

# Sam Moyo and Samir Amin on the Peasant Question

Agrarian South: Journal of  
Political Economy  
8(1–2) 287–302, 2019

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DOI: 10.1177/2277976019845737

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Issa G. Shivji<sup>1,2</sup>

## Abstract

This second Sam Moyo Lecture was delivered in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 22 January 2019, during the Annual Agrarian Summer School organized by The Sam Moyo African Institute for Agrarian Studies and the Agrarian South Network. The lecture celebrates the life and legacy of two great Pan-Africanists and world intellectuals, Samir Amin and Sam Moyo, who were close friends with mutual respect and admiration for each other, and who passed away in quick succession in the last 3 years. The lecture addresses three areas that were close to both Amin and Moyo: first, trajectories of accumulation on a world scale; second, the contestations over the agrarian question and third, the contradictions of the national question. Sam's and Samir's works were mutually complementary. Sam's empirical research was thorough and conscientious; his research site was Zimbabwe, but he trained his sight on the continent. Samir painted in broad strokes on the world canvas; his theory was global, his vision was epochal. In Sam and Samir, we had a fine 'glocal' pair. They have left us a wealth of writings from which we will continue to draw for many years to come.

## Keywords

Sam Moyo, Samir Amin, accumulation, agrarian question, national question

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<sup>1</sup> Nyerere Resource Centre, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, Tanzania.

<sup>2</sup> Former Professor, Pan-African Studies, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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## Corresponding author:

Issa G. Shivji, P.O. Box 953, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

E-mail: [issashivji@gmail.com](mailto:issashivji@gmail.com)

## Friendship and Comradeship

We lost two close friends and comrades in succession over the last three years.<sup>1</sup> We meet today to celebrate their lives, reflect on their thoughts, learn from their committed politics and continue on the long road to human freedom and emancipation. Before I proceed, I invite you to stand up and in unison applaud for a minute to show our appreciation and admiration for our comrades.

I deliberately did not ask you to stand up in a minute of silence. I have come to loath silence—some places where we come from, we have been silenced into subjection. But that is a story for another day and occasion.

Sam and Samir were close friends with mutual respect and admiration for each other. Both were disarmingly humble, without scholarly pretensions or intellectual arrogance. Sam and Samir were very warm people—always considerate, never condescending. They valued comradeship and cared for friendship. Sam and Samir's works were mutually complementary. Sam's empirical research was thorough and conscientious; his research site was Zimbabwe, but he trained his sight on the continent. Samir painted in broad strokes on the world canvas. Samir's theory was global; his vision was epochal. Sam's research was local but his thought was continental. In Sam and Samir, we had a fine 'glocal' pair. They have left us a wealth of writings from which we will continue to draw for many years to come.

Now let me move from the personal to the political.

I want to dwell on three areas that were close to both Samir and Sam: first, trajectories of accumulation—the veins and the arteries of the capitalist system; second, contestations over the agrarian question, which constitutes the heart of worldwide capitalism and third, contradictions of the national question, which is the nemesis of imperialism.

## Trajectories of Accumulation

The old man Marx taught us right at the beginning in Volume I of *Capital*: 'Accumulate! Accumulate! This is Moses and the Prophets'. Many read it, many more chant it, but few understand it. You abstract from the process of accumulation at your peril. Accumulation is an integral process from the point of production (the social expression of which we call *relations of production*); it goes through various forms and mechanisms of appropriation of surplus (whose social expression

is *relations of exploitation*); at the other pole, there is accumulation of surplus by capital or capitals. At one pole lies the producer of surplus, labor, and at the other pole is the accumulator of surplus, capital. In between are ensconced different intermediaries, who are historically, socially and spatially specific. A concrete analysis of these classes, fractions of classes and sub-classes gives us the character of a given social formation. Now, during our 1970s debate on the peasant question, it seems to me, we separated relations of production from relations of exploitation, characterizing the former as pre-capitalist and the latter as capitalist, thus arriving at the thesis of the articulation of modes of production. That can be done only if we *abstract* from the process of accumulation. In hindsight, I think we were wrong because we did not fully grasp the process of capitalist accumulation as an integral process. Thankfully, Sam and Samir have underscored the integral nature of the accumulation process. Therefore, they have had no difficulty in seeing peasant production as an integral part of the capitalist system.

