Chapter 3
Universities, East African Scholarly Networks and Knowledge Production

In 2018, Mahmood Mamdani published a powerful article in the *London Review of Books* recalling the fierce ideological debates which took place in and around the University of East Africa in the 1960s.[1] He evoked the world of the radicals of Dar es Salaam, epitomised by the Guyanese historian Walter Rodney, on the one hand, and that of Ali Mazrui, the champion of an East African liberalism at Makerere, on the other. Responding to Mamdani's article in the next issue, Colin Leys drew on his own memories of the time to point to the absence, in Mamdani's account, of the wider context of that time – the different academic models that the academics of that era turned to in building a new institution of the future, the power of external funding, neo-colonialism and the Cold War context.[2]

This chapter revisits the broader, regional context that Leys alluded to, asking how academics and students sought to build a university and wider research and knowledge infrastructure for an independent East Africa, amid constraints both historical and external. The short-lived University of East Africa (1963–70), which for a time coordinated the activities of its constituent sister university colleges in Kampala, Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam is one obvious thread in this story. Existing histories of the institution have already shown that it was more than simply a failed integration project.[3] We follow this scholarship in emphasising the colonial foundations of the university and various pressures for the development of *national* universities from the outset. However, as in other chapters, our argument about the role of the university, as an institution, in practices and ideas of regionalism extends beyond formal, constitutional arrangements. We demonstrate that academics continued to debate and pursue the intellectual project of East Africa through forums like the East African Academy and annual Social Science conferences, in defiance of the dynamics of high politics that saw the break-up of the

1 Mahmood Mamdani, "The African University," *London Review of Books*, 18 July 2018, 29–32, accessed 26 February 2025, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n14/mahmood-mamdani/the-african-university.

2 Letter from Colin Leys, *London Review of Books*, 2 August 2018, accessed 26 February 2025, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n15/letters.

3 Michael Mwenda Kithinji, *The State and the University Experience in East Africa: Colonial Foundations and Postcolonial Transformations in Kenya* (Pretoria, South Africa: UNISA Press, 2019); Bhekithemba R. Mngomezulu, *Politics and Higher Education in East Africa from the 1920s to 1970* (University of Johannesburg Press, 2012).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111620060-004

University of East Africa. In doing so, we add an analytical layer to accounts of East African higher education doomed by its colonial roots and dealt the ultimate blow by authoritarian nationalism.

In many respects, higher education remained an elite project following political independence in East Africa, and for historian Michael Kithinji this aspect of continuity spells a failure to decolonise the university.[4] While echoing this observation, we give renewed attention to the sustained and heterogeneous discussions across the period in question about how to make universities relevant to the social, political and intellectual realities of post-independence East Africa. Some of the proposals voiced were put into practice, often through new opportunities for external funding. More importantly, the *debate* about universities extended far beyond the institution itself. While schooling (itself coordinated in an East African framework at various moments) obviously touched the lives of more East Africans, university education retained a disproportionate role in the national and regional imagination, as will become clear. In this chapter, the university therefore plays a dual role. As an institution, it (re)produced the regional intellectual elite who populate the pages of this book – and for this reason we give space here to students as well as staff, nodding to an intergenerational process and building on extensive scholarship on radical campus politics. In tandem, it was a site of regional practices, like publishers or trade unions, through which thinkers and organisers refashioned East Africa as a category.

We begin by situating the growth of Makerere in the 1950s in its late colonial context. Regional planning and infrastructure were fundamental, but the regional and the national co-existed from an early stage. Tracing the work of education commissions, we suggest that a federal structure was a matter of pragmatism as much as ideology, guided by a sense of urgency and by constrained resources. There were always limits to the extent to which a formal federal structure was embraced, and this continued into the lifetime of the University of East Africa from 1963 to 1970. But, as we go on to discuss in the second part of this chapter, this regional structure underpinned a particular intellectual culture up to the late 1960s, in which different flavours of anti-colonial thought co-existed, ranging from various forms of liberal cosmopolitanism on the one hand, to a more radical leftist anti-colonialism on the other, which itself was profoundly transnational.[5] Both were anti-colonial and rooted in a desire to create something new. But over

4 Kithinji, *The State and the University Experience in East Africa*, 201–5.

5 Andrew Ivaska, "Movement Youth in a Global Sixties Hub: The Everyday Lives of Transnational Activists in Postcolonial Dar Es Salaam," in *Transnational Histories of Youth in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Richard Ivan Jobs and David M. Pomfret (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 188–210.

time, as we discuss towards the end of the chapter, this became hard to sustain. The external funds that supported this intellectual culture were taken as evidence of neo-colonialism and Cold War machinations at work. Moreover, East Africa's governments and ruling parties were increasingly anxious to control potentially unruly university campuses.

Colonial Visions for Regional Education

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Makerere College in Uganda was a central plank in Britain's late colonial rush to establish new institutions of higher education and in doing so both prepare colonial territories for self-government and shape the cultures of colonized societies beyond the end of formal colonial rule. As the historian of Britain Miles Taylor writes, "[n]o other former colonial power tried as hard as Britain to influence the future of its ex-colonies through exporting its own system of higher education".[6] Foundations for organising higher education along regional lines were laid in this late colonial context, but given the perceived urgency in preparing for self-government with limited resources, and a changing international playing field for study opportunities, there was significant contingency involved.

Makerere had been established in 1922 as a technical school and was initially under the control of the Uganda government, with most students coming from Uganda, and more specifically the Kingdom of Buganda. In 1937, the de la Warr Commission set out plans to develop Makerere as a Higher Education College of East Africa.[7] This was given renewed impetus by the wartime Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies chaired by Cyril Asquith.[8] Its report, published in 1945, concluded that there was an urgent need to provide higher education

6 Miles Taylor, "Utopian Universities of the British Commonwealth," in *Utopian Universities: A Global History of the New Campuses of the 1960s*, eds. Jill Pellew and Miles Taylor (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 269.

7 David Mills, "Life on the Hill: Students and the Social History of Makerere," *Africa* 76, no. 2 (2006): 252.

8 The Commission was established in 1943 "to consider the principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the Colonies; and to explore means whereby universities and other appropriate bodies in the United Kingdom may be able to co-operate with institutions of higher education in the Colonies in order to give effect to these principles." Colonial Office, "Report on the Commission of Higher Education in the Colonies" (London HMSO, 1945), 2. For further analysis on the Asquith Commission, see Apollos O. Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans, 1860–1960* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 134–56.

across the colonial empire. Universities were understood by the Commission as a means of producing "men and women with the standard of public service and capacity for leadership which self rule requires".[9] But for the Commissioners, this was not solely a question of creating new elites. More than that, they wrote, "universities serve the double purpose of refining and maintaining all that is best in local traditions and cultures and at the same time of providing a means whereby those brought up under the influence of these traditions and cultures may enter on a footing of equality into the world-wide community of intellect."[10] A series of new University Colleges would be established, which would award degrees from the University of London. They would be managed by the Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies (IUC) which described its mission in its 1955 annual report as "training the heirs of empire". The foundation of the IUC created a tight link between universities in the metropole and those established in the colonial empire.[11]

As Kithinji has argued, the foundations for organising higher education along regional lines had now been laid.[12] If the Asquith Commission spoke to a sense of urgency across the British empire as a whole, the sense of being behind and needing to very quickly develop local higher education was particularly marked in relation to East Africa. And so, despite the misgivings of some staff members at Makerere, in 1949 Makerere was granted the status of a University College with degrees awarded by the University of London.[13] The new University College was, like others established at the same time, intended to be unitary in the sense of operating from one site but federal in the sense of having a regional remit, mirroring contemporary British colonial thinking about political federation as a model for decolonization.[14] This was a model of higher education that assumed the number of students would be relatively small, and that asking each colonial administration to contribute to a single institution would be cheaper than having separate institutions in each territory.

