"Poison and Dope: Radio and the art of political invective in East Africa, 1940-1965"

The radio weapon was perhaps the most important, for its influence was out of all proportion to the number of listeners, perhaps ten to each radio set. Its voice carried the stamp of authority and a reputation for veracity. Its emotional appeal, interspersed with popular music, had a special attraction for the still large numbers of illiterate people.

Randal Sadleir, Information Officer, Tanganyika Public Relations Office, 1955-1961[1]

This paper examines how international radio popularized generic anti-colonial polemics through a

history of shortwave broadcasting to British East Africa from the Second World War to the

region's decolonization in the 1960s. It focuses in particular on the role of Radio Cairo's

broadcasts to East Africa in the 1950s, and the political networks that sustained this station's

Swahili-language broadcasts. Hostile external broadcasts looped and amplified nationalist voices.

Swahili radio announcers, enmeshed in East African politics and often directed by regional

political parties, transmitted their arguments and rhetoric across the shortwave band to radio

listeners back home. The phenomenon raised new questions of sovereignty[2] – how were territorial

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[*] One part of this paper was originally given at a workshop on the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference, held at Stanford University in May 2005; that portion is now to be published as 'Radio Cairo and the Decolonization of East Africa, 1953-1963', chapter of collected volume entitled *Bandung and Beyond*, edited by Christopher J. Lee, under consideration at Ohio University Press for 2009 publication. That section, along with newly-drafted sections here, represent part of a monograph research project on radio and political culture in Eastern Africa from 1940-80. I would like to thank Jan-Bart Gewald and Benjamin Soares for inviting me to this forum.

[1] Randal Sadleir, *Tanzania: Journey to Republic* (London, 1999), p. 215.

[2] Few concepts today are as theoretically contested as sovereignty, and few less amenable to working consensus definitions. Post-structuralist studies by Jens Bartelson and Cynthia Weber both oppose *any* definition of sovereignty, arguing that the notion is so entangled with the state that definitions of one inevitably conclude in tautological absurdities invoking the other. As metaphysics, sovereignty *decides*, deciding what is knowable, and therefore is a precondition for knowledge, and thus cannot be part of knowledge itself. Both authors instead retreat to examine sovereignty as representation. Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Cynthia Weber, *Simulating Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For more useful and less paralyzing approaches to the concept, see John Hoffman, *Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1998); and William Rasch, *Sovereignty and its Discontents: on the primacy of conflict and the structure of the political* (London: Birkbeck Law Press, 2004). The idea of sovereignty pursued here is a tentative and heuristic one that historicizes the efforts of actors to identify and address ultimate authorities within overlapping normative fields of territorial and nation-state legitimacies on the one hand and (subjectively) self-evident universal principles of justice on the other.

political authorities to react to incendiary international broadcasts that by definition did not respect territorial boundaries? As Julian Hale – author of the best single book on international radio propaganda – has observed, '[i]t is radio's special function to penetrate even where it is not wanted'.[3] A study of polemical radio in the age of decolonization reveals larger creative tensions among international networks of liberation, and the colonies and nation-states whose fragile sovereignties were felt to require a loud and singular territorial voice.

International broadcasting is essentially subversive.[4] It has ridiculed nominal, Westphalian principles of territorial sovereignty by lowering in unprecedented fashion the threshold for interfering in another state's affairs. Accountability for abusive external broadcasts was impracticable in times of peace; in war it plainly revealed the Hobbesian quality of international relations. Multi-lateral tools of compliance for external broadcasting standards were weak by both nature and design. Motivated by national self-interest, the major powers ratified a series of treaties to create the nominal international regulatory body for radio, the Swiss-based International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in the 1920s.[5] The institution proved powerless to influence noxious German broadcasts in the 1930s, and collapsed along with other League of Nations machinery with the outbreak of war. When ITU was reconstituted as a UN specialized agency in 1947, it reflected the Cold War *modus vivendi* of the conflict's principal actors, and thus stood by as an idle witness to the hypocrisies of regular Soviet bloc (and occasionally NATO-bloc) jamming

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[3] Julian Hale, *Radio Power: Propaganda and International Broadcasting* (London, 1975), p. xii. Other useful overviews include Philo C. Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda: International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992); Donald R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting: the limits of the limitless medium* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1982); and Willi A. Boelcke, *Die Macht des Radios: Weltpolitik und Auslandsrundfunk 1924-1976* (Frankfurt/M: Verlag Ullstein, 1977). The classic of this still under-developed field of radio history in general remains Asa Brigg's five-volume history of the BBC, *A History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961-95).
[4] Hale, p. xiii.
[5] The International Telegraph Convention, established in 1865 to regulate international telegraphs, formed the model institution for actors who signed the International Radio Telegraph Conference in Berlin in 1906. This agreement formed what are still known as the 'Radio Regulations', which included an agreement by signatories to refrain from interfering with other radio stations. Further treaties on radio were signed over the 1920s to form the International Radiotelegraph Convention, and at a conference in Madrid in 1932, the International Telegraph Convention and International Radiotelegraph Convention agreed to combine, forming the ITU in 1934.

of external broadcasts and chronic use of clandestine radio stations for 'grey' and 'black' propaganda efforts.[6] ITU has flourished only in those spaces where radio conflict was mutually and equally destructive. The organization has successfully coordinated the allocation of bandwidths to international broadcasters in an increasingly crowded shortwave band through a series of hard-fought negotiations among the growing numbers of recognized nation-states in Atlantic City and Mexico City in the late 1940s. Saving this narrow band of cooperation, international airwaves have more closely reflected the anarchy and naked power of the open seas than they have the territorial conventions of nation-states.

Aspiring to realize a national sovereignty through the exercise of a national electronic voice had been most dramatic where it was first pioneered. The grotesque and wild success of Nazi Germany's German-language radio broadcasts relied upon carefully measured emotional manipulation to effect maximum political mobilization. This technique would serve as a rather crass template for many emerging post-war radio propagandists throughout the world. But while the Nazi regime's broadcasts in the German language were undeniably successful, its foreign-language external broadcasts often only succeeded where a given country's own national broadcasts – most notably in France – were seen to be hiding or denying larger geopolitical truths.[7] Concessions were made to retain listeners. At home, while jazz remained anathema among most Nazi propagandists, light entertainment increasingly formed the core of national programming for an audience tiring of overtly ideological content.[8] All propagandists could, however, agree from the outset that both jazz and light entertainment were appropriate sugars to coat the propaganda pills for external broadcasts. The German Broadcasting Company used

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[6] For an overview, see Michael Nelson, *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997); and Lawrence C. Soley & John S. Nichols, *Clandestine Radio Broadcasting: A Study of Revolutionary and Counterrevolutionary Electronic Communication* (New York: Praeger, 1987).
[7] Hale, p. 5.
[8] Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), p. 206.

