has to have a final say on how the economy is run. In this posture there can be no half-measures allowing for retention of capitalist needs at the expense of the people. Finally, as stated above, for these immediate aims to be accomplished, it is necessary to defend the country against capitalist aggressive forces. This means building armed forces for the purpose, and seeking assistance from socialist countries. This fact must be stated, reiterated and emphasized without any apology.

Traditionally understood, "development" is taken to mean western capitalist development. But this model even if it were desired, is unavailable to the African people. The reason for this is that Africa is already a means by which western capitalists enrich themselves, which only means that the capitalist countries can never be instrumental for independent capitalisation of Africa. Ebitini Chikwendu, writing on the subject in her article: "The African peasantry neglected by African political science," explains the problems:

*The western model is unachievable because, while the west operates capital-intensive technology, with the underdeveloped world as the hapless dumping ground for their contaminated surpluses, we in Africa are faced with the reality of a capital-short, labour-intensive society with no recourse to captive European markets. (p. 38)*

One couldn't be more explicit than that. What needs to be ex-

plored further are the reasons why, in the face of this harsh reality, some African countries are still attempting the impossible. We shall examine some of the reasons for this later in the second section of this review.

We pointed out earlier that some of the contributors stand out as ideologically clear as they have the courage to articulate this clarity. We gave their names to be Wang Metuge, Bjorn Beckman, Okello Oculi and Eskor Toyo. We should now look at their articles to prove our point.

How is the phenomenon of ideological confusion, characteristic of so many an African intellectual, to be explained? Writing on "Class interests in the Teaching of political science in African Universities," Wang Metuge provides a profound analysis of the ideological factors in operation. The writer identifies four categories of African intellectuals in whom subjective and objective forces in the material existence of their lives intermingle to produce different hues and levels of ideological affinity. The first category is characterised by

*. . . those who are conscious of their ideological position but conceal it. (p. 48)*

This group specializes in accusing others of being ideologues, "as if having any ideology is criminal in itself." (ibid.) And the reason for this accusation is that these intellectuals are aware of the criminal content of their ideology. Metuge does not mention names, but Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian dramatist is a dramatic example of the type of African intellectual the author has in mind. For Soyinka, "ideology" is only such when it is anti-bourgeois, never bourgeois ideology, of which he is a proven representative.

Metuge minces no words in exposing what kind of ideology is criminal.

*In Africa . . . what is definitely criminal is to adhere to and defend an ideology which maintains and perpetuates the domination and exploitation of the many by a minute few. (p. 49)*

To this category belong many African intellectuals, understandably by virtue of our western form of education.

The second category of African intellectuals is made up of the ideologically unconscious "professionals." These deny that they hold any ideological views, claiming that they are only academics. They renounce what they call "value-judgements" in academic research. Says Metuge about them:

*They will emphasize that, as academics, we should see things from all angles. But in reality, they know only one method of looking at things, and do not care to understand the limitations of their tool of analysis because they already accept it as correct. (p. 49)*

This category constitutes a large number in the African intellectual circles.

The third group of African intellectuals indulges in vocal pronouncements of one, presumably "progressive" ideology, but actually belongs to another, i.e., bourgeois one. Samir Amin typifies this group.

Finally, there is a very small category of ideologically conscious African intellectuals who call imperialism and neo-colonialism in Africa by their first names. It should be added in regard to this last category that its members are usually persecuted in an attempt to silence them. They are to be found in their graves, in prison cells, in detention camps, unemployed or forced to live in exile. And even there, they are harassed and subjected to all kinds of material and intellectual humiliation.