As was the case with other aspects of post-war colonial development planning, the speed of change over the decade and a half after the end of the second world war is striking. Already by the early 1950s, only a few years after Maker-

9 Colonial Office, "Report on the Commission of Higher Education in the Colonies," 10.

10 Colonial Office, "Report on the Commission of Higher Education in the Colonies," 10–11.

11 Taylor, "Utopian Universities," 272.

12 Michael Mwenda Kithinji, "An Imperial Enterprise: The Making and Breaking of the University of East Africa, 1949–1969," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines* 46, no. 2 (2012): 195–214.

13 Mills, "Life on the Hill," 256. The Principal, Lamont, resigned and was replaced by De Bunsen.

14 Taylor, "Utopian Universities".

ere's transition to a University College, it was clear that Makerere would soon not meet demand or satisfy national aspirations. This sense of urgency was given added impetus by colonial anxiety that East African students would find means of satisfying their demand for higher education by going outside British imperial structures. In 1953, Makerere Principal Bernard De Bunsen told the Kenyan Department of Education that he was "rather perturbed by a trickle of students away from Makerere in the middle of their courses which might well develop into a flood if overseas facilities were known to be available".[15] The question of higher education demonstrated the contradictions of colonial policy making at the time. The desire to control the ways in which East Africans could access higher education was set against the inability of colonial states to resource the kind of expansion that would be needed to meet demand or accept a shift away from a model which offered higher education only to a tiny elite.

In 1954, the East Africa High Commission appointed a working party to consider the needs of East Africa in relation to Higher Education. The reports of the working party, as well as the white paper that accompanied it, reveals some of these contradictions. The working party was charged with thinking about the ten years ahead. With this brief, they stated that "we wish to emphasise with all the strength at our command that the provision of university education in East Africa should continue to be the concern of the three territories acting together." The major reason was financial. "The time has not yet come", they continued, "when each of the three territories could support its own university institution, and until that time it would be the height of folly to cripple the development of Makerere College by the diversion of funds, now needed to build up that College, to the foundation of new institutions for which financial support would be inadequate."[16] But looking to the future also meant thinking about provision for national universities. The report recognised that "there are three territories, each with growing territorial consciousness and consequential ambitions", and one of "these ambitions is that of possessing a university institution, especially suited to the racial and other characteristics of each territory and capable of giving expression to its awareness of itself." They were therefore, they wrote, "not surprised to learn that the Governor of Tanganyika has announced the setting aside of a sum of about £700,000 as the nucleus of a fund for the foundation of a university college in that territory."[17] They were rather more surprised to discover that Nairo-

15 Archives of Makerere University (hereafter using reference AR/MAK), AR/MAK/5/7, Bernard De Bunsen to N. Larby (Education dept. Nairobi) 22 April 1953.

16 East Africa High Commission, *Report of the Working Party on Higher Education in East Africa* (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1958), 44.

17 East Africa High Commission, *Report of the Working Party*, 45.

bi's Royal Technical College, due to open in 1956 through Colonial Development and Welfare funding, was intending to award degrees, despite an agreement between the three territories that it would only provide technical training.[18] The working party's report thus pointed both to ongoing close collaboration and to national institutions. This was endorsed by the East African governments in the ensuing white paper, which both urged further consideration of the potential advantages of a "single University of East Africa, of which all present and future colleges territorially situated would be constituent units", and in the meantime welcomed the report's support for establishing a University College in Nairobi and working towards a University College in Dar es Salaam.[19]

There were dissenting voices too. Over the course of 1956, the TANU activist Edward Barongo, who would go on to a post-independence ministerial career and also author one of the most important early histories of TANU, *Mkiki Mkiki wa Siasa Tanganyika (The Political Struggle in Tanganyika)*, wrote a series of letters to the newspaper *Baraza*, arguing the nationalist case on behalf of TANU against efforts by the colonial government in Tanganyika and the Capricorn Society to promote a politics of multi-racialism in the territory. One of his letters focused on the Tanganyika government's decision to put funds aside for a new university college. For Barongo, this was a poor use of money at a time when funds were short and there was a much greater need for school level education. And who, he asked, would staff such a College – surely it would be expatriates. His preference was for the money to be used to pay for scholarships to support study overseas, rather than for a local institution. Similar arguments, as we will see, would recur in the 1960s.[20]

The Working Party's discussion of study overseas revealed tensions between a commitment to higher education as an opportunity to move beyond national or imperial confines for, they wrote, "[h]igher education cannot be a self-contained system within territorial boundaries", and a desire to ensure that these opportunities were contained, suggesting that proposed "Queen's Scholarships" to support overseas study be offered only "to graduates for study in East Africa or at any university in the United Kingdom".[21] The question of money, and of what proportion of limited funds should be spent on higher education, framed what could be done. The East African Governments concluded their White Paper by emphasising that they recognised "the urgency of the many problems of higher education which confront East Africa today" and emphasised that they were "anxious to ex-

18 East Africa High Commission, *Report of the Working Party*, 46.
19 East Africa High Commission, *Report of the Working Party*, 5.
20 Letter from E.B. M. Barongo, "Chuo Kikuu Tanganyika," *Baraza*, 24 March 1956, 3.
21 East Africa High Commission, *Report of the Working Party*, 71.

pand the facilities for higher education in East Africa", but, they continued, "limited funds dictate the scale on which progress can be made and it is important to ensure that all branches of education develop in proportion to one another and in proportion to the other social services for the community as a whole."[22]

One answer to this was funding from overseas foundations, which would become increasingly important in the coming years. One student, W. J. Makene, claimed at Makerere's 1958 Pan-African Student Conference that the colonial administration had actively blocked information about scholarships for studying overseas that should have been available to East African students through the structures of the UN.[23] Possibilities for studying in India, for example, grew in the 1950s within the framework of Nehru's foreign policy, to which anti-imperialism and non-alignment were central.[24] The Indian High Commissioner in Nairobi, Apa Pant, was responsible for recruiting students from across British-administered or governed East and Central Africa – often to the displeasure of the colonial education departments.[25] Colonial anxieties could sometimes mean the concentration of students in unlikely destinations that were not deemed a security concern, but which nevertheless turned out to be sites of active student politics. One such location was Cuttington College in Liberia, where Kingunge Ngombale Mwiru studied in 1958–61 with a scholarship from a US Christian organisation, before being expelled together with a group of other East African students for involvement in a protest.[26]

22 East Africa High Commission, *Higher Education in East Africa* (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1956?), 18.

23 National Union of South African Students, "Report of the first Pan-African Students' Conference," 11 August 1958, Papers of Allard Lowenstein, online through JSTOR Struggles for Freedom, accessed 3 March 2022, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/al.sff.document.low141_97_04.

24 Gerard McCann, "From Diaspora to Third Worldism and the United Nations: India and the Politics of Decolonizing Africa," *Past and Present* 218 (2013): 258–80.

