

## SUNG AND UNSUNG: MUSICAL REFLECTIONS ON TANZANIAN POSTSOCIALISMS

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On 14 October 1999, Julius Kambarage Nyerere (affectionately known as *Mwalimu*, or ‘teacher’) died of leukaemia in a London hospital. The Tanzanian government announced a period of national mourning, and, after his body was returned to Tanzania, hundreds of thousands of people thronged the National Stadium in Dar es Salaam to view their former president and pay their final respects. At the state funeral, President Benjamin Mkapa extolled Nyerere’s commitment to African liberation and unity, his advocacy on behalf of refugees and the poor, his ‘vision of equality and respect across racial, religious, tribal and gender divides’ and his ‘pursuit of greater democracy on a global scale, and the sovereign equality of nations’. Towards the end of his speech, President Mkapa declared:

My Fellow Citizens, this is a sad occasion. But I am sure if Mwalimu could speak to us now, he would be exhorting us to pick up his mantle and carry on the struggle against poverty, against injustice, against bigotry. He would exhort us, as he always did in his lifetime, to cherish and protect the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar. He would ask us to be on guard against any divisive tendencies. He would urge us to move much more quickly to integrate African economies and promote African unity. He would appeal for collective South–South self-reliance. (Mkapa 1999)

‘Self-reliance’ is the only term in Mkapa’s entire address that can be directly linked to *Ujamaa* socialism, which, elsewhere in the world, is virtually synonymous with the name ‘Nyerere’. Given the extent to which socialist policy and philosophy dominated the labours of this complex figure, it is a silence that echoes loudly. By contrast, international coverage of his death drew clear connections between the man and his socialist ‘mission’:

*Julius Nyerere of Tanzania Dies; Preached African Socialism to the World:* ‘Julius K. Nyerere, the founding father of Tanzania who used East Africa as a pulpit from which to spread his socialist philosophy worldwide, died yesterday in London ...’ (*The New York Times*, 15 October 1999)

*Julius Nyerere – a giant of the African independence struggle, he retained his worldwide moral authority even after his vision of rural socialism faltered:* ‘In his

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heyday as president of Tanzania – which he ruled from 1961 to 1985 – Julius Nyerere, who has died from leukaemia aged 77, was lionised by the liberal left of the world for his impassioned advocacy of his style of African socialism, but mauled by his critics as a priggish autocrat, whose idealism failed to deliver prosperity to his people ...’ (*The Guardian*, 15 October 1999)

*Julius Nyerere*: ‘He gave Tanzania stability and unity. Under his one-party rule it was politically peaceful and it was spared civil war. His social experiments, on the other hand, drove the country towards economic ruin ...’ (*The Economist*, 23 October 1999)

This curious disconnection between internal and international recollections of the man and his legacy re-emerges in another venue. Once news of Nyerere’s passing reached Tanzania, musicians across the country began composing songs of lamentation (*nyimbo za maombolezo*) that mourned his passing and assessed his contribution to the nation. Even garnering mention in the British media (‘Songs of Grief for Tanzania’s Founder’, *BBC News*, 14 October 1999), these songs are similarly silent on socialism. In song after song, peace, unity, solidarity, good judgement, goodwill, the union with Zanzibar and the elimination of ethnic and religious divisiveness (*ukabila* and *udini*) are deemed Nyerere’s greatest gifts to the nation. But in song after song, no mention is made of *Ujamaa*.

In this article, I review a collection of over 100 *nyimbo za maombolezo* and analyse them in relation to the history and experiences of Tanzanian socialisms and postsocialisms. Competing rhetorics, as evidenced above, are at play in public representations of ‘Father of the Nation’ Julius Nyerere and, by extension, the Tanzanian nation. Taking my cue from Burawoy and Verdery (1999: 2–3), I am concerned, in part, with how *time* is implicated in processes of socialist and postsocialist transformation. How are the various periods of Tanzanian history – divided, for the purposes of this article, into the pre-socialist, socialist and postsocialist eras – materially, ideologically and rhetorically related to each other? A second concern relates to *space*. In what ways have experiences and interpretations of socialism/postsocialism varied in the two primary sites that comprise Tanzania – namely the mainland (former Tanganyika) and Zanzibar?<sup>1</sup> By taking Zanzibar into account, this study forces a rethinking of ‘Tanzanian socialism’, since existing studies typically focus only on the ‘African socialism’ promulgated by Nyerere and overlook the more Eastern European-influenced socialist programme pursued in Zanzibar. Finally, in taking these lamentation songs as locally produced versions of history and national narrative, I explore why it is that socialism has been written (or rather sung) out of existence. To build my case, I divide this article into four sections: first, a brief overview of *Ujamaa* socialism; second, a parallel overview

<sup>1</sup> The United Republic of Tanzania was formed in April 1964 from the merger of the Republic of Tanganyika (independent in 1961) and the People’s Republic of Zanzibar (independent in 1963).

of Zanzibari socialism; third, a discussion of contemporary postsocialist transformation to situate the songs; and fourth, analysis of *nyimbo za maombolezo*.<sup>2</sup>

#### TANZANIAN SOCIALISMS: MAINLAND

An extensive literature exists analysing Nyerere's *Ujamaa* socialism, through both celebratory and critical lenses. It is rare indeed to find a scholarly book or article about Tanzania that does not reference *Ujamaa*, so intertwined is the discourse on Tanzania with that of this socialist programme. In '*Ujamaa – the basis of African socialism*' (1968a [1962]), published the year after Julius Nyerere and his TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) party secured Tanganyikan independence, Nyerere argued that socialism was inherent in African ways of life. For evidence, he pointed to local models of land tenure based on usufruct rights, modes of decision-making based on consensus, the general absence of class structure, and communal living in extended families. He thus translated 'traditional communalism' into socialist terms, thereby indigenizing socialism and denying it status as a foreign political ideology. Distinguishing this from Marxist-Leninist 'scientific socialism', which assumed a background of class struggle and political revolution, he explained that

*'Ujamaa'*, then, or 'Familyhood', describes our socialism. It is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of the exploitation of man by man; and it is equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism, which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man. (Nyerere 1968a: 12)

Although clearly committed to socialist philosophy early on, Nyerere did not institute socialism as government policy until February 1967 with the Arusha Declaration, in which the government nationalized, on behalf of Tanzanian peasants and workers, the principal means of production and exchange.<sup>3</sup> The Arusha Declaration included a stringent (and ultimately highly unpopular) 'Leadership Code', which prohibited all TANU members and civil servants from receiving two or more salaries, participating in privately owned enterprises, or renting out properties. It was accompanied by a call to youth to form 'Green Guards' (along the lines of Mao's 'Red Guards') to defend the Arusha Declaration and secure the nation against 'criminal' activity. Finally, it placed a heavy emphasis on the concept of 'self-reliance' (*kujitegemea*).

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<sup>2</sup> Data on which this article is based were collected during multiple periods of fieldwork in Tanzania and Zanzibar between 1989 and 2004, including a continuous three-year residence from 1992 to 1995.

<sup>3</sup> These included: land; forests; mineral resources; water; oil and electricity; communications; transport; banks; insurance; import and export trade; wholesale business; steel, car, cement, fertilizer, arms, machinery, food, and textile industries; rental income properties; and foreign-owned plantations.