These four categories can be distinguished by the biblical dictum: "ye shall know them by their deeds." One need only to examine their methodology of their subject analyses, and their theoretical constructs. They all fall into bourgeois or non-bourgeois approach. A good example of the type of intellectuals Wang describes as denying the ideological content of their work is one Olatunde J.B. Ojo, a contributor in the volume under review. Writing on "Towards a Development Orientated Political Science Curriculum," this contributor argues that there is, and can be no such thing as an African political science, i.e., one based on the social reality of the African people. In his own words:

*We should be sceptical of any explicit or implicit line that there is an African political science, one that is sui generis, simply because it is decolonized . . . I am not aware that there is, or can be, an African political science that differs in scope, content, methodology, etc., from, say, Western, Eastern or Asian political science. (p. 59)*

Apparently, political science by any and every other name remains, according to Ojo, invariably political science, without meaning or direction. As for the content of the discipline, there is only one, namely, "human political behaviour." The objective and subjective factors of life that mold this political behaviour are, it can be surmised from the logic of the

author's premise, of no consequence. By implication, therefore, there is only one social value, best characterised by western bourgeois ideology.

Now, for this Doctor of Political science, the idea that socialism is the only way out of African economic dependency on the west, is a "new orthodoxy," which gives him "discomfiture." Not because he loves capitalism, but because he hates socialism more. Says he:

*The evils of capitalism are well known and so are the dangers of continuing dependence of African economies on capitalist multinationals and their states. But the capitalists and multinationals are unlikely to be safely pushed around, certainly not by socialist slogans and name-calling, as Nkrumah was to learn. (p. 60)*

Curious reasoning this! It's like saying that if a tsetse fly sticks its proboscis into your blood vein, you must not try to smash it, because then the parasite might thrust its sucker deeper into your heart. No wonder these "learned Doctors" have appropriately been described as "Basters" by prison inmates. (See Micere Mugo: "The Battle of the Mind" in this issue.)

One redeeming feeling about reading Political Science in Africa is the sense of intellectual freedom it accords the reader. So it is that some of the untouchable gods of the academic creed come under scathing attack purely on the basis of the ideological formulations of their works. So it is that those of us who live in the sepulchre of these gods, shaking with fear of their visible academic sceptre, must sigh with thankful relief to see them reduced to mortal sizes. One such big name which comes under scrutiny in this book, is that of James S. Coleman. Some hearts may tremble at the mention of this name, not that of Bjorn Beckman.

Writing on "Political Science and Political Economy," Beckman points at the need to study political economy in its classical sense; not the modish and reformist version now being preached by such bourgeois scholars as James Coleman and W.W. Rostow. Of Coleman's "New Political Economy" says Beckman:

*'Political economy', as developed by Coleman and his followers is perceived as a new specialisation within political science. (p. 103)*

Because

*It is not addressed to the problem of understanding the causes of development problems and their solutions. (ibid.)*

Beckman reveals the ideological content of the terminology Coleman uses in the expression of his treatise. This terminology includes such phrases as "political competitiveness," "political stability," "political integration," etc. Now, how are these system variables to be understood without a theoretical premise of their employment? The underlying assumptions about the particular type of social and economic system one has in mind must be stated, explained and understood before any formulations can be made regarding the function of that system. Beckman concludes:

*Only with such an understanding can we answer questions such as: competition between whom, over what; stability for what purpose, in whose interests; integration on whose terms; and only then will we be able to transcend the ideological obscurantism promoted under the auspices of such concepts.*

In the same vein, Eskor Toyo grabs the academic horn of the other god: W.W. Rostow. No embarrassment is intended, but for those who regard Rostow as the "alternative" to what they call "marxism" in respect to Africa, there is this open secret:

*. . . the American Central Intelligence Agency set W.W. Rostow, a man who showed much concern for the 'communist challenge' to the 'Western world' in developing countries, to write a 'non-communist manifesto'.*

The issue is one of development and how to achieve material sufficiently in the Third World. Alarmed by the spectre of "communism" hovering over these countries, Rostow lost plenty of sleep over the prospect; so he set out to "reject" Marx's "stages of social development," replacing these with five of his own. He listed them in the order of "traditional society, precondition for take off, take off, drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption." This scheme is supposed to 'fix' Marx and arrest his subversive influence in the Third World. Remarks Toyo:

*First Rostow did not understand Marx, for Marx's work does not constitute 'stage theory' in Rostow's sense. (p. 165)*

Secondly,

*Such terms as 'traditional society,' 'take off,' 'drive to maturity' and 'age of mass consumption', actually describe nothing. (p. 168)*

Lacking in any scientific foundation, these stages amount to



empty theoretical cardboard boxes.

