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- 1 Dedicated to the memory of the well-known historian of East Africa, Prof. Isaria N. Kimambo, the present volume regroups essays that pay a tribute to his work¹. Focusing on past configurations of power/knowledge relations to propose insights on the construction of political authority in Tanzania, these essays follow in Kimambo's footsteps in that they analyse the issue of power as a multifaceted phenomenon inserted in settings of various scales. The main objective of the book is to place pre- and post-independence nationalism in the light of local and national histories of authority and dissidence. Drawing on pre-colonial political organisations, it emphasises the role of debates and contests in the formation of colonial and national state to question totalising approaches of colonialism and nationalism.
- 2 Part I of the volume contains two essays about pre-colonial political structures describing two particular configurations of power/knowledge relations. In his essay on the Usambara Mountains in the nineteenth century, Steven Feierman presents rituals which followed the death of Shambaa kings and the enthronisation of their successors. The contribution focuses on the opposition between the reality of the production of these rituals and its description by academic history. Indeed, Shambaa rituals were divided into many localised rites effectuated by different heads of clans over several days. The whole process required the mobilisation of separate sets of knowledge that were not connected to each other. Contrary to this reality in which knowledge is not held collectively but "socially composed", as Feierman puts it, academic history as a discipline is concerned with the re-presentation of a synthetic version of the rituals as a whole, whose different parts are described in a linear and necessary process. According to the author, the opposition between social reality and historical reconstruction highlights the existence of a local configuration of power in which

knowledge is regarded as a powerful tool and therefore needs to be controlled through its segmentation. The second contributor, Edward Alpers, focuses on the pre-colonial history of the Uluguru Mountains and more specifically on the political career of a Luguru chief, Kingalu mwana Shaha. The author shows how this chief managed to maintain power in a period when the expansion of trade from Zanzibar had a strong impact on the political structures of the coastal hinterland. Indeed, Kingalu derived his legitimacy from both his power as a rainmaker and his coastal and Muslim identity. Both essays show how pre-colonial political forms of power gained “legitimacy by synthesizing knowledge drawn from different sources”², the first one by the required co-operation of different segments of a political group, the second by the combination of local and regional signs of authority.

- 3 The question of resistance to authority in the colonial period constitutes the central theme of part II. It is composed of essays focusing on the discrepancy between colonial attempts to control the production and the deployment of knowledge and the manipulation of political narratives by African political actors. In the first essay, Ralph A. Austen discusses the creation of colonial boundaries in the East African territories and its subsequent impact in the fostering of African nationalism. Departing from a majority of approaches on the issue of African borders, the author proposes to analyze violent movements that occurred within the enclave of the Kagera Salient (a piece of land situated in the east shores of Lake Victoria and divided between Uganda and Tanzania in the late 1880s) in their relation to pre-colonial territorial organisation and its difficult adjustment to colonial administration policies. The apparent absurdity of this border illustrates how the fight for territorial advantages between European powers did not take into account the specific cultural and political history of this region. The author presents the multiple colonial interests, diplomatic strategies and international events which participated in the marking of a definite boundary. In contribution Five, Thomas Spear shows that local history provides a significant basis to understand political activities of local communities. After a short review on the question of the “invention of tradition” as the production of social and cultural norms with the view to facilitate colonial dominance, he questions the generally underlying assumption that Africans were completely subjected to the colonial definition of tradition. To assert his point, Spear studies the role of Native Authority chiefs in the production of tradition, or what the author calls “neo-traditionalism”, and examines the resistance of Meru and Arusha communities, living in the northern part of the country, to colonial and chiefly definitions of tradition. His contribution insists on the limits of neo-traditionalism in a context of growing resentment of European land alienation and emerging tensions within local communities. The contribution of Gregory Maddox presents local and colonial narratives of power regarding Mazengo of Mvumi, a Gogo chief of the central region of Dodoma who had been chosen as a jumbe under the German power and had maintained his position as a Native Authority chief after the British takeover in 1916. The author emphasises the split between official stories recounting his legitimacy as a powerful chief and local versions of a tyrannical usurper of power. He shows how, in colonial times, the same narratives on “traditional” power (control of the rains, clan affiliations) were used by the colonial power as well as by local communities to account for Mazengo power, be it with the view to reaffirm or to contest this power. The following essay is concerned with local tribal histories produced in the 1950s-1960s. The case of two dissident historians who participate in the creation of TANU party in Mahenge district is discussed in full-length.