'popular music, swing and jazz as calculated bait to attract listeners to its foreign-language propaganda broadcasts'.[9] Music and light entertainment would similarly form the core of Radio Cairo's external broadcasts to Africa. Political commentary was offered in carefully measured amounts, but was wholesale polemic in its content. For East Africa, Swahili-language broadcasts from Cairo sharpened and perfected searing anti-colonial invectives in the 1950s that quickly became the clichéd slogans of the 1960s. Once independence was achieved, East African nationalist leaders quickly realized how fragile and brittle their hard-fought sovereignty was. In response, Kenya, Tanganyika, and Zanzibar transformed their inherited territorial radio station to project a loud and timorous voice announcing their sovereignty in an attempt to drown out external threats.

British East Africa: a neglected broadcast battlefield, 1940-1953

Anti-British radio broadcasting first entered East Africa with the outbreak of the Second World War. The world's short-wave bands were filled with hostile polemics railing against British imperialism, but there were few radio sets in East Africa to receive them, and only a tiny sliver of the population to understand the dominant languages. Exact figures for radio sets are unknown, but the number of license fees – theoretically required for each public and individual set – offer some approximation. There were 150 licensed radio sets in Zanzibar in 1938, the same number in Tanganyika in 1941; 820 sets in Uganda in 1941; and in Kenya the number rose from 2,995 in 1938 to 6,700 by 1944.[10] Most of these sets were in the private hands of more prosperous European settlers and officials, while public sets designed to deliver propaganda were rarely tuned

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[9] Horst J.P. Bergmeier and Rainer E. Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves: The Inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 136.

[10] Index card on radio in Zanzibar in British Broadcasting Corporation Written Archives Collection, Caversham, Berkshire [hereafter BBC WAC] E1/1344; 'Extract from Proceedings of Provincial Commissioners' Conference, Dar es Salaam, 12th-16th May, 1941', Tanzania National Archives, Dar es Salaam [hereafter TNA] 29541/8; Questionnaire answers from Information Officer Kampala, 19 June 1941, BBC WAC E1/1343; 'Broadcasting Survey of the British East African Territories 1946 Report by W.E.C. Varley, April 1946', enclosed in BBC WAC E1/21.

away from British-approved broadcasts.[11] Colonial officials were most anxious about the potential

effects of hostile Arabic-language broadcasts from Italy and Germany.[12] In the early years of the

war, large numbers of Arabic speakers in Nairobi and Mombasa would gather around radio sets to

listen Radio Berlin's Yunis al-Bahri preach Holy War against the British Empire.[13] Hyder Kindy, a

high-ranking African civil servant in Mombasa, reminisced that:

> More than 75 per cent of the non-European Mombasa population of all religions were pro-German, and were saying quite openly that Britain would be defeated. Every evening flocks of people from as far as Majengo would come to my place to listen to the Arabic announcer, Yunus El-Bahry, from Berlin. He would sarcastically ridicule Britain and her allies, enumerating the losses in shipping tonnage and in men at the battlefront. Most of these people could not even understand Arabic. My house was a small one and not more than twenty could be squeezed in. So people were scattered outside from the Mkanyageni Mosque to the old Slaughter House, waiting for anyone who came out of the house to tell them the latest news.

Attendance declined at Kindy's house only when the tides of war turned in Britain's favor.[14] Little

is known about the hostile broadcasts in Swahili – the region's *lingua franca* that all of Hyder

Kindy's guests would have understood – which emanated daily from Italian-controlled Addis

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[11] Although, incredibly, they did tune in to hostile broadcasts on the Kenyan coast at times – see District Commissioner Mombasa to Information Officer, 4 November 1940, Kenya National Archives, Nairobi [hereafter KNA] AHC/18/1/12; and District Commissioner [hereafter DC] Kilifi to Information Officer, 26 June 1941, KNA AHC/18/1.

[12] In 1935, Italy established an Arabic-language broadcast from Bari which regularly attacked Britain and its imperial policies. Italians distributed a large number of cheap radio sets throughout the Arab world tuned only to the Bari station frequency. Washburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11. For a full policy study, see Manuela A. Williams, *Mussolini's propaganda abroad: subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940* (London: Palgrave, 2006). Germany's Arabic-language broadcast, launched in April 1939, presented the country as an ally to the Arab world that had no territorial designs on the region. A two-hour daily program, *Stimme der freien Araber*, championed a pan-Arab liberation movement and exhorted its listeners to awaken to the call of holy war and help Germany defeat their shared enemies of Britain, France, and the Jews. The program famously recruited the 'Grand Mufti' of Jerusalem, Amin al-Hussain, as an announcer in late 1941, and helped to foment rebellion in Iraq. Boelcke, *Die Macht des Radios, op. cit.*, pp. 406-9.

[13] Director of Intelligence and Security to Information Officer Nairobi, 21 May 1941, KNA AHC/18/1. The transmission signals of Arabic broadcasts from British-controlled Aden and Cairo were weakly received along Kenya's coast, while that of Rome and Berlin were 'coming through as strong as you like'. DC Kilifi to Information Officer, Nairobi, 26 June 1941, KNA AHC/18/1.

[14] Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics in Mombasa* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House 1972), p. 116.

Ababa in 1940-41, except that they were judged hostile enough by the British heads of Zanzibar and Tanganyika to seek restrictions on playing enemy broadcasts in public places.[15]

What British-controlled radio did exist was poorly positioned to respond to these unprecedented attacks. In 1939 there was only a single radio station in East Africa, operated in Nairobi on concessionary terms by the British corporation Cable and Wireless to serve the needs of the region's European and (to a lesser extent) Indian listeners. General policy before the war had been to discourage bringing wireless radio closer to African subjects.[16] The outbreak of war drove Nairobi's information officers to use this station (call-lettered '7LO') to make semi-regular broadcasts in Swahili and other vernacular languages to distribute propaganda about general war-time developments, as well as to counter rumors of imminent Axis attacks or alleged British defeats.[17] These efforts were joined by BBC's launch of an irregular Swahili shortwave service from London in 1940.[18] Their collective effectiveness is difficult to judge, but the experience did open officials' eyes to the positive propaganda possibilities that radio might bring to the region.

Hostile external broadcasting to East Africa ceased with the war's end. Britain and its local colonial governments would dominate the region's airwaves for the next eight years. Swahili broadcasts from London's Bush House became even more intermittent after the war, but the BBC did exert greater regional influence through its English, Hindustani and Arabic broadcasts with larger and more regularized programming. What little international competition existed was weak. Global English-language broadcasts from the Soviet bloc went largely ignored. After 1947, Delhi's All India Radio used their English-language broadcast to criticize the British Empire, but

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[15] Chief Secretary [hereafter CS] Zanzibar to Secretary of Governor's Conference, 10 September 1940, TNA 27436/28; Governor of Tanganyika to Colonial Secretary, 7 October 1940, Colonial Office, Public Records Office, Kew [hereafter CO] 323/1805/1/1.