*Thirdly, what Rostow does really is to divide the rise of modern industrial society into 'growth stages' in which the character of the relations of production is hidden. (ibid.)*

And there is more, much more to say about Rostow and his theory of development; and not only by Toyo. What Toyo is saying in effect is that, the very concept of development needs defining. This definition constitutes one of the "Primary Requirements for the Unity of political science and economics." The absence of such a definition, even in economics, is due to the assumption that the only possible development is capitalist development. This, as we saw earlier in reference to Mrs. Chikwendu's article on the African peasantry, is the core of the problem in dealing with the subject. Toyo describes this assumption as the myopia of non-marxist political scientists. About these he has this to say:

*They have been used to describe the United States, for example, as a democracy in terms of one-man-one-vote institutional formulation, ignoring the vastly undemocratic nature of the U.S. political system in terms of the structure that determines the real allocation of values and power. (p. 122)*

The importance of Metuge, Beckman and Toyo's contributions lies in the fact that they do not shy away from defending their ideological viewpoints. There are no "Buts" and "Howevers" in respect to the scientific value of marxist analysis of African social problems. They offer no apologies for being marxists, because, like a growing number of African intellectuals, they see no reason for it. Bourgeois intellectuals never apologise for being bourgeois, why should those opposed to this anachronistic mental disorder apologise for taking up arms against it?

Finally, there is Okello Oculi who promulgates what has for long been privately known to be the essence of area case studies in Africa. He points out that the objective of these studies is to collect information "for the purposes of enabling policy-makers to predict events accurately and to intervene appropriately." (p. 135) He entitles his topic "Imperialism and the Politics of Area Studies," and gives concrete evidence that indeed imperialism is solidly behind these studies. For example, between 1950 and 1973, the Ford Foundation expended \$278 million for such studies, financing over 2,000 fellowships. Of these 67% were given to those who wanted to study in the Soviet Union, East Asia, Africa and Latin America. This explains why western Europe seems to be of no interest to the Americans, allocating it only 6.61% of the scholarship funds



vis-à-vis 17.31% going to Africa. Unsurprisingly enough, Africa comes only second to the Soviet Union in matters of American 'academic' interests.

But there have been beneficial consequences of Area studies, 'beneficial' in the sense of the use of the information for progressive work. Oculi cites the examples of W.E.B. Dubois, George Padmore and, more recently, Frantz Fanon and Walter Rodney, as researchers who used their findings for a good cause. Once again, it all boils down to the ideological belonging of the researcher when it comes to the employment of their material information. The use of this information data doesn't have to be "subversive," the information can be supplied to people's African governments, such as Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, etc., for use in social projects. What cannot be denied, however, is that much of this information is turned into an imperialist weapon against the people about whom the information has been collected.

What emerges from this collection of articles then can be summarised as a reflection of a definite stage in the process of intellectual maturity in Africa. Issues of social import are now being tackled luckily by African intellectuals themselves, in welcome contrast to what has been the practice hitherto. A debate of sorts is under way about the plight of the African people, and most western concepts and notions about African social development are being questioned openly and dismissed as the 'irrelevancies' that they are. Western "specialists" on African "political development" in the persons of Webers, Colemans, Rostows and a whole shoal of lesser gods, are in the process of being dethroned.

But it must not be construed from this intellectual activity that there is an African homogeneity of views concerning African social problems and what should be done to solve them. On the contrary, most African intellectuals remain firmly anchored in the murky intellectual waters of western social values. We have mentioned some of these confused African intellectuals to include Franz J.T. Lee, Olatunde J.B. Ojo and Eme O. Awa. The list can be extended to cover S. Egite Oyovbaire, who writes on "The Tyranny of Borrowed Paradigms and the Responsibility of political science," using Nigeria as a study case. But we have had to leave this contributor out of consideration because this typical middle-of-the-road 'liberal' hotchpotch is commonplace in this part of the world. The thinking is that any analysis of African social problems which is anti-imperialist in content is a "borrowed paradigm," or, as J.B. Ojo, another contributor in the same intellectual wavelength puts it, a "new orthodoxy." The impression that, by rejecting "borrowed paradigms" one also includes western bourgeois ideological kit in the throw-away basket is feigned, deceptive and dishonest. The

point must be reiterated; it is the ideological persuasion of a particular intellectual which determines the content and direction of his or her research. Comrade Wang Metuge's article says it all, and the contributors in this volume prove it to the last letter. But then the fact that these ideological divergencies exist among African intellectuals is a positive sign, indicating that, in sharp contrast to North America, in Africa, intellectuals can and do differ on matters of principle. And where there is a difference of opinion about social problems, there is no indifference to these. Let us now see how these problems are being "solved" in one African country.

