G. Thomas Burgess

6 The Rise and Fall of a Socialist Future: Ambivalent Encounters Between Zanzibar and East Germany in the Cold War

Less than a month into its existence, the People's Republic of Zanzibar in January 1964 opened a relationship with the German Democratic Republic that would have far-reaching consequences, particularly for Zanzibaris. In competition with the Chinese, who also saw their relationship to the incipient island state as a means by which to break out of their diplomatic isolation, East Germany offered a generous package of aid and expertise. Although in late April 1964 Zanzibar federated with Tanganyika—its much larger neighbor on the East African mainland—and although this meant the downgrading of the newly-established East German embassy in the islands, the new union did not short-circuit GDR-Zanzibar relations. Throughout the 1960s Zanzibar retained most of the accoutrements of an independent state: its own president, ruling party, bureaucracy, and security forces. Zanzibar also continued to enjoy some autonomy in foreign affairs. And so with a relatively free hand, islanders leaned heavily on East German aid and advice, which played an influential role in shaping Zanzibar's revolutionary experiment.

East Germany sent a regular flow of experts to Zanzibar, and in turn received a steady stream of Zanzibari students in search of training and education. Such encounters were sustained by a common vision of the solidarity of like-minded socialist nations, all supposedly sharing the same uplifting image of a future world characterized by equality, selflessness, and abundance. Officials in both Eastern Europe and Africa believed Zanzibar, with its relatively small size and population, could serve as a showcase for this future-in-the-making. At relatively

¹ For East German relations with Zanzibar during the Cold War, see Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, "I Was the First Third World Minister to Recognize the GDR," in *I Saw the Future and It Works: Essays Celebrating the Life of Comrade Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, 1924–1996*, ed. Haroub Othman (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: E & D Limited, 2001), 48–58; Eric Burton, "Diverging Visions in Revolutionary Spaces: East German Advisors and Revolution from Above in Zanzibar, 1964–1970," in *Between East and South: Spaces of Ineraction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War*, ed. Anna Calori et al. (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019); Antony Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution and its Aftermath* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1978); Heinz Schneppen, *Zanzibar and the Germans: A Special Relationship, 1844–1966* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: National Museums of Tanzania, 1998).

little cost, a small nation like East Germany could make a highly visible impact by rendering decisive assistance to an even smaller territory struggling to achieve a better life for its citizens. Together East Germany and Zanzibar could realize the socialist vision of a society free of capitalist exploitation and neo-colonial domination. Zanzibar could serve as a revolutionary model to neighbors still dependent on the West for aid, trade, and expertise.

As historians turn to the study of East-South relations during the Cold War, and recover an often forgotten and yet highly consequential world of linkages, moorings, entanglements, and disentanglements, we should consider the ideas that animated such encounters.2 This essay demonstrates that at least on one level the East Germans and Zanzibaris were in agreement: the future would be one in which Africans would not only enjoy the blessings of freedom and sovereignty in islands where many of their ancestors once toiled as slaves. They would also experience "development," and enjoy such modern amenities as electricity, running water, and indoor plumbing. Throughout the 1960s, this future sustained a relationship between two nations separated by thousands of miles of land and sea, as well as highly dissimilar cultural traditions.

Such cooperation between Zanzibar and East Germany may be placed within the context of an historic moment when socialist internationalism appeared to possess real promise in orienting recently decolonized territories in Africa and Asia towards the socialist East. The East beckoned with aid, friendship, and discursive support, and was an emerging and enticing counterpoint to Western nations implicated by colonialism. Later in the Cold War, East Germany would form close ties with other movements and nations of the developing world, and Zanzibar would look to China for aid and expertise. Nevertheless, for both Zanzibaris and East Germans, their once close relationship contained all the romance, frustrations, and misunderstandings of a first love.3 Believing socialism and African nationalism were natural allies in the struggle against imperialism, racism, and inequality, they rushed into a relationship that seemed to offer a bright future and benefits to both sides, and yet which led instead to mutual disillusionment.

This chapter will discuss why Zanzibar's ties with East Germany quickly waxed, and eventually waned. It will examine East Germany's influence on Zanzibar's fledgling revolution, the initial violence of which had only recently been

² For a broad picture, see Philip Muehlenbeck and Natalia Telepneva, eds., Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018).

³ Soviet-Cuban ties also contained a strong element of romance in the 1960s. For a study that emphasizes how Soviets imagined the relationship, see Anne Gorsuch, "'Cuba, My Love:' The Romance of Revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Sixties," American Historical Review 120 (2015).

brought under state control by the time GDR representatives made their first appearance in the islands in early-1964. In addition to oral and archival sources that give some indication of the impact of this relationship on the popular level, I will examine the novel By the Sea, in which Zanzibari author Abdulrazak Gurnah provides a compelling narrative of Latif Mahmud, who at the age of 18 sets out to study in the GDR. 4 Latif is something of a composite character, inspired by the memories and narratives of Gurnah's former classmates who set out with high hopes to study in East Germany in the 1960s.⁵ Their experience is emblematic of an era of inflated expectations, when Africans newly-liberated from colonial rule hoped to achieve all their nation building ambitions, and turned to wise men from the East bearing gifts of credit, scholarships, and technology. After the end of colonialism and before the onset of the African debt crisis of the 1980s there were relatively few limits on futurist discourses. In the 1960s, the "socialist transnational imaginary" was in full swing, producing a series of images of the future that animated a steady stream of students, technocrats, and teachers traveling back and forth between East and South. Such encounters, linkages, and connections helped shape Zanzibar's revolutionary experiment, and were but one component of a project of socialist globalization that forged new and consequential ties between Africa and the East.

The Rise of a Socialist Vanguard

When in the early twentieth century the British began to establish schools in Zanzibar along western lines it had to overcome considerable resistance among parents and village leaders convinced such institutions would corrupt the minds of the next generation, and undermine their faith in Islam. Only after the colonial state moved in the 1940s to incorporate Islam into the curriculum did the schools begin to gain widespread favor and acceptance.⁷ The experiment proved so successful that after World War II more and more Zanzibaris began to look further afield for opportunities to pursue higher education. Those who came to physical maturity in the Cold War era were uniquely advantaged in

⁴ Abdulrazak Gurnah, By the Sea (New York: New Press, 2001).

⁵ Personal email communication from Abdulrazak Gurnah to the author, August 14, 2019.