[16] For one summary, see minute of Hone to D.A.S., 5 April 1941, TNA 29541.

[17] Memorandum enclosed in Northcote to Cameron, 28 September 1942, CO 875/6/17/83; Baker to CS, 31 October 1939, TNA 27436/8.

[18] The BBC began its external service by launching an English-language Empire Service in 1932; in 1938 it began broadcasting in Arabic to respond to constant attacks from Italy's Arabic service. BBC, *BBC Handbook* (London: BBC House, 1955), p. 29.

in East Africa it was its Hindi and particularly its Gujerati programmes that had the largest impact, and they were concerned mostly with music and cultural programming. Local radio development moved ahead complacently. In 1946, a BBC engineer toured East Africa to make recommendations for an ambitious East African broadcasting scheme, but his plans were rejected as too centralized and grandiose by the territorial governments in 1949; radio would instead develop along separate territorial lines.[19] Such development was perpetually limited by budgetary constraints, and radio ranked low in each government's spending priorities. Excepting the emerging Mau Mau crisis in central Kenya, this was a period of relative political stability in East Africa. Decision makers attached little urgency to matters of propaganda or counter-propaganda.

But regional radio did nonetheless develop during this period. Each East African government applied successfully for Colonial Development and Welfare Act funds to erect or expand territorial and provincial radio broadcasting. Colonial radio was particularly dynamic along the coast. *Sauti ya Mvita*, the Mombasa radio station formed in response to the town's disruptive 1947 dockworkers' strike, served as a springboard for local musicians and regional *ta'arab* performers, as well as a theological satrapy for the town's haughty *ulama*.[20] *Sauti ya Unguja*, originally no more than two giant loudspeakers attached to Zanzibar's *Beit al-Ajeib* ('House of Wonders') during the Second World War, had by the mid-1950s become a powerful shortwave station heard up and down the coast broadcasting religious talks, *id* and *maulid* celebrations, and regular performances by the Sultan's royal band.[21] In Tanganyika, *Sauti ya Dar es Salaam* appeared as the territory's first radio station only in 1951, serving the immediate city and hinterland with medium wave

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[19] Edward Twining, then the newly-appointed governor of Tanganyika, was instrumental in derailing the scheme. He argued that local programming would be far more suitable to the needs of Tanganyika, where he proposed to begin with wired ('diffused') broadcasting in Dar es Salaam. Twining to Creech Jones, 20 October 1949, CO 875/67/6/3.
[20] James R. Brennan, '*Sauti ya Mvita*: Mombasa Radio, Kenya, and the World, 1947-1963', paper delivered at conference entitled 'The Meanings of Popular Culture: Perspectives from the East African Coast', in Mombasa on 22 July 2006. This paper is being revised as a chapter for the larger monograph study of radio in East Africa.
[21] See *Sauti ya Unguja*'s monthly reports in Zanzibar National Archives AB/5/80.

broadcasts until it expanded as a territory-wide station in 1955.[22] The core appeal that drew

listeners to each of these stations was music, driven mainly by listeners' requests but also by

programs dedicated to popular genres. By the mid-1950s, listeners along the coast and indeed the

wider Western Indian Ocean littoral, as well as in the East African mainland, were tuning in to the

three coastal stations that collectively produced an enlargement and sort of virtual rebirth of

Swahili culture, expressed not only in crisscrossed greetings among distant friends, *ta'arab* music,

and theological programs, but also by regular broadcasts of Swahili *utenzi* and *shairi* verse poets,

who now enjoyed a massively enlarged audience.[23]

    For East Africa's radio listenership had grown exponentially as technology made sets more

affordable over the 1950s. The 'Saucepan Set', invented in Northern Rhodesia in the mid-1940s,

enabled those with money but without access to electricity mains to listen to a battery-powered

radio; in the late 1950s the transistor radio would improve on this by radically reducing battery

costs, the main economic bottleneck to radio listening.[24] In 1950 there were 4,500 radio sets in

Zanzibar; by 1960 it had increased to 13,000. Tanganyika imported 21,225 radio sets in 1955

alone.[25] British officials had underestimated both the demand and opportunity East Africans had

for radio listening. When they finally came alive to this potential danger, it was too ideologically

awkward, too impractical, and simply too late to restrict or regulate listenership growth. And they

found themselves vulnerable once again to powerful external voices that made a mockery of

Britain's nominal territorial sovereignty.

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[22] Martin Sturmer, *The Media History of Tanzania* (Ndanda: Ndanda Mission Press, 1998), pp. 77-85 & 292-5.

[23] Brennan, '*Sauti ya Mvita*'; A.I. Salim, *The Swahili Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast* (Nairobi, 1973), p. 216.

[24] Graham Mytton, 'From Saucepan to Dish', in Richard Fardon & Graham Furniss (eds.), *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), pp. 23-24.

[25] Media data index card for Zanzibar in BBC WAC E3/784/1; extract from 1959 Tanganyika Broadcasting Report, BBC WAC E3/763/1. Radio sets throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, leaped from 460,000 in 1955 to 4,800,000 in 1965. Mytton, p. 25.

Radio Cairo in East Africa

Between 1953 and 1960, the rhetoric of improvement that had long dominated East Africa's public sphere yielded to a rhetoric of confrontation against British colonial rule. While reasons for this change are numerous, it coincided with a massive increase in the region's radio listenership, as well as a massive increase in the supply of anti-colonial political invective broadcast to the region in Swahili, primarily from Cairo. And local demand was strong. Writing in 1957 about the influence of foreign radio broadcasts in Tanganyika's capital of Dar es Salaam, an astute colonial officer wrote that:

> Delhi, with its strong anti-colonial slant, has its listeners, but much the most popular of the foreign radios is that of Cairo: not only because it is anti-colonial and anti-British and anti-Western, but because its presentation is hard-hitting, unequivocal and makes no attempt to be fair.[26]

Radio broadcasts from Cairo offered a powerful vision of an emerging Afro-Asian world that would assist Britain's East African colonies to throw off the chains of Western colonialism. But this Afro-Asian utopia also raised into stark relief the political and economic disparities *among* the 'Afro-Asians' residing in East Africa. Like the ideals espoused at the Bandung Conference in 1955, shortwave radio propaganda claimed to erode political boundaries while paradoxically strengthening them. To the same extent that Gamal Abdul Nasser revealed his primary consideration to be Egypt's place in the Middle East rather than in 'Afro-Asia', the primary considerations of East Africans proved to be an anti-colonialism that would first extinguish local racial hierarchies through victory of an African racial nationalism, only after which the region could join 'Afro-Asia'. Radio Cairo broadcasts popularized an effective anti-colonial invective, but also accelerated regional conflicts, particularly in Zanzibar where violent rhetoric gave way to horrific violence.

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[26] J.A.K. Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam* (London, 1963), p. 199.