The author, Jamie Monson, shows that transcription of oral knowledge about the past was used as a political weapon to challenge colonial ethno-histories used by the colonial administration to appoint Native Authority chiefs. Their writings, depicting idealised pre-colonial societies based on peaceful and consensual cooperation, question the legitimacy of these chiefs while advocating for the construction of an autonomous local government inspired from pre-colonial social organisations. But the use of a nationalist language about freedom and democracy clearly shows that the resistance to colonial power resorted to a combination of tribal history with modern arguments. The contribution emphasises the significance of control over the writing of history to gain political authority. In contribution Eight, E. S. Atieno Odhiambo proposes a general reflection on the significant role of “unknown” individuals in the shaping of history. He contests the ethnocentric bias of a majority of scholar approaches presenting Africans as mere victims of the changes introduced by colonisation rather than as real actors of their lives. The essay clearly shows its affiliation to Subaltern Studies. According to the author, political and social changes that occurred in Tanganyika between 1890 and 1930 must be attributed to the African young generation who distance themselves from their traditions and acted as translators of the emerging new culture. The life of Mohammed Hussein Bayume, a resident of Tanga who fought on the side of the Germans in WWI, moved to Germany and became a professor of Swahili, is presented as an example of an unknown Tanzanian having taken an active part in the introduction of changes.

- 4 The following contribution of James L. Giblin deals with the gap between normative conceptions of social groupings (family, clans) and the individual experience of negotiations of roles, status and positions in Bena-speaking communities in Njombe region, southern Tanzania. The author observes a dialectic process of the search for political authority by group leaders. On the one hand, colonial administrators and ethnographers found among chiefs a discourse that presented their society as a rigid hierarchy of clans and patrilineal descent. But on the other hand, foreign observers participated in the construction of the legitimacy of these chiefs by putting the latter’s normative discourses into words. Written documents and colonial knowledge then became the source of group leaders’ power. According to the author, this language of obligations and norms had not obliterated everyday practices of social negotiations that characterize relations between individuals. The impact of Christianity on family norms is discussed as example of resistance to the discourse of tradition. Giblin shows that individuals used the Christian set of values, which banned polygamy and arrangement of marriage, as an alternative discourse to challenge “traditional” norms imposed by chiefs. Claims for individual autonomy therefore jeopardized chiefly political authority.
- 5 In the last essay of part II, Marcia Wright examines the practice of labour migration and its effect on the perception of ethnic identity (localism) and national sentiment (nationalism). As people moved from their home district around Lake Malawi–today Lake Nyasa–in the South Rukwa region to the sisal plantations in Tanga regions on the Swahili coast, identities were submitted to variations. Census data for 1948, 1957 and 1967 are analysed to establish the patterns of distribution for the population groups of the Fipa, Nyamwanga, Nyika and Mambwe. Dramatic increases or decreases in number among these various population groups account for the fluidity of ethnic identification. In the context of migrant labour in Tanga, the representations and clichés attached to certain ethnic groups made their members declare another identity to prevent discrimination. What is more, years of work in the sisal plantations with workers from

various regions of Tanganyika helped to develop an overall national consciousness at the same time as spatial and temporal distance from the South Rukwa region fostered local sentiments. Marcia Wright shows that a national identity existed before the emergence of a nationalist party composed of the urban elite. Her study therefore challenges the preconceived idea that the construction of a national sentiment would “necessarily be heralded and embodied in political parties”.