⁶ James Mark and Péter Apor, "Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956-1989," The Journal of Modern History 87

⁷ Norman Bennett, A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar (Cambridge, MA: Methuen and Co., 1978), 222-33, 244.

this respect; not only were the British offering more scholarships—primarily to study at Uganda's Makerere University, or in the United Kingdom-families were also more willing than ever to sponsor promising children anxious to acquire higher education overseas.⁸ And by the late 1950s a rising generation of young Zanzibaris could also look to the East for patronage and support. Recognizing an opportunity to influence an emerging Third World elite, the socialist fraternity of nations began to arrange for a growing number of Africans to visit carefully stage-managed tours, or to stay for longer periods of study and training. The GDR was one of a constellation of states that also included the Soviet Union and China willing to invest scarce state resources in an attempt to inculcate Third World nationalists in socialist theory and belief.9

By the late 1950s the British also signaled their intention to eventually withdraw from Zanzibar, which triggered a bitter partisan dispute over the colonial inheritance. Two rival nationalist party coalitions emerged, and access to foreign scholarships was just one of the ways in which they competed. Of the two, the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) was more aggressive in obtaining and disseminating scholarships; indeed, the party could not find enough applicants to fill the number of offered scholarships. 10 Party leader Ali Muhsin persuaded Gamal Abdel Nasser to sponsor dozens of Zanzibari students to come and study in Egypt. 11 Sent to Cairo in 1960 to represent the ZNP and supervise the students, Ali Sultan Issa contacted Eastern Bloc embassy officials, and requested scholarships. He estimates that through his and others' efforts over 300 Zanzibaris went to the GDR in the 1960s for short courses in trade unionism and cooperatives, or for full degree programs in such fields as medicine and engineering.12

The presence in the islands of a small but increasingly significant cohort of youth who had been exposed to life in the East had far-reaching consequences,

⁸ See G. Thomas Burgess, "Youth and the Revolution: Mobility and Discipline in Zanzibar, 1950-80" (PhD. diss., Indiana University, 2001), 84.

⁹ The Bandung Conference of 1955 was a major stimulus to Chinese efforts; see G. Thomas Burgess, "Mao in Zanzibar: Nationalism, Discipline, and the (De)Construction of Afro-Asian Solidarities," in Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives, ed. Christopher Lee (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Burgess, "Youth and the Revolution," 84.

¹¹ Ali Muhsin Al Barwani, Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar (Memoirs) (no publisher: 1997), 98 - 105.

¹² G. Thomas Burgess, Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar: The Memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 66. Most went after independence, when the GDR became Zanzibar's leading educational patron.

which will only be outlined here.¹³ It encouraged a growing divide within the ZNP between the more conservative party mainstream and a leftist faction led by Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, the party's secretary general and principal founder of the ZNP youth wing, known as the Youth's Own Union (YOU). In mid-1963 Babu resigned from the ZNP to help found the Umma Party, which gained the support of most of those who had returned from the East. The new party was based overwhelmingly in Zanzibar Town, and accommodated members who espoused everything from Maoism to anarchism, nationalism, and social democracy.¹⁴ Umma began to criticize the ZNP as a party of reactionary feudalists and capitalists; it also formed a tactical alliance with the ZNP's main rival, the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), even though in previous years Babu had repeatedly attacked that party for its divisive racial polemics.¹⁵

As Zanzibar approached independence these three parties presented widely contrasting electoral appeals. In a society in which a large majority of voters were poor Muslims of at least partial African ancestry, they disagreed as to how that majority ought to be identified, and from what it ought to be protected. The ZNP claimed Zanzibaris were first and foremost Muslims who needed to be protected from the political domination of newly independent states like Kenya and Tanganyika lacking clear Muslim majorities. They also needed to preserve Zanzibar's unique Muslim culture from "hordes" of unwanted migrants from the African mainland. The ASP, meanwhile, claimed most Zanzibaris were Africans who needed to defend themselves from Arab cruelty and domination. 16 And for its part Umma claimed most islanders were members of downtrodden classes that required protection from exploitative capitalists and feudalists. The three parties also differed dramatically when it came to which global leaders they found most inspiring, and to which they looked for material support. The ZNP claimed to eschew racial politics, and yet aligned itself with Gamal Abdel Nasser's version of anti-colonial Arab nationalism. The ASP for its part openly embraced racial politics, yet drew inspiration from Julius Nyerere, the non-racialist

¹³ See G. Thomas Burgess, "An Imagined Generation: Umma Youth in Nationalist Zanzibar," in *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence from Tanzania: Essays in Honor of I.M. Kimambo*, ed. Gregory Maddox et al. (London: James Currey Publishers, 2005), 216–249.

¹⁴ For a particularly laudatory account, see Amrit Wilson, *The Threat of Liberation: Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar* (London: Pluto Press, 2013). Wilson draws heavily from Babu's writings and recollections.

¹⁵ The ASP, in turn, criticized the ZNP for its "communist" element. Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones, Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 271–272.

¹⁶ See Glassman, War of Words.

leader of Tanganyika's independence movement. Umma, meanwhile, looked further afield for allies and ideological cousins, revering socialist nations as sources of inspiration and support.¹⁷

Umma's very existence was only possible through Eastern patronage; despite the triangular symmetry of the partisan contest, socialism was not an organic plant that sprouted naturally from an island population that traditionally saw the world in terms of class struggle. The only thing "traditional" about socialism in Zanzibar was its cosmopolitanism; socialism drew much of its strength and vitality from the travel experiences of a rising generation precocious in its cultural and intellectual appropriations. While Zanzibaris coming to maturity during the height of the Cold War were uniquely eager and able to go abroad, and while they ventured much further than their predecessors, for at least a thousand years Zanzibar had been a key link in a cosmopolitan network of trade and migration encompassing the islands and coasts of the western Indian Ocean.¹⁸ In the waning years of colonialism the GDR and other socialist nations of the East managed to attract a growing number of aspiring young islanders, many of whom upon their return to Zanzibar gravitated towards Umma, and embraced "scientific" solutions to the islands' chronic racial and class divisions. Never a party that enjoyed mass appeal, Umma may be described as a small but effective party in the Leninist vanguard tradition. In the mid-1960s Umma would play an instrumental role in pushing Zanzibar towards the GDR and other nations of the East.

A New East-South Partnership

After a final round of elections, in December 1963 the British transferred power to the ZNP and its sister party, the Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party (ZPPP). Barely a month later the independent ZNP-ZPPP coalition government was overthrown in an ASP uprising that triggered weeks of violence. The seizure of power quickly captured international headlines, in part because it was not clear who was behind it, or whether the new regime would align with the East, the West, or remain neutral in the Cold War. While the violence was definitely racialized, and directed primarily against Arabs as the allegedly arrogant descendants of slave owners, Umma comrades were also active in the revolution, including

¹⁷ See Burgess, "Mao in Zanzibar."