Although the political programming of Egyptian radio had grown more anti-British in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the history of its regional and global ambitions began with the Egyptian Free Officers in the coup of July 1952. Gamal Abdul Nasser emerged as new regime's leader soon after, and had formed rough ideas about Africa and 'Afro-Asian' liberation – most of which centered on expelling the British and Israelis from the Middle East and 'restoring' the unity of the Nile Valley under Egyptian leadership. Securing Egyptian influence over the Middle East was always Nasser's top foreign policy priority. Only after failing to form a pan-Arab defensive pact against the Baghdad Pact did Nasser opt to expand his political horizons by attending the Bandung Conference in April 1955. Bandung was Nasser's first major appearance on the international stage, and his anti-West inclinations were well-received and encouraged by China, India, and Indonesia. In words of the state newspaper *Al-Goumhouryah*, Egypt's 'inferiority complex disappeared at Bandung'.[27] Nasser's foreign policy of 'positive neutralism' served as the malleable rubric for Egypt to fight colonialism on the grounds that deterrent wars could be necessary and passivity could not be justified.[28] Bandung inspired Nasser to focus attention on Sub-Saharan Africa. Carrying the banner of 'anti-imperialism', Nasser offered many African leaders diplomatic protection and support in Cairo. By 1962, no fewer than 15 African countries had taken up the offer, with various bureau officers taking in an Egyptian government stipend of £E100 per month and free air travel, all supported by the African Section of the Egyptian Ministry of Information.[29]

After Bandung, Nasser launched a vigorous propaganda campaign for Africa, identifying Egypt as an ancient civilization African in its origin. Alleged racial difference between Africans north and south of the Sahara, Egyptian propagandists claimed, was merely an imperialist tool to create

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[27] Jacques Baulin, *The Arab role in Africa* (Harmondworth, 1962), p. 69.
[28] Saïd K. Aburish, *Nasser: The Last Arab* (London, 2004), p. 102; Baulin, pp. 73-75.
[29] Tareq Y. Ismael, *The U.A.R. in Africa: Egypt's Policy under Nasser* (Evanston, 1971), pp. 36 & 134; Baulin, p. 46.

rifts and division. Nasser firmly established his Afro-Asian credentials with the tremendous

propaganda victory at Suez in November 1956.[30] The event shook colonial administrators

throughout East Africa. Randal Sadleir commented that:

> I certainly felt at the time that things could never be quite the same again, and one could
> sense a definite change in the mood of people in Dar es Salaam. They had begun to realize
> that their erstwhile imperial masters had feet of clay.[31]

No less a figure than the Kenyan nationalist Oginga Odinga stated that 'Africa was never the

same after Suez and the coming into play on the continent and in the world of the forces of Pan-

Africanism'.[32]

Radio would prove to be among Nasser's most effective propaganda weapons.[33] *Sawt al-Arab*

('Voice of the Arabs'), an Arabic-language broadcast which began on the first anniversary of the

July Revolution in 1953, was the 'pulpit for revolution' which enabled Egypt to 'create a public

opinion where none had existed before, among the illiterate and semiliterate masses of the Arab

world'.[34] Soon broadcasting twenty-four hours a day, *Sawt al-Arab* emphasized music and popular

entertainment, recruiting some of the Arab world's most beloved artists such as the singer Oum

Khaltoum for in-house talent.[35] Its schedule reflected Schmittian themes – one daily program was

entitled *Enemies and Agents*.[36] Moreover, 'Voice of the Arabs' ended Britain's post-war monopoly

on propaganda in the Middle East.[37] Beamed on shortwave frequencies, these broadcasts reached

East Africa from the outset, and immediately helped to radicalize demands of Arabs living on the

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[30] Ismael, pp. 36 & 103.
[31] Sadleir, p. 185.
[32] Oginga Odinga, *Not Yet Uhuru* (London, 1967), p. 175.
[33] Given its regional historical significance, as well as the current political significance of its spiritual successor *al-Jazeera*, Radio Cairo and its *Saut al-Arab* program suffer from a shocking dearth of academic research. For a starting point, see Rais Ahmad Khan, 'Radio Cairo and Egyptian Foreign Policy 1956-1959', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1967; and Inshirah Shal, *sawt al-arab bayna al-ams wa al-yawm* (Cairo: al-Sayyidah Zaynab, 1989). More recent work on the region has taken fuller note of Radio Cairo's political role; *cf.* Matthew J. Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's fight for independence and the origins of the post-cold war era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Aburish, *op. cit.*
[34] Winston Burdett, *Encounter with the Middle East* (London, 1970), p. 23, quoted in Julian Hale, *Radio Power*, p. 72.
[35] Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 282.
[36] Hale, p. 81.
[37] Aburish, p. 80.

Kenyan Coast. British military operations in Suez incensed Kenyan Arabs – funds were raised and

special prayers were held for Egypt in the mosques throughout the country.[38] British bombers

famously targeted and destroyed the Radio Cairo transmitter in the early morning of November

2nd, but 'Voice of the Arabs' listeners along the coast could pick it up three days later.[39] Kenya's

intelligence officers considered Arab hostility 'unlikely to go beyond words', but that things could

change if 'a call for holy war is sent out by Egypt'.[40] The colony's Intelligence Committee offered

this appreciation:

> Cairo radio is listened to eagerly by Arabs and preferred to the B.B.C., Nairobi, and
> Mombasa (Sauti ya Mvita) radios. It is the most potent force for the encouragement of
> nationalism and subversive tendencies. The broadcasts from this station are sometimes
> virulent and nearly always anti-British in tone. It seizes on any local issue that might
> embarrass the British, or offers an opportunity to proclaim the cause of Arab nationalism; a
> recent example is the broadcasts on the sovereignty of the coastal strip following Mackawi's
> statements on the need for a revision of the 1895 Treaty.[41]

The treaty in question was a reference to the *mwambao* movement, which sought to exploit the

legal fiction of the Sultan of Zanzibar's 'ownership' of the 10-mile strip along Kenya's coastline,

expressed in the 1895 treaty, to pursue demands for local autonomy from 'mainland' Kenya.

Ahmad Said, the major 'Voice of the Arabs' announcer, celebrated the cause as an appropriate

anti-colonial struggle. The following broadcast reveals the power as well as obvious limitations for

such broadcasting in East Africa:

> O! Arabs. News has reached us that an Arab Islamic Nation is being established in Zanzibar
> and the Coastal Strip of East Africa . . . It is our duty then, to assist this blessed movement,
> so as to glorify it, support it and bring it up to join our Arab Procession . . . Arab
> Nationalism is penetrating the East African Jungle and Central Africa. The Arab League of
> Nationals on the one hand and the Arab Nations extending from the Atlantic to the
> Arabian Gulf, on the other hand should help our Brothers in Kenya and Zanzibar . . . We
> shall help this Nationalism emitting from the heart of the African Continent.[42]

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[38] Baring to Lennox-Boyd, 18 August 1956, CO 822/825/2; Governor's Deputy Kenya to Lennox-Boyd, 12 November 1956, CO 822/804/7.