Prabhat Patnaik and I have argued that there are two trajectories and two forms of accumulation, once you look at accumulation as a worldwide process. These are accumulation by expanded reproduction and primitive accumulation (Shivji, 2009). Patnaik (2005, 2008) calls them ‘accumulation through expansion’ and ‘accumulation through encroachment’. Over five centuries, the brunt of the brutal forms of primitive accumulation has been borne by the South, far more by Africa than any other continent. Sam, together with Praveen Jha and Paris Yeros (hereinafter, ‘the trio’), have argued further that primitive accumulation was neither the original, pre-historic form of accumulation nor conjunctural; rather it has been continuous, present throughout the development of capitalism predicated on the centre-periphery construct (Moyo, Yeros, & Jha, 2012). They correctly link this form of accumulation to imperialism in its various historical and contemporary incarnations. Under financialization and privatization (the two legs of neoliberalism), primitive accumulation has become rampant and blatant. Primitive accumulation has invaded public goods sectors such as education, health, water, flora, fauna, atmosphere and biosphere. Not only peasants are subjected to primitive accumulation, who are thus semi-proletarianized, but also other working poor in urban and rural areas.

The trio’s argument is that primitive accumulation, which has always been existent, is irrefutable at the global, centre-periphery level. At a lower level of abstraction, for example, when you are considering particular historical periods and/or specific countries and regions, the picture is slightly different. The two forms of accumulation are in tension,

ying for dominance. Patnaik and I, for instance, have suggested that in the immediate postcolonial period, the dirigiste economic strategies adopted by the first generation of nationalists was an attempt to curtail primitive accumulation in favor of ‘accumulation through expansion’. In some cases, private bourgeoisies, in other cases, bureaucratic bourgeoisies, and still in other cases, a combination of both drove the process, but in all cases, the state was the central player. In politics, we have come to call such classes as ‘nationalist’ and anti-imperialist. In economics, such states have been dubbed ‘developmental’. The ‘nationalist’ characterization has been used to distinguish them from compradorial classes who are the carriers and facilitators of primitive accumulation and thus the conveyor belts of imperialist capital.

At a more generic level, I have argued that primitive accumulation is possible under conditions of monopoly capitalism precisely because it enables capital to cut into the necessary consumption of the producer. Thus, a peasant or a *mama ntilie*<sup>2</sup> exploits herself to subsidize capital by shouldering the cost of reproduction of labor. The peasant cedes to capital both ground rent as a ‘landlord’ and part of his/her necessary consumption as the laborer! Patnaik, with his usual economic clarity, talks about the compression of demand of the working people through income deflation to augment primitive accumulation. I believe this comes close to my argument about capital cutting into necessary consumption of the producer. In the result, working people, in particular the peasantry, are *super-exploited*, while living *sub-human* lives (Shivji, 1987, 2018). There is, thus, an objective materiality against monopoly capital across the whole spectrum of working people, regardless of different classes and sub-classes within it. For this reason, I have identified the working people as the revolutionary agency in the current conjuncture (Shivji, 2017). This is not to say that there are no secondary contradictions among the working people: contradictions of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, indigenous versus immigrants, and so on. Capital and narrow nationalism feed on such contradictions to rule by dividing them politically and defining them ideologically (e.g., identity discourse). It is in such circumstances that progressive forces in each concrete situation have to know how to address secondary contradictions without losing sight of primary contradictions. At the same time, they should be able to recognize when and under what political situations certain secondary contradictions may play a leading role in the struggle.