By this time, Tanzania was already a single-party state.<sup>4</sup> The Party structure paralleled government structure at the regional, district and village levels down to the ten-house cell system (introduced in 1964; see Bienen 1970; Barkan et al. 1998: 13). Ten-house cell leaders, responsible for mobilizing local development initiatives, were expected to be members of TANU, as were leaders at all subsequent levels. This paralleled the consolidation of party and government in China, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (Barkan 1994: 6). For the first decade after independence, TANU membership was open to all peasants and workers, and it held competitive elections in which any member could run. But beginning in the early 1970s, it ceased to be a mass movement; only those who underwent a course of ideological training were eligible for membership, thus creating a vanguard party not unlike those in other parts of the socialist world (Nyalali 1995; cited in Widner 2001: 144).

Affiliated with the Fabian Society when studying at Edinburgh University, Nyerere believed that socialism need not be predicated upon revolution, class struggle and violence. This was a major point on which he disagreed with doctrinaire socialism. For Nyerere, the material and social conditions in Tanganyika at the time of independence – specifically, its 120 ethnic groups kept underdeveloped and fractured by colonial divide-and-rule policies – required a form of socialism that would not exacerbate existing divisions but would instead cultivate national unity. Secondly, Nyerere prioritized agriculture and the rural peasant over industry and the urban worker – a choice that aligned him more with the Chinese approach to socialism. While his policies did not, in fact, always favour agriculture,<sup>5</sup> Nyerere's rhetorical rejection of industrial revolution and class struggle as necessary prerequisites to socialist development, together with his insistence that peasant production offered a viable alternative, evoked the ire and disdain of Marxists.<sup>6</sup>

*Ujamaa* socialism, thirdly, deviated from both Marxist-Leninist and Maoist socialisms in its rhetoric of return – return to the family-based communalism of what Nyerere construed as a proto-socialist African past. 'The traditional African family lived according to the basic principles of *Ujamaa* ... They lived together and they worked together; and the result of their joint labour was the property of the family as

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<sup>4</sup> This is perhaps misleading in that there were officially two parties – TANU on the Tanzanian mainland, and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) in Zanzibar – until 1977, when TANU and ASP merged to form today's ruling party Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM, or 'Revolutionary Party').

<sup>5</sup> Agriculture was taxed heavily to develop selected 'import substitution' industries and pursue social agendas like universal education and healthcare. Forced villageization would prove disastrous.

<sup>6</sup> Soviet observers, for example, refused to consider Tanzania a socialist state, dismissively labelling it a country with 'socialist orientation' or as one pursuing 'non-capitalist' development. See Gromyko 1983, 1984; Sosna 1983; Papp 1985; also Potekhin 1964; Klinghoffer 1969; Andreyev 1977; Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences 1978, 1979; Gorman 1984; Valkenier 1986.

a whole' (Nyerere 1968b: 106). Nyerere sought to build upon what he identified as familial socialist practice and nurture this into village and national socialist practice. Problems lay, however, in the fact that Tanganyika was a country of some 12,000,000 people spread across 364,000 square miles in scattered individual holdings. This spawned *Ujamaa* villageization – which would become one of the largest forced resettlement schemes in Africa, with some 10,000,000 people moved into state-designed villages.

Two additional features merit attention. Nyerere (a devout Catholic) rejected the proposition that socialist thought and religious belief are fundamentally incompatible. With Muslims and Christians each constituting 40 per cent of the population and adherents of indigenous African religions the remaining 20 per cent, Tanzanians as a whole are religious, and Nyerere recognized that a secularist (let alone atheist) socialism would have little chance of success in his country. Finally, as one of the founders of the Organization of African Unity (OAU, established 1963) and chairman of the OAU Liberation Committee (based in Dar es Salaam), Nyerere was passionately committed to pan-Africanism and the liberation of all Africa.<sup>7</sup> Anti-colonial struggles to the south of Tanzania continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s in Portuguese-ruled Mozambique and Angola, in white-settler-ruled Zimbabwe and against apartheid in South Africa and Namibia. Nyerere offered refuge and support to all these liberation movements, turning Dar es Salaam into 'a virtual mecca for African revolutionaries and political activists from abroad' (Shiner 1997: A16), including Malcolm X, Walter Rodney and Che Guevara. Support (military and financial) was provided to the ANC, FRELIMO and SWAPO; because these movements all embraced one version or other of socialist ideology, anti-colonialist agendas became conflated with those of socialist internationalism.<sup>8</sup>

Julius Nyerere led Tanzania in an official capacity for over twenty years. He positioned the *Ujamaa* programme in opposition to both Western capitalism/individualism and doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist socialism. He put into practice an ambitious range of socialist policies: nationalization of major industries, institution of single-party rule, expansion of social services (accompanied by expansion of the civil service), enforcement of a leadership code that required socialist morality of the country's leaders, communal villageization and policies requiring female representation in government bodies as part of a broader commitment to gender equity. Most accounts agree that the 1970s were successful years for Tanzanian socialism (McHenry 1994: 226). Economic indicators showed slow but steady growth, Tanzania boasted the highest primary-school enrolments in Africa (93 per cent in

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<sup>7</sup> He also served as chairman of the Organization of Front Line States and, in 1974, hosted in Tanzania the sixth Pan-African Congress. This was the first of the Pan-African Congresses to take place in Africa.

<sup>8</sup> As a sign of their continued allegiance to each other, to Africa and to socialist brotherhood, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and South Africa today all share the same national anthem, however with different lyrics.

1980; Gibbon 1995: 15), and free healthcare was available throughout the country. Contrary to what one might expect, the Arusha Declaration did not have a negative impact on Western aid flows; the country, in fact, attracted more foreign aid than almost any other African country because its version of socialism was somehow palatable to Western donors while still being socialist enough to attract Eastern donors (Okoko 1987; Rugumamu 1997; Weeks et al. 2002).

#### TANZANIAN SOCIALISMS: ZANZIBAR

Just as the United Republic of Tanzania consists of two formerly independent nations, so too were there two socialist programmes pursued quite independently of each other on the mainland and in Zanzibar. Zanzibar's experience with socialism rarely receives attention despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that it resembled much more closely socialist programmes pursued in Eastern Europe. The exceptionalism attached to Nyerere's *Ujamaa* and its self-proclaimed efforts to create something new as an African alternative to Marxist or Maoist socialisms captured most of the limelight, leaving Zanzibar to pursue its socialist agenda relatively undisturbed. Heavily enforced restrictions on foreign journalists, scholars and tourists, together with prohibitions on Zanzibari emigration, assisted in isolating Zanzibar from world attention, despite occasional leaked reports of forced marriages and summary executions.

As Nyerere laboured to implement socialist policy and instil socialist attitudes according to his Africanist model, his counterpart in Zanzibar, Abeid Karume (President of Zanzibar and First Vice-President of Tanzania after the Union), pursued an altogether different socialism. Karume came to power following the January 1964 Revolution, a violent revolution that overthrew a newly installed (as of December 1963) independent government under Sultan Jamshid Abdullah (the latest in a long line of Omani sultans) and the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP). Scholars have examined the revolution, its causes and its effects (Lofchie 1965; Bennett 1978; Martin 1978; Clayton 1981; Burgess 2001; Petterson 2002), but there remain many unanswered questions. Karume's role in the revolution, or lack thereof, lies among these questions, but he nevertheless wasted no time upon assuming the presidency in crediting himself and his party, the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), with its success. Although Nyerere had played an important role in the creation of the ASP (in 1957) and nurtured strong ties between the ASP and TANU (Plate 1), it was not his influence that led the post-revolutionary Zanzibar government to adopt a socialist platform.