[39] See note on Foreign Office, Public Records Office, Kew [hereafter FO] 371/11925/JE1433/93. Swahili broadcasts resumed regular schedules by February 1957. Circular of Lennox-Boyd to Administering Officers, Africa, 26 February 1957, Dominions Office, Public Records Office, Kew [hereafter DO] 35/9645/15.

[40] Governor's Deputy Kenya to Lennox-Boyd, 12 November 1956, CO 822/804/7.

[41] Kenya Intelligence Committee: Appreciation of the Arab Situation at the Coast, October 1956, CO 822/804/2.

[42] Saut el Arab broadcast, 30 June 1956, FO 371/119222/E1433/76.

Subsequent political initiatives by Zanzibari politicians to reclaim the coastal strip for the Sultan were enthusiastically received by Arabs and, to a lesser extent, by Swahili inhabitants along the coast up until 1960.[43]

Yet, as during the Second World War, only a small minority of East Africans understood Arabic. The seminal development of Egyptian propaganda to East Africa was the launch of the Swahili-language broadcast *Sauti ya Cairo* ('Voice of Cairo') on 3 July 1954.[44] The program, initially only thirty minutes in length, started at 19.00 local East African time with the Egyptian national anthem, followed by a five-minute recitation of the Koran, ten minutes of daily news, followed by either two weekly political commentaries or a cultural program that emphasized the history, culture, economics, and politics of Egypt. Each section was linked by short intervals of music.[45] In July 1955 the program was increased to forty-five minutes, in 1958 to a full hour, and in 1961 to an hour and a half. Radio Cairo's first Swahili broadcast encapsulated the radicalism and paternalism of Egypt's African policy, announcing that 'Egypt's geographical situation requires her to work for the liberation of the African continent, in which the Nile flows, from all forms of imperialism. . . . [t]he transmission aims at linking the fighting peoples of Africa with the Arab peoples, who are also struggling for freedom, peace and prosperity'.[46] Generously funded by the state, Radio Cairo raided broadcast talent throughout East Africa, offering announcers and

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[43] There was never a chance that the British would allow the coastal strip any meaningful autonomy – even the most staunchly pro-Arab of Kenya's Governors, Philip Mitchell, admitted that the coastal strip has 'no political future' detached from mainland Kenya. Mitchell to Creech Jones, 24 February 1948, CO 537/5911/8. For an authoritative if somewhat dated literature on *mwambao*, see A.I. Salim, *Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast* (Nairobi, 1973), pp. 220-246; *idem.*, 'The Movement for 'Mwambao' or Coast Autonomy in Kenya, 1956-1963', *Hadith* 2 (1970) pp. 212-228; Richard Stren, *Housing the Urban Poor in Africa: Policy, Politics and Bureaucracy in Mombasa* (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 74-87; and Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics in Mombasa* (Nairobi, 1972), pp. 184-191.

[44] BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part IV (Middle East), First Series, Volume 687 [hereafter cited in the form BBC SWB I ME/687], 6 July 1956. Egypt also initiated a half-hour program in Amharic in December 1955, a broadcast in Somali in March 1957, and broadcasts in English, Lingala and Nyanji in 1961. Egypt initiated broadcasts to West Africa in English, French, and Hausa in December 1959, and broadcasts in Fulani in July 1961. Programs were assembled on the basis of requests received from listeners. See Ismael, pp. 155-156.

[45] Mathieson to Shepherd, 3 July 1956, FO 371/119222/E1433/73.

[46] BBC SWB I ME/481, 9th July 1954.

technicians larger salaries to tempt them away from colonial information service positions.[47] In addition to *Sauti ya Cairo*, Radio Cairo also launched a pseudo-clandestine station known as the 'Voice of Free Africa' in April 1957, broadcasting in Swahili for East and Central Africa during the hour before *Sauti ya Cairo* began, and on a frequency very close to that of Cairo's acknowledged broadcasts.[48] Unlike *Sauti ya Cairo*, which opened with qur'anic recitations, the 'Voice of Free Africa' began with drumbeats and horn music, followed by political talk. The 'Voice of Free Africa' claimed to be located 'in the heart of Africa' – indeed at one point white Kenyan officials feared that its claims to be broadcasting from the White Highlands might be true. Despite Egyptian denials that the station was within their territory, British radio technicians eventually obtained a fix on the signal and confirmed that it was broadcasting from Cairo.[49]

Although Nasser played a central role in launching this full-scale propaganda campaign against European colonial powers in Sub-Saharan Africa, a remarkable feature of Radio Cairo broadcasts was the light editorial influence that Nasser or any other Egyptian official exercised over program content. Suleiman Malik, an announcer on *Sauti ya Cairo* and later 'Voice of Free Africa', remembered that Major Mohamed Faiq, Nasser's advisor on African affairs, had no influence over his activities at the Zanzibar National Party's (ZNP) Cairo office, and that people in the ZNP office enjoyed 'complete independence'.[50] While this was certainly less true for Radio Cairo's main program, 'Voice of the Arabs', it does seem that vernacular broadcasts to Sub-Saharan Africa were surprisingly independent of state controls, even though Radio Cairo announcers were on quite generous state salaries.

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[47] British Embassy Khartoum to Africa Department, 9 March 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/17.

[48] Memorandum entitled 'Cairo Broadcasts to British Africa', enclosed in Hopson to Murray, 19 November 1959, FO/1110/1244/PR136/28.

[49] Minute of Hopson, 15 February 1961, FO 1110/1370; Beith to Crowe, 11 February 1960, FO 1110/1347/PR136/1; Rothnie to Crowe, 25 March 1960, FO 1110/1347/PR136/1.

[50] Sauda Barwani et al. (eds.), *Unser Leben vor der Revolution und danach* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 50-52. This was unlike the quid pro quo arrangements of Russian contacts in Cairo, who offered Malik E£30 in exchange for publishing Russian-penned stories in the ZNP propaganda paper *Al Falaq* (*Dawn in Zanzibar*).