¹⁸ See, for example, Randal Pouwels, The Horn and the Crescent: Cultural change and traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

those of Arab ancestry. And since over a dozen had received military training in Cuba, and could be heard shouting Spanish revolutionary slogans over the radio in Zanzibar, there was even brief media speculation that the revolution was the work of Fidel Castro's regime.¹⁹

Umma cooperation with the ASP in early 1964 was a function of their common opposition to the ZNP-ZPPP alliance; but it also stemmed from the fact that race and class identities were slippery, and easily, conflated. It was not difficult for ASP revolutionaries to recast Arabs as feudalists and South Asians as capitalists—especially when, in the context of the Cold War, such an appropriation of socialist vocabulary earned the new regime a modicum of international respect, as well as inclusion in the global narrative of the dawning of a new and more equitable socialist epoch. A further reason for the willingness of ASP leaders to accept Umma comrades into their ranks was a desperate manpower shortage caused by the death or flight of so many supporters of the former regime, some of whom were among the islands' more educated citizens.

Umma officially merged with the ASP in March 1964, by which time Babu and his cohort of leftists had assumed positions of influence in the new regime. In fact, as Minister of External Affairs and Trade, Babu was instrumental in Zanzibar's decision to recognize the GDR in late January 1964.²⁰ According to West Germany's Hallstein Doctrine, no nation except the Soviet Union could have relations with both West and East Germany. By siding with the GDR, the new regime clearly signaled its intentions to depart from the general trend of African non-alignment in the Cold War. Markus Wolf, who at the time was the GDR's director of foreign intelligence in the ministry of state security, reasoned that diplomatic recognition came about through the influence of Zanzibaris who studied in the GDR, and returned with positive feelings towards the East.²¹ Those who visited other socialist lands instead were also in support of recognition.

Relatively uneducated, and a moderate when it came to the global contest between East and West, President Abeid Karume was encircled by ministers like Babu who had traveled to the East and embraced a socialist vision of the future. Though they sometimes disagreed as to what that would actually entail,

¹⁹ Keith Kyle, "The Zanzibar Coup," *The Spectator*, January 25, 1964; Keith Kyle, "How it Happened," *The Spectator*, February 14, 1964; cf. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 59–60; cf. Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights*, 84.

²⁰ Schneppen, *Zanzibar and the Germans*, 12. See also Babu, "I Was the First Third World Minister," 53.

²¹ Markus Wolf, with Anne McElvoy, *Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster* (New York: Random House, 1997), 252.

at least some were convinced of the need to oust or at least sideline Karume in order for their cherished People's Republic to take its rightful place in the progressive march of humanity. After considerable maneuvering on all sides, as well as continual American and British strategizing as to how to best neutralize the perceived communist threat in the islands, in late April 1964 Karume consented to a federation with Tanganyika, Zanzibar's closest neighbor on the continent. This allowed him to transfer to the mainland men like Babu and Vice President Kassim Hanga considered to be hostile and/or actively plotting against him.22

If the federation purchased Karume some short-term political security, it set up an immediate confrontation with Tanganyika over the issue of Zanzibar's recognition of the GDR. The GDR had already offered a generous aid package, which Karume saw as vital to his ambitions for nation building and racial uplift. He was not prepared to abandon such aid in order to placate Julius Nyerere, his partner in the union and now president of the United Republic of Tanzania. Tanganyika, meanwhile, was the largest recipient of West German aid in sub-Saharan Africa, and among other projects the Bonn government provided key technical and material assistance to the air wing of the Tanganyikan army. All of this was now in jeopardy due to the Hallstein Doctrine. The issue was so serious it threatened to break the union; Karume refused to abandon his East German "friends," and Nyerere was convinced the GDR was trying to sabotage the union.²³ He eventually persuaded the East Germans to accept the demotion of their embassy in Zanzibar in exchange for the right to open a consulate general in Dar es Salaam. When the West Germans interpreted this as a violation of the Hallstein Doctrine, and announced in early-1965 they would be withholding their military aid, Nyerere renounced all aid ties with the Federal Republic.²⁴ Karume was the only real winner in all these negotiations, since the East Germans were forced to increase their aid pledges so as to keep him on their side.

The New Zanzibar

From 1964 to 1968 the GDR competed with China as Zanzibar's leading patron. In his vivid memoir, Markus Wolf describes the beginnings of a relationship that would fall into a familiar pattern of East-South relationships during the Cold

²² See Burgess, "Youth and the Revolution," 258 – 275.

²³ Issa Shivji, Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism? Lessons of Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2008), 103.

²⁴ Schneppen, Zanzibar and the Germans, 14-20; Clayton, Zanzibar Revolution, 147-148.

War. It included farcical moments, as when upon his arrival in February 1964 Wolf was asked to inspect a guard of honor to the "lilting strains" of a police orchestra playing Viennese waltzes. In celebration of May Day, he watched as singers "praised the beauty and richness" of the GDR as a kind of "fairytale land of plenty." Clearly, Zanzibari officials saw the GDR as a potentially endless source of patronage. And the GDR did nothing to disabuse such notions, but instead offered an aid program that would have gone a long way towards "developing" Zanzibar, and realizing a modernist vision of the future shared by President Karume and his new East German friends.

Though the GDR did not deliver on all its initial promises, it did send medical personnel and secondary school teachers to help make up for the exodus of British expatriates and skilled Zanzibaris victimized by the revolution.²⁶ Officials of the Freie Deutsche Jugend, the East German youth organization, also advised the ASP on how to mobilize the younger generation in support of socialist nation building imperatives. Abdulla Said Natepe and Aboud Talib traveled to the GDR to receive training in how to establish their own version of the Young Pioneers, an institution first established in the Soviet Union in the early-1920s, which over the decades had become ubiquitous in the socialist East. Rajab Kheri told a Zanzibari student audience in 1965 that "our problem is that we are backward, and we have to be in harmony with our friends who are the long time founders of these children development programs. ... their children have achieved high development levels. We have to construct a bridge of friendship with them and unite with them. In this way we can achieve that same level of development."²⁷ The youth labor camp was another fixture of life in the socialist East, and the GDR assisted Zanzibar in establishing its own set of camps by sending tractors

²⁵ Wolf and McElvoy, *Man Without a Face*, 253 – 254. Wolf reasoned Zanzibaris had chosen the GDR as a major patron so as to not offend neighboring states like Kenya still economically tied to Great Britain, and who might be anxious about too close of ties with the Soviet Union: "We were economically advanced enough to be a useful supplier of advice … but small enough not to annoy any other sources of income." Ibid., 255.