At this point, let me flag an important point of methodology. When we talk of tendencies of accumulation and tensions between them—or when we talk of state and market, or state-led or market-led reforms—we are,

of course, talking of *abstractions*. You cannot touch, smell, hate, or love tendencies. For purposes of analysis, we *abstract* from real-life social processes and struggles. Tendencies never work out to their logical end, or bring about changes, precisely because they do not have agency. It is human beings who have agency, who organize, fight, struggle and change their lives and conditions. The state or the markets do not drive reforms. It is the people who do. This is where we talk about classes and class struggles, which lie at the core of the real Marxist method of historical materialism, beyond the abstractions of political economy, classical or radical. The use of terms like ‘Marxist political economy’ is, at best, a shorthand way of distinguishing one’s method from bourgeois economics, but not a description of Marx’s method. In my view, Marx’s was a *critique* of political economy, not a substitute for extant political economy. If I were to sum up, I would say it is necessary but not sufficient to read the abstractions of *Capital*. You have to read the real-life class struggles of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and *Class Struggles in France* to understand Marx’s method. I believe that historical materialism was the method of our comrades, Sam and Samir.

## The Agrarian Question

The agrarian question was central to Sam’s work and commitment. In this regard, he made a great contribution. The agrarian question can be resolved into two interconnected and interdependent components: the Land Question and the Peasant Question. In settler African countries, the land question immediately confronts the issue of land reform, in the sense of land redistribution. Sam believed that even in non-settler African countries, there is a land question, both in terms of land tenure reform and also because the peasant question has not been resolved. If anything, it has deepened with extensive alienation of land in the neoliberal period. Sam lays bare these issues in a splendid piece he wrote on his conversation with Archie Mafeje (Moyo, 2018). Thanks to Paris and Praveen, that piece is now available in *Agrarian South*.

In a seminal article, Sam, Paris and Praveen discuss how classical Marxists—from Engels through Kautsky to Lenin—presented the agrarian question and how its application to the global South today is flawed (Moyo, Jha, & Yeros, 2013, 2016). I submit that the trio weave their analysis around two major propositions: one, I believe, is their original contribution, and the other, standing on the shoulders of the path-breaking work of Utsa Patnaik (and to a lesser extent Samir Amin),

is an elaboration of Utsa's contention as applied to the contemporary global South. Their first proposition is that in the classical Marxist literature, the agrarian question was seen as a question of transition. That is to say, transition from the backward feudal, semi-feudal, or peasant agriculture to advanced industrial production, in turn resulting in industrial agriculture. On the social front, the peasantry was dispossessed and proletarianized. On the accumulation front, the industrial revolution entailed massive displacement of the peasant producer on land through primitive accumulation. This was the 'original sin' that landed Adam and Eve in the capitalist hell, as Marx would have perhaps formulated it.

Contemporary European Marxists, like Byers and Bernstein, work in this tradition. With great ingenuity, they identify different paths of transition and then apply them to their locations of research in the global South—Byers in India, Bernstein in Africa. In this narrative, the agrarian question has been resolved in Europe. Bernstein (1996) posited that the 'classical' agrarian question was the agrarian question of capital. To the extent that the agrarian question of capital was resolved, so was the agrarian question of labor, since capital and labor constitute the two defining poles of the capitalist mode of production.

At this stage, let me enter a caveat. The trio fully acknowledge, as I do, that both Byers and Bernstein and other 'lesser mortals' working in that tradition, have done enriching and useful work. But in their historical narrative as to what happened in Europe and their contemporary understanding of the agrarian question in the South, their premises are flawed. Sam et al. argue that contemporary European Marxists in their historical narrative of the classical agrarian question and in their understanding of the contemporary agrarian question, abstract from imperialism, the centre-periphery dialectic, and, I would add, from the worldwide accumulation process. Such abstraction enables them to arrive at the conclusion that the agrarian question in Europe has been resolved. If at all the agrarian question still remains unresolved in the South, Bernstein argues, it is the agrarian question of labor. And that, too, might be on its way of resolution through four types of what Bernstein calls 'land accumulation'. The first type of dispossession is the dispossession of peasants by 'powerful forces' in the countryside akin to the classical primitive accumulation described by Marx in the transition from feudalism to capitalism in England. The second type of dispossession is 'accumulation by dispossession' by 'indigenous classes of capital and politically powerful groups' from outside the countryside. The third type of dispossession is by international capitals in alliance with local capital and state, as in 'land grabbing'. The fourth type is 'accumulation from

below' through peasant differentiation similar to that described in Lenin's *Development of Capitalism* in Russia. He then goes on to tabulate the class agents in terms of accumulation from above or below, external or internal (Bernstein, 2015, p. 19 et seq.). It should be immediately evident that Bernstein's typology is *structural* with Europe as the point of reference. This is unlike Patnaik's 'accumulation through expansion' and 'accumulation through encroachment' which are located solidly in imperialism and accumulation as a worldwide process.