25 Gerard McCann, "The Trumpets and Travails of 'South-South Cooperation': African Students in India since the 1940s," in *India's Development Diplomacy & Soft Power in Africa*, eds. Kenneth King and Meera Venkatachalam (Oxford: James Currey, 2021), 169–84; Gerard McCann, "Where Was the Afro in Afro-Asian Solidarity? Africa's "Bandung Moment" in 1950s Asia," *Journal of World History* 30 no. 1–2 (2019): 89–123.

26 Interview with Kingunge Ngolmbale Mwiru, Dar es Salaam, 1 December 2017, conducted by Ismay Milford.

Students and Their Worlds

Students at 1950s Makerere were not simply the recipients of colonial education policies: they also articulated the college's regional remit and tested the liberal pretensions of the institution at a time when both territorial administrations and actors abroad recognised the growing importance of the university. This importance, of course, was because of a shared assumption about the positions of power that the students of the 1950s would occupy. Despite new opportunities to study abroad, Makerere continued to be the training ground of a regional elite. As student numbers at Makerere expanded dramatically after World War Two, the balance of students shifted, making the institution look more "East African" than ever. In 1937, 100 of Makerere's 160 students came from Uganda; in 1958–59, those from Uganda numbered 259, from Kenya 285, and from Tanganyika 209, along with much smaller numbers from Zanzibar, Nyasaland (Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Somalia and Ethiopia. In comparison, during that same year of 1958–59, the number of Ugandan students in the USA was 29 and in the UK 80–90, the number of Kenyan students in the USA 73 (and 7 in Canada) and in the UK 40, and there were 22 Tanganyikan students in the USA and 26 in the UK.[27] Similar numbers, in the tens, were in India, Egypt, and Eastern Europe in the late 1950s.[28]

As student numbers at Makerere rose, societies along ethnic, religious and territorial lines abounded – most with their own publication. These societies self-consciously worked through questions of inclusion and exclusion, rather than taking for granted essentialist characteristics: the Western Uganda Students Union was open to Makerere students "coming from Western Uganda" or "having cultural or tribal affinity to the Western Province"; meanwhile, Bukedi Students Union celebrated having "members from as many as five tribes".[29] An eagerness to pin down social and geographical roles, through multiple parameters, was palpable. In 1955, one student conducted (with a humorous tone, under a penname) "A survey of students on a territorial basis", noting anecdotal differences between students from the largest national groups, Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda: "A stranger would think twice before he spoke to a Kenya student, whereas he would think only once before he approached the average Tanganyika student". Most of the article's observations cut across territorial boundaries, grouping stu-

27 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 6, 142; Mills, "Life on the Hill," 252.

28 Eric Burton, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and Africans' Routes to Higher Education Overseas, 1957–65," *Journal of Global History* 15, no. 1 (March 2020): 169–91.

29 AR/MAK/61/3, constitution of Western Uganda Students Union, c. 1959; AR/MAK/61/1, 'The Bukedi Student: The magazine of Bukedi Makerere Students Union' [n.d. 1961/62], 3.

dents in bordering regions: "students from the Coast Province [of Kenya] are more akin to Tanganyika students", while those from Uganda's Western province "are similar to those from the Bukoba area of Tanganyika" who were themselves "a quieter sort" who "speak less Swahili" than other Tanganyika students.[30]

Student societies provided forums for their members to reflect on the relationship between institution, region, and globe. When the student *Muslim Journal* launched in 1958, it stated four aims: "First, to accept articles which aim at correcting any misconceptions about Islam. Second to accept articles that give information with regard to our problems and activities on the hill. Third to publish articles which draw attention to problems and activities of the Muslim community of East Africa. Fourth to accept articles which present genuine views of any writer so as to encourage free discussion and mutual correction."[31] The society was small – only thirty Muslim students passed through Makerere in the period 1955–60 – but its aims demonstrate how students could understand life "on the hill" as both a microcosm of global currents, and a place that could shape its immediate East African surroundings.

At times, this kind of activity intervened very directly in local politics in ways that were not always welcomed, as in the second half of the 1950s when the Makerere Chagga Students Society found itself in conflict with Kilimanjaro's Paramount Chief, Thomas Marealle, and its leaders were forced to apologise, a humiliating experience which fuelled opposition to Marealle in Kilimanjaro. The activities of the Society intersected with oppositional politics in Kilimanjaro.[32] The liberal paternalism of Bernard De Bunsen, in which students were invited to look critically at the world without proposing radical change, made space for student initiatives to exist while banning student journalism when it was deemed to challenge authority at Makerere itself.

Even while Kampala remained the hub for East African students in the 1950s, there was already significant concern about the extent of Makerere's independence from each colonial administration, and its vulnerability to foreign influence. Student mobility pushed this question to the foreground. The early

30 AR/MAK/159/6, "A survey of students on a territorial basis", by "social observer", *New Hall Times*, Vol 1 No 8, 31/10/55.

31 AR/MAK/61/13, *The Muslim Journal: The magazine of the Makerere College Muslim brotherhood* No 1, Oct 1958, 4–5.

32 UKNA, FCO 141/17864, 25 April 1959, f. 10, Commissioner of Police to Ministerial Secretary, "Makerere College Chagga Society." It was reported in 1959 that the Society's magazine, filled with its members' arguments for the urgency of political change in Kilimanjaro, was circulating widely in Moshi, Kilimanjaro. For more detail see Emma Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania: Freedom, Democracy and Citizenship in the Era of Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 169 and 184–185.

Cold War saw the emergence of competing student internationals broadly allied with the Eastern and Western blocs. The International Union of Students (IUS), an attempt to coordinate national unions of students, founded headquarters in Prague in 1946 and soon came under Soviet influence. Echoing many other spheres of social organisation in the early Cold War, the International Student Conference (ISC) was founded in 1950 as a response, largely financed by the United States. Makerere students were soon invited to participate in the events of these groups, given that both organisations saw expansion into colonial territories as a priority. In 1953, Student Guild president Arthur Wina travelled to Copenhagen for an ISC meeting and received a parallel invitation for an IUS meeting in Helsinki. The UK Government's Student Liaison officer in London advised Wina to turn down the IUS invitation, and wrote to Makerere principal Bernard De Bunsen that the trip was "rapidly developing into a battle with the IUS".[33] The Guild's positive neutralism – its active engagement with both the ISC and IUS – was written into its constitution, and a Vice President for External Relations was elected in 1955.[34]

These growing ties with the international student movement caught the attention not only of Makerere staff but of territorial administrations, who sought to coordinate a response at a regional level. In June 1955, two students, Mark Bomani and James Nesbitt, travelled to Britain at the invitation of the British Council, timed to coincide with an ISC conference in Birmingham. At the conference, Latin American students led what De Bunsen described as an "anti-anti-communist" bloc within the national student unions.[35] Like the case two years previously, Bomani and Nesbitt also received an invitation from IUS, this time to visit the organisation's headquarters in Prague. De Bunsen warned that accepting the invitation would make the government less likely to give passports to students in the future and would "generally set the clock back".[36] The Prague trip went ahead, covertly. As De Bunsen feared, the news reached the Uganda colonial secretariat.[37]

There were existing tensions between De Bunsen and the region's secretariats regarding Makerere policy towards student participation in international events. The Tanganyika Secretariat asked in early 1955 that Makerere extend their responsibility for students' movements beyond term time and into college vacations, a suggestion that the college Vice Principal considered to raise "a very diffi-