²⁶ Clayton, *Zanzibar Revolution*, 144, 146. To compare East German aid with that of the USSR and China, see also Burton, "Diverging Visions;" Burgess, "Mao in Zanzibar"; and G. Thomas Burgess, "A Socialist Diaspora: Ali Sultan Issa, the Soviet Union, and the Zanzibari Revolution," in *Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters*, ed. Maxim Matusevich (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007).

²⁷ Thomas Burgess, "The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *Africa Today* 51 (2005): 10.

and instructors to impart practical skills in plumbing, for example.²⁸ Finally, the GDR ramped up the number of scholarships on offer; in 1966, for example, 123 Zanzibari students were in the GDR—more than in any other foreign country, and nearly double the combined number of those studying in China and the USSR.29

While the GDR sponsored the construction of a dairy plant it had a more significant economic impact in the realm of finance. The Moscow-trained Abdul Aziz Twala, Zanzibar's Minister of Finance, leaned heavily on the advice of Martin Gentsch, who although East German was asked to chair the Public Finance Control Commission. In early 1966 the commission was instrumental in establishing the People's Bank of Zanzibar (Benki ya Wananchi wa Zanzibar). As Eric Burton describes, Twala and Gentsch were close personal friends, and agreed that Zanzibar needed to reduce its dependency on the capitalist West, while also maintaining financial autonomy from the Tanzanian mainland. They were also convinced of the need for East German instruction in the principles of socialist economics, management, and bookkeeping. In addition to arranging for islanders to receive such training in the GDR, Gentsch and Twala collaborated on the opening of a "School of Economics," which when it opened in Zanzibar in April 1967 boasted over a hundred students.³⁰

While the GDR had an impact in the realms of finance, education, and youth mobilization, East Germany is especially remembered for its assistance in housing and security. From early-1964 Karume was an enthusiastic supporter of East German plans to house the entire population of the islands in massive new apartment blocks that would boast modern amenities such as running water, indoor plumbing, and electricity.³¹ As an African nationalist who cut his political teeth in the streets of Zanzibar Town, it is not hard to imagine Karume's rapturous response to such proposals. By the mid-twentieth century the capital was divided between the largely Arab and South Asian neighborhoods of Stone Town, and the mostly African area known as Ng'ambo, or literally "the other side." Stone Town enjoyed cooling sea breezes and close proximity to the palaces of the sultans, high colonial officials, and wealthy grandees of island society.

²⁸ G. Thomas Burgess, "To Differentiate Rice from Grass: Youth Labor Camps in Revolutionary Zanzibar" in Generations Past: Youth in East African History, ed. Andrew Burton and Hélène Charton-Bigot (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 227.

²⁹ Burgess, "A Socialist Diaspora," 281.

³⁰ Burton, "Diverging Visions," 91–92, 95, 109. See also Shivji, Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism, 133 – 141; Clayton, Zanzibar Revolution, 144.

³¹ Garth Andrew Myers, Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 109.

It also boasted an array of cafes, movie theaters, and public gardens. Meanwhile the African residents of Ng'ambo rented housing of widely varying quality and amenity.³² Thus if East Germany followed through on its promise to provide Africans with "modern" housing it would rectify one of Zanzibar's most visible, galling, and visceral reminders of racial inequality.

Such grandiose plans were, however, soon scaled down to the demolition and reconstruction of two Ng'ambo neighborhoods, Kikwajuni and Kilimani. In 1968, however, architect Hubert Scholz and a team of East German experts proposed to extend these pilot projects over the rest of Ng'ambo. The plan called for the construction of 6,992 flats in an area that already included 5,163 homes deemed to be in good or fair condition.³³ Ultimately, through GDR support and the forced and unpaid labor of urban Zanzibaris citizens, the regime managed to construct only 1,102 flats. These new units in the urban area Michenzani suffered from chronic problems with water pressure, and along with those in Kikwajuni and Kilimani represented an addition of less than a thousand flats to Ng'ambo's pre-existing housing stock.³⁴ Yet in terms of square footage the Michenzani apartment blocks were the largest buildings ever constructed in Zanzibar, and their sheer scale did manage to impress some islanders, and grant the regime's development schemes a measure of legitimacy. For many islanders, however, the massive apartment blocks are stark reminders of the thousands of hours of forced labor required for their construction. And according to this author's own subjective aesthetic, they have aged about as well as most of their modernist Eastern European predecessors.35

A plan to demolish homes, relocate citizens, and force them to contribute unpaid labor to the construction of flats intended for only a relative few was controversial enough; even more so was the GDR's central role in setting up Zanzibar's notorious security apparatus. Markus Wolf recalls that almost as soon as diplomatic relations were established the Zanzibaris requested training in intelligence gathering—no doubt due to the GDR's excellent reputation in such matters. Karume's regime hoped to employ such expertise against potentially disloyal islanders. Wolf recalls:

³² See Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001).

³³ Myers, Verandahs of Power, 111-112.

³⁴ Ibid., 115, 123.

³⁵ The regime's dependence on forced labor to build the new flats in Ng'ambo, as well as for other public works projects, is one of the most vividly remembered and well known facets of the revolutionary project. See, for example, Burgess, *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights*.

In many ways we were naïve about the effects of our intervention in Third World countries. Our intelligence-gathering skills, honed by the experience of the Second World War and the Cold War, were transferred through our well-trained liaison officers and specialists. Prompted by their diligence, the security service in Zanzibar reached ridiculous dimensions. Relative to the size of the population, it was soon far bigger than our own, and it rapidly acquired a dynamic of its own over which we had no more influence.³⁶

In hindsight, Wolf is defensive and apologetic about the consequences of such training. He must certainly have been aware of the willingness of people like Seif Bakari, Zanzibar's director of intelligence, to resort to torture and extra-judicial murder. Until research is undertaken in the Stasi archives, much will remain unknown about this murky relationship.³⁷ It is known that Seif Bakari and other islanders received security training in the GDR,³⁸ and that under Bakari's direction thousands of Zanzibaris were arrested in the decade following the 1964 Revolution. Many were tortured, and some were killed. Citizens were kept in a permanent state of fear; informants were believed to be everywhere, continually feeding information to security agents. Ali Sultan Issa, who served Karume's regime as Minister of Education, recalls:

In those days, we could not trust even our own wives because they sometimes informed on their husbands to the state security, trained by the East Germans. And we all know how the East Germans controlled their people, so almost the same system applied here. ... We used to have a saying that "among three people one is not yours." We thought the walls had ears, they could be bugged.³⁹

Kjersti Larsen notes that in her anthropological fieldwork, "elderly people recall the system of denunciation ... where neighbors, even family members, informed on each other."40 Charles Swift, an American mental health officer assigned to Zanzibar in the late-1960s, recalls the atmosphere as "heavy with suspicion and apprehension. ... About the only people who spoke their minds were the patients at the psychiatric hospital."41 While in popular memories the GDR is usu-

³⁶ Wolf and McElvoy, Man Without a Face, 256.

