

ideologies; there were weakly developed markets, and no relevant political experience, since Africans, and especially nationalists, had been marginalized by colonial rulers; and yet they inherited a monopoly of power that was, of its nature, corrupting. What were leaders to do? In answering this conundrum Aseka consults a number of political philosophers, including Althusser, Gramsci, Hegel, Heidegger, Kant and Nietzsche and, from their various wisdoms distils the vital importance of maturity and integrity in leadership, the only intelligible and politically plangent embodiment of ideologies able to energize and inspire coherent and responsible political communities out of the unpromising historical material left behind by British imperialism. Only one postcolonial leader, Nyerere, had any inkling of the immensity of the task and the intellect to address it. But, Maseka argues, that was not enough to transform Tanzania. Indeed Nyerere's very intellectual certainty was Tanzania's undoing: such was his towering stature that no other intellectual projects had any hope of contesting the President's or of subjecting it to the criticism that no political project can do without. Tanzania almost died from good intentions. Neither Obote nor Kenyatta, however, were able to pursue such good intentions, nor their successors. It was not that they were entirely without transformational vision but that they got bogged down in the merely transactional politics by which they survived the maze of intrigue and corruption to which they were condemned by the competitive politics of ethnicity. As for Zanzibar, that was ethnicity with racial barbs added.

It is this shared impasse that leads Aseka to stress the necessity of moral integrity in a leadership that is sufficiently convinced of the managerial efficiency of popular involvement and freedom of expression for its ideological vision to liberate rather than suffocate creative energy. Moreover, there has to be popular involvement of specific sorts, especially of women with subversive notions of what constitutes liberty, so as to cross-cut the otherwise deadly influence of politically involved ethnicity that has caused such strife in Uganda and such futility in Kenya. It is in relation to the gender implications of his focus on the unrealized creativity of ideologically visionary leadership that Aseka reflects most interestingly on what is needed in order to practise transformational politics. To what other communities of involvement, and with what particular visions, can leaders appeal who wish to break out of the currently unproductive politics of contemporary East Africa? I would have liked Aseka to have spent rather more time in pursuing such questions, the answers to which would I think be found more in his own acute observation and less in the alleged wisdom of Althusser and his like.

Trinity College, Cambridge

JOHN LONSDALE

THE PRIVATE SPHERE IN TANZANIA

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A History of the Excluded: Making Family a Refuge from State in Twentieth-Century Tanzania. By JAMES L. GIBLIN. Oxford: James Currey, 2005. Pp. xii + 304. £50 (ISBN 0-85255-467-2); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-85255-466-4).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, family, kinship, local history, nationalism, state.

The most innovative research on modern African history of late has been that which seeks more meaningful units of analysis to challenge or reframe the seemingly inevitable categories of state, nation, ethnicity and race. Whether it is

recasting vast geographies around shared practices of public healing or vampire beliefs, or exposing the workings of transnational networks to illustrate how notions of citizenship and sovereignty take shape, these efforts all endeavour to free the history of social units small and large from the tyranny of nation-state teleology. James Giblin joins this effort by tackling one of Africa's strongest and most enduring nationalist projects in the case of Tanzania through the lens of a local kinship study with broad theoretical ambitions. The result raises fundamental questions about the thinness of state-centred historical consciousness as well as the paradoxically individualistic nature of kinship.

