

"Implementing African Socialism"

Kenya's revised
development plan

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THE second version of Kenya's 1964-70 Development Plan - to be accurate a radically revised 1966-70 Plan - should put paid to the claim that the famed Sessional Paper Number 10 of 1965, "African Socialism" was really a hypocritical blueprint for achieving 19th Century American laissez faire capitalism. This claim was inherently as implausible as the rumours that Tanzania's competitive one-party system was shaped by the thought of Chairman Mao, or that Milton Obote's successful political strategy was based on the advice of that notably unsuccessful politician Oginga Odinga. Yet the charge has hampered serious analysis of the social and economic structures Kenya's government was seeking. It has also hindered evaluation of the consistency of proposed policy measures with each other and with Kenya's social and economic goals.

The Sessional Paper tended to add to the confusion because, despite its superficially inclusive policy listing, it was subject to fairly widely varying interpretations. Certainly Mr. Okello-Odongo (then Junior Minister of the Kenya Treasury and now of K P U), The Hon. T. J. Mboya, and the British and American press all expressed favourable opinions but equally they expressed opinions on very divergent readings. Predictably it is Mr. Mboya's (and also that of the Hon. Mwai Kibaki) which has proven the best guide to the way in which the Development Plan has set out to implement the Sessional Paper's statement of aims.

The Plan, in its Presidential and Ministerial prefaces provides a clearer (and more compelling) statement of goals. More important, it sets out detailed strategies and policies, both implicit and explicit, in the chapters on the nature of development and in the body of the programmatic text. From these a fairly clear picture of what "African Socialism" means to the Kenya government emerges. And so also do the unresolved problems which threaten its attainment.

THE picture is one of a conservative social-democratic socio-political outlook backed by a cautiously realistic policy for promoting economic growth. The latter appears as the first priority toward achieving more far reaching social and economic change over a considerably longer time span than this Plan. "Conservative" as used here is not perjorative; the Scandinavian and German Social Democratic parties could equally well be so described.

THE Kenyan political elite is not the "East African Nigerian" - a term of praise in 1964-5 that rings somewhat differently today. President Kenyatta, Planning Minister Mboya, Minister of Commerce and Industry Kibaki, Minister of Agriculture MacKenzie, and Interior Minister Ngala, to cite some key figures, are able men who are committed to furthering the public interest. One may question some or many aspects of their vision - economic, social, and/or

political - but to lump them with the late Festus Okatie Eboh or S L Akintola as venal self seekers dedicated to the use of public office for improper personal gain or the late Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello as champions of aristocratic privilege is as misleading as it is mischievous. To pretend that there is no corruption in Kenya would be idle. To suppose that it has either poisoned the highest levels of public decision-making (as in Nigeria) or hopelessly eroded the operational efficiency of the system and of public confidence in the government (as in Ghana) would be quite inaccurately pessimistic. Or optimistic in some cases, judging from the tone of a good deal of "radical" criticism.

Further the Kenyan government's basic nation view is independently formulated, nor derivative. The President and most major Cabinet and political leaders are committed to the goals and means set out in the Sessional Paper and Plan. Their advisors did indeed advise, propose means of achieving politically formulated ends, provide working draft texts - not formulate the ends and promulgate the documents. Those who reject much or all of the approach chosen by the Kenyan government are engaged in self-deception if they suppose that "African Socialism" is a foreign script mouthed by marionettes.

On the other hand, the breadth of involvement in the formulation and promulgation of either the Sessional Paper or the Plan was not great. K A N U is not now an effective mass party nor a particularly fertile source of ideas at either the grassroots or the parliamentary levels. Indeed one serious question is whether a conservative social-democratic programme can be carried out without a much stronger and more alert mass party and local-level party leadership than exists today or seems likely to result from the present not very energetic reform and rebuilding efforts within K A N U.

Equally critical may be doubts as to whether the conservative social-democratic approach is fully relevant to, or capable of surmounting the national development problems confronting African nations. Its successes to date (with the rather doubtful exception of South Italy) have been in states which had already surmounted the hurdles of creating a unified nation and achieving a substantial and more or less steadily growing national product per capita. Not only a broader and institutionally stronger political base than the present K A N U but also a much more inclusive, complex, and dense net of voluntary organizations (co-operatives, labour unions, educational associations) directly related to the political process has, in the past, been associated with the rise of this type of socialism. The self-help efforts

most strikingly symbolised by the Harambee schools may mark the emergence of such an organisational base, but, to date, they are erratically and tenuously linked to K A N U, local, or central government. They have in practice all too often been discouraged by one or all three because of lack of easy incorporation into tidy organisational or bureaucratic structures.