In May 1963, seven months before independence, a split occurred in the ZNP leadership resulting in the formation of a new party, the Umma Party. Led by the ZNP's former general secretary, Abdulrahman Mohamed 'Babu', the Umma Party advocated a radical socialist agenda. Babu, a Zanzibari of Arab-Comorian descent who had studied at Makerere University and worked as a journalist in London, had





PLATE 1 Julius Nyerere with founding members of the ASP (AV48/1; courtesy of the Zanzibar National Archives)

emerged as leader of a leftist contingent within the ZNP. He espoused Marxist philosophy, developed strong ties to international labour movements, spent several months in China and helped secure hundreds of scholarships for Zanzibari youth to study in socialist countries, including China, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Albania, Korea, Romania and Cuba.<sup>9</sup> Upon leaving the ZNP, the Umma Party threw its support behind the ASP, and, after the revolution, Karume rewarded Babu by naming him Minister for Defence and External Affairs. In that capacity, Babu actively nurtured Chinese and Eastern Bloc affiliations (Plate 2). These activities greatly alarmed British and American intelligence, who feared that Zanzibar was fast developing into a base for the spread of communism in Africa.

As on the mainland, Zanzibar's socialist programme adopted the term *Ujamaa*, and it too referenced a mythic past when people lived a harmonious, cooperative existence. Although the Afro-Shirazi Party claimed that the 1964 revolution had restored *Ujamaa* to Zanzibar, few would consider the Karume years (1964–72) a time of peace and harmony. The fact of the revolution (in which hundreds, if not thousands, lost their lives) allowed Zanzibar the theoretical possibility of pursuing 'scientific' socialism – an option precluded on the mainland due to its peaceful transition to socialism. Yet fears of counter-revolution – from the Umma Party or pro-Sultan Arab

<sup>9</sup> Ali Sultan Issa, interview with author, 4 June 2004. Also Martin 1978: 123.



PLATE 2 Abeid Karume with Yugoslavian Premier Tito at airport, 1970 (AV48/30; courtesy of the Zanzibar National Archives)

nationalists – haunted Karume and his cabinet. Their solution was to develop, with East German assistance, a surveillance state wherein ‘Africans spied on other Africans ... and informers were everywhere. Mail was opened, phones tapped, and people were followed’ (Martin 1978: 63). Random arrests, imprisonments, trials without judges or juries, and summary executions were the order of the day.

Those who could escape did so. An estimated 10,000 people fled the islands within the revolution’s first decade (Burgess 2001: 333) in addition to the flight of virtually all Europeans (roughly 500 at the time of the revolution) and a majority of the Asians (who had numbered 20,000 at independence). These departures left vacuums in the skilled labour force that socialist states were only too happy to fill. According to one source:

By the late 1960s, there were 700 Chinese, 50 Russians and 200 East Germans resident in Zanzibar. The Chinese served as medical doctors, technicians, military advisers and agricultural experts. The Russians worked mostly in the armed forces with equipment they gave to the government, while the East Germans took over security and helped to teach courses in secondary schools. Additionally four Cuban and six Bulgarian doctors came to Zanzibar. (Martin 1978: 60)

As on the mainland, the government nationalized all land and confiscated most businesses, houses, buildings, farms and productive





PLATE 3 Karume looking at photos of Lenin and other famous leaders at Beit al-Ajaib (AV48/59; courtesy of the Zanzibar National Archives)

clove and coconut trees. All schools were nationalized,<sup>10</sup> all trade unions and political parties other than the ASP were banned (Table 1), and, with the assistance once again of East Germany, modernist high-rise housing blocks were built. Desires to make manifest in architecture, monuments and industrial production a socialist aesthetic of progress consumed public funds and required the deployment of ‘volunteer’ labour forces. ‘Voluntary’ labour for ‘nation-building projects’, such as work on the modern Michenzani flats pictured in Plate 4, was demanded of all adult males aged from 18 to 50, and each branch of the ASP Youth League was required to produce twenty ‘volunteers’ per day. For the building projects, members of the East German youth league, the *Freie Deutsche Jugend*, trained volunteers in carpentry, electrical work and construction (Burgess 2001: 288–9).

Plate 4 presents a very telling snapshot of Zanzibar under Karume. Foreign visitors grace the foreground of the image, which otherwise focuses on the unfinished Michenzani flats. Banners adorn the building announcing Karume’s educational philosophy: *Tumesoma hatukutambua. Tumejifunza tumejua*, ‘When we went to school, but did not understand. When we taught ourselves, then we knew.’ The

<sup>10</sup> *Zanzibar Gazette*, special issue, no. 4,362, 1 July 1964.



PLATE 4 Michenzani modern flats under construction (AV48/314; courtesy of the Zanzibar National Archives)

other banners in the photo proclaim standard socialist truisms: *Umoja wetu ndio mafanikio yetu* ('Our unity is our success') and *Umoja wetu ndio nguvu zetu* ('Our unity is our strength'). As a man with very little formal education, who acquired most of his knowledge of the world during his twenty years as a merchant seaman, Karume posed quite a contrast to the highly educated Nyerere. As the first slogan intimates, Karume was no fan of formal education. Most likely, a sense of insecurity about his own educational background combined with a deep distrust of intellectuals (and their counter-revolutionary

TABLE 1 *Dissolved trade unions, Zanzibar and Pemba, 1964*<sup>11</sup>

<i>Union</i>	<i>Date Dissolved</i>
1. Government Teachers Union	25 April
2. Masonry, Wood and Allied Workers Union	25 April
3. Zanzibar Electricity Board Workers Union	30 April
4. Printing Press and Allied Workers Union	22 May
5. Boat Builders Union	21 May
6. Zanzibar Customs Union	9 June
7. Smith, MacKenzie Zanzibar Staff Union	26 June
8. Zanzibar and Pemba Civil Workers Union	16 July
9. Zanzibar Plantations and Allied Workers Union	16 July
10. Zanzibar Wharfage Employees Union	16 July
11. Zanzibar and Pemba Painters Union	16 July
12. Pemba Born Civil Servants	16 July
13. Zanzibar and Pemba Clove Growers Association Workers Union	16 July
14. Hotel, Domestic and Allied Workers Union	16 July
15. Metal, Engineering and Allied Workers Union	16 July
16. Pemba Union of Public Employees	16 July
17. Health Workers Union	16 July
18. Maritime and Allied Workers Union	16 July
19. Pemba PWD Workers Union	16 July
20. Zanzibar Seamen's Union	16 July
21. Zanzibar and Pemba Building and Construction Workers Union	16 July
22. Agricultural and Allied Workers Union	16 July
23. Medical Workers Union	16 July
24. Zanzibar and Pemba Dock Workers and Stevedores Union	16 July
25. Zanzibar Broadcasting Corporation Staff Union	16 July
26. Twentseche Overseas Trading Company, Ltd., Staff Union	16 July
27. Zanzibar and Pemba Banks Employees Union	16 July
28. Oil and Soap Manufacturers Association	16 July

potential) led him to actively undermine education. After banning the Government Teachers Union (the first union to be dissolved; see Table 1), and nationalizing all the schools, Karume so modified the curriculum – by including heavy doses of government propaganda and ideological training – that Zanzibar's schools lost their overseas accreditation. 'Students spent much of their time studying the speeches of Karume, marching, listening to army officials describe the history of the ASP, or memorizing and reciting the names of the thirty-two members of the Revolutionary Council' (Burgess 2001: 328). Not surprisingly, the number of students pursuing overseas degrees fell

<sup>11</sup> Data compiled from announcements published in the *Zanzibar Gazette*, 2 May 1964 to 25 July 1964.

dramatically. Compared to the hundreds on foreign scholarships in the early 1960s, between 1968 and 1972 scarcely half a dozen Zanzibar students were sent to overseas universities (Martin 1978: 123).