33 AR/MAK/5/7, R.E. Wraith to Arthur Wina (copied to De Bunsen with additional note), 13 January 1953.

34 AR/MAK/159/6, "The Guild Constitution," *New Hall Times*, Vol 1 No 7, 17 October 1955, 2.

35 AR/MAK/54/4, De Bunsen to Langlands, 6 August 1955, with reference to the *Economist* article.

36 AR/MAK/54/4, De Bunsen to RA Frost British Council, 7 July 1955.

37 AR/MAK/54/4, De Bunsen to Andrew Cohen, 4 November 1955.

cult principle".[38] Because IUS events sometimes took place in Western Europe, the mere destination of a conference was not enough to raise the suspicion of immigration services, making De Bunsen's cooperation vital: the Uganda Chief Secretary wrote in March 1956 to make De Bunsen "aware" that a Guild representative had been invited to an IUS conference in Copenhagen, "in case there is any interest [among students] in visiting Scandinavia next month".[39] De Bunsen was no more keen to see students attend communist-sponsored events than was government, but his approach was a typically paternalistic one: he remarked on the "innocent idealism" which informed the Student Guild's "fence-sitting" policy and considered the priority being to avoid suspicion among students, or the emergence of underground propaganda, and especially to avoid making political martyrs of those who engaged with communist bloc politics – "we cannot in any case keep our chaps isolated from the world".[40]

Bomani used his lengthy letters of apology for the secret Prague trip to make the case for the *colonial* interest in a liberal policy towards the international student movement. The first letter was to the Immigration Officer in Kampala. Bomani apologised for the "anxiety" his trip had caused, and continued:

> I was very proud to correct a number of wrong points of information about East Africa and I hope I succeeded in showing a number of Czech students that things out here are not as bad, if anything, as they seem to think! On the other hand, I was least impressed by the political and economic systems obtaining there – especially the incredible literary repression.[41]

Bomani's letters to the Chief Secretaries in Entebbe and Dar es Salaam took the same line. He said that it was "curiosity more than anything" that had led him to visit Prague, without the knowledge of De Bunsen, or of his older brother Paul Bomani, a member of the Tanganyika Legislative Council. Bomani concluded that the trip "had no effect at all" on his political beliefs, only that he was "now in a position to understand what [the] 'disguised slavery', we hear so much about, is". He insisted there was no sympathy for communism within the student body, and that although some students were "critical of some actions of some governments in East Africa", it would be "completely wrong and unfortunate to attribute this attitude to anything like communism".[42] In this way, students pushed the issue of

38 AR/MAK/54/4, Makerere Vice President to the Secretariat, Dar es Salaam, 10 February 1955.

39 AR/MAK/54/4, Chief Secretary Entebbe to De Bunsen, 27 March 1956.

40 AR/MAK/54/4, De Bunsen to RA Frost (British Council) 7 July 1955; De Bunsen to Langlands, 6 August 1955; De Bunsen personal notes, dated 9 August 1955.

41 AR/MAK/54/4, Mark Bomani to Immigration Officer Kampala, 3 November 1955.

42 AR/MAK/54/4, Mark Bomani to Chief Secretaries, Entebbe and Dar es Salaam, 25 February 1956.

access to connections abroad into the discussion of the limits of political liberalism in an East African institution. These early Cold War negotiations would prove prescient to debates in the 1960s.

A University for East Africa

As independence approached, the pressure for university colleges for each territory continued to grow. A second Working Party on Higher Education, which in 1958 produced the Lockwood report, put forward plans for a University of East Africa to be established in 1966 and exist for around ten to fifteen years. The structure envisaged saw it having a relatively weak centre with power in large part sitting in its constituent colleges at territorial level. The working party's report was accepted by the East African governments in 1959.[43]

But in the meantime, for the nationalist parties across the region which were preparing to move into government, having a university had, as Bethwell Ogot recalled in his memoirs, "become an important symbol that each East Africa country wanted to acquire before attaining independence."[44] In concrete terms, this meant speeding up plans for Tanganyika's University College to launch in 1961, rather than 1964 as planned for in the Lockwood report.[45] It also meant giving thought to the kind of University College which should come into being. Tanganyika's Legislative Council Member responsible for education, Solomon Eliufoo, wrote a memorandum in 1960 spelling out what Tanganyika's distinctive identity meant for the question of what its university should teach and where it should be situated. "Tanganyika", he wrote, "is an agricultural country and the sooner its University reflects this (in the form of a Faculty of Agriculture), the better." And this meant too that there was no need for it to be situated in a large town or capital city. Arguing in favour of Arusha as the site for Tanganyika's university, he proposed that "Arusha and Moshi towns are quite sufficient to give the University the amount of urbanity it needs."[46]

The question of funding continued to loom large. Political independence opened up new opportunities. For example, when educational patron Joseph Murumbi returned to Kenyan after a trip to Moscow in 1964, he reported plans for an

43 Kithinji, *The State and the University Experience*, 64–72.

44 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 130.

45 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 129.

46 CCM, NP003 Education General, Accession 1, f. 55, Solomon Eliufoo, M.L.C. "Memorandum on Choice of Site for a University in Tanganyika," 25 April 1960, 2.

entirely Soviet-funded technical college in Kenya for a thousand students.[47] The possibility of obtaining significant financial backing for education had grown dramatically, but the political undercurrents that allowed this flow of cash were ever clearer. As Miles Taylor argues, these years saw Britain, America and Canada using "financial aid for higher education as a weapon to stifle Soviet and Chinese influence, and also to temper the explicit socialism of new post-colonial regimes."[48]

The annual reports of Tanganyika's Ministry of Education show the importance of funding from overseas foundations in the slow task of building up the new University College. The 1964 report contained a long list of benefactors and their gifts, with figures ranging from substantial sums, such as £500,000 from the UK Department of Technical Co-Operation for the science school and hall of residence funding, and $320,000 from the Ford Foundation for the Law Building, to smaller amounts, such as £250 each from BP Tanganyika and Shell Tanganyika to spend on library books.[49]

For major American foundations such as Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie, supporting higher education in Africa, Asia and Latin America was a way of contributing to the building of new nations through educating their leaders. The powerful role which elites could and should play was, as Edward Berman emphasises in his study of the Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie Foundations, a centrepiece of United States development thinking of the era, as articulated in W.W. Rostow's 1960 book *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*.[50] The Rockefeller Foundation's approach was to select a small number of institutions to support, and one of these was the University of East Africa.[51] Both Carnegie and Ford also had a previous history of supporting institutions in the region, in particular the East African Institute of Social Research at Makerere. The three foundations were actively involved in the development of plans for the University of East Africa from 1961, and in 1963 a major conference which brought representatives from the East African governments and colleges, the British Department of Technical Cooperation and the Inter-University council, the World Bank, the US

47 KNA, MAC/KEN/89/7, Anonymous report on Kenya delegation's visit to the Soviet Union, April 1964.

48 Taylor, "Utopian Universities," 270.

49 Ministry of Education (Tanzania), *Annual report* (1964), 14–15.

50 Edward H. Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy : The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 67.