## II

It all started in 1977 when the Swedish Beijer Institute decided to initiate a long-term project on the study of energy and development issues in East Africa. Kenya, always a ready candidate in any undertaking involving African studies, was chosen as a "case-study." Three years later, the project was actually launched; data was collected, workshops set up and abstracts and conclusions drawn. Result: a summary of information material relating to the use of fuelwood as a source of energy entitled Energy and Development in Kenya: Opportunities and Constraints.

The stated objective having been the exploration of the role of fuelwood as a possible supply of energy for the economic "take off" of the country, the study arrived at some honest conclusions, including the following:

- a) Given an unfavourable trade relationship between the 'developed' and 'developing' countries, capital outlay for commercial energy will be scarce. This will lead to heavy 'biomass' energy, e.g., fuelwood.
- b) With a growing population, the reliance on 'biomass' energy will deplete wood stocks, since these do not keep pace with the population demand.
- c) Urban demand for charcoal will result in the destruction of whole trees. This calls for a provision of 'woodfuel belts' surrounding urban areas.
- d) The scarcity of capital for technology, and the problems of technology transfer do not facilitate easy conservation of commercial energy. Therefore the survival of national enterprises depends on a careful analysis of future fuel-technology combinations.

The first merit to be admitted about this volume, therefore, is the remarkable honesty of its findings. Results are

reported as observed; none of that American tendency to doctor data and information to suit preconceptions and ideas. The second quality of this book is the clarity of its expression. Premises are stated, theories developed and conclusions drawn in direct and simple language. No attempt is made to conceal the editors' intentions under clumsy verbiage so characteristic of much of American writings and pronouncements.

There are 8 chapters to this volume, each dealing with one or other aspect of the subject of development. Chapter one introduces the subject matter as a contribution "to the process of timely energy planning in Kenya." (p. 1) Chapter 2 explores the relationship between energy consumption and economic development. Analysis and categorisation of energy use in the different sectors of the economy of Kenya comprise the topic of chapter 3; while chapter 4 deals with land allocation between wood resources and agriculture. Chapter 5 makes development forecasts using such variables as economic, demographic, technological, institutional and policy patterns. Options and recommendations about energy creation are suggested in chapters 6 and 7, leaving chapter 8 to summarise the findings of the study and draw conclusions about future energy use.

Long term development objectives have to be set against the reality of energy resources, says the report, the magnitude and availability of which depend on external factors. These include:

- i) population growth
- ii) increasing prices for fossil fuel
- iii) diminishing agricultural land.

This necessitates "appropriate policy intervention" for economic planning, involving regional and national approach. The projected time framework for which the study is made lies between 1980-2000. The character of the Kenyan economic development up to the present is summarised and forecasts made on the basis of past performance. An historical link between increasing energy consumption per capita and economic development is thematically stated. This consumption takes the form of "progressive substitution of inanimate energy forms for human and animal power . . ." (p. 7) Examples of this substitution is discernible in agriculture, industry and household.

But "energy consumption" here does not relate energy production to that consumption. Neither are all the factors of production considered in the equation. For example, like an individual, a country can consume without producing. On a wide world economic structure, the United States is mainly a consumer of other countries' products, mainly raw materials and natural resources, not a producer of these. Conversely, a country can

produce or serve as a source of energy, raw material, labour, etc., without itself consuming its own products. This is precisely the basis of the so-called North-South economic relationship. In their characteristic honesty, the editors admit as much; they write:

*While the developing countries have more than two-thirds of the world's population, they consume less than 20 per cent of total commercial energy. (p. 7)*

The study identifies 5 income classes in Kenya and relates them to corresponding patterns of energy consumption. Here it is revealed that the more affluent the class, the more "non-biomass" energy it consumes; that is to say, the less charcoal, and the more kerosene, electricity and cooking gas it can afford for its domestic and any other related consumption.