³⁷ See Anna Warda's project on The Ministry of Security in the "Third World", which includes a case study on Zanzibar: https://zzf potsdam.de/de/forschung/projekte/die-tatigkeiten-des-mfs.

³⁸ Interview by author, Seif Bakari, Dodoma, Tanzania, May 1, 1995.

³⁹ Burgess, Race, Revolution and the Struggle for Human Rights, 126-127.

⁴⁰ Kjersti Larsen, "Silenced Voices, Recaptured Memories: Historical Imprints Within a Zanzibari Life-World," in Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar, ed. William Cunningham Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, Ltd., 2018), 259.

⁴¹ Charles Swift, Dar Days: The Early Years in Tanzania (New York: University Press of America, 2002), 98.

ally remembered as the patron and mentor of this hated security apparatus, locals tend to blame its cruelty on officials like Bakari, animated as they were by a lethal combination of paranoia and racial animus.

East-South Encounters in Memory

In oral histories of the revolution, Zanzibaris remember East Germany mostly for its investments in housing and security. Those who studied in the GDR, however, often have more vivid, personal memories. Such recollections inspired Abdulrazak Gurnah—Zanzibar's most respected novelist and twice a nominee for the Booker Prize—to provide us with the evocative story of Latif Muhammed, who in *By the Sea* obtains a scholarship to study dentistry in the GDR in the 1960s, and thus escape a series of tragedies that have engulfed his family.⁴² His father is considered the town drunkard, and his mother is indiscrete in her infidelities. His older brother, meanwhile, is seduced by a visiting Persian merchant, who convinces him to board a dhow and follow him over the horizon. To compound the family's shame, the Persian merchant also tricks the father into relinquishing ownership of his house; the family suffers eviction, and the loss of their possessions.

Latif is laconic about his family's descent into poverty and disgrace. He merely notes that he wants to escape from his parents, to never "see them again, to leave them to their indignant decline and their poisoned lives." Literature becomes a refuge—the books and magazines available at his school library, and at the United States Information Service (USIS). He praises America for offering air-conditioning, jazz recordings, and "beautiful" books he could actually borrow, and return. Through such American largesse Latif becomes exposed to Emerson, Hawthorne, Melville and other authors who excite "a noble curiosity," and which—unlike British authors—are unconnected to "a discourse of [colonial] tutelage and hierarchy." As "the Emperor of Hollywood and rock'n'roll," President Kennedy also impresses him. America's glamorous image is tainted, however, by the murder of Patrice Lumumba, footage of American police roughly handling black civil rights activists, and the CIA's reputation for "manipulating and controlling every small and big thing that caught their attention."

⁴² Gurnah interviewed his former classmates who studied in the GDR in the 1960s. Personal email communication from Abdulrazak Gurnah to the author, August 14, 2019. It bears notice that in *By the Sea* Latif's story represents only a fractional component of a much larger narrative. **43** Gurnah, *By the Sea*, 115.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 106 – 107.

In his hunger for the cultural and intellectual capital of distant lands, Latif also visits the East German "Information Institute," where he discovers Schiller, Chekov, and Mikhail Sholokhov. And then as the mistress of the Minister of Education, Latif's mother manages to secure for her son a coveted scholarship to the GDR. Having sworn off alcohol, and become deeply religious, Latif's father worries Latif will lose his religious beliefs among the communist atheists of the East. He takes him to the mosque, where he leads the men in prayer, and then dispenses some fatherly advice: "When you get to that godless place, don't forget to pray. ... Whatever else you do, don't lose God, don't lose your way. There's darkness there." Blaming his father for his family's dissolution, Latif finds his newly found piety laughable.45

Latif's first impressions of the GDR are not favorable; the place strikes him as wet and gloomy, and his student hostel is cramped and poorly heated. It is a "catacomb" set aside for "dark" male students from Africa like himself. Uprooted and thrust into this artificial environment, the students jostle one another for respect and primacy. They create "an order of precedence and exclusions and dislikes" that is "detailed and precise, despite the appearance of raucous, romping disorder." Having never "lived amid such noise and play and violence before," Latif relishes "most of it cautiously, without questioning or wonder." His roommate, Ali, hails from Guinea and immediately demonstrates his "sneering dislike," and need for deference. Full of "scorn and mockery and knowingness," Ali has a low opinion of the GDR's rank among the nations. "This is Eastern Europe," he says. "They don't have anything here. It's just as bad as Africa." He speculates that the meat in the cafeteria stew is not really meat, but goat feces, or asbestos.47

In such cynical company, Latif quickly loses any belief he may have had of being on a personal mission to help realize his country's future as a "developed" socialist society. Early on he declares to Ali: "I came to GDR to study, to learn a skill. As soon as I've done that, I'll go back home and do what I can to help my people." Ali just laughs, and dismisses Latif's attempt at idealism:

Is that why you came, you Young Pioneer? I did not want to come here. I wanted to go to France, but the only scholarships available were to fraternal socialist countries, either to come here or go to the Soviet Union to learn to drive a snow plough. I think all the students here would prefer to be somewhere else.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Latif then concedes: "We all wanted to be in the land of Coca-Cola and blue jeans, even if it wasn't just for those refined pleasures that we wanted to be there." 48

Though Latif is an avid student, and earns the respect of his German instructors, he observes a relationship between them and the rest of the students rife with "misunderstanding and insolence and mischief." As a whole, the teachers are neither very fond of nor impressed by their African charges. And in turn, the students

acted superior to the teachers, as if we knew about things which the teachers had no ink-ling of – useful and complicated things, not just a couple of wedding songs or a sonorous prayer or how to play a harmonica. I wondered then, and still wonder now, who did we think we were? Perhaps we knew that we were beggar pawns in somebody else's plans, captured and delivered there. Held there. Perhaps the scorn was like the prisoner's sly refusal of the gaoler's authority, stopping short of insurrection. Or perhaps most of us were reluctant students, and reluctant students are always like that with their teachers. Or perhaps still, something stern and unyielding and despising in our teacher's demeanor made us resistant to them. Or perhaps even further still, as one of the teachers told us, the heat in our countries and in our food had sapped our motivation and drive, and made us prisoners to instinct and self-indulgence.⁵⁰

Thus despite the rhetoric of socialist solidarity Latif's German instructors possess attitudes and draw conclusions about their "dark" students that mirror colonial and Orientalist tropes of equatorial idleness and hedonism. They see their students' less than stellar academic performance as indicative of broad cultural and racial norms. The students, meanwhile, do not view their instructors as comrades in the great progressive march of humanity, but rather as curmudgeonly and mean-spirited prison guards, whose austere and often disdainful attitudes deserve only mischief and mockery in return. And yet Gurnah goes further than merely setting out a well-worn dialectic between European paternalism and post-colonial pride. Through Latif he asks: "who did we think we were?" Did the students really know more than their teachers?

