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African Renaissance: Roadmaps to the Challenge of Globalization Fantu Cheru. London: Zed Books, 2002. 253 pp.

In *African Renaissance*, Fantu Cheru offers new insights into the crisis of Africa's development. His goal is to set a different agenda, a path not bound by the often idealistic, sometimes naïve visions of some left thinkers, nor trapped under the dogmatic arrogance of the neo-liberal consensus. Based on numerous field studies and secondary research, the eight chapters cover nearly every possible aspect of African social and economic development, with much room for overlap. The chapters range in topics from agriculture to regional integration to democracy and provide a clear analysis of Africa's current crisis with realizable proposals for development and policy alternatives to ensure the realization of the "African Renaissance". Cheru points out the fact that African governments have thus far reacted to the challenge of globalization in one of two ways, outright resistance as the example of the earlier Marxist inspired experiments showed, or, as in the case of South Africa, total acceptance of globalization and neo-liberal paradigms.

For Cheru, neither of these options is feasible today; the former because for such a resistance to be successful, African and other Global South nations would have to unify and stand together in demanding paradigmatic shifts in international trade and economic policy; which for Cheru isn't likely (although recent events at the WTO meeting in Cancun might suggest otherwise). For the latter, complete acceptance of the neo-liberal agenda has proven to have dire effects on the ability of states to maintain social systems and to formulate and conduct nation development agendas. Here, Cheru brings into focus a third option, what he calls, "a guided embrace of globalization with a commitment to resist."

In the opening chapter, "The Globalization Challenge", Cheru sets the tone of the book by exploring the broad problem of African development and the failure of the liberalization policies of structural adjustment enforced by the WTO and IMF. Extreme rates of poverty throughout sub-Saharan Africa, where close to half of the continent's population live on under \$.65 (USD) per day, coupled with the overall decline in foreign aid, have led to crisis in the ability of the African state to support education and health care, which is dominated by the epidemic of HIV/AIDS and the largest refugee problem of any region in the world. He looks at domestic factors in creating political and economic instability, which leads to poor agricultural performance due to the dependence of the state on levying heavy taxes on agricultural exports and the centralized control over commodity prices and market entry. In the manufacturing sector, which employs less than 10% of the total work force, dependence on foreign technology and expertise has led to stagnation in growth for this sector across the region. The "African Brain drain" has resulted in a depletion of needed expertise and now stands at an annual rate of nearly 20,000 trained intellectuals leaving the continent for higher salaries and political stability in foreign lands.

In the second half of the chapter, Cheru turns his focus on external forces at hand in undermining Africa's development. Unfavorable, even hostile terms of trade lead the way in a range of issues and conflicts with the international economic order followed by the lack of positive foreign direct investment have left Africa vulnerable to volatile external market forces and coercion from multi-lateral lending institutions, as the only sources of foreign exchange credits. This dependence has created a situation where African nations' control over regional and national development policy is consistently curtailed and opposed by the interest of the international financial system, to which Africa's economies are essentially mortgaged.

The chapter concludes with a restatement of the main idea that Africa must have a *"guided embrace of globalization with a commitment to resist."* The following seven chapters highlight some major points and issues that African policymakers and civil society groups will have to face in order to usher in a new era of social development with universal access to health, education, sanitation, water and other basic life services.

The remaining chapters of the book cover some of the main challenges to sub-Saharan Africa's future development, including democracy, education, agriculture, regional integration, rural-urban linkages, and rebuilding war torn societies. Throughout each chapter is detailed research on the recent histories in domestic policy and global forces that have helped to shape the reality sub-Saharan Africa finds itself faced with today.

The book ends with a "Wake up Call to Fellow Africans". Cheru calls on us to rethink the concept of "decolonization of the African mindset". Africa's dependence on foreign aid, he says, has done the opposite of its claimed mission, but in fact has been used to keep Africa's people disempowered through the support of dictatorships and undemocratic regimes. Further, the habits of import consumption and the rejection of products produced in Africa is the highest example of how deep the colonial ingraining has been.

Further along, he challenges African universities, scholars and heads of state to commit to strengthen their people's capacity in "all the relevant specializations" and improve the ability for sub-Saharan trade negotiators to engage in meaningful dialogue during WTO meetings, and other international negotiations.

One thing I felt was missing from the book was a specific look at the situation from a health-related and gendered perspective. Although Cheru offers many side bars and critiques of the crisis from a gender sensitive view and discusses to some degree the issue of health care, with particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS, I thought both subjects warranted a chapter on their own that would have made this book absolutely complete.

Still this book is by far the best that I've read on the issue of modern African development. It is a very easy read either for graduate level students or for those newly approaching the subject. Cheru's research, which was accumulated through years of work as a consultant with many international organizations and governments, was very well documented in the notes and references sections. I highly recommend this book to any and all interested in African political economy and development.

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