A History of the Excluded is at one level a straightforward monographic social history of the Njombe area in southwestern Tanzania. Politically decentralized, Njombe suffered at the hands of neighbouring Hehe and Ngoni invaders during the nineteenth century, served as a battlefield for Germans, their allies and their enemies around the turn of the twentieth century, and then functioned primarily as a labour exporter within the British colonial economy. The book traces the experience of Njombe's 'colonial generation' through conventional themes of marriage practice, indirect rule, labour migration, commercial farming, land conflict, the growth of Christianity, ethnic and nationalist politics, and disappointment with the postcolonial state. But the core argument of the book stems from the author's own dissatisfaction with state-centred narratives that meant little or nothing to the people he interviewed. Taking inspiration from subaltern studies generally and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* in particular, Giblin draws a distinction between the 'analytical'-prioritizing narratives of the state on the one hand, and 'affective' narratives of family on the other. People in Njombe overwhelmingly used this latter device to express their understandings of history, having felt excluded from the sort of knowledge necessary to articulate the state-centred narratives dear to professional historians. The ubiquity of this language of kinship leads Giblin to propose the existence of an enduring 'private sphere' of family that survived the hegemonic project of colonial and postcolonial state authority, serving as a haven from state predation while spurring on individuals to overcome their colonial exclusion through improvement and travel. The 'private sphere' here is specifically colonial in that it was a response to the severing of ties between households on the one hand and patronage networks and political hierarchies on the other as colonial bureaucratic structures replaced the latter. Giblin makes clear that the private sphere of family should not be understood as another collective like tribe or class, and is keen to avoid any recourse to a language of class – which, he argues, has flattened African historiography's understanding of the nature of familial patriarchal authority. Kinship, Giblin argues, was far from 'a source of ascribed roles that leave little room for individuality', but instead enabled individuals to gain 'a consciousness of self that was distinct from any relationship or group identity' (p. 12). The private family sphere was no communal realm of virtue 'ruled by altruism and love', but instead a 'sphere of expectations, disappointments, critique, and moral judgement' (p. 28). Armed with these insights, Giblin reconstructs Njombe's history through a formidable collection of oral and archival research, with local story-telling serving as the point of departure. The author enjoys the inestimable advantage of being a member (through marriage) of much of the family that he studies, and he credits his wife, Blandina Kaduma Giblin, for providing the critical personal and linguistic link between himself and the stories told by Njombe villagers. In the hands of local story-tellers, Maji Maji is no longer the singular anti-colonial uprising so prominent in Tanzania's nationalist historiography, but rather merely one chapter in a long history of regional warfare lasting from 1860 to 1918 remembered principally through the idiom of family obligation. Two chapters that deal explicitly with kinship

practice argue that British indirect rule resulted in quite shallow roots for chiefly patriarchal authority because of the unbridgeable gap between the normative chiefly discourse of territory-bound patrilineal clans and the messy lived experience of people who relied upon overlapping patrilineal and matrilineal relations, where 'shared interests and outlook were as important as descent in shaping family relations' (p. 66). Women moderated their vulnerability to male authority through the strategy of cousin marriage, which strengthened matrilineal ties and lessened bridewealth demands. Giblin argues that the cumulative effect of this 'constant undercutting of ideological theory by social practice distanced the subalterns from the state, its normative theories and its historical narratives' (p. 102).

The realm of kinship provided both a refuge and a moral compass for Njombe villagers navigating a highly unfavourable British colonial economy. Anywhere from a fifth to a half of Njombe's adult male population were away at any given time working as migrant labourers between the 1920s and 1960s, with many travelling to the sisal estates of Tanga. There they either succeeded through hard work, savvy and self-denial to return to Njombe with wealth, an act captured in the Ki-Bena word *kupagala*, or they drowned in the sea of temptation of the Swahili coast, leaving wives and children back home to fend for themselves. Giblin is particularly sensitive to the quandaries and strategies of Njombe women who faced up to their vulnerability to abandonment by migrant husbands through maintaining family farms, pioneering the local flour trade, and in one extraordinary case travelling to Tanga dressed as a man to seek out a wayward husband. Although resistant to the language of class when discussing the private family sphere, Giblin does identify two overlapping classes – the undercapitalized but ambitious male commercial farmers and traders seeking autonomy from colonial restrictions and Indian creditors – as the local motor of post-war agricultural and political change. An identifiable group of commercial farmers in Njombe emerged in the 1940s by seizing often peculiar market opportunities (such as demand for tomatoes at a nearby wartime prison for Poles), adopting plough technology, and exercising acumen in transactions involving newly scarce land. Excluded from networks of credit and wholesale goods, Njombe's African traders largely abandoned the sphere of state control and instead thrived in the 'shadow economy' of parallel markets by minimizing their need for capital and relying on family relationships to organize labour and business. The late colonial government, chiefs and outsider TANU politicians all competed for the political loyalty of these commercial classes in the 1950s, but all also proved alien and tone-deaf to the private sphere of authority. After independence, TANU turned particularly hostile towards the private family sphere and its shadow economy. The new government understood such practices as a moral failing of individualism left over from Western colonial corruption, and pursued its struggle against the private sphere through the nationalist takeover of cooperatives and crop marketing. Such political philosophy fundamentally mistook the origin and nature of the private family sphere in Njombe, and subsequent policies resulted in a startling depth of local hostility towards TANU that led to an even greater reliance upon parallel markets, effectively dooming *ujamaa* socialism in this corner of Tanzania.

