

37. Chubb, *op.cit.*, p. 48.
38. Allen, J.C; "Ngwa Customs" (Unpublished cited in Chubb, *op.cit.* p. 48).
- 39 Oral information from Gabriel Obong, an Ibibio. See also N.A.I.N. C.S.C. 26/2 "Land Tenure Among the Ibibio"
40. Dr. Ijoma cited; oral information.
41. Ukegbu, B.N; *op.cit.* p. 48.

## Review Article

### Capitalism and Racism in South Africa\*

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These two books can highly recommended for various reasons. Firstly, because the information they provide is compelling reading. Both are studies of white South African nationalism. Their titles indicate that they are complementary in the periods they cover.

One would expect that a racial minority which oppresses a large majority would display a high degree of internal cohesion in order to face the threat of revolt. White South African politics appears, however, to be marked by intense internal strife, shifting alliances and seemingly inconsistent behaviour. A key Afrikaner politician like Verwoerd came into conflict with the Afrikaner Cape capitalist Hofmeyr, because the latter could not stand verwoerd's anti-semitism. But Verwoerd also destroyed the openly national-socialist, Brandwag. Yet all three - Hofmeyr, Verwoerd and Brandwag - are manifestations of Afrikaner nationalism pleading unity of the volk. The long political of J C Smuts symbolises continuity in the Boer war; the end of his career came in 1948 when he was ousted by Afrikaner nationalism. His name is associated with committing South Africa to the British side in the First World War. The people who would never forgive him that became his coalition partners and merged with his party after 1933. A large number of those left him again when he entered the Second World War. The South African Labour Party then became the coalition party of the man who had suppressed the white labour Rand revolt of 1922.

\*Belinda Bozzoli 1981 *The Political Nature of a Ruling class: Capital and Ideology in South Africa 1980-1933* Routledge Kegan and Paul O'Meara 1933 *Volkskapitalisme: Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism 1934-1948* Cambridge University Press

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These books make such seeming contradictions and ambiguities in South African nationalism intelligible by relating them to the development of the economic substructure. Bozzoli documents the development of an ideology of South Africanism as a concomitant of the development of local South African manufacturing. The emergence of this South African economic nationalism was embedded in struggles between commercial capital, agricultural capital and imperial mining capital. The white proletariat provides the complicating factor in these struggles. O'Meara shows behind the diverse and often fragmentary nature of Afrikaner nationalism the drive to mobilise Afrikaner savings. Amidst the mythology of Voortrekkers and the search for the true interpretation of Calvinism

there is a move to centralise capital, then dispersed among the ordinary Afrikaner volk, in order to establish Afrikaner capitalism. The splits and centrifugal forces in Afrikaner politics are made understandable by the divergent economic basis of Afrikaner nationalism in the Cape and in the Transvaal. Financial structures are much more developed in the Cape and there was agriculture produced for export. In the Transvaal, by contrast, agriculture produced food for the mines and there was both an Afrikaner proletariat and a petty-bourgeoisie of religious ministers, teachers and academics.

A second reason to read these books is the way in which they illustrate a creative application of a marxist method. Marxism is for the authors not a doctrine that gives all answers beforehand but provides an inspiration to understand the perplexing realities of South Africa. The marxist writing produced in the last decade has enriched our understanding of that society. Few people still argue that apartheid should be seen as an aberration of capitalism or are still blind to its role in the process of capital accumulation. Yet it would be a simplification to describe the South African situation as a dichotomic struggle between capitalism and the oppressed. The struggles are more complicated. Bozzoli notices perceptively that it makes a big difference whether the African population is seen as a market for a developing local industry or is merely regarded as a cost factor that has to be kept down in the interest of a gold mining industry producing for export. O'Meara describes delicately the protest of poor white people against a capitalism which was also part of Afrikaner nationalism; albeit that this indignation led only to the development of their own Afrikaner capitalism. Both writers avoid stressing the economic substructure at the expense of the superstructure. Because these authors see so clearly the logical tendency to fragmentation in the white population as a result of differing interests, they show the role of ideology as a unifying force.

*The Political Nature of a Ruling Class* intends also to be a contribution to the marxist theory of the state in capitalist society. Bozzoli develops Gramsci's ideas on the role of culture and intellectuals in the integration of the capitalist state or, in other words, the role of organic intellectuals in establishing class hegemony. The book will for that reason probably appeal to a different category of readers than Volkskapitalisme. O'Meara refers to similar ideas, but these are for him above all an aid to understanding Afrikaner nationalism. He wants to clarify the rationality behind Afrikaner politics and break with the "inherited pro-British spirit" [p5]. He considers Afrikaners as backwards, gullible, socio-pathic, etc. His marxism views Afrikaners as engaged in class struggles like the rest of humanity. For some people, his approach will therefore be shallow and voluntaristic as compared to Bozzoli's, but can be preferred.