Greater social services, more equity in distribution of output (especially of the additional output fairly automatically arising from economic growth within an industrial pattern), and creating a more humane set of relationships within the economy while sustaining its established growth trend - these have been the areas of conservative social democracy's greatest efforts and most marked successes. Organised labour has been its ally because, in the relevant economies, the wage labour force was an economically depressed group and the organised farmer (e.g. through co-operatives based on farmer initiative and through one or more political parties) was able to ensure that labour's gains did not come primarily at the expense of the rural poor. These are conditions altogether different from and, alas, far easier to operate in than those confronting Kenya.

KENYA'S Plan certainly cites expanded social services increased economic justice, and less unequal access to economic opportunity among its aims. However, these are both explicitly and - more important - in terms of policy and programme selection seen as substantially in conflict with, and less critical than, attaining a rapid growth of output. Within the African community emphasis is on raising the productivity and incomes of those areas, groups, and individuals who are identified as most economically promising. The identification is very largely in terms of present above-average productivity and income. For example, up to 80% of all agricultural development expenditure will benefit perhaps 10-15% of the rural population while the endemic near-famine pastoral and subsistence agricultural areas will receive distinctly marginal attention.

This strategy is neither necessarily economically unsound nor unsocialist. It is divergent from social democratic practice and it will be politically difficult to sustain without far greater levels of coercion than the Kenya government desires or can at present dispose. Concentration of industrial and selected rural growth points has been a significant factor in Marxist-Leninist Socialist Development, including that of China. Equality of income distribution, access to economic opportunity, or of opportunity to enjoy higher consumption standards have certainly not typified the period when national reconstruction and the creation of a securely develop-

ing economy took place. The nearest case to an exception is that of post 1950 - but more especially post 1955 - Yugoslavia and here, overgenerous welfare state and egalitarian wage-salary policies have tended to pose serious obstacles to sustaining the tempo of development.

In the context of an economy generating about £10-12 cash income for the 90% rural African sector of the population (barely above the levels of Mainland Tanzania, significantly below those of Uganda, under half those of Zanzibar) a strategy of delaying mass benefits while building a broader economic base to support them will be politically difficult to explain much less to use as a basis for generating mass involvement and support. How difficult depends in part on how long the need for concentrated public effort and private gain is expected to last. Because Kenya's Plan - unlike Uganda's or Tanzania's - does not form the first tranche of a longer perspective, the question of when it is expected that broader distribution of benefits will be possible remains unanswered.

A related problem is how the recipients of the concentrated benefits will use them. As Joan Robinson - scarcely an ardent supporter of capitalist accumulation - has remarked, European and North American capitalism was in fact an efficient road to development because a high proportion of national product went to the capitalists on the tacit assumption they would not consume but would reinvest it. African experience to date - vide Nigeria, Liberia, Gabon, Morocco - cannot lead to great optimism that African bureaucratic and state-favoured business recipients of gains will necessarily work on that tacit assumption. The greater their conspicuous consumption and the lower their levels of domestic reinvestment the wider the perceived gap between them and the great masses of the population, the higher the levels of resentment against their privileged position, and the longer it will take to expand the productive base of the Kenyan economy.

Over the next five years two factors will tend to make the Kenyan strategy more popular than might be expected from its basic outlines. First, real efforts are being made to increase African economic participation on the skilled, clerical, technical, professional, middle-scale farmer, and entrepreneurial-proprietorial levels. These policies, which are effectively publicised in Kenya even if some of their clumsier examples create rather bad publicity abroad, will both provide a popular image of and lead to significant gains from Kenyan economic policy so far as the

power. Thus it can wrest gains at the expense of the much poorer rural proletariat which is also less well organised, more dispersed, and less immediately pressing.