As for the consumption of energy for industrial purposes, the study finds very little input. In respect to agriculture for example, the editors file this report:

*It is an apparent irony that, while agriculture is the major occupation in the working population, commercial energy consumption in the agricultural sector (8.2 million gigajoules) amount only to 2.5 per cent of total energy consumption in Kenya. (p. 29)*

This low consumption of commercial energy in agriculture is accounted for by the predominant reliance on animal and human labour, say the editors. If then we apply this low consumption of inanimate energy in Kenya to the theory of development as promulgated by the editors, according to which development is measured in terms of the use of inanimate energy, then, Kenya, with only 18 per cent energy consumption in the industrial sector, must be 82 per cent underdeveloped. The matter is really much more complicated than that, involving concepts and definitions of development, but this point needs pondering.

Does availability of arable land or natural and human resources spell automatic economic development? Conversely, whether the scarcity of these vital factors imply inevitable underdevelopment? The answer to this question must be spelt out at some point, but historical evidence casts a negative vote. Walter Rodney said it loud enough in his study of the question -- perhaps too loud for his own good -- but the issue keeps coming up to pose itself anew every time Africa is brought under investigation. Those of us who grew up in Kenya and received formal education there, used to have it repeated in our ears that "Kenya is primarily an agricultural country." We came to accept as self-evident, therefore, that Kenya would find its economic development balance on the agricultural scale.

Now it turns out that actually, agriculture hasn't brought about any development to the country, that on the contrary, Kenya has had to resort to importing food. Just as the availability of natural resources does not translate into unconditional development, so apparently also with the agricultural potential. So then, how does one spell development? Write the authors:

*Development theory has to date not explicitly incorporated the problem of the energy constraints to growth or to the need to blend a realistic energy plan into the wider social and economic planning process. (pp. 10-11)*

In his own confused way, this is precisely the point Eme O. Awa tries to make above in relation to the teaching of political science in Africa as a "problem-solving approach"

The population element in the economic development of the country is seen as having a detrimental effect in the process. At 3.9 per cent, the Kenyan population growth is described as "growing more rapidly than any other national population in the world" (p. 83). Three explanations for this high rate of growth are given: first there is a high fertility level among Kenyan women, with a crude birth rate of 53/1000; and a low mortality level of 14/1000. Second, there is the historical pattern of economic development, resulting in the expansion of wealth and medical services without effecting any decline in the family size. Third, there is the decline in polygamous marriages, which is said to have had a positive effect on fertility. This last factor is ironic. The irony lies in the recognition of reduced economic incentives for large families consequential to economic development. Under the conditions of a "polygamous society," one would expect the very opposite, i.e., more polygamous marriages as a result of increased material ability to afford them. Be that as it may, with the rise of fertility following a decline in polygamous marriages as a function of economic development, the average fertility rate is expected to vary with varying economic development, increasing, falling or remaining constant relative to the rate of development.

Juxtaposing the population growth with food production, the authors come up against a reconciliation problem. The need for increased agricultural production for food sufficiency would demand an extensive extension of land for cultivation; but then this would detract from agricultural production for export: growing coffee, tea, pyrethrum, etc., for the purpose. Thus, the study forecasts that, even with an assumed 50 per cent increase in food production for the year 2000, this will be insufficient for a projected population of 33,962,000 for

the same year.

Owing to the dependency on foreign energy supplies, Kenya is expected to suffer a serious energy crisis. By the year 2000, the country will need 41.5 million barrels of oil per year, as compared to the present (1980) 13.1 million. This will demand an immense amount of foreign exchange, leading to a worsening deficit, hence a negative effect on economic growth. Under these circumstances, no development will be possible; social conditions will deteriorate and the "future" of the country will be endangered.