O'Meara is restrained in the use of marxist vocabulary. In his writing he brings alive the variety of people in Afrikaner culture. For example (p261) or "The venerated 'Vader' Kestell, pastor to the Boer commandos during the Anglo-Boer war and doyen of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk clergy" (p 109) Afrikaner nationalism is depicted as the creative response to a particular economic predicament. The role of the Cape financiers who are all the time scheming to use nationalism as a lever to mobilise Afrikaner savings is crucial in his perspective.

Bozzoli, in contrast, consciously develops and cultivates the use of jargon, which is often meaningless.<sup>1</sup> She stresses the impersonal logic of a developing economic system that has needs to be fulfilled. For example "contradictions need to be solved" [p 136] or "national capital found it imperative" [p 137]. This leads to a functionalist perspective in spite of her abhorrence of bourgeois social science. A follower of Talcott Parsons could agree with a theoretical concern to study "the need for co-opting, conciliating and accommodating whites of all classes into the industrial revolution" (p 205). There is an unavoidable logic in the development of South Africa as seen through her eyes. I am not convinced that South African development as we know it was unavoidable.<sup>2</sup> Although I find it extremely illuminating to clarify South African politics by relating it to the economic substructure, I can well imagine an alternative world where South Africa has developed into another type of harsh capitalist country without the racism that marks it now as distinct.

This leads to the third reason for recommending these studies; they raise important questions on the relationship between capitalism, accumulation of capital in the periphery of the world capitalist system and racism. The study of Southern Africa has been influenced strongly in the last decade by the dependency theory. This explains underdevelopment as a result of capital accumulation at the centre of the world capitalist system. These books document indigenous capital accumulation in a capitalist system which is peripheral to the world system and the struggles between metropolitan and national capitalisms. The question that emerges is: Under which circumstances is such an emergence of national capitalism likely to succeed?

One possible line of reasoning starts from the observation that these nationalisms — South Africanism and Afrikanerdom — were rooted in already developing indigenous capitalism systems. For example, in the case of Afrikanerdom, it was the Sanlam empire of Hofmeyr that looked to nationalism as an instrument for capitalist development. Elsewhere in Africa, nationalism was rooted in the first place in grievances against racial discrimination and only late — mostly after independence — was economic nationalism grafted upon that. In the latter situation the state becomes the only vehicle available for emancipation — through massive job creation and fast expansion of service of service. This may preclude capital accumulation. In these South African cases the state was a help in a process of capital accumulation that was already under way — through protection and investment in key supporting industries. This argument overlooks the question that looms large in these two books: What is the relationship between these economic nationalisms and the racism of the South African system?

The position of non-white people was not of overwhelming concern for the ideologues of these nationalisms. The advocates of South African industrialisation made frequent allusions to racism, but these referred to Anglo-Afrikaner relations. As late as 1944, the apartheid ideology was merely a loose set of principles in Afrikaner thinking. The attention to objective relations of exploitation avoids being deceived by this seeming unconcern. The racial question was raised in Afrikaner nationalism "firmly within the conception of the need to restructure economic and social relations to ensure rapid accumulation on the part of Afrikaner business" (p.178). Bozzoli analyses how industrialisation provides the background

for emerging liberal attitudes towards the non-white population. This serves the interests of capital: "The universities, the Institute of Race Relations, the ICU, the ANC ... were either created by liberals or placed directly under their influence in these years ..... This left the way clear for capital to put its remaining energies into the creation of a central state that was all intents and purposes, an entirely white one" (p 189).

I doubt whether such views give satisfactory insights into the dynamics of racism in South Africa. It is pertinent to ask the question: who benefits economically from racism? South African racism undoubtedly benefitted from processes of capital accumulation. That does not however, explain the persistence of racism in certain groups rather than in other. The liberals, to whom Bozzoli refers, were concerned about the plight of oppressed people, while many others in their class position did not care. It is an absurd reasoning in the functionalist tradition that people who resist racism are actually the cause of the creation of a racist state; whatever happens contributes to the survival of the system. *The role of racism against people can only be partially gauged in studies.* Both authors focus on the role of ideology and therefore on the attitudes of the literate part of the population. It may be that there was most racism among those at the margin of white wealth, the unemployed Afrikaander urban migrant, those who maintained themselves marginally on the land, or the recent immigrant with few skills.

