

## INTRODUCTION

The Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was born in the midst of debates on Pan-Africanism and in the thick of the Cold War. To this day, the Union carries its birthmarks, more of the latter than the former. The Union is the only surviving example of a political association of African sovereign states. Friends and foes alike often cite it as an exemplar of Pan-Africanist unity or an illustration of its failure. While there is considerable literature on the Union, there is no serious study of the Union from a Pan-Africanist standpoint. Yet, the Union provides valuable and enduring lessons – whether positive or negative – for African Unity and Pan-Africanism.

As globalisation entangles the continent in its web, there is a resurgence of African nationalism, as a form of both resistance to and reconciliation with imperialism. Narrow chauvinist nationalisms based on race, ethnicity or territory are on the rise within and between African countries leading to wars and civil strife. The continent is in turmoil. Imperialism feeds on it like a vulture; power hungry elite worsen it as they thoughtlessly implement their masters' military designs and economic schemes. The first-generation African nationalists feared that left on their own African states would become pawns on the imperialist chessboard. They pleaded for African Unity with little success witnessing their fears materialising in their lifetime. Some, like Nkrumah, became victims of imperialist machinations; others, like Nyerere, survived by practising pragmatism while preaching Pan-Africanism. Nonetheless, they were great visionaries, and like all visionaries, their legacy lies in their vision more than in their practice. While appropriating their

vision, we need to examine their practice critically to draw lessons. Vision inspires, practice teaches.

In this age of post-Cold War imperialism, called globalisation, African Unity is back on the historical agenda. African scholars and intellectuals are revisiting and deepening the theory, philosophy and ideology of Pan-Africanism.<sup>1</sup> African politicians are trying to reclaim the mantle of Pan-Africanism to gain legitimacy for their projects, whether it is President Mbeki of South Africa with his initiative on NEPAD or President Mummar Gaddafi of Libya with his mission for USA (United States of Africa) or President Museveni of Uganda with his 'fast-tracking' of East African Federation. They are all at the helm of their states. They all appear to be 'willing partners' in the military and economic architecture of globalisation. Are they a 'new breed' of Pan-Africanists? Are they visionaries like Nkrumah and Nyerere? Is theirs a vision of liberation or a delusion of glory? We need to ask and answer these questions from the standpoint of Pan-Africanism and avoid falling into narrow nationalisms. The current discourse among African elite, regrettably, tends to fall into what Nyerere called the 'wounds inflicted upon it [Africa] by the vultures of imperialism.'<sup>2</sup> Gaddafi's 'African Union' is opposed because he is perceived to represent 'Arab colonisers' who invaded Africa some six centuries before Christ; Museveni's fast-tracking of the East African federation is opposed because he has a hidden agenda to become the first president of East Africa. Kenya is overzealous for the federation because it has economic designs over Tanzania's land and jobs, and so on.<sup>3</sup> The Pan-Africanist project was not conceived so narrowly. It

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<sup>1</sup> Pan-Africanism was the main theme of CODESRIA's major Conference on its 30th Anniversary. CODESRIA is the premier Pan-African research organisation and provides an important forum for African scholars and intellectuals. Its formation was conceived in the womb of Pan-Africanist and anti-imperialist ideology.

<sup>2</sup> Nyerere 1997.

<sup>3</sup> One often reads these arguments in the pages of African newspapers. For example, the debate on the fast tracking of East African federation has been woefully immersed in narrow nationalisms. See, for instance, Waiswa Abudu Sallam, 'When did Gaddafi begin caring about black Africans?', Tanonoka Joseph Whande, 'United States of Africa? You gotta be kidding.' Anon, 'The united Africa debate',

was premised on the concept of African citizenship, not on Kenyan, Ghanaian, Tanzanian or Algerian citizenship. It did not discriminate because of one's pigment; it embraced because of one's commitment.<sup>4</sup>

Pan-Africanism was, literally and figuratively, a continental project. It was a grand political vision, not a puny economic design. 'Unity will not make us automatically rich', Nyerere said, 'but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated.'<sup>5</sup> The Pan-Africanist project was liberatory, anti-imperialist and democratic. To rebuild a new Pan-Africanist project in the age of globalisation, we need to understand its ideological drive and political practice. This study is meant to contribute to that understanding. The running thread of the study is to apply the yardstick of Pan-African ethos, one of whose leading proponents was Julius Nyerere, to the formation and development of the Union, whose ardent defender was none other than Nyerere. The purpose of the study is to draw lessons for 'New Pan-Africanism' from an actually existing political union of two African states.