On the capital side, Sam et al. argue that the accumulation for the industrial revolution came from the South. As long ago as 1944, Eric Williams (1964[1944]), in his *Capitalism and Slavery*, brilliantly showed that the triangular slave-cum-commodity trade provided the necessary surpluses for the industrial revolution to take off. On the labor side, the 'surplus population' displaced from the countryside, as a result of enclosures and other processes of peasant dispossession, was shipped off to the so-called 'new world' of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand. The original inhabitants of these continents were massacred, and the world witnessed its first genocide. Millions of indigenous Americans and Australians were slaughtered, their ancient civilizations destroyed and their treasures like silver and gold looted. This was the massive primitive accumulation, the extent of which even Marx did not fully recognize or acknowledge. Utsa Patnaik (Patnaik & Moyo, 2011) went further to show that a section of the displaced from the countryside who became proletarians were fed on cheap foods extracted from the tropical South, thus cheapening the price of labor power and further augmenting surplus for capital. Thus, what *appears* as the resolution of the agrarian question in Europe is a myth. The agrarian question, either of capital or of labor, was never resolved in Europe. It was 'exported' to the South with all its ugly features. Many, if not all, fundamental contradictions of world capitalism—including climate change, ecological degradation and air pollution—are today concentrated in the agrarian question in the South. A revolutionary resolution of the agrarian question in the South by the semi-proletarianized working people of the South therefore holds a key to the liberation of the working people of the North as well. Just as the national liberation wars in Lusophone Africa set off the 'political revolution' against fascism in Portugal, so, I believe, the agrarian revolution in the South would spark off a socialist revolution in the North. So there are objective conditions for a revolutionary solidarity of the people of the South and the North transcending the facile 'aid' and self-serving 'humanitarianism' of their states. The earlier the working people of the North realize and internalize this relationship, the shorter

and less tortuous will be the journey towards human liberation and emancipation from the clutches of barbaric capitalism.

A couple of months before he passed on, Amin (2018) had proposed a far-sighted project of forming an ‘Internationale of Workers and Peoples of the World’: ‘[i]t has to be founded on other and new principles: associate all working peoples of the world and not only those qualified as representatives of the “proletariat” (recognising also that this designation is itself matter of debates).’ It seems to me, this initiative profoundly recognizes the centrality of solidarity between the peoples of the South and the North at this conjuncture. If it happens—and it falls on us to make it happen—this will be the first time that an initiative on forming an Internationale would have come from the South. (I am aware of an effort on the part of Hugo Chavez to form a Fifth International but am not fully conversant with where it ended.) All the previous three Internationales, including the abortive Trotskyite Fourth Internationale, were formed at the initiative of the North. Samir’s proposal deserves to be discussed on another occasion. For the present, let me now turn to my last section: the national question.

## The National Question

The national question is most contentious and contradictory, which can be seen in Sam’s and Samir’s writings. In spite of its contentious and contradictory nature, we should not shy away from debating it because it pertains to the way forward.