There is ample reason provided in these two books to believe that where people perceive an economic threat, racism starts to develop. In *The Political Nature of a Ruling Class* the competition of 'native' labour was obviously of overwhelming concern for the white proletariat. O'Meara notes with pleasure any tendency towards a broad proletarian multi-racial consciousness in South Africa. However, when he analyses the success of Afrikaner nationalism among the workers, he has to also point to a major preoccupation with racially - based privileges (240-241). Shopkeeping is oftgen seen as a way to emancipation for those at the margin; those who are a little bit more wealthy than their fellow workers. O'Meara quotes a column from the Afrikaans economic journal *Volkshandel* which shows the unmistakable blend of racism, protection of sexual desire, jealousy of economic success, and -erceived ecmp,oc tjreat. tjat are tje sta-?e omgreedoemts pf fiasco.:

We may understand the virulent nature of South African racism better through illuminating the role of these marginal groups in white society tghan by concentrating on the processes of capital accumulation. Those who were called 'poor whites' may remain crucial to an understanding of white South African politics. The stability of the system and its capacity to cope with minimal changes in order to adapt to changing circumstances would then depend upon the measure to which such groups can be satisfied. This becomes an acute problem because South Africa like other industrial countries, is affected by the new technological revolutions. Automatisaton reduces the need for lowly-skilled workers considerably in the areas of white reserved labour and reduces the need for supervisors of lowly-skilled non-white workers. The reopressive nature of the regime will probably provide an expansion of careers in police, prisons and army for these groups. This can be seen in conjunction with the tendency of the armed forces to play a more and more autonomous role in South African politics. Little is known these categories of people

who provide a breeding ground for fascism. They are difficult to approach for both liberal and marxist scholars; and people who are attracted to bullying in the service of fascism do not write papers. Yet it may be that ultimately a study of the grey-shirts of Ossewa Brandwage may tell us more about racism in South Africa than these two excellent studies.

1. An illustration of Bozzoli's use of jargon: "In this pivot chapter we have tried to portray a massive change in the nature of capital in South Africa. In order to capture the essence and significance of this change we need to move away from the endless and multiplying 'sectors', 'sections' and 'fractions' of capital, its allies and its enemies, that have littered this and he previous chapter, and to consider capital on a more general plans" (p. 170-170). May it be that the message is: This is an important chapter and we must think about the role of capital in society to understand this, because we are dealing with a change in the nature of capital? May it be that this is a tautological statement that does not add information?
2. For a similar argument, backed up by a comparative study of the United States and South Africa, Frederickson 1981 *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York).
3. Political behaviour in independent Africa is often seemingly dysfunctional to the process of capital accumulation. This argument has been presented by Saul along similar lines with reference to Ugandan politics. Saul, J.S.; (1979. *The State and Revolution in Eastern Africa* (London), pp. 340-391.

## Book Reviews

### The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective\*

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The Development Process embodies a prescriptive "view from the periphery" on the issue of Third World socio-economic development. Specifically, Mabogunje focuses on the spatial dimension to this problem. Thus, after getting oriented in development theory and spatial analysis, the reader is told that self-centred and self-reliant development at the national level requires comprehensive spatial reorganisation of both the rural and urban sectors. In the rural sector, this reorganisation would involve 'co-operativisation' based on traditional spatial units to ensure peasant participation in a two-way decision-making process. For urban development, the author recommends rank-size rule, decentralised urbanisation with each city possessing internal organisational coherence for efficiency in planning and management. Indigenous solutions to such urban problems as unemployment and shortage of housing would be made an integral part of this urban development strategy. Integration at the national level would be achieved through the creation, proper management, and direction of flows of information, goods and services. The rationalisation of these flows would be critical to the full 'mobilisation' of the citizenry for self-centred, self-sustaining national development

While opposed to an open-door external relations policy, Mabogunje recommends regional and 'south-south' co-operation between Third World nations, plus 'selective' south-north relations. Some degree of autonomous existence vis-a-vis the developed nations is deemed necessary for the full 'incubation' of the development process in any developing nation.

In *The Development Process*, Mabogunje exhibits in full the eclectic qualities of the geographer. He has managed successfully to give spatial flavour and focus to an impressive amount of data drawn from disparate disciplines. His chapter conclusions are very effective in helping the reader recapture the essence of individual chapters. However, as a methodological and prescriptive book, *The Development Process* can be judged on these two virtues alone. A fair judgement of the book requires two considerations: firstly, has the set objective been achieved? and secondly, how clear is the development strategy prescribed for the typical developing nation-state which is Mabogunje's spatial unit of interest?

To the extent that the objective is to present a spatial view of Third World development, and in so far as the spatial perspective is perceived as one that "provides ideas as to how" this development could be achieved, Mabogunje has been remarkably successful in meeting his set objective in *The Development Process*. Some of these ideas are familiar to the geographer, but many have been

\*Mabogunje A K 1980 *The Development Process: A Spatial Perspective* London: Hutchison and Company pp 383

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