Wood demands will increase too, following population growth. The rural population will be forced to shift from wood to dung and crop residues as sources of energy. Among the social consequences of this scenario are the following:

*Cooking directly with dung could increase the bacteriological intake, thus increasing disease potential. Removal of animal waste and crop residues from the soil cycle could deplete the soil nutrients, thus reducing agricultural productivity. (p. 115)*

The study also notes that, the scarcity of wood in the rural areas will result in the commercialisation of this item, turning it from a use-value into a value. Consequently, the poorest section of the society will be forced to spend an increasing amount of time in the search for wood. Then, the law of statistical probability will become operative. In order to increase the probability of finding adequate wood, an increasing number of "wood-searchers" will be required. This new need can only be met biologically through an increase in population. The phenomenon of economic underdevelopment has a direct effect on demographic changes, making the latter a function of the former.

So then, what is to be done? To avoid negative social consequences of economic, demographic and ecological changes following energy problems in Kenya, the editors make certain recommendations, including this:

*Both food and energy requirements dictate that sufficient indigenous resources and associated technology be developed; (p. 117). (Emphasis added).*

The indigenous resources of energy are identified to cover

- a) Agroforestry
- b) Replanted forests
- c) Periurban plantations (urban greenbelts)
- d) Industrial forests
- e) management of natural forests.



The plan for the establishment of indigenous energy resources involves training, management and introduction of new techniques. And associated with this plan is the opening of the proposed second University, with an emphasis on faculty of forestry.

The issue of indigenous technological innovations is of extreme importance to the whole concept of development. At least the editors acknowledge that fact and draw corresponding conclusions. Any design of an implement involves theoretical concepts. These comprise principles of design, methods of production and manner of function. The tenets of any theory are based on practice. This in turn owes its existence to the concrete needs of society. It follows therefore that more than the mere fact of technological "know-how" is required in respect to the development of the Third World. The implication here is that, some so-called "advanced" technologies coming from the Western countries are in fact irrelevancies for all African practical purposes. "The design of technology, particularly household technology, depends on an understanding of the inter-related system of use, production and exchange," says the report. (p. 129) In other words, one could add, on the social needs of the people as defined by their culture. Here then cultural norms define technological systems, becoming the criterion for development. The study acknowledges this reality to the editors' credit; but they conclude in respect to the design of stoves: "It is difficult to design efficient stoves to accommodate all possible energy sources." (p. 129) Why is it difficult? If "the design of technology . . . depends on an understanding of the interrelated systems of use . . .," by the authors' own admission, then given that understanding, which entails cultural considerations, technological innovations can surely be made to accommodate the different forms of energy corresponding to the cultural practices of the people. Technological designs whose end-use (use-value) is devoid of the cultural components of the people for whom the technology is intended, cannot fulfil their social needs. This implies further that, to a definite point, technology is thus far socially meaningful in the extent to which it is indigenous.

The issue of theoretical concepts regarding technology has to address itself to "Appropriate Technology." Turning to this topic the authors evoke the unholy ghost of multinationals and their role in the matter. The argument runs that "Appropriate Technology" approach is beset with a set of contradictions which complicate and frustrate any attempts at the realisation of this ideal. Among these contradictions is the question whether or not the multinationals should be encouraged to manufacture "efficient" technological systems, e.g. stoves. On the one hand, says the report, the multinational involvement in the production of technological systems leads to an inevitable establishment of monopoly conditions, thus automatically pre-



cluding any competition from the informal sector. On the other, it is precisely the informal sector which creates urban employment and puts the resources into an effective use by means of recycling. Again, how is this problem to be resolved? The report says, "The resolution of this conflict is clearly a political issue" (p. 130). Amen to that!

The "contradiction" between what is traditionally referred to as "capital --" vis-a-vis "labour-intensive" approach to economic development, and the actual social conditions obtaining in the country in question, is a basic characteristic in the present neo-colonial economic order in the Third World. The multinational constant defines the political texture of this equation, thereby positing the social framework within which a solution can be found. To the multinationals are attributed "efficiency," quality and quantity of production. But then concomitant to these "advantages" is the disadvantage of monopolistic set-ups, leading to mass unemployment.