- 6 Part III of this volume is composed of seven essays questioning the process of nation-building in Tanzania. The first five essays focus on political changes in Tanganyika in the 1950s-1960s. The essay written by John Iliffe explores the period of the transition from colonial rule to independence in 1949-1958. Selecting information about the “thinking of British policy-makers” available in the British Government Records, he shows how Tanganyika, the least developed country within British East Africa that was planned to be the last to become a self-governing territory, was in fact the first to gain independence. The contribution gives a full account of the complex relations and negotiations between the African nationalist movement of the Tanganyika African Association (TAA), converted into the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in 1954, and the British Colonial Office. His analysis puts the emphasis on the central political issue on which no agreement could be reached: the question of power related to race. Indeed, the “policy of multi-racialism” advocated by the colonial government aiming to preserve the political and economic interests of minority races—the Whites and the Asians—could not be agreed upon by African nationalists. The fluctuations in the responses given to Tanganyikan nationalism by Sir Edward Twining, Governor of Tanganyika from 1949 to 1958, and his ambivalent positions regarding the president of TANU, J. K. Nyerere, first perceived as a moderate and co-operative leader and then as a virulent defender of a “black nationalism”, are proof of the colonial difficult adjustment to African claims. As the editors put it in the introduction to the volume, the essay illustrates the growing significance of the notion of race in the African political landscape. The three followings contributions highlight the same phenomenon. The contribution of Lawrence Mbogoni is concerned with the issue of the freedom of the press in colonial Zanzibar in the 1950s. It presents a sedition trial against an Arab newspaper, *Al-Falaq*, after it called for a jihad against the British administration. This call for resistance and liberation from colonial rule was the result of colonial oppressive practices and subsequent rise of anti-colonial sentiments. The author retraces British strategies to limit free speech and open contestations to its power. He shows that this overwhelming control on the press resulted in the unification of the Arab community. But another effect of British political tactics was to polarize the Zanzibar society along racial lines, the Arabs on the one hand and the Africans on the other. According to Mbogoni, the advent of a race divide signed the end of pre-colonial multifaceted modes of identification. The following essay by Thomas Burgess retraces the influence of the Umma Party in Zanzibar political life. The analyses of the birth of the party and its role in the preparation of the 1964 Zanzibar socialist Revolution show that the Umma Party was designed by young African and Arab Muslims who shared a common belief in the value of socialism and a common exposure to foreign culture through overseas scholarships to Communist countries. The author is bound to highlight the fact that the 1964 Revolution should not be simply attributed to racial tensions of the 1950s-1960s periods, as it is too often the case in scholar books. In other words, Burgess’s work challenges discourses emphasising the race factor in the understanding of political changes. Class, religion and, above all, the

emergence of a “generational identity” whose members imagine themselves as a vanguard generation involved in the advent of socialism cannot be ignored in a comprehensive study of political and social changes in colonial Zanzibar. The two essays on Zanzibar therefore reach a different conclusion, the latter challenging the idea defended by the former that race became the main factor of division in the Islands. In his essay, James Brennan explores past political opposition to TANU in order to help understand the nature of Tanzanian nationalism in the 1960s and present representations of multipartyism. It focuses on the trajectory of the African National Congress (ANC), a party led by Africans advocating for the rule of the Africans. It traces the history of the ANC, from its birth as a dissent branch of TANU to its banning after TANU decision to make Tanganyika a one-party state in 1963. The author shows that, notwithstanding the party success among unsatisfied citizens in the first years after its creation, ANC failed in elections due to difficulties of internal organisation but also to TANU strategies to undermine alternative discourses. He emphasises the failure of ANC to compete seriously with TANU ideology beyond the issue of race.