Though Latif includes himself in this question, he is clearly open to new understandings. For him, East Germany is "like a gleaming new order, intimidating in its earnest and brutal self-assurance." ⁵¹ He does not, however, expound much further on his personal impressions of this socialist new order, other than to note

⁴⁸ Ibid., 119.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 104.

the local town's unwelcoming architecture and wind-swept emptiness, which may be read as a metaphor for sterile bureaucratic central planning. He also refers to the "authoritarian degradations of the GDR," but without elaboration.⁵² Otherwise, his interpretations of life in the East are free of socialist references, and could be the impressions of any African traveler coming to Germany long before or after the Cold War. Accompanying Ali on a walk around town on a Sunday afternoon, they encounter racist or at least socially obtuse behavior. A clutch of male German youths approach on the sidewalk; Ali tenses for an altercation, but the boys merely laugh and exclaim, "Afrikernische."53 Latif remarks: "their swagger and their laughter made the word ugly. It was shocking, that casual mockery, but there would be time to get used to that and worse, to learn to recover from such smug disregard."54

Later, while riding a nearly empty bus a German man "wearing a dark, heavy workman's coat" leans over the back of his seat and stares at Latif "for about five minutes without interruption." When Latif eventually "glanced back into the bus, it was to find the man's liquid eyes resting watchfully on me, unraveling a deep mystery. ... After his five minutes were up, the man made a snorting noise and turned to face the front again."55 Aside from whatever may be deduced from a snort and a stare, Latif's encounters with ordinary East Germans are devoid of violence and overt abuse. And on a trip to Dresden Latif is amazed to learn of the city's "medieval triumphs, its great industries, its beautiful buildings," as well as devastation suffered in the recent war. He regrets that his colonial education was limited to the historic doings of the British, and made no mention of Dresden, "or a multitude of other Dresdens. They had been there for all these centuries despite me, ignorant of me, oblivious of my existence. It was a staggering thought, how little it had been possible to know and remain contented."56

Latif's visit to Dresden figures as part of a growing awareness of a very humanist side of the socialist East, first glimpsed in the works of Schiller and Chekov. Further nurturing this awareness is a pen pal relationship with a young German woman named Elleke, who sends Latif a photo of herself wearing a leopard-

⁵² Ibid., 135-136.

⁵³ This might refer to the German adjective "afrikanische."

⁵⁴ Ibid., 119.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 135.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 122.

skin coat and a "friendly satirical smile." The two agree to meet; and Ali begs to come along as a sort of bodyguard, in case he is harassed by "German thugs." Ali says "You are so young. ... So inexperienced. Such a sad creature from the bush. You'll need some worldly advice when you meet up with the leopard-skin coat." 58

Latif goes alone, however, and is approached by a young man named Jan, who announces he is Elleke—that he impersonated a young woman in their correspondence as a prank that went further than intended. It all began when a speaker came to his college "to talk about the work that the GDR was doing in Africa," which Jan dismissed as "the usual campaigning rubbish about fraternal relations." He decided to invent Elleke as a sort of secret slap against the authorities, but which to his surprise yielded a letter from Latif, and the beginning of a very satisfying correspondence.⁵⁹ A student of automobile design at a local college, Jan introduces Latif to his mother who is tall, graceful, and a former beauty. Both he and his mother are well read, fluent in English, and pepper their conversation with literary allusions rather than socialist rhetoric. Indeed, though having lived through two world wars, and seen the rise of both fascism and socialism, the mother is remarkably independent in her thinking. Above all, she may be described as an irrepressible humanist, who through life's many vicissitudes retains a passionate attachment to literature and philosophy.⁶⁰

Latif is surprised to discover the mother also has her own deep well of African stories to tell, as well as scathing ruminations on the morality of settler colonialism. Before World War One her parents were wealthy landowners in Austria; when Austria lost the war the family booked passage to Kenya, and purchased a coffee farm. They felt they had a right to "places that were only occupied by people with dark skins and frizzy hair." Her parents didn't inquire much into the "duplicity and force" of colonial rule; all that mattered was "the natives were pacified and labour was cheap." And life continued that way until 1938, when they were informed that if war erupted in Europe they would be interned. So they sold their farm, moved to Dresden, and with their

⁵⁷ Ibid., 117. For Gurnah, this pen pal relationship was autobiographical. However, unlike in *By the Sea*, he and Elleke never met in real life. Personal email communication from Abdulrazak Gurnah to the author, August 14, 2019.

⁵⁸ Gurnah, By the Sea, 122-123.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 124. For a thoughtful examination of Hungary's contemporaneous attempts to nurture a youth culture of international socialist solidarity, see Mark and Apor, "Socialism Goes Global."

⁶⁰ Gurnah, By the Sea, 125–128.

life's savings bought a large and imposing home. After the war the new socialist regime confiscated their home and divided it into smaller apartments. 61

When Jan mentions his mother wrote a memoir of her time in Africa, she dismisses it as "lying nostalgia." She says,

If I were writing it now, I would also tell the horrible stories and depress everyone, like a boring old woman. ... My father was fond of saying that our superiority over the natives was only possible with their consent. ... Poor Papa, he didn't think that it was torture and murder that were committed in our name which gave us that authority in the first place. He thought it was something mysterious to do with justice and temperate conduct, something we acquired from reading Hegel and Schiller, and going to Mass. Never mind the exclusions and expulsions, and the summary judgements delivered with contemptuous assurance. ... It was our moral superiority which made the natives afraid of us. 62

If anything in East Germany strikes Latif as especially admirable, it is this sort of ruthless honesty. Years later, Latif recalls the way Jan and his mother "treated every question as if it tested their integrity, as if they had to guard against the duplicitous revision which alters the balance of a story and turns it into something heroic." He praises their "sustained passion for ideas that could not be destroyed completely, not even by living through the obscenities of colonialism, nor the inhumanities of the Nazi war and the Holocaust, nor by the authoritarian degradations of the GDR."63 Latif admires their obstinate belief in humanist values, and unwillingness to conform to hegemonic narratives and ways of seeing the world.