The first generation African nationalists were driven by the imperative of nation-building. At the time of independence, as Nyerere said, they did not inherit nations but a motley of ‘tribes’—some invented, others caricatured and still others reconstructed by colonialism. The nationalist’s imagery of a nation was derived from European history and experience. ‘I’ve questioned many, many, many things from Europe, but I’ve not questioned the nation-state’, Nyerere said, and continued: ‘I cannot think, how do I think in terms of *not* the nation-state?’ (Sutherland & Meyer, 2000, p. 76). Ironical as it is, the agency to build the nation was the state. This was the inherited colonial state, the very anti-thesis of a nation. There was no national bourgeoisie worth the name to shoulder the burden of building the nation. What existed was a caricature of a bourgeoisie as Fanon (1963) so eloquently showed in *Wretched of the Earth*. It was the same state that also had to carry the task of development. Hence, many African countries, regardless of the ideological label they



adorned, adopted interventionist development strategies. The first wave of nationalism, in a variety of forms, was broadly radical, anti-imperialist (at least in its anti-colonial sense) and zealous of sovereignty, albeit state sovereignty. The national project did not prove to be durable. It was defeated by the onslaught of neoliberalism, as imperialism went on the offensive with a vengeance.

Fifty years on, and after some three decades of neoliberal interregnum, the national question is making a comeback. What is the character of this new nationalism? What does it represent politically and what is its social character? Can it be compared to the first wave of nationalism? What does it portend for the future? With these questions in mind, and against the background of the first wave of nationalism, we should interrogate Sam and Samir's thesis on the national question.

Both Sam and Samir consider the agrarian question as constituting 'the central axis of the national question'. Both would agree that the national question in the era of monopoly capital has to be *per force* anti-imperialist. But when it comes to the character of the state and the forces and ideology that would advance the national question, I think that Samir is more explicit, albeit general, than Sam (Amin, 2011, 2012). Sam and Paris, in their *Introduction* to the volume *Reclaiming the Nation* (Moyo & Yeros, 2011a), in my view, do not fully characterize the agency of the national question, although in some places they attribute agency to the peasantry. They are very aware of the problematic use of the term 'people' and its related emanations of populist ideologies to drive nationalism, but posit that an 'undifferentiated view of the people may be a unifying force against a dominant power bloc...' (Moyo & Yeros, 2011a, p. 21). In the same vein, they argue that the distinction between populisms should not be between 'a populist and supposedly non-populist form of nationalism but between different forms of populism' (Moyo & Yeros, 2011a, p. 21), that is, between progressive and reactionary populism. I ask myself: what makes one form of populism progressive and another reactionary? The method of historical materialism would require us to investigate concretely the class character of populism and the historical conjuncture in which it arises to be able to call it either progressive or reactionary. Samir, on the other hand, avoids the use of the category 'populist' but instead uses the term 'popular'—*a bloc of popular classes*—to identify the drivers of what he calls the sovereign national project. This formulation is undoubtedly at a high level of abstraction, and it does not absolve us from identifying a 'bloc of popular classes' in our own concrete situations and historical conjunctures.

Similar questions arise from the way Sam and Paris characterize states in the periphery. They identify what they call ‘four trajectories’ of states. To me, they appear more like typologies than trajectories. But that is not very significant. The four categories are *fractured*, *radicalized*, *stabilized* and *occupied* states. In my view, this is more like naming a static photograph at a particular moment than analyzing a motion picture. We have to investigate the social basis of the state to be able to characterize it. We cannot fully discern the state as a terrain of political and social struggles if we adopt a structuralist view of the state, as opposed to state as a class organ. In the structuralist view, the movement from one category to another becomes mechanistic rather than dialectic predicated on the state of class struggles. Elsewhere, they state that the state in a capitalist society is an ‘autonomous actor...autonomous from the social classes that compose it’ (Moyo & Yeros, 2011a, p. 17). I find this a bit problematic. My understanding is that while under certain situations, a state may appear to rise above different factions of the ruling class and different fractions of capital in the interest of the system as a whole, it is hardly ever autonomous of the ruling class except perhaps in a crisis situation when the system itself is under threat. I point this out because it is crucial for political praxis to understand the social character of the state, in the first instance, struggles in civil society and over state power at the moment of crisis, in the second instance, so as to forge appropriate alliances and make concrete demands of the state to advance the struggle of the working people, in the third instance.

Having raised some issues in the *Introduction* by Sam and Paris to the volume *Re-claiming the Nation*, I would like to say at once that I was fascinated by their article in the same volume on Zimbabwe’s land reform (Moyo & Yeros, 2011b).