Art, orthodoxy, and Zanzibari politics in Radio Cairo's anti-colonial invective

Zanzibar nationalists, who – to simplify a tortuous debate over coastal identity – would identify themselves as 'Zanzibaris' yet be identified by mainland Africans as 'Arabs', dominated the early years of Radio Cairo's Swahili-language broadcasts. Sharifa Lemke, the first broadcaster of *Sauti ya Cairo*, came from a prestigious Zanzibari family with close historical ties to the Sultan of Zanzibar. She was also sister to Ahmed Lemke, who had studied in Egypt, joined a communist movement opposed to King Farouk, and later spent two years in an Egyptian prison. When he returned to Zanzibar in 1953, Lemke organized Zanzibari workers and students into a politically oriented multi-racial club called the Zanzibari Association, which protested Britain's reliance on racial institutions.[51] Because of these connections, the politics of the Zanzibari Association and later the ZNP informed the politics of Radio Cairo's early Swahili broadcasts – anti-racialist, anti-colonialist, and vaguely pan-Islamist. In early 1955, Sharifa Lemke was joined at *Sauti ya Cairo* by Ahmed Rashad Ali, before she finally left the job in November that year.[52]

Ahmed Rashad Ali became the major personality of *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts during his long tenure there, running from 1955 to 1964. Also from a family with close ties to the Sultan of Zanzibar, Rashad had been a Sanitary Inspector in Zanzibar town in the 1930s and then traveled to Oman in 1937. The following year he arrived in Bombay and remained there until 1947, where he became a professional football player and great admirer of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League. On his return to Zanzibar, he took up a job as an announcer with *Sauti ya Unguja*, the radio station of the government's Information Office, as well as captain of the Malindi Sports club football team. He joined Ahmed Said Kharusi, later editor of the radical newspaper *Mwongozi*, to produce anti-colonial documents for the Zanzibar Human Rights Party, for which he was

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[51] See Michael Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 140ff.
[52] Trevelyan to Foreign Office, 10 April 1956, FO 371/119220/E1433/44; BBC SWB I ME/624/2, 25 November 1955.

arrested and dismissed from his government position. He was selected as a Radio Cairo announcer following an interview with Ali Muhsin al Barwani at the Arab Association premises in late 1954. After a brief return visit to India as a broadcaster on All-India Radio, he began broadcasting from Cairo on 27 February 1955, reading news in Swahili as well as making a weekend political propaganda broadcast.[53]

The popularity of *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts were stunning, particularly along East Africa's coast. Ali Sultan Issa, nephew to Ahmed Rashad, recalled that '[e]verybody in East Africa who spoke Swahili used to tune in to that program (Sauti ya Cairo). In Zanzibar we listened to [Ahmed Rashad's] programs in all the cafes. My uncle was a radical in those days, and he wanted to get rid of the Sultan. It infuriated the British, but it gave us inspiration'.[54] Editorial connections between Zanzibar and Radio Cairo were tight in these early years – on the second anniversary of the Free Officers' Revolution, Zanzibar's Arab Association sent two telegram to Cairo, the first praising Neguib and Nasser, the second to Radio Cairo informing them that Arab representatives had withdrawn from the Legislative Council in protest of the sedition case against editors of the radical newspaper *Al Falaq*.[55] Ahmad Rashad's 'East African Newsletter', the broadcast's weekly political commentary, was part of a 'machine for feeding material from Zanzibar to their compatriots in Cairo' that had developed, since late 1955, an 'alarming effectiveness' to lay stinging attacks on the British in Zanzibar.[56] The personal abuse of European officers in Zanzibar Government, as well as attacks on Zanzibari 'traitors' who worked with the British, moved the

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[53] 'Hii ni Sauti ya Cairo: The story of Ahmed Rashaad Ali' by M. W. Kanyama Chiume, *Sunday Observer* (Tanzania), 8 July 2001; interview of Ahmad Rashad Ali with author, Dar es Salaam, 9 August 1999; Evans to Stewart, 9 February 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/5.

[54] Ali Sultan Issa, 'Walk on Two Legs: A Revolutionary's Memoir of Zanzibar', manuscript edited by Gary Thomas Burgess, p. 51, copy in author's possession. This memoir will soon be published in a book by James Currey, paired with a memoir of Sharif Hamad, leader of the Zanzibar opposition party, the Civil United From (CUF).

[55] Extract from Zanzibar Protectorate Intelligence report July 1954, CO 822/840/27.

[56] Mathieson to Watson, 25 February 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/7. See also Annex, 'The Activities of Cairo Radio and their impact on territories towards which they are directed', enclosed in Ellingworth to Waterfield, 30 August, 1956, BBC Written Archives Collection, Caversham, Berkshire [hereafter BBC WAC] E1/1848/1.

British Resident to register a series of complaints.[57] One insult, deemed too libelous to reproduce

in the *Summary of World Broadcasts*, attacked one Mr. Jury, a former C.I.D. officer who in 1954 had

opposed the Arab Association during the *Al Falaq* sedition trial. The announcer jibed that he had

been dismissed from his post and ended up working in a London shop selling ladies' stockings,

and prayed 'that Mr. Jury may be able to keep that post'.[58]

British complaints centered on fears that Radio Cairo broadcasts would provoke violence in

East Africa. Such concerns were not completely without foundation – in 1955 a 'Voice of the

Arabs' broadcast criticizing the mission to Jordan of a British General moved listeners to

violence, leading directly to major riots in the streets of Amman.[59] The station would later be

credited for bringing about the collapse of a royalist government in Yemen in 1962.[60] While there

were no analogous riots or coups in East Africa resulting directly from *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts,

the program did usher in a new rhetorical era of sharp personal abuse on public figures. The

broadcasts that most tightly grabbed British attention in East Africa concerned Mau Mau. Ahmad

Rashad gave a wide range of anti-imperialist talks that labeled Mau Mau figures as 'freedom

fighters'.[61] One broadcast explained:

> There is no greater injustice than that which has been and still is endured by the people of
> Kenya. The fertile land of the people of the country is seized from them, and they are put in
> reserves, segregated from the settlers and without any reasonable relations with them. They
> are made to wear identity labels round their necks like dogs – and they are even forbidden
> to go to some places where dogs are allowed. If this is not injustice, what is it? Surely no
> one can call it democracy. Although the native of Kenya has no weapon but the panga
> which he uses to cut his way through the forest, he is labelled [sic] an enemy of freedom
> and security – while the imperialist troops, machine-guns in hands, are labelled [sic] soldiers

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[57] Mathieson to Watson, 20 Feb 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/6.

[58] Broadcast No. 640, enclosed in Evans to Stewart, 2 February 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/4.

[59] Rais Ahmad Khan, 'Radio Cairo and Egyptian Foreign Policy 1956-1959', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1967, p. 32.

[60] Browne, pp. 282-3.