As with *Ujamaa* on the mainland, the idiom of 'family' was heavily employed in Zanzibari national narratives. Karume frequently employed the categories 'elders' and 'youth' to refer to government elites on the one hand, and citizens on the other, irrespective of age. As Burgess describes in his study of youth and political mobilization in Zanzibar, this evoked traditional authority structures in which elders controlled the labour and movements of youth (Burgess 2001: 308–09). It therefore provided rhetorical rationale for the 'voluntary' labour requirements that, as already mentioned, were orchestrated by the ASP Youth League. Honorifics employing the family idiom were frequently applied to Karume as they were to Nyerere, such as 'Father of the People' and 'Father of the Nation'. And, in another similarity to the mainland, religion, specifically Islam, was promoted in Zanzibar to the extent of introducing Islamic law into the court system, but only in certain domains like family law.

The economic state of Zanzibar under socialism was quite contradictory. On the one hand, producers of cloves, the number one export, received less than they ever had for their produce, with the government paying a paltry 12 per cent of the market rate in 1967, only to drop to 7 per cent in 1978 (as compared to the 69 per cent paid by the colonial government in 1956). Smuggling flourished as a result, along with inefficient production; but, with clove prices at an all-time high, the state nevertheless accumulated unprecedented amounts of cash in its foreign reserves. With so much of the arable land devoted to clove production, food supplies had to be imported; yet, despite the large foreign reserves, Karume refused to import basic food items such as rice and sugar and insisted that Zanzibaris become 'self-reliant' and eat only what they could grow. Starvation ensued, especially in rural areas and on Pemba island (which produced most of the clove harvest and which was a target of Karume's anger for not having supported the revolution). Only after Karume was assassinated in 1972 were imports increased and the shortages alleviated.

While Karume's austere and autocratic version of socialism shared some traits and narrative elements with that of the mainland (for example, terminology like *Ujamaa* and 'self-reliance', nationalization programmes, support for religion, mobilization of youth), the differences were many and significant. These included its strong ties to Eastern Europe and China, advocacy of 'scientific' socialism, deprecation of education, lack of elections, its surveillance atmosphere and regularly occurring state-sponsored violence. Finally, although government rhetoric periodically exhorted people to set aside ethnic categories and embrace the label 'Zanzibari', in fact the politicization of ethnicity continued under Karume. Of Malawian heritage himself, Karume privileged mainlander Africans over Zanzibari Africans (who self-identified as 'Shirazi') and those of Arab and Asian descent. He initiated at least two 'ethnic cleansing' campaigns. In one, he forced Shirazis to

sign statements denying their Shirazi identity (Amory 1994) – a contradictory move given his chairmanship of the Afro-*Shirazi* Party. In another, he forced young Persian, Indian and Arab women to marry members of his Revolutionary Council as part of a project to ‘end’ racial discrimination and produce new Zanzibaris.

Contrary to what one might expect, conversations with Zanzibaris today do not often vilify Karume despite his despotic ways. While they typically acknowledge the violence, the fear and the deprivations of that era, they nevertheless speak of him as a leader who fought unceasingly for Zanzibari self-determination, and they contrast that to its current relation of dependence on the mainland and on foreign aid. When anger is expressed, it is directed instead towards Nyerere, who, they claim, knew full well the atrocities that were being committed in Zanzibar and yet did little to stop them. In the section to follow, I explore some of the changes that have taken place on the mainland and in Zanzibar as a result of the retreat from socialism so as to set the stage for my analysis of musical laments commemorating Nyerere’s death.

#### RETREAT, BUT NOT SURRENDER

During the 1970s and early 1980s, a series of concomitant disasters hit Tanzania, including drought, the oil crisis, war with Idi Amin, dissolution of the East African Community, and falling world prices for its agricultural products. These problems, together with crises in agricultural production resulting from artificially low producer prices and the mainland’s project of forced villageization,<sup>12</sup> initiated a two-decade period of economic decline. Production fell by over 50 per cent, causing Tanzania to become dependent on food aid and setting the stage for recurrent famine, a pattern that exists into the present.

Determined to see his country ‘self-reliant’, Nyerere rejected IMF offers of assistance throughout the early 1980s, despite a worsening situation, because they came with conditions that he opposed. Zanzibar wasn’t much better off due to plummeting clove prices and a disease that greatly diminished the harvest, but the excesses of Karume’s rule had been toned down considerably by his successors. Change proved inevitable, and in 1985 Nyerere voluntarily stepped down from his role as president of the Republic (retaining, however, his position as party chairman) and welcomed to the helm Ali Hassan Mwinyi, a known supporter of reform and former president of Zanzibar. One year later, Mwinyi signed an accord with the IMF that provided some financial relief for the country’s many woes yet also paved the way for the formal dismantling of Tanzania’s socialist platform via trade liberalization (*mageuzi*), privatization (*ubinafsishaji*) and political pluralism (*vyama vingi*).

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<sup>12</sup> For more on *Ujamaa* villageization, see Coulson 1979; Freyhold 1979; Hyden 1980; Shao 1982; Abrahams 1985; Scott 1998.

Tanzania only problematically qualifies as a 'postsocialist' state. Hit hard like most socialist states by the global economic and political transformations of the mid-1980s, socialism nevertheless remains enshrined in the Tanzanian constitution. Although modified in 1995, it still affirms as its goal

the building of the United Republic of Tanzania as a nation of equal and free individuals enjoying freedom, justice, fraternity and concord, through the pursuit of the policy of Socialism and Self Reliance which emphasizes the application of socialist principles while taking into account the conditions prevailing in the United Republic. (*Constitution* 1998: 18)

Despite this constitutional insistence, the socialist policies described above have, for the most part, been abandoned.

Much of the literature on postsocialism draws attention to the indeterminacies of 'transition' from socialism to whatever follows (Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Stark and Bruszt 1998; Verdery 1996). Given that Tanzania has yet to denounce socialism officially, one currently finds elements of socialist, capitalist and democratic practice in 'recombinant strategies' (Stark and Bruszt 1998) that blur public and private domains. Land tenure is one example. In 1995, the cabinet approved a National Land Policy (NLP) that reiterated: 'all land in Tanzania is public land vested in the President as trustee on behalf of all citizens', yet allowed for individual titles to land in areas not designated for other uses (Wobst 2001: 24). Houses and buildings throughout metropolitan areas remain marked as property of *Mhajili wa Majumba* (the 'Registry of Buildings') with identifying plot and building numbers painted on them for all to see. Despite pressure from the World Bank and the IMF to privatize land holdings, this is one area in which socialist emphasis on use-rights prevails. Possession of title is never sacrosanct, for owners must constantly prove their use of their properties to avoid confiscation by the government and redistribution to others. One strategy evident in neighbourhoods throughout the country is to 'use' land by constructing a building at glacial speed. Seeing so many incomplete houses, I had always attributed it to lack of resources. While that is indeed often a determining factor, people explained that plot 'owners' circumvent the usage policy by adding just one row of bricks to their house-under-construction each year. Should a government surveyor make a surprise inspection, proof would exist that work was ongoing and that the property was indeed being used. Recombinant property relations thus continue into the present because of the continued strength of communalist/socialist values.