51 Berman, *Ideology of Philanthropy*, 71.

Agency for International Development, and several British foundations together with the three foundations and the Africa Liaison Committee to discuss plans to support the new University was held at the Rockefeller's Villa Serbelloni on Lake Como.[52]

For our purposes, what is striking is the strong emphasis which the foundations placed on creating a strong centralised University of East Africa. Edward Berman notes that this was in contrast to the "loosely federated structure that was favored by several of the African representatives".[53] The rationale was similar to that of their British predecessors, citing a desire to avoid duplication, but they also, Berman suggests, "recognized that their funds would be able to exert a greater degree of leverage on the direction of university development if they could work through a centralized rather than a diffused administrative structure."[54]

Money from foreign states, international organisations and foundations flowed into the University of East Africa throughout its existence and shaped conflicts over the direction it should take.[55] The financial support given by the Rockefeller Foundation was considerable, and involved a commitment of around $1.5 million over three years.[56] For East African scholars returning from doctoral training overseas, like the historian Bethwell Ogot, external funding provided opportunities for academic posts beyond what was planned for in the development plans which had been prepared for each territory's university college. There were supernumerary posts supported by the Rockefeller Foundation which, Ogot recalled, were a "temporary form of assistance" which were offered on the expectation that their occupants might move into "established posts as they became vacant".[57] The Rockefeller Foundation also funded mobility beyond East Africa. For example, Wilbert Chagula, later President of the University College in Dar es Salaam and President of the East African Academy, spent time in the United States and the Caribbean as a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow.[58] At the same time, there continued to be a strong expatriate British presence among academic staff across East Africa, sustained by the IUC. This was the environment in which the short-lived University of East Africa was formally inaugurated in 1963.

---

52 Berman, *ideology of Philanthropy*, 77.

53 Berman, *Ideology of Philanthropy*, 77.

54 Ibid.

55 Carol Sicherman, *Becoming an African University: Makerere, 1922–2000* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 58.

56 Berman, *Ideology of Philanthropy*, 78.

57 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 130.

58 W.K. Chagula, "The Role of the Elite, the Intelligentsia and Educated East Africans in the Development of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania," *The East African Academy: The Second Foundation Lecture*, 20 Sept 1966, Kampala, Uganda., n.p.

Reflecting on the short life of the University of East Africa, Ogot, one-time University of East Africa professor, reflected that, in the case of this regional university, "Regional planning [was] outpaced by national aspirations".[59] The formation of the university in 1963 brought together three university colleges: Makerere, University College Nairobi (founded as the Royal Technical College in 1956), and University College Dar es Salaam, the newest of the institutions, established in 1961 on the eve of Tanganyika's independence. The rise and fall of the institution might appear at first glance as a high point in regionalism in relation to higher education in East Africa. As Bhekithemba Richard Mngomezulu has suggested in his study of the institution, however, a simple chronology of a post-independence golden age of regionalism followed by collapse is misplaced: the institution was based on plans made in the colonial period and was always envisaged as a temporary umbrella to support the development of three national universities.[60] When this happened, in 1970, "no one grieved".[61]

In essence, the differing visions of East African states could not be buried beneath a technocratic language of planning and manpower requirements. As plans for the university were drawn up, decision-making power was concentrated in the constituent colleges – and the states in which they were based. The University Development Committee (on which Ogot sat) was repeatedly overruled by territorial governments. The opening of the new University College of Dar es Salaam was, as we have seen, brought forward, with the Tanganyika (and then Tanzanian) government determined that the young institution could live up to the reputations of the older Makerere and the University of Nairobi (previously the Royal Technical College, which had opened in 1956).[62] In this competitive environment, agreements about not duplicating specialist training were breached. Given Makerere's longer history, there was inevitable unevenness between the three 'sister' colleges. Yet the view from Uganda sometimes implied that Uganda was benefitting least from the arrangement, given its university college had the most to share in terms of experience. As early as 1965, Uganda's Minister of Education, J. S. Luyimbazi-Zake, was calling for the dissolution of the University into its three

59 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 176

60 Bhekithemba Richard Mngomezulu, "A Political History of Higher Education in East Africa: The Rise and Fall of the University of East Africa, 1937–1970" (PhD thesis, Rice University, 2004), especially 324.

61 Sicherman, *Becoming an African University*, 57.

62 Andrew Ivaska, *Cultured States: Youth, Gender, and Modern Style in 1960s Dar Es Salaam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), Chapter three.

colleges, noting that the existing arrangement was fuelling "jealousies", "lots of arguments" and "movements that now carry a flavour of the underhand".[63]

None of this is surprising, in light of what we saw in the previous section of this chapter. The sense that a nation should have its own university was deeply embedded in the politics of the 1950s, and the University of East Africa came into existence alongside three institutions which were developing distinctive characters and which in all cases were tightly bound to the nations they were a part of. Bethwell Ogot recalled that Kenyan academics at Makerere were encouraged to "come home to build 'their' university."[64] But beyond the questions of university constitutions and formal structures was an intellectual commitment which was transnational in scope and approach, and it is this we turn to trace in the next section.

Home-Grown Research and The East African Academy

In his opening speech to the East African Academy's third symposium, held in Dar es Salaam in 1965, Amon J. Nsekela, then Principal Secretary in Tanzania's Ministry of Industries, captured a sense of the importance of academic research at that moment, for both "intellectual" and "practical" reasons. "The growth of a people's intellectual and spiritual stature is every bit as important as that of its physical wellbeing", he said, "and to favour one at the expense of the other can only lead to an imbalance which would, at best, interfere with the overall process of improvement". His vision of progress was one in which East Africa's universities had a crucial role to play. He suggested that perhaps a School of Development Management could be established. This would, he suggested "present a major opportunity to the University to chart out an entirely new field of studies, one which would not only take account of our own experience and needs in East Africa but draw on the work which is being done in other institutions of higher learning throughout the world, and here I think particularly of the great colleges of France, the universities of the socialist countries, and the major schools of business administration in the United States." For, he emphasised, "[n]o one tradition I believe can provide an effective solution to the problems which confront us in

63 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 175; Mngomezulu, "A Political History of Higher Education in East Africa," 410–15, 434.

64 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 130.

East Africa – we must rather match the experience of divergent traditions to our needs and our own requirements."[65]

The 1960s ended with fierce arguments about universities in East Africa's public sphere, lambasting their colonial structures and dependence on external funding.[66] It is tempting to view the preceding decade through this lens. But it is important to go back to the earlier moment captured in Nsekela's address, when, as Nsekela told his audience, "so little has been done, so much left to do, that the field is enormous – almost unlimited", and think about how a new generation of East African leaders and intellectuals sought to build a new ecosystem of intellectual life, navigating difficult questions of external funding and support as they did so. Far from simply accepting inherited colonial structures, they sought to rethink the place of the university in their new states and the meaning of an East African intellectual community tackling shared problems in ways which often crossed national borders in practice even when formal federal university structures proved limited.[67]

It is important first and foremost to remember the international character of student intake. In the second year of Dar es Salaam's law school, for example, of the thirty-four new students admitted to the law course only twelve came from Tanganyika.[68] The international nature of the three colleges was, of course, fundamental to their inter-territorial nature. But it was also a product of student demand. The historian Andrew Ivaska has highlighted the attraction of Dar es Salaam to left-wing students from across East Africa, drawn to an internationalist left-wing scene in and around the university campus.[69] The university's reputation was so great that some arriving students were disappointed to find that the student body as a whole was not as radical as hoped – like in the case of the young Yoweri Museveni, who famously arrived from Uganda and became founder and chair of the University Students' African Revolutionary Front, for a time the beating heart of leftist internationalism on campus.[70]

65 Amon J. Nsekela, "Opening Address," in D.F. Owen, ed., *Research and Development in East Africa: Seven Papers presented at a plenary session at the third Symposium of the East African Academy, Dar es Salaam, September 1965* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1966), 14.