Zanzibar on the eve of the revolution was a microcosm of the continent. Some perceived it as a melting pot of cultural diversities; others saw it as a hotbed of political divisions. All were correct, if one takes the position of the proverbial blind men and the elephant, but none could explain the elephant. To be able to explain, we need to see 'the elephant as a whole', to explore the connection between diversities and divisions. The premise of this study is that diversities become divisions precisely when they are politicised. Chapter 1 explains the politicisation of diversities, thus

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all in THISDAY, 1 & 2 August 2007, 2 July 2007; Joseph Mihangwa, 'Africa's Unity: Arabs Have a Hidden Agenda', *The African Executive*, <http://www.africanexecutive.com/modules/magazine/articles.php?article=2437> also reproduced in *The Citizen*, 3 August 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Nkrumah married an Egyptian lady, Fathia. It was a 'political' marriage, as their son Gamal Nkrumah attests in a tribute on her death. See Gamal Nkrumah, 'Fathia Nkrumah: Farewell Tranquility Never on the Agenda' at <http://www.nathanielturner.com/fathiankrumahfarewell.htm> accessed on 8 October 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Nyerere 1997.

converting mutually enriching cultural identities into conflicting political interests. From a melting point of cultures, Zanzibar became a hotbed of politics, which boiled over in the revolution, the subject matter of Chapter 2. Instead of the usual narrative of what happened and who was involved, I attempt to characterise the revolution. While taking full account of the perceptions, even ex-post-facto analysis of the participants, I have tried to keep the distance of an intellectual activist to understand better the past and draw lessons for the future.

Chapter 3 discusses in some depth the context, which led to the signing of the Articles of Union. The Cold War had intensified with the Cuban missile crisis; negotiations on the East African federation were fizzling out as the leaders of the newly independent countries settled in the saddles of the state. Patrice Lumumba in the Congo was murdered; Sylvanus Olympio of Togo was assassinated; and the three East African countries themselves, including Tanganyika, had army mutinies which were put down with the help of the former colonial power, Britain. Nyerere came under irresistible pressure from Western powers to do something about Zanzibar lest it become another 'Cuba'. Secretly prepared Articles of Union modelled on the colonial-type relationship between Britain and Northern Ireland were signed hurriedly without fully consulting the members of the Revolutionary Council or the Tanganyika cabinet. The legal validity of the Articles has often been challenged on the ground that the then legislature of Zanzibar, the Revolutionary Council, did not ratify them. The chapter goes into a detailed analysis of the ratification process based on a synthesis of extant secondary and some primary evidence and arrives at a definitive conclusion, which, it is hoped, will put this controversy to rest.

In Chapter 4, we trace the constitutional and political developments of the Union during Karume's eight years in power. The Union was in a precarious state and it would have most probably dissolved had Karume not been assassinated in April 1972. Karume had little regard for legalese and ruled Zanzibar as if there had been no Union. Nyerere found himself politically helpless but with the help of his lawyers continued increasing the list of Union matters

thus legally constricting the autonomy of Zanzibar. Karume's death and Jumbe's ascension to power placed the Union on a different political and constitutional trajectory. Jumbe introduced some order in what had hitherto been an arbitrary rule. He also gradually began to open up political space, albeit cautiously. Nyerere lost no opportunity and tested the waters for a possibility of merging the two parties as early as 1975. Eventually the parties merged and the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) was born followed immediately by the adoption of the permanent Union constitution. The making of the 1977 constitution and its implications are discussed in Chapter 5. The chapter also discusses the process of making the 1979 constitution of Zanzibar, the first constitution since the revolution. Based on new evidence, the chapter, for the first time, is able to throw significant light on Jumbe's thinking behind, and his role in the making of the 1979 constitution.

Among other things, Chapter 6 deals with Jumbe's efforts to separate the state and the party following the 1977 constitution to protect the autonomy of Zanzibar. This was a futile attempt. The 1977 constitution not only made the party supreme, but also monopolised politics and made the two governments – the Zanzibar and the Union – accountable to the party. Jumbe's efforts to reclaim Zanzibar's autonomy from the clutches of the party and Nyerere's determined stand to consolidate the Union through the party reached a crisis point in the 'pollution of political atmosphere'. The chapter gives a blow-by-blow account and analysis of the crucial seven-day meeting of the National Executive Committee of CCM, which culminated in a dramatic resignation of Jumbe from all his government and party positions. Factional alliances and intrigues preceding Jumbe's resignation were as dramatic as the outcome. The Union would never be the same again. A detailed narration of the next twenty years is beyond the scope of the book but the first twenty years, particularly the last episodes, in essence, sow the seeds, which germinated into weeds constantly embroiling the Union in crises. Since then the Union has moved from crisis to crisis euphemistically called *kero za muungano* ('troubles of the union') in official circles.

The concluding section draws some lessons of the Union for the current debate on African Unity at the continental level and the federation process at the regional level. This section also briefly teases out the main planks of the Pan-African ideology, which inspired African nationalism in the fifties and sixties of the last century. It is against the broad Pan-African canvas that the study scrutinises the Union and the political practice of its main protagonist, Julius Kambarage Nyerere.