This article is a brilliant example of what a historical materialist, as opposed to a structuralist analysis would look like. The article is a close and very insightful account of the various social forces involved in the struggle for land reform, shifting alliances during the process and the eventual co-optation and capture of the process by the state representing the interests of the emergent black bourgeoisie in cahoots with the bureaucracy. The land reform movement initiated from below by the war veterans’ movement scored a major success in the first stage of land reform, that is in the stage of redistribution, but failed to generalize it and take it to a higher stage of collective organization of production because it lacked the proletarian ideology and strategy (Moyo & Yeros, 2011b, p. 93). When I read those lines, two historical analogies sprang to my mind: Lenin’s thesis on worker-peasant alliance and Mao’s conception of land reform. Let me explain.

The October Russian Revolution was a worker's revolution, not a peasant revolution. The peasantry was under socialist revolutionaries (SRs). Although the Bolsheviks forged alliance with the SRs in the initial stages, it did not last long. Lenin argued that it was decisive for the consolidation of the workers state to win over the peasantry from the bourgeois realm. Since then, the worker-peasant alliance has become axiomatic in revolutionary ideology and political praxis. In their monographs on 100 years of October, both Samir and Patnaik argue that it was the rupture in the worker-peasant alliance during the Stalin period that led to the decline and eventual fall of the revolution (Amin, 2016; Patnaik, 2016). Stalin, through his forced collectivization, alienated the peasantry. The underlying logic was the need for socialist primitive accumulation as propounded by Preobrazhensky.

Would I be right in suggesting that, in the case of Zimbabwe, the failure to win over the working class from the opposition bloc under Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was partly a reason for the failure to move to a higher stage (Moyo & Yeros, 2011b, p. 90)? The lesson perhaps is that it is not sufficient to be led by proletarian ideology. One must also have the proletariat in the revolutionary bloc.

The Chinese revolution under Mao was a peasant revolution. But it was led by a hardened Communist Party with a proletarian ideology, with some working class cadres, both rural and urban, in its ranks (Chun, 2015, p. 103). After the first stage of anti-feudal land reform that entailed fundamental land redistribution, the Party moved very quickly to the second stage of collectivization. Mao believed the peasantry created through redistribution would become the soil of the rise of a new bourgeoisie that could undermine the Party's socialist program. In fact, this had already begun to happen. Immediately after redistribution, poor peasants who had benefitted from land redistribution began to sell their plots to rich peasants and hiring themselves out as laborers (Chun, 2015, p. 115). Yet, the redistribution played a decisive role in winning over the peasantry to socialism. However, as Li Chun puts it, a revolutionary transformation 'is not complete without the subsequent steps of reorganizing the economy and society, so as to overcome scattered and secluded petty-farming and its social-structural and political-psychological ramifications (Chun, 2015, p. 114).'

In the case of Zimbabwe, we have already begun to see the recapture of the peasants by agri-business through contract farming and such other mechanisms (Yumi, 2018).

By way of conclusion, without concluding, I would like to raise a few issues for our conversation on the current resurgence of the ideologies

of nationalism and the intellectual advocacy of bringing back the ‘developmental state’ whose foremost advocate (in the good sense of the word) has been Thandika Mkandawire (2015). In the Centre, the narrow and parochial nationalisms tend towards fascism. In the Periphery, we have the emergence of demagogues and populists who, under the ideologies of nationalism and developmentalism, trample on people’s basic freedoms and rights—right to livelihoods, freedom of expression, freedom of organization and freedom from fear. In their rhetoric, they deploy anti-imperialist slogans and eclectically take some anti-imperialist measures. They have no problem in ‘bringing back the developmental state’. In fact, in some cases, they go further in their dirigiste policies than even the first generation nationalists. They have no qualms in deploying parochial ethnic and religious ideologies. They speak in the name of ‘the poor’ and privilege God. The first generation nationalists were popular but not populists. They sought legitimacy in their people. Some far-sighted nationalists like Nyerere scrupulously refused to ethicize politics and painstakingly observed the separation between state and religion. The current breed of ‘nationalists’ do not have such sensitivities. They are populist, not popular. They seek legitimacy from gods and ancestors, not from their people. My question therefore is—and I don’t have a clear answer—how does one engage with this new wave of nationalism? ‘What is required *once again*’, Sam and Paris suggest, ‘is a *critical engagement* with nationalism—that is, neither an *uncritical engagement*, nor a *critical disengagement*’ (Moyo & Yeros, 2011a, p. 19). I presume by the use of the phrase ‘once again’ they mean engagement with the current wave of nationalism. Their rule of engagement, I guess, worked and could work well with the first wave of nationalism. Is it workable in the current wave without the progressive left being subsumed by demagogy and, in the long run, discredited in the eyes of the people?