Recommendations on how to solve this problem include producing energy within the country, rather than importing it. For practical ways and means of doing this, the editors point to the Swedish example where, in addition to heavy taxation on imported energy, government loans and grants are offered to firms engaged in energy-saving devices. There, private profit for such firms is limited at 25 per cent of return, beyond which such government financial assistance is denied. Social loss below 6 per cent borders the other end of qualification for these loans. Suggestions are made to the effect that similar policies can be used in Kenya, combining tax and incentive policies to stimulate energy conservation. But the report admits that the likely effect of a policy which links profit-making with energy-saving devices in a country like Kenya where capital is foreign, is an inducement for further dominance of this capital over the economic life of the country. This is formulated unambiguously as follows:

*It should be noted in the context of Kenya's industrial structure, that the prominent firms are frequently transnational corporations and any policy that seeks to link increased energy efficiency with profitability would probably enhance the dominance of foreign capital. (p. 146)*

In view of this problem, the report comes to the final conclusion that it is necessary to reorientate development strategies to accommodate immediate needs of the country. Among the causes of the present development difficulties in Kenya can be reiterated as population growth, scarcity of land resources, demographic changes, inefficient employment of technologies, the high cost of imported oil and the demands of the development

itself. Consequently two general recommendations for remedying the situation are stated as:

- i) Gradual reduction of oil imports.
- ii) Enhancement of wood-based energy supply.

These two preconditions for development are envisaged to allow for a better allocation of foreign exchange resources for development needs.

To conclude this analysis of the book, it should be admitted that the report is a very serious and non-nonsensical piece of research. Most of the studies on Africa, especially those ensuing from the American quarters, tend to be confined to the narrow academic views of the researchers. At best they are paternalistic and presumptuous, at most, worthless. Perhaps because this study involved indigenous researchers in its research stages, it does not suffer from this malady. There is a sense of respect for the views, efforts and observations of others, which do not necessarily correspond to those of the editors. This is very welcome and commendable.

But as it is wont, the report presupposes capitalist conditions of social production. The assumption is that capitalist development is here to stay, so that the multinational involvement in the economic ill- or 'well-being' of the Third World is a necessary evil. Is this assumption historically justifiable? The socialist alternative is not even mentioned as a possibility since the capitalist reality is posited as the natural order of things.

The question whether or not underdeveloped countries can describe the capitalist economic parabola is a misformulation. What is on agenda is this: Can capitalism as an economic system be repeated in the Third World? Those "development specialists" who seek to fabricate an affirmative response to this question ignore Lady Macbeth's warning:

*. . . I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.\**

Or, as the German woman once sang after selling out her fruit-juice:

*was ist vorbei  
ist wobei\*\**

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\*Shakespeare, W. Macbeth, Act V, scene II.

\*\*Literally, 'what is gone by is gone', or, 'what has past has been'.

It may be too late to convince anybody else, but for the African posterity, it is necessary to clarify this point: the conditions under which capitalism grew and matured are historically determined and cannot be reproduced in Africa. Except in the Bible, nobody can be borne again. Development, any development, that is, whether biological or social, is always preceded by certain irreversible processes which, in their operation continually set ever new conditions for new and better forms of development. Once established, these new conditions 'usurp' the traditional authenticity of the old order. Duplication of functions is not an operation of the law of motion. This needs to be grasped in relation to the analysis of problems of economic and social formations in Africa. Capitalism has made its positive contribution to the productive forces of the human race; now, however, it has become a fetter to further social development and to the process of the humanisation of the homo-genus. The continued existence of capitalism in the world as a whole, and in Africa particularly, can only bring more destruction and death. That is what the African people must not let happen.

If nothing else, the two books reviewed here have unwittingly proved the absurdity of trying to "make it" under capitalism. Yolamu Barongo's Political Science in Africa gives expression to this absurdity through the pronouncements of African political scientists. Phil O'Keefe, et al, examine how this absurdity applies on Energy and Development in Kenya and find the effort unworkable. One in a series entitled "Energy, Environment and Development in Africa," the latter work is a candid admission that there is little hope for African countries to develop under the present capitalist conditions. Both books are essential for specialists and students of political science and development studies in Africa.