Another topic highlighted in the literature on postsocialism is the existence of 'second', or 'informal', economies that accompany centralized economies. As Verdery explains, socialist systems bear within them an essential tension between acquiring power by accumulating goods in the centre, and acquiring legitimacy by redistributing goods to the masses. Production and distribution therefore receive the bulk



of governmental attention to the detriment of consumption. This creates a situation in which second economies become necessary to meet consumer needs and desires beyond the basics offered by the state (Verdery 1996; Kenedi 1981). In this, Tanzania was exceptional only in that – given the agricultural crisis, plummeting terms of trade, rocketing foreign debt, infrastructural investment following the 1977 dissolution of the East African Community, and the expenses of supporting multiple liberation struggles – the state was too impoverished to supply even the most basic of needs. The early 1980s, both on the mainland and in the islands, are remembered as times of widespread shortages of key commodities such as flour, rice, salt, sugar, cooking oil, kerosene, cement and soap. Shelves of the government's retail trade outlets, the Regional Trading Companies (RTC), lay bare. Employees' answers to customer queries were limited to '*Hamna*' ('There isn't any'), '*Bado*' ('Not yet') and '*Jaribu kesho*' ('Try again tomorrow').

Not surprisingly, this led to a sudden expansion of the second economy (*magendo*) (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990; Tripp 1997). Goods could easily be smuggled into the country across its many borders with Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Zaire, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, and via its Indian Ocean ports. As the prices set by government marketing boards for valued commodities remained artificially low, some took to smuggling coffee, cloves, cattle, seafood, gold, gems, animal hides and ivory out of the country. Corruption (*ubaadhirifu*) escalated and the government responded by declaring war on saboteurs, racketeers, hoarders and smugglers via the Economic Sabotage (Special Provisions) Act of 1983. Over 1,000 people were detained within days of the Act's implementation, and their offences reported on government-controlled radio programmes with the public invited to denounce additional transgressors (Maliyamkono and Bagachwa 1990: xvii). Anti-Economic Sabotage Tribunals were set up around the country, and the crackdown continued into the following year, when preliminary liberalization measures were introduced.

After Ali Hassan Mwinyi succeeded Nyerere to the presidency in 1985, structural adjustment was pursued in earnest to gain access to much-needed loans. The economy shuddered and stumbled along as it underwent the process of decentralization. One condition set by the IMF and the World Bank was the downsizing of government bureaucracy. Salaries for those civil servants who weathered the massive layoffs stagnated and have not kept up with rates of inflation. In 1991, the government amended the leadership code to allow for private capitalist activities because it was recognized that only by supplementing their low salaries could civil servants survive.<sup>13</sup> Some supplement their incomes through legal means, such as growing crops on the communal plots still maintained by certain companies despite the demise of communal agriculture (TANESCO, the Tanzanian telecommunications company, for example, still has and allocates to its workers access to a company

<sup>13</sup> National Executive Committee meeting, Zanzibar, 1991; see Gibbon 1995: 14.

plot). But others supplement through bribery, which in certain sectors has become commonplace. To offer one example, on the streets of every major city and town one can find street vendors selling driving-licence covers. These are small, empty cardboard folders, roughly the size of a credit card, that simply state 'Driver's licence' on the front. The process of acquiring the actual licence itself – a government-produced stamped paper inserted into such a cover – is a costly and arduous ordeal through seemingly endless bureaucratic hurdles. I therefore found it puzzling that there could be such a large market (based on the number of vendors one sees) for these driving-licence covers. It was only after being a passenger in a friend's car, a friend who did not have a driving licence, that I came to understand the value of the driving-licence cover. When stopped by a traffic police officer for an unknown infraction and asked for his driving licence, my friend placed a folded Tsh 1,000/-note in the empty driving-licence cover that he always stored in the glove compartment and handed it to the officer. The officer opened the cover and pretended to scrutinize the details of the non-existent licence before accepting the 'gift' inside and waving us along.

At more macro levels, corruption increased during the neo-liberal reforms with an upsurge of illegal imports, unpaid import duties and taxes, corporate tax evasion and the informal privatization of public parastatals. Previously bare shelves teemed with imported consumer and luxury items from all over the world, 'with the remarkable outcome that European-produced commodities from canned beer to automobiles now retailed considerably cheaper in Tanzania than in Europe itself' (Gibbon 1995: 16). Parastatals were sold off in mysterious transactions, primarily to foreign investors (many being, in an ironic and particularly painful twist of fate, white South Africans). Thus, structural adjustment has been credited with introducing not Western capitalism but 'wild capitalism', namely 'the reappearance in free-market guises, and on a larger and less controlled scale, of many of the much-condemned preadjustment forms of "rent-seeking behaviour"' (ibid.). As the overseer of this process, President Mwinyi came to be known as '*Mzee Ruksa*' ('Mr Permissiveness'), for whom anything goes. Such was the rise in corruption that the current administration of President Benjamin Mkapa, elected in 1995 and re-elected to a second term in 2000, ran its campaign on the promise to combat corruption.

Ordinary Tanzanians felt the impact of reform hardest in the cutbacks in social services that they had come to expect from the government. By 1980, the results of fifteen years of Nyerere's heavy investment in universal education paid off, with the Tanzanian mainland boasting the highest primary-school enrolment and adult literacy rates in the continent. (The situation in Zanzibar, of course, presented a stark contrast.) But by 1997, less than 50 per cent of the school-age population was enrolled in school due to reduction in government expenditures during the crisis years of the 1980s and the imposition of school fees as mandated by the World Bank and the IMF. In 2001, in a return to socialist-era policy, the Tanzanian government abolished school fees as part of an effort to recapture its former successes.

The situation of healthcare has followed a similar pattern of rapid expansion during the socialist era and contraction during the budget crises of the 1980s, with the imposition of user fees in the early 1990s as part of structural adjustment policy. Currently, Tanzanian health indicators rank among the worst in the world, with life expectancy at forty-five years compared to forty-seven for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (Weeks et al. 2002: 130). Unemployment rates have rocketed (47 per cent in the city of Dar es Salaam), and the increasing rate of urbanization brings ever more unemployed to the city in search of opportunity. When complaints are directed at the government, officials often respond by putting a reform-era twist on an older socialist mantra. Take, for example, the case of sports. The government used to fund soccer clubs, including costs incurred in attending regional and continental tournaments. But the situation in the early 1990s did not allow for this, so clubs were told 'to shoulder all costs for their participation . . . The Deputy Minister said the government would never object to the idea of clubs becoming companies because "our concern is to see them become self-reliant"' (*Daily News*, 25 March 1994).

Once Tanzania submitted to economic reform, political reform was not slow to follow. In the mid-1980s, only three African countries had multi-party systems: Botswana, the island nation of Mauritius, and Senegal (although effectively a single-party state). Donors began to insist on political change; and, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, multi-party democracy came to be seen as the only conceivable goal. The main obstacle to reform in Tanzania, however, proved to be the people themselves. After travelling extensively throughout the country in 1991, interviewing thousands of people, holding countless public meetings and analysing the results of some 16,348 completed questionnaires, Chief Justice Francis Nyalali and the Presidential Commission on Political Change discovered that, despite parlous economic conditions in the country, no less than 79.7 per cent of mainland Tanzanians, and only a slightly smaller percentage in Zanzibar, favoured continuing the single-party system.