66 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 194–209.

67 On shared ideas across student publications in the university, see Anna Adima, "Anglophone Women's Writing and Public Culture in Kenya and Uganda, 1959–1976" (PhD thesis, University of York, 2022), Chapter 1.

68 Ministry of Education and Information Services (Tanganyika Territory), *Annual report* (1962).

69 Ivaska, "Movement Youth," 188–210.

70 Yoweri Museveni, "Activism at the hill", reproduced in *Cheche: Reminiscences of a Radical Magazine,* ed. Karim F. Hirji (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2010).

Staff also moved across the region, with a staff exchange programme seeing academic staff frequently teaching at sister colleges.[71] East Africa-wide structures provided spaces for intellectual exchange, for example through the Annual Social Science conferences which were once hosted by the East African Institute of Social and Economic Research at Makerere but after 1966 were taken on by the Inter-University Council of East Africa.[72] A sense of the role regional conferences played in driving forward research comes through in the publications and bulletins of the time. In January 1971 *Tanzania Zamani* reported on the 1970 Universities of East Africa Social Science Conference which had been held in Dar es Salaam in December, with history papers focusing in particular on "trade and production, development and under-development, both in recent and earlier African history, some of them with specific reference to Tanzania." Readers of *Tanzania Zamani* eager to see the latest research which had been presented were informed of the likely publication of some of the papers, and directed to bound volumes containing the history papers from the 1968 conference in Makerere and the 1969 conference in Nairobi.[73] As well as providing an opportunity to share research, conferences further developed and cemented personal connections and produced new initiatives. Bethwell Ogot recalled in his autobiography that it was meetings between the departments of History at Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam held at one such conference in 1968 which led to the founding of the *Transafrica Journal of History*. Departments of Literature from the three institutions met in a similar way to discuss curricula and pedagogy.[74]

But beyond the formal structures of the university, a new infrastructure of academic exchange across the region developed in those years. One important dimension of this was the East African Academy of Arts and Sciences, at whose third symposium Nsekela delivered the address with which we opened this section. The East African Academy was established in 1963 and had branches in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. As L.K.H. Goma, Chairman of the Uganda Branch and Vice-President of the Academy wrote in 1963 in the introduction to the proceedings of its first Symposium, its aim was to be "not only a forum for East Africa's research workers and scholars of all disciplines, but also a body

71 Sicherman, *Becoming an African University*, 71. On the East African Special Lectureship Scheme, see Ogot, *My Footprints*, 131.

72 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 144; TNA, Acc 597, S. 111 FA/E90/7 Part E, Call for the 1976 Social Science Conference of the East African Universities.

73 "Conferences: The 1970 Universities of East Africa Social Science Conference," *Tanzania Zamani*, no. 8 January 1971, 15.

74 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 8.

that will be in touch with the general public."[75] In January 1964 it was officially recognised by the East African Common Services Organisation as an "indigenous East African Learned Body".[76] The Academy organised seminars and conferences that brought together academics from across the region.[77] And academics travelled together on behalf of this emerging East African intellectual community, for example when Shihabuddin Chiraghdin, as delegate for Swahili and East African history, travelled with six other delegates from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania on behalf of the Academy to the Peking Scientific Symposium in August 1964.[78]

To return to Nsekela's 1965 speech, it is striking that he explicitly reflected on the East African nature of the gathering. He told the delegates that "as you yourselves assemble here, you are almost a perfect example of East African co-operation. The problems you discuss, the ideas you disseminate, are to a great degree concerned with all the countries which separately and together constitute the East African confederation . . . The existence of bodies such as the East African Academy of Arts and Sciences is a vital constituent of the cement which binds our countries together."[79] Nsekela's pride at being able to host the meeting in the "brand new" buildings of the University College in Dar es Salaam was coupled with his enthusiasm for what could be achieved by researchers working together across the region.[80]

At the same time, new ventures which were linked to universities but not necessarily part of them – for example the *East Africa Journal* – also helped consolidate a strong network of East African academics, whose names reappear on the list of advisory boards and editorial boards in those years. As we saw in Chapter two, its editor from 1965 until it closed at the end of 1972 was the Nairobi historian Bethwell Ogot, with the Dar es Salaam historian Isaria Kimambo an associate editor.[81]

---

75 L.K.H. Goma, "Introduction," *Proceedings of the East African Academy; First Symposium, Makerere June 1963* (Nairobi: Longmans, 1963).

76 J.M. Robertson, "Report on the East African Academy," 18 February 1965, UNESCO Archives, Catalogue number 0000158080: 69.

77 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 8.

78 Latifa S. Chiraghdin, *Shihabuddin Chiraghdin: Life Journey of a Swahili Scholar* (Nairobi: Asian African Heritage Trust, 2018), 102. Academy members also visited Moscow and India in the Academy's first two years of operation. J.M. Robertson, "Report on the East African Academy", 18 February 1965, UNESCO Archives, Catalogue number 0000158080: 5.

79 Nsekela, "Opening Address," 11–15.

80 Ibid., 13.

81 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 280. The journalist Philip Ochieng was Ogot's assistant. Bethwell Ogot and Isaria Kimambo both played an active role in the UNESCO General

This activity was, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, heavily dependent on foreign funding and, as Edward Barongo had predicted in his 1956 letter to *Baraza*, expatriate academics remained a powerful and visible presence. As late as 1971, two-thirds of the academic staff at Makerere were expatriate, though the nature of this expatriate presence had changed: where in the 1950s they had primarily come from Britain, they were now just as likely to be from America or elsewhere in the world.[82]

External funding and academic networks of mobility shaped the contours of disciplinary research and teaching. In Nairobi, Rockefeller funded the Institute for Development Studies which, Geoffrey Reeves argued in his 1974 thesis, constituted a highly effective form of academic gate-keeping, shaping the study of development in Nairobi along Western lines.[83] In Dar es Salaam, where there was a noticeable uptick in the presence of academic staff who had been trained in the communist world after 1966, those staff were particularly concentrated in the departments of Sociology, Statistics, Economics and the Economic Research Bureau.[84]

Members of East Africa's intelligentsia also worked closely with new governments. The example of the History departments of Dar es Salaam and Nairobi provide an example of what this meant in practice. In his reflections on the early years of the Department of History at the University of Dar es Salaam, the historian Isaria Kimambo recalled the close relationships the department had with the Institute of Education and the Ministry of National Education.[85] The urgency of conducting new research into Tanzania's pre-colonial history and getting that research into schools comes through clearly both in memoirs and reminiscences and in the documents of the time. A critical role in linking the University to this wider community was played by the Tanzania Historical Association. Kimambo recalled that *A History of Tanzania*, which he edited with A. J. Temu and which was published in 1969, and "was the first publication to demonstrate to the public that the study of pre-colonial history of the country was possible", was first "dis-

History of Africa project, on which see Larissa Schulte Nordholt, "What is an African Historian? Negotiating Scholarly Personae in UNESCO's General History of Africa," in *How to be a Historian: Scholarly Personae in Historical Studies, 1800–2000*, ed. Herman Paul (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 182–200.

82 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 143.

83 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 158.

84 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 179.