Needless to say, these are questions of political praxis, but pointers to their answer may be found in how we characterize ‘new nationalisms’. I will not attempt to do that here except to suggest (although it needs further research and reflection) that the social base of these new nationalisms, at least in Africa, is the middle and lower petty-bourgeoisies who live under constant fear of being casualized, semi-proletarianized or lumpenized, or becoming precariats by the onslaught of neoliberalism. In more than one way, therefore, ‘new nationalisms’, both in the Centre and the Periphery, are a backlash to neoliberalism gone wild.

Returning to the rules of engagement (if I may use that phrase) with the current wave of nationalism, I tentatively suggest that we have to develop an alternative, counter-hegemonic project from whose standpoint

we can crystallize the rules of critical, and I would add, tactical engagement. Samir Amin's (2011) formulation of a sovereign national and popular project with socialist-orientation, I believe, is a sound point of departure (and I would suggest we conceive this as a Pan-Africanist Project.).<sup>3</sup>

Borrowing from my article that I wrote over 20 years ago commemorating the 75th birthday of Mwalimu Nyerere, I flesh out Samir's alternative. I argued then that there was a need of constructing a new 'national consensus' after the defeat of the first postcolonial national consensus. I called this a 'new democratic consensus'. Today, I would call it a 'new democratic national project'. It will be based on three cornerstones: *popular livelihoods*, *popular participation* and *popular power*. It is popular in two senses: (a) it is anti-imperialist and (b) it is based on a bloc of popular classes. Popular classes, or masses, are constituted by 'land based producer classes and the urban poor together with lower middle classes' (Shivji, 2000, p. 32). This was the formulation then. Today, borrowing Sam's formulation, we would say proletarianized and semi-proletarianized urban and rural working people.

*Popular participation* was meant to interrogate the limits of parliamentary and party politics and rethink the institutions of the state. The idea was to turn on its head the notions of liberal ideologies and posit a new mode of politics. 'Politics is not simply a politics of (state) power but rather the power of politics. This is where the masses are' (Shivji, 2000, p. 33). *Popular power* was meant to critique the constructions of the liberal, state-based notions such as separation of politics and economics, separation between state and civil society and separation of power among the three branches of the state. I proposed the restructuring of the state rooted in village and neighborhoods. I also suggested moving away from the concept of state sovereignty to people's sovereignty. Does this have some resonance with the construction of an alternative national democratic project with socialist-orientation? Would it help us to avoid 'the pitfalls of new nationalism and developmentalism'? These are the questions for our conversation, and some of the answers can only be found in political practice and struggles.

Let me end once again by paying my unflinching tribute to our comrades Sam and Samir. I have learnt a lot from them, not least the 'rule of engagement' with comrades. Sam taught by practice that the rule of engagement with comrades should be emotionally sensitive, socially comradely and politically committed to the working people. I have tried to apply that rule in this lecture, as I engaged with Sam and Samir. If I have succeeded, credit goes to Sam. If I have failed, responsibility is mine.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

### Notes

1. This second Sam Moyo Lecture was delivered in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 22 January 2019, during the Annual Agrarian Summer School organized by The Sam Moyo African Institute for Agrarian Studies and the Agrarian South Network.
2. This refers to women who sell food to workers at various sites in urban and semi-urban areas in Tanzania.
3. I have no time to work this out here, but see Shivji (2019, pp. 257–269).

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