- 7 In the fifteenth contribution of the volume, the late Susan Geiger, Professor Emeritus of Women's Studies, proposes an analysis of the role of women in the development of nationalist ideas within TANU. Her approach aims at challenging major scholar works in which Tanganyika nationalism is presented as a masculine project based on men's activities and ideas. Contrary to this view, her essay demonstrates that the history of nationalism in Tanganyika cannot remain ignorant of women initiatives. Indeed, Muslim women sustained actively the transformation of TANU into a popular nationalist movement in promoting the party and socialist ideas on the ground. They are the one who spread the basic tenets of nationalism by informing people in the streets, selling membership cards or organizing performances to advocate for a party with non-discriminatory, anti-racist and anti-ethnicist values. Apart from challenging the masculine bias of most scholar studies, Geiger's work proposes general reflections on the origin of nationalism to suggest that Tanzanian current “political culture” is not only the product of the nationalist period, but draws also on pre-colonial structures of authority and knowledge and on the history of mobile and mixed populations. The following contribution by Yusuf Q. Lawi deals with the issue of the teaching of history in Tanzanian schools. It shows that since the shift from a history elaborated in local communities to a history produced by formal institutions of education, the recollection of the past has become peripheral to social concerns of local communities and irrelevant to understand and resolve local issues. The author asserts that the conception of the nature of history as a discipline has not much varied from the colonial era to present-day Tanzania. It is a universalistic and theoretical approach of history that has long been promoted, *i.e.* a history characterized by a focus on general evolutions of mankind and the search for universal explanatory principles of evolution. Even if changes in perspectives have occurred, from the colonial denial of the existence of an African past to the post-independence romanticism of pre-colonial ways of life and movements of resistance to the colonial power, Lawi asserts that history has remained a tool to maintain social order. A colonial history supportive of the imperialist project has given way to a postcolonial history used to foster patriotic concerns and feelings of nationhood. What must be read behind the success of nation-building is the alienation of local communities from historical production. Finally, the last essay of the volume discusses the disjuncture between local and state artistic

conceptions. Kelly M. Askew's analysis of music production gives evidence of the existence of two main divergent aesthetic ideals. From the point of view of local and private artists as well as of the public, it is individual talent that merits to be celebrated. Taarab music, a genre of music and poetry that arose along the Swahili coast, exemplifies this conception of art. Musicians and singers gather a large audience only if they are experts in their own art. But as far as the state is concerned, art has long been perceived as a means to propagate and encourage national unity. It is not the individual artist specialized in one domain of art that must be encouraged but groups of artist performing synchronized movements in linear formations, singing in chorus. In this artistic approach, solos and improvisations are simply dismissed. A historical review shows how socialist ideology oriented artistic conceptions. The adoption of socialist principles and policies account for the discouragement of artistic experts and the promotion of "generic artists", not particularly skilled but able to perform different arts—the sort of artists that the author calls "Jacks-of-all-arts".

- 8 The multiplicity of contributions collected in this volume, which address a wide variety of themes situated in an equally wide variety of times and locations, are linked by a unique concern in the understanding of political authority and dissidence in Tanzania. Most essays draw on previous published writings or current studies, which explains the quality of the data provided and the arguments developed. If the title of the book, *In Search of a Nation*, is ambiguous, in that it seems to focus only on the question of post-independence nation-building, the book provides the reader with in-depth analyses of long-term dynamics of political activities. It shows that in Tanzania, the narrative of the nation produced by the nationalist movement and perpetuated throughout the socialist era has shaped Tanzanian political discourse for decades, but has not obliterated multiple political discourses and identities which exist in the country. All essays leave us with a stimulating way of thinking about nationalism that avoids polarizing representations and binary conceptions of social reality, but highlights on the contrary complex procedures of negotiations of identity and political authority.

NOTES

1. I. N. KIMAMBO, *A Political History of the Pare of Tanzania, c. 1500-1900*, Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1969 ; *Penetration and Protest in Tanzania : The Impact of the World Economy on the Pare, 1860-1960*, London, James Currey ; Athens, Ohio University Press, 1991.
2. "Introduction" by MADDOX & GIBLIN, p. 3.