85 Isaria N. Kimambo, *Three Decades of Production of Historical Knowledge at Dar Es Salaam* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1993), 6.

cussed in a conference of history teachers and members of the Historical Association of Tanzania in 1967".[86]

In his autobiography, Bethwell Ogot recounts the roots of the Kenya Historical Association (KHA) which was founded in 1966. The idea of establishing a Historical Association was first discussed at a conference in 1966, sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the Department of History in Nairobi.[87] As in Tanzania, revising the school curriculum was a central concern, and the KHA was rooted in a close relationship with schoolteachers and the ministry. Benjamin Kipkorir, who became Honorary Secretary of the Association in 1970, recalled in his autobiography that

> [b]ecause of the developmental role that the association played, the Ministry of Education supported the annual conferences with small grants. It was my duty each year to make a formal request to the Director of Education (for many years the position was held by Herbert Kanina, one of the most enlightened professionals in the civil serviced that I ever met). Both the Government Chief Inspector of Schools, J.N.B. Osogo, himself a noted historian and author, and Keith Hardyman, the History Inspector, used to attend the conference in person.[88]

In both cases, the intellectual excitement which was captured by Nsekela in the quotation we started this section with is very clear. And it reached beyond universities and schools to a wider public. Looking back from the vantage point of the early 1990s, Kimambo recalled the huge public enthusiasm for historical research in the 1960s, a sense of which comes through in the pages of the journal *Tanzania Zamani* which began life in 1967 as a "bulletin on pre-colonial history", though later expanded its chronological reach. Alongside reports detailing the research which doctoral researchers and members of the History department were undertaking – a 1971 issue referred to department member Walter Rodney's recent archival research in the Seychelles – there were reports of local history societies, often tied to schools.[89] A section on "School Magazines" in a 1968 issue described the research content of recent issues of the magazine *Our Past*, published by the Likonde Seminary, and of the *The Old Moshi Historical Magazine*, published by Old Moshi School.[90] At the same time, *Tanzania Zamani* captures the exchange between historical research and other forms of cultural production,

86 Kimambo, *Three Decades*, 1, 4.

87 Ogot, *My Footprints*, 145.

88 B. E. Kipkorir, *Descent from Cherang'any Hills: Memoirs of a Reluctant Academic* (Nairobi: Macmillan Kenya, 2009), 239.

89 "Current Research by Members of the History Department, University of Dar es Salaam, Teaching Staff," *Tanzania Zamani*, No. 8, January 1971, 3.

90 "School Magazines," *Tanzania Zamani*, No. 3, July 1968, 19.

noting that Ebrahim Hussein's play *Kinjeketile* was "partly inspired by the Paper No. 4 of the Historical Association of Tanzania, *Records of the Maji Maji Rising, 1905–1907*".[91]

Its Kenyan sibling also sought to reach out to a wider public. In the first editorial of the *Kenya Historical Review*, published in 1973, William Ochieng traced the origins of the journal through the Kenya Historical Association. It had, he explained, long been an ambition of the Association to "publish a journal". A start had been made with a cyclostyled magazine, edited by M.T. Wang'ombe and shared with members, but "it was always the point of the Association that it should disseminate historical knowledge and ideas to as many people as are interested in Kenya's past and future. It is with such sentiments in mind that the Editor hails the birth of this Journal."[92] As Priscilla Asiimire has shown, Makerere's outreach programmes thrived under the University of East Africa and continued after its dissolution.[93] But at the same time, in a rapidly changing political, economic and social context, major questions about the role of universities in East Africa were being asked.

In the Service of Nation and State

In March 1967, the University College in Dar es Salaam hosted a "Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania". This conference has been much studied. For some, it is read in the context of the dramatic events of 1966 which saw Tanzanian students protesting against National Service sent home from the University of Dar es Salaam, and the Arusha Declaration of February 1967 which marked Tanzania's turn to socialism. It was indeed a critical moment in the life of the Tanzanian nation, as Andrew Ivaska's work has emphasised.[94] Others have focused on its place in the history of the left in Tanzania and in East Africa more broadly, and in cementing a divide between a 'liberal' model of the University, personified by Mazrui, at Makerere, and a socialist model at UDSM.[95] In recent years, the curriculum work which was central to the conference, in particular proposing political education as an essential part of

91 "Publications: Books," *Tanzania Zamani*, No. 8, January 1971, 11.

92 "Editorial", *Kenya Historical Review*, 1 (1973), no page.

93 Priscilla Asiimire, "University Adult Education at Makerere, 1953–2006" (PhD thesis, Makerere University, 2025).

94 Ivaska, "Movement Youth."

95 Mamdani, "The African University."

teaching, has featured in discussions about what it means to "decolonize" university education.[96]

But for some of those who spoke at the conference, it was important to stress that the University College was not disengaging from its neighbours. In his opening address, the Principal, Wilbert Chagula, expressed the hope that the conference would not be seen as being "parochial in outlook" and sought to put the conference in a wider context.[97] "Although it is true to say that this conference would probably not have been held if the student demonstration against certain aspects of National Service had not taken place on 22nd October, 1966", he told delegates, "it is *not* true that we have asked you to this conference so that you could assist us in solving our domestic problems connecting with or arising from that regrettable incident of 22nd October, 1966." Rather, he continued,

> we have invited you to this Conference so that all of us can discuss the various ways in which Colleges such as this one can be fully incorporated into the social and political fabric of the nation so that their contribution to the social, economic and political development of the countries in which they are situated could justify the large amounts of money that have been invested in them by the people.[98]

The theme of what this could and should mean was a powerful thread running through the discussions at the conference.

In this sense, the conference was firmly situated in wider transnational discussions of what the purpose of a university should be, building on conversations that had been taking place over the preceding decades. These debates brought together questions about how to move beyond the structures inherited from colonial rule and build something new, and what kinds of higher education should be prioritised in a context where the resources to support education were very limited indeed. In his own speech, Tanzania's education minister Solomon Eliufoo combined his support for the work of the university with the argument that from his perspective the purpose of the university was to fulfil a manpower need, and

96 Bheki R. Mngomezulu and Sakhile Hadebe, "What would the decolonisation of a political science curriculum entail? Lessons to be Learnt from the East African Experience at the Federal University of East Africa", *Politikon*, 45, no. 1 (2018): 66–80; Roger Southall, "The Decolonisation of the Political Science Curriculum in East Africa: A reply to Mngomezulu and Sakhile Hadebe," *Politikon* 46, no. 2 (2019): 240–251; Eric Burton, "A Marxist-Leninist Tanzanian Economist: Kassim Guruli, East Germany, and Struggles over Socialism at the University of Dar es Salaam," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 54, no. 3 (2021): 239–307.

