



The Village Woman in Ghana by Jette Bukh

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would still have arisen because the expropriated merchant assets were dependent for their maintenance on British and, in some cases, Indian industrial capital – obviously, to cut these links without first establishing alternative sources, either internally or externally, was bound to cause economic difficulties. In the end, Amin's régime faced extremely tight credit abroad, and local businessmen were required to pay cash for their goods before they were shipped to Uganda.

Jørgensen writes well, and although some of his interpretations are inappropriate, this is probably due to the continuing inadequacies of his 'structural dependence' framework. As explained in the Preface, this paradigm has passed through six over-lapping phases since its emergence in the 1950s 'as a nationalist response by intellectuals in the new nations to the liberal paradigms and to orthodox Marxism, which posited its own Eurocentric model of linear stages of development' (p. 16). Even so, *Uganda: a modern history* will appeal to a wide range of readers who are interested in the creation and problems of underdevelopment, especially in East Africa. An Epilogue provides a useful account of the struggle by various factions within the Uganda National Liberation Front to control the state after the fall of Amin, although the author wrongly credits his régime with the innovation of the *Nyumba Kumi* or 10-house system of social control and surveillance.

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The Village Woman in Ghana by JETTE BUKH

Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1979. Pp. 118. Sw. Kr. 25.00 paperback.

This compact little book is based on different periods of fieldwork between 1973 and 1978 in the Ewe village of Tsito in the Volta Region of Ghana, and the main conclusion by Jette Bukh is that the processes of economic change have led to a deterioration in the position of women. The theoretical framework is that of the articulation of modes of production which, in the author's words, implies 'that "traditional" societies will be changed and preserved to the extent that it is functional for the capitalist accumulation in the centres and subcentres, e.g. by providing raw materials and by maintaining and reproducing the labour force' (p. 13). Some of the consequences of this process are a new division of labour (resulting in heavier burdens on women), as well as non-traditional patterns of exploitation, elements of class conflict, and trends to private land ownership.

A brief historical background of the Ewe society focuses attention on the village economy, especially the changes that have taken place in the household, such as an increase in female heads and divorce rates, a decrease in the economic usefulness of children, and the 'marginalisation of husbands' in the upkeep of the family. This is followed by a chapter on women and resources, with special reference to their increasing restrictions as regards land, labour, cash, education, and agricultural government assistance. Thereafter we are given an overview of the activities which women promote in the informal

economic sector to cope with these problems, notably in petty trading and subsistence agriculture. Because of a number of constraints placed on them and the general worsening of the Ghanaian economy, women are not able to develop their activities into more profitable undertakings – they remain merely attempts to survive. There is a short chapter on protest and organisation which sums up the strategies of resistance used by women: divorce, abortion, and migration at the individual level, as well as the creation of new communal groups to fight oppression. The author believes that these women's organisations are likely to play a crucial rôle in the emancipation struggle. There is an appendix with information on research methods, and special mention must be made of the 12 photographs by the author which usefully illustrate her text.

The Village Woman in Ghana contains a wealth of information on a variety of subjects, only a few of which have been mentioned here. I have two brief comments to make. First, although Bukh contends that men were able to benefit most from the economic changes, because *their own* traditional patriarchal structures restricted women in their access to the new resources, it seems to me probable that *western* patriarchal structures played an important rôle in this process. Viri-centrism was imported into the Gold Coast through government, missionary, and trade channels. Secondly, although I agree fully with the main thesis of the book – namely that women have come to be burdened excessively in the present situation – I wish to draw attention to a simultaneous, somewhat contradictory, development. The increase of burdens implies also an increase in power, and Bukh is not unaware of this because she describes the marginalisation of husbands in the running of their families.

It is clear that the women of Tsito have acquired more power to decide about the day-to-day affairs in their homes, and if the author had given this other side of the coin a more prominent place in her analysis, she would probably have come up with more intriguing alternatives for women's resistance and action. This is not to deny, however, that Bukh has written an extremely useful study about women in Ghana, with new and important data to further understand and help change their life conditions.

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Self-Reliance: a strategy for development edited by JOHAN GALTUNG, PETER O'BRIEN, and ROY PREISWERK
London, Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1980. Pp. 422. £5.25 paperback.

This collection of 20 essays, which grew out of series of meetings in Geneva at the *Institut universitaire d'études du développement* during 1975–6, is extremely wide-ranging and thought-provoking, if somewhat abstract in places (in spite of the publisher's claim that it is 'an attempt to get the debate and the action started on more solid grounds').

An implicit tendency throughout is a general, idealised view of rural life and frugal living, and a corresponding dislike for modern industrial technology. It is significant that Rousseau and Gandhi have whole essays (by Ann Tickner and Ignacy Sachs, respectively) devoted to their ideas, whilst the Chinese