[61] See BBC SWB I ME/690, 17 July 1956; O'Hagan to Governor [Kenya], 29 September 1956, CO 822/804/1/E2; Ali Muhsin Al Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar* (Dubai: self-published, 2000), p. 99; Mohamed Said: *The Life and Times of Abdulwahid Sykes (1924-1968): The Untold Story of the Muslim Struggle against British Colonialism in Tanganyika* (London, 1998), pp. 179-180; and Ismael, pp. 155-156. Rashad states that he first arrived in Cairo in 1953. Interview by author with Ahmed Rashad , 9 August 1999, Dar es Salaam.

of security and freedom! Whose security? Against whose security is the nationalist fighting? From whom are they afraid that he will steal his freedom?[62]

Radio Cairo's Swahili broadcast on New Year's Day 1956 wished, 'God willing, may the remaining people of Kenya continue with their jihad for freedom, and we pray that He will grant them their freedom in the shortest possible time. Amen'.[63]

Egypt's two Swahili-language programs, *Sauti ya Cairo* and 'Voice of Free Africa', popularized new polemics that facilitated the spread of anti-Western polemics throughout East Africa. The vivid language of invective directed against British colonial interests was the most striking aspect of Radio Cairo's Swahili broadcasts. The revelation of using the words 'dogs' and 'pigs' to describe British officials was the most powerful and memorable aspect of Radio Cairo's invective. Mohammed Adam, a Zanzibari journalist, would later remember that:

> We heard on the radio of the Egyptian revolution. We were told that this had put the people of Egypt in control of their destiny. So dreams were actually exported to us through the soundwaves into the island of Zanzibar, and we were living a dream as reality. The Radio Cairo broadcaster talked about British Imperialism and came up with the phrase, 'the bloody dogs of imperialism.' I've never taken dope, but this was the nearest that I can imagine one would have felt, when I listened to Radio Cairo.[64]

Resuscitating a tradition in Swahili poetry of the competitive insult[65], this invective assimilated contemporary world events into a consistent and powerful anti-colonial message. A broadcast from 'Voice of Free Africa' proclaimed:

> Africans, Indians and Arabs are brothers, as shown by the Bandung Conference . . . Brothers, my African national compatriots, I appeal to you to work together with the Arabs and Indians, to fight those white pigs side by side until freedom is attained. Disregard the venomous honeyed words of these white colonialist pigs – words which are intended to cause quarrels between you and to separate you and thus make you humble for ever.[66]

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[62] 'Cairo's Swahili Newsletter on East Africa', BBC SWB I ME/638, 17 January 1956.
[63] 'Cairo's Swahili Newsletter on East Africa', BBC SWB I ME/640, 24 January 1956.
[64] 'The Story of Africa: Independence', at www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica.
[65] See Ann Biersteker, *The Significance of the Swahili Literary Tradition to Interpretation of Early Twentieth Century Political Poetry*, African Humanities Discussion Paper 6 (Boston, 1990); for more recent developments, see Nathalie Arnold, 'Placing the Shameless: Approaching Poetry and the Politics of Pemba-ness in Zanzibar, 1995-2001', *Research in African Literatures* 33 (2002), pp. 140-166.
[66] BBC SWB I ME/365/L1, 3 October 1957.

Radio Cairo's early days were dominated by events and views concerning the Sultan's realm of Zanzibar and the Kenyan coast. In an early survey on the influence of Radio Cairo's Swahili broadcasting in January 1956, the governments of Uganda and Tanganyika stated that neither broadcast had much effect, but Zanzibar reported that it was 'widely listened to' as the announcer was a Zanzibari, though there were as yet 'no signs that public opinion has been much infected'.[67] By August 1956, Radio Cairo broadcasts were reckoned to be 'making a particular impact in Zanzibar and on the coastal region of Kenya where there are large Moslem communities', having the effect in Zanzibar of 'intimidating the people who would otherwise be prepared to co-operate with the Government'.[68]

The idea of a Zanzibari nationalism founded on allegiance to the Sultan and non-racialism – opposing both the colonial government's various racial laws on the one hand, and more significantly a continental African racial nationalism represented by the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) on the other – was the keystone of early *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts. Ahmad Rashad criticized the racial hiring and salary practices of new companies coming to Zanzibar, saying that '[t]he Zanzibaris cannot get accustomed to the subjugation of their famed "Uzanzibari" (Zanzibarism)'.[69] These early broadcasts reflected one side of the newspaper wars fought in Zanzibar between supporters of ZNP and ASP.[70] The ASP newspaper *Afrika Kwetu* attacked *Sauti ya Cairo* in early 1956 for not understanding who a real Zanzibari was. The announcer, presumably Ahmed Rashad, countered that 'the difference between the words and birthright of the writer of 'Afrika Kwetu' and the announcer of the 'Voice of Cairo' is really a big one'. He elaborated that

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[67] Summary of replies to enquiry about effect of Cairo Broadcasts. Colonial Office, 31 January 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/4.

[68] Annex, 'The Activities of Cairo Radio and their impact on territories towards which they are directed', enclosed in Ellingworth to Waterfield, 30 August, 1956, BBC WAC E1/1848/1.

[69] Monitoring Report of Sauti Ya Cairo Talk given by Ahmed Rashad Ali, Sunday May 6th, 1956, FO 371/119221/E1433/69.

[70] See Jonathon Glassman, 'Sorting out the Tribes: the creation of racial identities in colonial Zanzibar's newspaper wars', *Journal of African History* 41 (2000), pp. 395-428.

'[t]he editor of 'Afrika Kwetu', his ancestors and he himself are people of the mainland, whereas the speaker of the 'Voice of Cairo' and his ancestors before him were born in Zanzibar. Who is more a native of the country, the editor of 'Afrika Kwetu' or the announcer of the 'Voice of Cairo'?' The announcer finally concluded by comparing Egypt favorably to East African mindset of *Afrika Kwetu*, arguing that eleven different racial groups living in Egypt were 'all working for their freedom and the freedom of their own country'.[71] Both *Sauti ya Cairo* and 'Voice of Free Africa' took free aim at ASP leader Abeid Karume. A 'Voice of Free Africa' broadcast described Karume as a 'boatman' (he had earlier been a sailor) to emphasize his poor educational qualifications. Using the technique of rhetorical questions (often disingenuous ones), the broadcast asked:

> This boatman brother of ours who is President of the African Association of Zanzibar and an honourable member of the Legislative council must understand that times have changed and progress demands from us Africans to co-operate and be all united for the sake of the freedom of our countries. . . Why does not our brother the boatman of Zanzibar, who leads a group of nationals, follow the example of Mr. Julius Nyerere, the leader of the nationals of Tanganyika, and of Mr. Tom Mboya, the leader of the nationals of Kenya? I have forgotten the name of this gentleman, but that is of no account.[72]

As late as January 1961, *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts supported ZNP in elections, attacking the ASP for not fighting for Zanzibar on the world stage at various solidarity conferences, as well as for advocating the continuation of British rule in Zanzibar.[73]

 After this point, however, Egypt's Swahili-language radio broadcasts became remarkably agnostic on the question of Zanzibari politics. Walking on eggshells following the horrific riots in June 1961, the 'Voice of Free Africa' avoided assigning any partisan blame, and instead wished only that 'the people of Zanzibar would soon be reconciled and would stop bloodshed'.[74] Two

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[71] BBC SWB I ME/643/37, 3 February 1956.
[72] BBC SWB I ME/607/M/3, 22 July 1958.
[73] BBC SWB II [i.e., Second Series] ME/546/B/2 23 January 1961.
[74] BBC SWB II ME/657/B/5 6 June 1961; see also the pleas before the election in BBC SWB II ME/654/B/7 2 June 1961.

weeks later it hesitantly criticized the ASP for its historic 'stubbornness'.[75] Said Khalifah

Muhammad, the second major personality following Ahmad Rashad on *Sauti ya Cairo*, lightly took

up the ZNP cause by countering claims in the British 'Intelligence Digest' that the ZNP was not

party of the African people.[76] Ahmad Rashad Ali himself formally broke with the ZNP and began

to support, albeit tentatively, the Afro-Shirazi party, but exactly when remains unclear – Ali

Muhsin states was '[a] few years before the tragedy of 1964'.[77] Direct commentaries on events in

Zanzibar after June 1961 became sparse. Following Abdulrahman Babu's break with ZNP to

form the socialist Umma party in 1963, almost no broadcast from Radio Cairo openly supported

ZNP activities.