While initially willing to at least try and sound like an idealistic Young Pioneer, Latif comes to see the great distance between the transcendent rhetoric of fraternal East-South relations and the depressing realities of life in the GDR, including an ever-present fear of arrest and imprisonment. He becomes an accomplice in Jan's elaborate plan of escape. The two pose as tourists visiting Yugoslavia; from there they board a train to Austria, where the authorities send them on to Munich. The two then separate, with Jan staying in Germany, and Latif continuing on to further studies in England. Thus we see how, in an effort to escape his tragic family circumstances, a shy and precocious young Zanzibari male accepts an opportunity to study in the GDR, and there loses any faith he may have had in the socialist project. Within a few months he takes an opportunity to travel to London, the capital of British imperialism, and yet also a center of humanist learning and scholarship.

⁶¹ Ibid., 131–132.

⁶² Ibid., 132-133.

⁶³ Ibid., 135 – 136.

Although a work of fiction, Latif's story is inspired by Gurnah's own life experiences, in that he left Zanzibar in the 1960s to study literature in Great Britain, where he has resided for most of his adult life. Like Latif in By the Sea, Gurnah eventually became a university lecturer, as well as a noted author of both novels and literary criticism. While he did not spend time in the GDR as a student, Gurnah developed his account of Latif from the recollections of fellow Zanzibaris who had. And although highly mediated, By the Sea nevertheless proposes a way for us to view the Zanzibari encounter with East Germany in the 1960s as one in which African students were on the surface willing to respect the basic tenets of the socialist project. Yet because they were not consulted in the role they were to play in this project, they sometimes felt they were "beggar pawns in somebody else's plans."64 And though their presence in the GDR was meant as living proof of the socialist fraternity of nations, for some this fraternity remained abstract, and less real or impactful than the personal connections they made with German citizens while abroad. 65 Anxious over where such unscripted encounters might lead, the GDR's notion of "solidarity" did not actually encourage such personal associations. As Toni Weis observes, the GDR was far more interested in the solidarity of abstract peoples than of real, flesh-andblood people.⁶⁶ And yet some Africans were able to leave their student hostels and form associations with East Germans, through which they were introduced to a surprising world of private passions and subjective experience.⁶⁷

Conclusion

Back in Zanzibar, the effort to turn the theory of socialist internationalism into the reality of modernist development was facing unforeseen obstacles. When Wolf first arrived in the islands in 1964, he soon realized Zanzibaris had exaggerated ideas of what sort of aid the GDR could provide: "They would mournfully

⁶⁴ Ibid., 115.

⁶⁵ For another perspective, based upon oral histories of Tanzanian students in the GDR, see also Eric Burton, "Navigating Global Socialism: Tanzanian Students in and Beyond East Germany," *Cold War History* 19 (2019); Eric Burton, "Introduction: Journeys of Education and Struggle: African Mobility in Times of Decolonization and Cold War." *Stichproben. Vienna Journal of African Studies* 18 (2018).

⁶⁶ Toni Weis, "The Politics Machine: On the Concept of 'Solidarity' in East German Support for SWAPO," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37 (2011).

⁶⁷ For other perhaps less mediated perspectives on how African students remembered their time in the GDR, see Alberto and Schenck; Osei, annotated by Harisch; Piepiorka and Buanaissa; Schenck and Raposo, all in this volume.

show us crumbling boats, old radios, and fraying telephone cables left behind by the British, hoping that we could restore the infrastructure of their entire country."68 If islanders saw the GDR as a source of endless munificence, and if East Germans saw their relationship with Zanzibar as a means by which to break out of their diplomatic isolation, and build idealistic ties with a state that met their standards of socialist authenticity, the disillusionment was on both sides. By 1968 President Karume was increasingly upset with the poor results and/or high cost of GDR-sponsored fishing and dairy projects, the poor English skills of East German instructors, and the amount Zanzibar was expected to pay back on interest-bearing loans. He became impatient with any foreign expertise that could not be obtained at minimal cost—and by "minimal cost" he meant the Chinese, who offered grants and interest-free loans, and sent experts and advisors willing to subsist on very little. Some of Karume's frustration with the East Germans percolated down to the popular level. An East German biology teacher, when asked by his students in 1967 about the size of his salary, was duly informed that for the same amount Zanzibar could support five or ten Chinese instructors, all of whom could live in the house he alone occupied.⁶⁹

Karume's attitude became one of suspicion of all forms of technocratic expertise; hence his closure of the short-lived GDR-sponsored "School of Economics," and decision in the late-1960s to dramatically curtail the numbers of Zanzibaris sent overseas for training and education.⁷⁰ He began to say at rallies, "Tumesoma hatukujua, lakini tumejifunza tulijua," which roughly translates as "We studied and didn't understand, but then we learned through practical experience." 1 Karume's disdain for experts was an extension of his general dislike for educated persons, since from the 1950s they were the ones in the ASP most likely to challenge his authority. Yet Karume also parted ways with the GDR over his unwillingness to follow any "scientific" blueprint for socialism that entailed collectivization of agriculture, for example, or curbing the privileges of the political elite. And as Eric Burton observes, the East Germans were sometimes put off by the racial animosity that animated many of Karume's

⁶⁸ Wolf and McElvoy, Man Without a Face, 254. For an engaging American perspective on the Cold War rivalries playing out in Zanzibar, see Don Petterson, Revolution in Zanzibar: An American Cold War Tale (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ Interview by author, Eckhart Schultz, Zanzibar Town, July 22, 2004.

⁷⁰ Burton, "Diverging Visions," 108-109.