Judge Nyalali and his colleagues analysed these responses in an attempt to understand *why* Tanzanians had expressed such strong support for single-partyism. By this time, Tanzania was host to hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing turmoil in their own countries (Malkki 1995; USCR 2004 [2002]).<sup>14</sup> A popular view voiced in public meetings and interviews was that political pluralism resulted in civil strife whereas single-partyism created peace. Secondly, large numbers of Tanzanians knew no other system, given its prolonged thirty-year existence (1962–92). But, while only a minority favoured multi-partyism, a majority did express desire for change that would

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<sup>14</sup> According to the 2002 US Committee for Refugees report on Tanzania, there were 500,000 official refugees in Tanzania at the end of 2001, plus an additional 300,000–470,000 Burundians who resided in western Tanzania without official refugee status (USCR, 2004 [2002]).

improve their lives. The commission ultimately recommended multi-partyism as the easiest means of responding to people's concerns. Thus it was that in 1992, the ruling party *Chama cha Mapinduzi* ('Revolutionary Party', born of the 1977 merger between TANU and the ASP) declared the formal installation of multi-partyism and began preparing for national multi-party elections in 1995.

*NYIMBO ZA MAOMBOLEZO AND THE SILENCE ON SOCIALISM*

In her analysis of rhetoric surrounding the 1988 reburial of Béla Bartók's body in Budapest, Susan Gal shows how the Hungarian state and intellectuals shaped understandings of political-economic change on the eve of postsocialist transition. She draws out a series of themes appearing in speeches, newspaper articles, conversations, testimonials and scholarly commentaries that construct an image of Bartók aligned with values and ideals being promoted by the state. For, as she notes, 'state socialist societies have operated by a different logic than [*sic*] capitalist social orders . . . to maximize the control of the centralized political apparatus over the production of everything – cultural values as well as material goods' (Gal 1991: 441).

Nyerere's funeral in 1999 was no less an occasion for rhetorical constructions of the Tanzanian nation. The songs that filled the radio airwaves bespoke a surge of nationalist sentiment following his death, and offered laudatory assessments of his contributions and his legacy. Silent on the topic of socialism, however, but for a few rare allusions, and unevenly distributed between the mainland and islands, it is clear that these songs, like the discourses surrounding Bartók's reburial, constituted 'an unfolding argumentative exchange between elements of the . . . state and its adversaries, as well as other internal and international audiences' (*ibid.*: 442).

*Nyimbo za maombolezo* span every conceivable genre of Tanzanian music, from traditional dance (*ngoma*), urban jazz (*dansi*), sung poetry (*taarab*) and recitative poetry (*shairi* and *utenzi*) to Swahili reggae, choir music (*kwaya*), steel pan bands, an Indian-style Swahili song, and even a song that Tanzanians would refer to as 'blues' but that would be identified as 'soft pop' by Westerners. Some were recorded in the many private studios that have mushroomed in urban areas following liberalization of the media in 1993; others were produced at the government radio station, Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD). On the mainland, one can still purchase commercial cassettes of many of these songs more than five years after Nyerere's death; but, despite much searching, I was unable to find any cassettes of *nyimbo za maombolezo* retailing in Zanzibar, a significant fact to which I shall return. In all, I collected 103 songs and have text transcriptions for two-thirds of these (sixty-nine songs). Themes that recur, themes that are absent, and the significances of who wrote and who did not write lamentation songs together form a multi-faceted narrative of Nyerere and, by extension,

TABLE 2 *Recurrent themes in Nyimbo za Maombolezo*

<i>Theme (English translation)</i>	<i>Theme (in Kiswahili)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
God (any reference)	<i>Mungu, Mwenyezi, Mola. . .</i>	70%
Peace	<i>Amani</i>	45%
Unity	<i>Umoja</i>	38%
Good judgement, wisdom	<i>Busara, hekima, ushauri</i>	30%
Love, goodwill	<i>Upendo</i>	26%
Union between mainland and Zanzibar	<i>Muungano</i>	23%
Eliminated ethnic divisiveness	<i>Ukabila</i>	20%
Solidarity among Tanzanians	<i>Mshikamano</i>	19%
Protector of the oppressed	<i>Wanyonge</i>	19%
Calm (in Tanzania)	<i>Utulivu</i>	17%
Liberated Tanzania	<i>Mkombozi</i>	16%
Stemmed religious divisiveness	<i>Udaini</i>	14%
Supported African liberation movements	<i>Mkombozi (wa Afrika)</i>	12%
Independence	<i>Uhuru</i>	12%
Fought colonialism, imperialism	<i>Ukoloni, ubeberu</i>	10%
International peace-maker	<i>Amani (wa dunia)</i>	9%
Defender of human rights	<i>Haki</i>	9%
Honest, not corrupt	<i>Mkweli, mwavimifu, bila tamaa</i>	9%
Hero	<i>Shujaa</i>	7%
Multi-partyism	<i>Upinzani, vyama vingi</i>	7%
Morally upright, scrupulous	<i>Muadilifu</i>	6%
Democracy	<i>Democrasia</i>	4%
Education	<i>Elimu</i>	3%
Agriculture	<i>Kilimo</i>	3%
(Arusha) Declaration	<i>Azimio</i>	1%

the Tanzanian nation. What follows are some of the most frequently invoked themes.

*God has taken Nyerere.* References to God, for whom there are many Kiswahili names (for example, *Mungu, Mwenyezi, Mola, Rabuka, Rabana, Jalali*) were identified in 70 per cent of the songs. Musicians request that God welcome Nyerere, give him a restful place in heaven, forgive him his sins and spare him punishment. Other songs console Tanzanians, saying that it was God's plan that he be taken now, that everyone must also eventually take leave of this world, and that he has gone ahead (*katangulia*) to prepare a place for others. Nyerere and Karume had both insisted that a secular or atheist socialism would

find no home in Tanzania, and the ubiquity of spiritual references in these songs would seem to prove them right. Rather than raising him to superhuman status, however, in the style of typical praise poetry, these songs acknowledge that Nyerere at times failed and made mistakes, even if they stop short of naming them.

*Nyerere brought us peace and unity.* Song after song praises Nyerere for the peace (*amani*) and unity ( *umoja*) he is credited with having brought to Tanzania and to other parts of Africa.<sup>15</sup>

Citizens of Tanzania, we are filled with sorrow to have lost the love of our 'Father of the Nation'. We lament the death of Mwalimu Nyerere ... He accomplished an enormous job in building unity and peace for us. He fought for all of Africa. Let us lament the death of Mwalimu Nyerere. He was a lover of peace, hope of the oppressed. We all cry for him. ('Death of Mwalimu Nyerere', youth choir from the *Mburahati Barafu* National Housing estate, Dar es Salaam)<sup>16</sup>

At times, Tanzanian peace and unity are contrasted to the conflict and chaos that has engulfed many of its neighbours. Yet, although this trope of Tanzanian peace is a common one, reiterated almost daily in newspaper reports, street conversations and official speeches, it camouflages and ignores the violence that once wracked and, to a lesser degree still plagues, Zanzibar – violence to which Nyerere had turned a blind eye. It is therefore employed less commonly in the islands, except in official rhetoric. Conflict and instability continue in Zanzibar, with periodic outbreaks of riots and state-sponsored violence especially during elections. No election in Zanzibar's history has been unmarred by contested results, and the latest fatalities occurred in January 2001 during continuing protests over the November 2000 elections. Official results for the 2000 elections, which were widely denounced by international observers as unfair and plagued with irregularities, proclaimed the narrowest margin of victory for Amani Karume, son of Abeid Karume and current president of Zanzibar, who ironically bears the name 'Peace'.