Amidst all this rich social history, the main contribution of *A History of the Excluded* is its notion of the private family sphere, which accounts for shifts and continuities in local idioms of moral obligation and accountability while also explaining the development of a marginal political economy, in particular the social origins of one segment of Tanzania's famed 'uncaptured peasantry'. Giblin's reluctance to privilege theory over evidence is admirable for the most part, though as a result the private family sphere seems at times more a heuristic device than an

ontological entity, particularly as the author does not really broach a discussion about the meaning and applicability of its better-known obverse, the public sphere, in colonial Africa. The reader is also left to wonder what comparative usages the private sphere might have for other regions in Tanzania and Africa more generally, for Giblin does not wander beyond the monographic task at hand. In particular, in what ways is the distinction between public and private spheres malleable to the persistent privatization and informalization of African economies? Such a question seems all the more pressing in light of this wonderful book.

School of Oriental and African Studies, London

JAMES R. BRENNAN

COLONIAL NOTIONS OF URBAN ORDER IN DAR ES SALAAM

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African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime & Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam.

By ANDREW BURTON. Oxford: James Currey; Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota; Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2005. Published in association with The British Institute in Eastern Africa. Pp. xviii + 301. £50 (ISBN 0-8214-1635-9); £16.95, paperback (ISBN 0-8214-1636-7).

KEY WORDS: Tanzania, class, colonial policy, urban.

Dar es Salaam has been oddly neglected in the growing literature on African urban history, lacking the substantial monographs that have been written on Nairobi and Mombasa. That is now changing, however, with a spate of dissertations and journal articles by a younger generation of scholars. Of this newer scholarship, *African Underclass* is the first book-length study to be published in English. Burton focuses on urban policy during the British period, in particular the persistent attempts to impose colonial order on townspeople who just as persistently refused to be controlled. Indeed, as Burton tells us, before the Second World War policy-makers were uncomfortable with the very idea of an African urban population. Convinced by official ideology and political temperament that Africans belonged naturally in the countryside, colonial thinkers slotted any who turned up in town into the catch-all category of 'detribalized natives'. Such assumptions placed serious limits on officials' knowledge of what was going on in the town, which, combined with a lack of resources and political will, only exacerbated their inability to craft effective policies of control. Their thinking began to change in the 1940s, however, as part of an overall policy shift away from a reliance on migrant labor and indirect rule and towards labor stabilization and the encouragement of limited local self-government. Planners and administrators now envisioned a place for urban Africans – but only for a narrowly defined stratum which was steadily employed in respectable work and whose embrace of colonial modernity rendered them fit to participate in the new institutions of non-tribal colonial politics. Henceforth urban planners aimed their anxieties not at all 'detribalized natives' but only at the 'spivs', 'loafers' and 'undesirables' who did not fit into their neatly imagined categories.

This greater precision (such as it was) prompted administrators to intervene more aggressively in town life, thus producing the irony at the core of Burton's analysis: government acknowledgement that Africans could play a legitimate role in the city was accompanied by a determination to control their presence more