⁷¹ Interview by author, Rubesa Hafidh Rubesa, Mtambwe Nyale, Zanzibar, June 21, 2010. These words were featured on a large banner strung up on the government-built Michenzani flats, suggesting Zanzibaris did not need East German expertise to complete the project (photograph in author's possession).

most cherished initiatives. Though they once viewed him as an "anti-imperialist progressive," by 1970 he was a "nationalist conservative" who "artificially fuelled racial tensions for personal interests." By then China had supplanted the GDR as Zanzibar's leading foreign patron, and about 200 East German teachers and "experts" in Zanzibar had already left, or were on their way home.⁷³

The disillusionment was mutual—East Germans were convinced Karume was not a true socialist, and Karume felt that other than in the realm of security the GDR had failed to live up to expectations. It wasn't only the obstacles of language, culture, and distance that eventually brought an end to the flow of students, technicians, and teachers between East Germany and Zanzibar. By 1970 it was clear to both sides their shared vision of a socialist future was hollow, superficial, and unable to paper over serious differences of interest and ideology. The political elite of both countries felt it was time to be more selective in their international partners, and to be more aware of the potentially shallow quality of an imagined future that, while possessing immense appeal, was unable to reconcile diverging concepts of revolution, development, and solidarity.⁷⁴

Thus just as Zanzibar achieved sovereignty during the height of the Cold War, the GDR was poised and ready to break out of its diplomatic isolation and conduct its first major development projects in Africa. Believing they were part of a global drama in which one people after another would embrace socialism and achieve modernist development, East Germans felt they were playing a significant and honorable role in advancing the irreversible progressive momentum of history. By 1990, however, the GDR had merged with West Germany, and Zanzibar had lost key aspects of its sovereignty: its presidents were now selected by Tanzania's ruling party based overwhelmingly on the mainland. Severe economic decline had also compelled Zanzibar to roll back one revolutionary initiative after another, and to abandon anything more than lip service to socialism. Instead of gazing eastward, state officials now looked to the West and Middle East for aid, expertise, and tourists to fill the many hotels now clustered along Zanzibar's fine white sand beaches. And Abdulrazak Gurnah was now asking his friends and former classmates who studied in the GDR-caught up as they were in an era of high idealism and socialist solidarity—how they managed to negotiate the disparate avenues of opportunity suddenly presented to them.

⁷² Burton, "Diverging Visions," 111.

⁷³ Burgess, "A Socialist Diaspora," 282; Clayton, Zanzibar Revolution, 148.

⁷⁴ For the difference between "development" and "solidarity," see Weis, "The Politics Machine," 352, 357.

Bibliography

- Al Barwani, Ali Muhsin. Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar (Memoirs). No publisher, 1997. Babu, Abdulrahman Mohamed. "I Was the First Third World Minister to Recognize the GDR." In I Saw the Future and It Works: Essays Celebratina the Life of Comrade Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, 1924-1996, edited by Haroub Othman, 48-58. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: E & D Limited, 2001.
- Bennett, Norman. A History of the Arab State of Zanzibar. Cambridge, MA: Methuen and Co.,
- Burgess, G. Thomas. "Mao in Zanzibar: Nationalism, Discipline, and the (De)Construction of Afro-Asian Solidarities." In Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives, edited by Christopher Lee, 196 - 234. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010.
- Burgess, G. Thomas. "To Differentiate Rice from Grass: Youth Labor Camps in Revolutionary Zanzibar." In Generations Past: Youth in East African History, edited by Andrew Burton and Hélène Charton-Bigot, 221-236. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010.
- Burgess, G. Thomas. Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar: The Memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press,
- Burgess, G. Thomas, "A Socialist Diaspora: Ali Sultan Issa, the Soviet Union, and the Zanzibari Revolution." In Africa in Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters, edited by Maxim Matusevich, 263-291. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007.
- Burgess, G. Thomas. "An Imagined Generation: Umma Youth in Nationalist Zanzibar." In In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence from Tanzania: Essays in Honor of I.M. Kimambo, edited by Gregory Maddox, James Giblin, and Y.Q. Lawi, 216-249. London: James Currey Publishers, 2005.
- Burgess, G. Thomas. "The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar." Africa Today 51 (2005): 3-29.
- Burgess, G. Thomas. "Youth and the Revolution: Mobility and Discipline in Zanzibar, 1950-80." PhD. diss., Indiana University, 2001.
- Burton, Eric. "Diverging Visions in Revolutionary Spaces: East German Advisors and Revolution from Above in Zanzibar, 1964-1970." In Between East and South: Spaces of Ineraction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War, edited by Anna Calori, Anne-Kristen Hartmetz, Bence Kocsev, James Mark, and Jan Zofka, 85-115. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019.
- Burton, Eric. "Navigating Global Socialism: Tanzanian Students in and Beyond East Germany." Cold War History 19 (2019): 63-83.
- Burton, Eric. "Introduction: Journeys of Education and Struggle: African Mobility in Times of Decolonization and Cold War." Stichproben. Vienna Journal of African Studies 18 (2018):
- Clayton, Anthony. The Zanzibar Revolution and its Aftermath. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1978.
- Glassman, Jonathon. War of Words, War of Stones, Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011.

- Gleijeses, Piero. Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959 1976. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.
- Gorsuch, Anne. "'Cuba, My Love:' The Romance of Revolutionary Cuba in the Soviet Sixties." American Historical Review 120 (2015): 497-526.
- Gurnah, Abdulrazak. By the Sea. New York: New Press, 2001.
- Kyle, Keith. "The Zanzibar Coup." The Spectator, January 25, 1964.
- Kyle, Keith. "How it Happened." The Spectator, February 14, 1964.
- Larsen, Kjersti. "Silenced Voices, Recaptured Memories: Historical Imprints Within a Zanzibari Life-World." In Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle: Remembering the Revolution in Zanzibar, edited by William Cunningham Bissell and Marie-Aude Fouéré, 251-278. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2018.
- Mark, James, and Péter Apor, "Socialism Goes Global: Decolonization and the Making of a New Culture of Internationalism in Socialist Hungary, 1956-1989." The Journal of Modern History 87 (2015): 852-891.
- Muehlenbeck, Philip E., and Natalia Telepneva, eds. Warsaw Pact Intervention in the Third World: Aid and Influence in the Cold War. London: I.B. Tauris, 2018.
- Myers, Garth Andrew. Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003.
- Petterson, Don. Revolution in Zanzibar: An American Cold War Tale. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002.
- Pouwels, Randal. The Horn and the Crescent: Cultural change and traditional Islam on the East African coast, 800-1900. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Shivji, Issa. Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism? Lessons of Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2008.
- Schneppen, Heinz. Zanzibar and the Germans: A Special Relationship, 1844-1966. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: National Museums of Tanzania, 1998.
- Swift, Charles. Dar Days: The Early Years in Tanzania. New York: University Press of America, 2002.
- Weis, Toni. "The Politics Machine: On the Concept of 'Solidarity' in East German Support for SWAPO." Journal of Southern African Studies 37 (2011): 351-367.
- Wilson, Amrit. The Threat of Liberation: Imperialism and Revolution in Zanzibar. London: Pluto Press, 2013.
- Wolf, Markus, with Anne McElvoy. Man Without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism's Greatest Spymaster. New York: Random House, 1997.