*The wisdom of Nyerere and his love for all.* Frequent references to Nyerere's good judgement, political acumen and goodwill towards others appear in these songs. Whereas songs of a different era would have specified his socialist policies as evidence of his good judgement, the *maombolezo* songs do not. Compare this silence to, for example, a song by Lucky Star Musical Club from the 1970s called 'Hurrah Mwalimu Nyerere', which states: 'Your politics, President, indeed suit us: to unite us and make us socialist brethren. Do not worry, we citizens have agreed.'<sup>17</sup> Nyerere is described as one who exhibited love and

<sup>15</sup> All translations from the original Kiswahili texts are my own. I thank Mrs Aisha Mabrook for her assistance in transcribing the songs.

<sup>16</sup> *Kifo cha Mwalimu Nyerere*, Mburahati Barafu National Housing youth choir, Dar es Salaam.

<sup>17</sup> *Heko Mwalimu Nyerere*, composed by Sudi Hilal, Lucky Star Musical Club, Tanga, circa 1970s.



goodwill to all. Many Zanzibaris, again, would take issue with this depiction, but it is widely held nonetheless.

*Nyerere created the Union; we must protect and defend it.* Especially common in songs composed by musicians in some way affiliated with the state is the matter of the union between the mainland and Zanzibar. The union was contested from its very birth, concluded, as it was, in secrecy between Nyerere and Karume without consulting the citizenry of either Tanganyika or Zanzibar. In 1964, when the union was formed, African nationalism and Cold War alignments suffused continental politics. For Nyerere, united with Nkrumah in advocacy for a United States of Africa, this constituted a first step toward pan-Africanist unity. It also, he hoped, would allow him a measure of influence over the more radical tendencies of Babu that threatened to drag the Cold War into East Africa. For Karume, the union offered his government stability and the power of Nyerere's police regiments in stemming threats of counter-revolution. As global processes over subsequent decades rendered these concerns irrelevant, contestation over the union intensified. Yet, up until his death, Nyerere defended the union and urged that it be preserved. Loyalty to Nyerere is often measured by one's support for the union, thus this theme recurs with considerable frequency:

He united the mainland with the islands to form one nation with a strong objective. Nations around the world recognize the wisdom and diplomacy of Mwalimu. He maintained peace and calm in the country during all of his life. He defended the weak of different nations when they were oppressed by other nations and enemies. He was chief advisor to many world nations. Mwalimu Nyerere fought for respect for our nation and for Africa his entire life. ('Wailing of Africa', Muungano Cultural Troupe)<sup>18</sup>

Zanzibaris share little or no enthusiasm for the union, the prevailing perspective being that it robbed Zanzibar of its sovereignty and turned it into a vassal state – or, worse, a mere region within Tanzania. In his novel *Admiring Silence*, Abdulrazak Gurnah, a Zanzibari author based in the UK, writes obliquely about Zanzibar and Tanzania, but his underlying sentiments on the union emerge quite clearly:

The island part of our republic had been forced into marriage with the big state next door after the uprising, but we retained our own Rais,<sup>19</sup> and our own Revolutionary Council for the Redemption of the Nation, our own jails and a myriad of picnic sites where our psychopathic authorities could play their dirty little games. (Gurnah 1996: 157)

*Nyerere our liberator, who brought us independence and eliminated ethnic/religious conflict.* Nyerere, as leader of TANU, obtained independence for Tanganyika without bloodshed. He sought to preserve

<sup>18</sup> *Kilio cha Afrika*, Muungano Cultural Troupe, Dar es Salaam.

<sup>19</sup> 'President'.

and nurture the united front realized in the nationalist movement by instituting policies that prevented subnationalisms born of ethnicity or religion. He is widely credited with curtailing tendencies towards ethnic and religious conflict that are so evident in neighbouring Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya. Overlooked in these assertions, however, are the conflicts in Zanzibar attributed by many to subnationalist politics.

Mwalimu Nyerere was morally upstanding, a good listener, a humble man of the people who understood their troubles and defended them. He did not separate people according to religion, colour, tribe, even gender. He promoted equality. ('We've Received a Blow', band unknown)<sup>20</sup>

*Nyerere, supporter of African liberation movements.* Nyerere is frequently remembered in the company of African freedom fighters. His internationalism was oriented less towards socialist internationalism (although that too was important, as his ties to Zambia and China demonstrate; see Monson, this issue) than African nationalism, hence his chairmanship of the OAU Liberation Committee.

Mwalimu Nyerere freed us from colonialism along with Kaunda of Zambia, Mondlane and Samora [Machel] of Mozambique, Angola's Neto, Namibia's Nujoma, and Mugabe of Zimbabwe. All the way to South Africa people know the name of Nyerere. Nyerere is a hero. ('Mwalimu Nyerere', band unknown)

Yet not all would honour him in this way. Gurnah very pointedly excludes Nyerere in a list of heroic African leaders including Nkrumah, Touré, Lumumba and Kenyatta (Gurnah 1996: 66). He moreover disparagingly describes Nyerere as '*Rais of the Federal Republic*, who had presided for decades over the crumbling state while his carefully modulated commentaries on the African nation soothed liberal consciences in Europe and North America' (ibid.: 157).

As for *Ujamaa*, only indirect references appear in a handful of songs, specifically to agricultural production and to an unnamed 'declaration' that can only be the Arusha declaration:

In the time of his life, Father [Nyerere] told us many things. He said that we youths should work hard so as to progress. He emphasized the question of education and stressed the topic of agriculture. For our part, we youths should always promote agriculture for it will bring us much profit. ('We Remember Many Things', Amana Youth Group)<sup>21</sup>

In 1967, he made a declaration that would burn capitalists. Oh, how they treated us like children! But he was determined. If we worked for them, we

<sup>20</sup> *Tumepata Pigo*, band unknown.

<sup>21</sup> *Tunamkumbuka kwa Mengi*, Amana Youth Group, Dar es Salaam.

did not get paid, but he was determined. ('History of Nyerere', Tanzania One Theatre)<sup>22</sup>

Receiving attention in an equally small number of songs are references to democracy and multi-partyism, with which Nyerere aligned himself after having relinquished the presidency.

Although the term '*Ujamaa*' never arises once in the full corpus of songs, values such as 'peace', 'unity', 'African political liberation', 'solidarity' and 'equality' that Nyerere defined as socialist values have been identified. Because, as I have already argued, Nyerere translated local values and practices into socialist terms, the question arises as to whether or not these should be considered 'socialist', for they can just as easily be labelled 'democratic' or 'humanist' values. But, in the particular trajectory of Tanzanian experience and history, wherein a thirty-year battle was waged against capitalist class formation, 'equality' takes on socialist overtones. In a context wherein 'African political liberation' was financially, militarily and ideologically linked to socialism, it too takes on socialist overtones. When 'peace' is spoken of in a context where exclusionary subnationalisms pervade a majority of states, claiming millions of lives and displacing millions of refugees, it evokes Tanzania, a state that took preventive measures in the name of socialism to suppress subnationalist sentiment; a state that offered safe haven to countless refugees disenfranchised from equal political, social and economic participation at home. Finally, given the efforts of African socialists like Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU), 'unity' connotes the socialist fraternity of states that Nyerere, Nkrumah, Kaunda, Mondlane, Machel and others tried so hard to bring about.