97 CCM.570, Wilbert Chagula, "Opening," Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania, 3.

98 CCM.570, Chagula, "Opening," Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania, 5–6.

education for education's sake would have to wait until after the economic take-off which the development theory of the time confidently predicted.[99] Students, too, were debating this question. *Dialogue*, the student magazine of the University of East Africa, had recently published contrasting takes on the subject alongside one another: one contribution argued that students constituted a "special class" and that employing them to undertake general labour was "sheer wastage of skilled manpower"; another proposed to "Keep Africa classless" and criticised the high salaries of graduates in general, and Tanzanian students unwilling to contribute to the National Service Fund in particular.[100]

The question of foreign funding, and expatriate staff, was a central concern of the Dar es Salaam conference. Committee Four, which was tasked with discussing the curriculum, moved quickly from the question of whether teaching staff need themselves have socialist commitment to the wider question of recruitment and finance. Criticising current recruitment processes, the committee "felt that the Inter-University Council and the Overseas Education Service were inadequate, and that any dependence upon Overseas Foundations and other sources (both for recruitment and salaries) should be carefully reconsidered." On the question of how specifically to take East Africanisation forward, "one recommendation was that the East African governments should be asked to support the East African Special Lectureship programme, whose present method of financing may be about to lapse." The committee discussed the importance of recruiting "East Africans conducting their post-graduate research locally" and asked the College to "take particular note of the possibility of recruiting from among the East Africans studying in socialist countries". While the focus of the discussion was on "East Africanisation", "a number of participants wanted to be clear that 'East Africanisation' was not a process designed to entirely exclude other nationalities, particularly Africans from other parts of the continent."[101] The draft recommendations which concluded the conference included the clear statement that "[t]he Confer-

99 CCM.570, S. N. Eliufoo, "Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania." Though as Eliufoo wrote in the *East Africa Journal* later that year this should not be understood as a threat to research work. He argued that "We must accustom ourselves to the idea that the University is a *Service institution*, fashioned and guided by the actual circumstances and requirements of this part of Africa . . . the essential liberties of a university, namely, the freedom to study and to teach and to follow the truth wherever it may lead, can survive such planned intervention [as controlled student numbers per course] unimpaired." S. N. Eliufoo, "Education for service-men only," *East Africa Journal* 4 no. 8 (1967), 23–4. Italics in original.

100 BM Kimulson, "Students in Society" and Tom Amasira-Kecha, "A rising National Bourgeoisie," *Dialogue* no. 3 (1966), 9–11.

101 CCM.570, "Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania," Committee 4, "Recommendations," 2.

ence is of the opinion that in future less reliance should be placed by the College on overseas agencies or foundations for both recruitment and salaries of staff."[102]

While Chagula sought to stress that the conference was not simply concerned with Tanzania's domestic problems, it did indicate the growing challenge of a multi-national university in an age of nationalism. In his own lecture, the Vice-Principal R.C. Honeybone explicitly drew attention to the challenge of nation-building in a multi-national institution. "It is not widely realised", he told his audience, "that for the first few years the Tanzanian students were a minority. The students union was run largely by non-Tanzanians so that nation building attitudes were more difficult to develop." This, however, was now changing. "Last session", he continued "for the first time Tanzanians formed the large majority of the student body and we can now use this new situation to ensure that their commitment to national development is sharpened without running the risk of reducing the value of a multi-national college." This did not mean, he hastened to add, that non-Tanzanians were any less welcome, it "merely means that in future this college in Tanzania will achieve the maturity of having most of its students from Tanzania."[103]

In his speech, he drew attention to the ways in which the University and its Institutes worked closely with government, and the role its students played in their local communities, echoing what we saw earlier in relation to Kenya and Tanzania's History societies. But he also indicated the challenges it faced in its relationships with mainland Tanzania's ruling party, TANU. These were the issues which, as Andrew Ivaska has emphasised, ultimately led TANU to assert greater control over the university and its students, reasserting a limited national scope for campus activism.[104] No less importantly for the capacity of faculty and students to think and act on a regional than national scale was the trend from 1967 towards closer alignment between the University's mission with the development policies of national government, most notably through manpower planning.[105] On 1 July 1970, the Tanzanian University Act declared the object of the University of Dar es Salaam was to "preserve, transmit and enhance knowledge for the benefit

102 "Draft recommendations of the Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania held on 11th and 12th March, 1967," 2.

103 CCM.570, R.C. Honeybone, "The organization, operation and plans of the University College, Dar es Salaam," Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam, in a Socialist Tanzania, 15.

104 Andrew Ivaska, "Movement Youth," 205.

105 Abdullah Ismail Kanduru, "The Implementation of the National Manpower Policy by Tanzanian Universities from 1962 to 1994" (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 1994), 111.

of the people of Tanzania in accordance with the principles of socialism accepted by the people of Tanzania."[106]

Conclusion

Despite Ogot's reflection on the limited power of the University of East Africa's development committee, when compared to the three contributing states, the regional character of the university did preserve a certain amount of independence from government. The official formation of three national universities paved the way for greater state control over the institutions. In Uganda, for example, almost immediately after the dissolution of the University of East Africa, Obote's government began to replace people in senior positions at Makerere, like the Vice-Chancellor, with individuals close to the president.[107] In some ways, universities remained spaces of regional mobility in the 1970s precisely *because* East African states sought to contain the role of national institutions, pushing staff and students to move within the region in search of improved freedoms or salaries when political tides turned against them. The mass exodus of Ugandans (an estimated 85% of all teaching staff) to neighbouring countries (and further afield) under Idi Amin is only the most extreme example.[108]

Meanwhile, East African students still protested against university and government policy, and still debated what their role in society should be. University of Nairobi students in the late 1970s saw themselves as a vanguard of a second liberation, for example, but they were invested in defining who was a worthy *Kenyan* anti-imperialist, rather than how a regional academic sphere could pursue its vision to mark a break with its colonial origins.[109]

A regional institution was part of the discussion that this chapter has traced about what role a university and its students should play in society. In the late colonial period as in the early independence period, East African leaders could agree on the maxims that universities should be "relevant" to "African" society. What this meant in practice was far less clear. A regional university represented a possible answer both for pragmatic and ideological reasons. Like Makerere in

106 Reeves, "East African Intellectual Community," 177.

107 Mngomezulu, "A Political History of Higher Education in East Africa," 432.

108 This figure refers to staff in schools as well as universities. Olong-Atwoki, quoted in Sicherman, *Becoming an African University*, 105.

109 Duncan Omanga and Kipkosgei Arap Buigutt, "Marx in Campus: Print Cultures, Nationalism and Student Activism in the Late 1970s Kenya," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 11, no. 4 (2017): 571–89.

the 1950s, the University of East Africa in the 1960s was a more efficient use of limited resources than multiple national institutions, particularly when planning for a rapid increase in skilled labour supply was a political priority. And, like Makerere in the 1950s, preserving a certain amount of academic freedom, or independence from colonial or national governments, was easier through an institution with a regional executive board. Aspirations toward pan-African exchange and solidarity could fit comfortably within the project of a regional university, but these were not the driving force. On the contrary, the University of East Africa relied on foreign funding that precluded radical visions of what a learning institution could look like (like those that animated the TANU's Kivukoni College, for instance).[110]

This chapter provides an insight into how and why many of the forms, structures and characteristics of the late colonial regional project were carried into the post-independence era and with what consequences. Despite being charged with the missions of Africanisation, nation-building and supporting the economic and social transformation of East Africa after independence, the colonial origins of the university limited the extent to which higher education became a site of radical change. Moreover, this contradiction between the liberating and constraining effects of the university on intellectual life in East Africa and ideas of the region had an impact beyond the campus. The centrality of East Africa's universities to the region's intellectual ecosystem, notably the activities of the East African Academy, ensured that debates about the operation of the universities had a disproportionate impact on wider networks of knowledge production.

110 Eric Burton, "Forging the Vanguard of African Socialism: Nationalism, Respectability and Ideological Struggles at Kivukoni College, Tanzania," in *Socialism, Internationalism, and Development in the Third World: Envisioning Modernity in the Era of Decolonization*, eds. Su Lin Lewis and Nana Osei-Opare (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024), 193–214.