It needs to be underlined that a strategy of concentrated economic effort and postponement of mass benefits is neither historically nor logically unsound on economic grounds nor is it logically nor for that matter historically linked to laissez faire or any other variety of unregulated capitalism. The initial stages of economic development have been characterised in virtually all cases by precisely the type of phenomena noted above. Privileged technical, managerial, and entrepreneurial elites and high ploughback into investment linked with low standards of mass services (except those seen as vital to creating the skilled manpower needed for development) have been typical of socialist as well as capitalist development. (Milovan Djilas' *New Class* describes one of the least and Imre Nagy's *In Defense of the New Course* one of the more elitist Marxist-Leninist Socialist nations in their initial phases of economic development) Development is costly in human as well as material terms, individuals with source skills must be rewarded for using them well, for technical as well as incentive reasons as rather obly expounded by Mao Tse Tung among others.

However, the balance in allocation of development costs and benefits within the Kenya Plan is more open to query. Cannot more broadly based rural development efforts be instituted consistent with rapid growth of output? Uganda has achieved a higher output per member of the rural population based on smallholders with low monetary capital inputs. The bulk of the Ugandan Plan's agricultural output growth is to come from the smallholders and two thirds of its developmental expenditure to go to them. Tanzania's attempt to transform rural development has proven inadequately formulated and been cut back. But its more general agricultural efforts seem to have had a high payoff in the post 1961 period once droughts are taken into account e.g 1966 growth in agricultural output will probably exceed 10% (Kenya 68%) and cotton, cashew nut, coffee and tobacco output increases are very much higher. Are present salary structures immutable? Uganda has attempted some minimal cuts in new entry scales and a general salary freeze. Tanzania, admittedly a special case in this regard, has made salary cuts for all civil-service political salaries over £660 and has had at least some response in urging parallel cuts elsewhere e.g at the University. Is it necessary for the economic gap between the labour elite and the rural proletariat to widen? Tanzania has had discussions about tying wage increase averages to average growth in per capita rural incomes, albeit recent industrial tribunal awards bear no relation to any such standard. Uganda has laid down an incomes policy which would hold the rate of wage increases to about the same order of magnitude as expected per-capita farm-income growth.

These issues are certainly not novel to Kenya's planners or the more economically astute of her political leaders. Thinking is going on in relation to each - fairly intensive thinking which may lead to significant alterations in rural development-employment-incomes policy. However, real doubt remains whether adequate priority is being given to or a real sense of urgency pervades further thinking on these and similar questions. If the answer is negative, there is danger of levels of socio-political disenchantment with the economic fruits of independence which will gravely jeopardise implementation of the 1970-76 Plan and probably affect that of the 1966-70 one as well.

99% African component of citizens is concerned. Second, settlement farms and loan schemes, land, expanded employment opportunities, and a growing civil-service qualified-teacher corps will raise total Kenyan African income recipients with at least £100 annual cash income from about 650,000 to the 1,000,000 mark and those with £500 or more from under 20,000 to conceivably 60,000. Over the next five years these two processes will be effective demonstrations that Kenya's economy is becoming more Kenyan and that economic opportunity, while still relatively narrowly dispersed, is becoming available to growing numbers.

Unfortunately, the long term socio-political results of these processes may be less satisfactory. Income differentials within the African community will both rise and be seen to rise. Relative opportunity of access to higher economic status will tend to narrow after 1970 - barring fairly substantial changes in development strategy Africanisation, settlement, initial governmental and educational build up and related policies use up a stock of existing opportunities for African advancement as well as or more than a flow of net new economic opportunities generated by development itself. With increased Kenyanisation, moreover, the problems of low average incomes and highly unequal distribution of economic gains will no longer be so readily, nor so accurately, attributable to the transitional problems of phasing out the colonial socio-economic heritage. Nor can it be attributed to the related but not wholly identical problem of economically dominant minority communities.

The larger settlement and loan-assisted farmers may well become an isolated rural upper-middle class with the 100-500 sub-group (largely senior civil servants and politicians who have purchased settler homes and "core farms") a nearly closed landed gentry. African businessmen, including para-statal and co-operative officials who tend to be subject to rather tenuous and limited effective state or member control, may in fact use political power to maintain economic privilege despite "African Socialism's" evident desire to avoid such a situation. The civil-service business-enterprise African salariat (or if one prefers technical meritocracy) produced by the limited-access secondary schools and universities may all too easily be as far removed economically and socially from the semi-subsistence farmer as was its expatriate colonial predecessor class. Organised urban labour is becoming ever more clearly an economically privileged group often benefiting from its organisational structure and location uncomfortably near the seats of economic and political