Certainly, these *maombolezo* songs project only positive representations of Nyerere. But the attributes and accomplishments of his that they honour have been carefully selected so as not to affront contemporary neo-liberal, postsocialist sensitivities. The rarity of *maombolezo* songs in Zanzibar is telling. (I did find two musicians who insisted that at least two Zanzibari musical groups composed *maombolezo* songs for Nyerere; but, if any recordings still exist of them, no-one knew where they were.) It is a silence rendered significant when weighed alongside comments about Nyerere drawn from conversations with islanders or from the novels of an expatriate Zanzibari. In sum, representations of Nyerere in *maombolezo* songs are best analysed alongside those present in other expressive domains and in relation to the historical trajectory of his own narratives and actions. With this multi-dimensional approach, we can access the discursive battles that jointly construct the multi-sited Tanzanian nation.

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<sup>22</sup> *Historia ya Nyerere*, Tanzania One Theatre, Dar es Salaam.

## CONCLUSION

While earlier studies on postsocialist situations in Eastern Europe focused on ‘continuities’ that bridged experiences of socialism and postsocialism, more recently scholars have argued that apparent holdovers from the socialist era constitute strategic innovations to shifting postsocialist conditions. Burawoy and Verdery, for instance, argue that ‘patterns familiar from socialism are something quite different: direct *responses* to the new market initiatives, produced by them, rather than remnants’ (1999: 2, original emphasis). This approach critically examines phenomena that are popularly defined as, or understood to be, ‘remnants’, ‘legacies’ or ‘habits’ of one period inherited into the next. It privileges historical and socio-political contingencies and guards against tendencies to draw facile connections between complex and differently situated ideas and behaviours.

This approach holds relevance for understanding presocialist–socialist and socialist–postsocialist transitions in Tanzania. The fault which many found with Nyerere’s socialist philosophy was that he romanticized history, essentialized ‘African culture’ and viewed both through socialist-coloured lenses. The ‘traditional communalism’ that he defined as proto-socialism justified his project to ensure the continuation of such practice: *Ujamaa* policies would rationalize already existing socialism, not introduce something fundamentally new. Yet, when asked to take their indigenous socialist practices and move into communal villages to perform communal agriculture for the state, people rejected this latest state encroachment on their labour (highly reminiscent of previous colonial state demands) and proved false the claim that *Ujamaa* would be a continuation of existing practice. The failure of communal agriculture relates in part, then, to Nyerere’s insistence on finding, and when necessary inventing, ‘continuity’ between presocialist and socialist Tanzania.

Yet, with that lesson learned, perhaps we should proceed cautiously before assuming that all transformations give birth to completely new social, political, cultural and economic consequences. In attempting to explain the continued salience of values and practices that Nyerere’s government once defined as ‘socialist’ in the face of national silence on ‘socialism’, I find myself wrestling with seeming ‘continuities’. Consider, for example, the ways in which customary patterns of land tenure, in which chiefs or elders held communally owned land in trust and allocated use-rights to individuals (James 1971; McHenry 1994: 91), resemble socialist patterns with the state substituting for chiefs. Even as the Tanzanian state has conceded to privatization of parastatals and soccer clubs, it has yet to privatize land. Instead, in 1995 (well into the reform era), it reiterated its position that land constitutes a public resource held in trust by the state. The value of land as a public resource has traversed the presocialist, socialist and postsocialist eras in Tanzania; and, while it may not have borne the same meanings, ‘continuity’ can be neither assumed nor dismissed out of hand.

As another example, consider patterns of patronage and clientelism, a topic that has generated considerable discussion in both African studies (Barnes 1986) and postsocialist studies. Chiefs, vested with the authority to allocate resources, rights and responsibilities, lost much of their allocative power once the party assumed a position of dominance. This was by design, since Nyerere (son of a chief though he was) keenly sought to undermine former patrons and the relations of inequality they presupposed. Nevertheless, as Verdery has shown, socialist systems breed their own forms of patronage and clientelism based on the distribution of resources and the centralization of allocative power (Verdery 1996). Thus, in spite of a strict 'leadership code', new patrons emerged in the form of party officials and civil servants who created patron–client networks based on new ties of affiliation through state and party bureaucracies. Yet what is particularly interesting is that, in the current era of multi-partyism, one finds many an opposition party led by a former chief or son of a chief, thus indicating that their roles as patrons managed somehow to survive the socialist period in one form or another. In short, continuities of sorts *can* persist across periods of political-economic transformation, and efforts to discern and understand them should be made without immediately evoking ideas of 'legacy', 'remnants' or the obdurate 'culture' that colonialists, socialists and postsocialists alike have rated an obstacle to 'progress'.

In short, socialism was a language employed by both Nyerere and Karume to achieve centralization of economic, political and cultural resources. This was a particularly tempting strategy given the manifold insecurities they faced as leaders of newly independent countries. Nyerere proclaimed his support for democratic principles early in his career (although he did not always abide by them), and was able to then claim, without appearing contradictory, the language of democracy when it was revitalized under structural adjustment. Karume, on the other hand, did not evoke the language of democracy, and the result was a police state ruled through fear, intimidation and authoritarianism. *Maombolezo* songs commemorating Nyerere show that his facility for translating tradition into socialism and socialism into democracy is matched by citizen-musicians who deftly convert socialist-era concerns into postsocialist ones. Finally, these conversions/translations prove not to be limited to the discourse, as a quick review of contemporary land, education, healthcare and refugee policies reveals. *Ujamaa* may be a term to be avoided these days in Tanzania, but its continued salience for understanding the present should be recognized.

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#### ABSTRACT

On 14 October 1999, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the first president of the United Republic of Tanzania, died in a London hospital. In Tanzania, musical bands throughout the country reacted to the news by composing scores of lamentation songs (*nyimbo za maombolezo*) that mourned his passing and assessed his contributions to the country he helped to create. While elsewhere in the world Nyerere is affiliated with the 'African socialist' platform termed *Ujamaa* that he theorized in his political writings and instituted during his tenure as president, these lamentation songs are notably silent on the topic of socialism. This silence indicates the ambiguity with which Tanzanians today relate to their socialist past. As a necessary prelude to analysis of the *nyimbo za maombolezo*, this article explores the practices, policies and values promoted in Tanzanian socialisms (mainland and Zanzibar) and in the postsocialist present. Competing rhetorics are revealed in these musical constructions of the 'Father of the Nation' and, by extension, the Tanzanian nation itself.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Le 14 octobre 1999, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, premier président de la République unie de Tanzanie, décédait dans un hôpital londonien. Partout en Tanzanie, les groupes de musique ont réagi à la nouvelle en composant des chants de lamentations (*nyimbo za maombolezo*) qui pleuraient sa disparition et dressaient un bilan de ce qu'il avait apporté au pays qu'il avait aidé à créer. Alors qu'ailleurs dans le monde on associe Nyerere à la plate-forme

«socialiste africaine» appelée *Ujamaa* qu'il a théorisée dans ses écrits politiques et instituée durant son mandat de président, ces chants de lamentations sont remarquablement silencieux sur le thème du socialisme. Ce silence révèle l'ambiguïté des rapports que les Tanzaniens entretiennent aujourd'hui avec leur passé socialiste. En prélude nécessaire à l'analyse des *nyimbo za maombolezo*, cet article examine les pratiques, les politiques et les valeurs promues dans les socialismes tanzaniens (partie continentale et Zanzibar) et dans le postsocialisme actuel. Des rhétoriques rivales se révèlent dans les constructions musicales du «Père de la Nation» et, par extension, de la nation tanzanienne elle-même.