Presumably to authenticate its popular African sensibilities, the 'Voice of Free Africa' indulged

itself in attacks on the South Asian communities of East and Central Africa for 'covertly

collaborating with the British against the Arabs and Africans'.[78] But the gist of Egyptian radio

broadcasts on race and racial mixing were, even on its more conscientiously African 'Voice of

Free Africa' program, overwhelmingly optimistic, and strikingly out of step with its allocation of

support for political parties. One broadcast attempted to unravel the history of slavery to make

sense of Afro-Asian relations. Here the broadcaster offered a Manichean overview, where the

Afro-Asian world of Bandung on the one hand was one of true non-racialism, struggling against

the hard racial categories of Western imperialism on the other. Responding to ASP and other

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[75] BBC SWB II ME/768/B/5, 14 October 1961.
[76] BBC SWB II ME/657/B/1-3 6 June 1961; and BBC SWB ME/663/B/1, 13 June 1961. As early as March 1960, Ali Muhsin and others in ZNP began to distance themselves from the *mwambao* cause. See extracts from Zanzibar Intelligence Report March 1960, CO 822/2134/6.
[77] Ali Muhsin Al Barwani, *Conflicts and Harmony in Zanzibar*, p. 110. As early as 1957, Ahmed Rashad declined Muhsin's request that the former represent the ZNP at the first Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference held in Cairo – Rashad having already begun to distance himself somewhat from the ZNP. Barwani et al., p. 30. In the author's interviews with Ahmad Rashad Ali before his death, he refused to discuss this question or much of anything of detail relating to his employment in Cairo.
[78] BBC SWB I ME/432/3 20 December 1957.

African nationalist propaganda that highlighted the Arab role in the slave trade, and the often

marginalized status of mixed-race children of Arab fathers[79], the broadcaster stated:

> In ancient times slavery prevailed all over the world, including Africa. Africans used to
> enslave other Africans and used to sell them to the Arabs, whom they used to transport to
> their own countries; even today Africans are selling Africans. In short, there are at present
> Arab kings reigning in Arab countries who have in their veins African blood. Africans
> marry Arabs and Arabs marry Africans, and Indians marry Africans and Africans marry
> Indians, and their children are (word indistinct). But in Britain and America there are
> several millions of Africans with White blood who are not accepted among the White
> people . . . So, my traitorous and shameless brothers, hirelings of the white dogs, stop your
> dangerous game and adopt the spirit of the Bandung conference and let it bring the
> Africans, Asians and Arabs in East Africa together.[80]

This view of racial harmony was credible depending on the perspective of the listener – to ZNP

supporters and its sympathizers, it confirmed the non-racial, anti-colonial bona fides of a pan-

Islamic nationalism.[81] To many African nationalists, it was a disingenuous description that

attempted to obscure racial hierarchies and sexual exploitation that long buttressed East Africa's

coastal social structures.

Islamic anti-colonialism in *Sauti ya Cairo*

While Radio Cairo's political support for the ZNP waxed and then waned in the decade under

consideration here, Islam was a consistent focal point in most *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts, though

considerably less so in 'Voice of Free Africa' programs. The rhetoric and idiom of Nasser himself,

the former 'Young Egypt' leader Ahmad Hussein, and 'Voice of the Arabs' announcer Ahmad

Said, all offered what P. J. Vatikiotis described as a 'potent mix of words with both secular and

religious connotation'.[82] The short-wave broadcasts to Sub-Saharan Africa in languages spoken

overwhelmingly by Muslims, such as Somali and Hausa, centered around specific discussions of

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[79] For a discussion of this, see Glassman, *op. cit.*, and James R. Brennan, 'Nation, Race and Urbanization in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania 1916-1976', Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 2002, chapter 5.
[80] BBC SWB ME/353/L/5, 19 September 1957.
[81] The project of vindicating the history of Arab slavery from Christian missionary attacks became a major part of Arab and pan-Islamic political activism in East Africa during the 1950s. For one such counter-attack, used to justify the rights of Radio Cairo to criticize the British, see 'Who will cast the first stone?', *Mwongozi*, 30 March 1956.
[82] P.J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and His Generation* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 283.

Islamic theology and calls to *jihad* in its political discussions and anti-colonial bromides. As Kiswahili was a language that in the 1950s was overwhelmingly Muslim for mother-tongue speakers, yet also a *lingua franca* for predominantly Christian countries such as Kenya, the role of Islam in *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts was more complicated. Ali Muhsin regularly reminded readers, through Ahmad Rashad's 'East African Newsletter' scripts, that he supported co-operation with Christian countries in Africa, as well as the ultimate aim of a unified Africa through organizations such as Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA).[83]

But an identifiably anti-colonial Islam clearly informed many *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts. Said Khalifah Muhammad regularly gave talks in Kiswahili explaining the anti-colonial, democratic, and nationalist nature of Islam, one that kept with nostrums elaborated at the Bandung Conference and Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation conferences.[84] In one lecture, 'Islam has fought tribalism', he explained that the teaching of Islam 'had made it clear to enlightened people in East Africa that they must set aside tribalism, for it was from this fortress of racialism that the foreign imperialists sowed the seeds of dissension among the people of one country . . . Down with racialism, down with imperialism, and long live nationalism in East Africa'.[85] He also took aim at those people who worked with the colonial governments in East Africa on religious grounds. 'Treason', he stated, 'is a major sin in Islam'. In a flow of rhetorical questions, a method central to *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasting style, Muhammad went on to ask, '[w]hat do you think of those who claim East African nationality and who eat off the country's bounties, drink its waters and live as its original owners and then betray the valued trust, religion, homeland, and that nationality? Indeed, they betray God and His Prophet and the Muslims!'[86] The term and idea of *jihad* was regularly, almost casually deployed. One broadcast on 'Imperialism in East and Central

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[83] BBC SWB II ME/278/B/3 8 March 1960.
[84] See, *inter alia*, BBC SWB II ME/183/B/4, 16 November 1959, and BBC SWB I ME/721/A/4, 2 December 1958.
[85] BBC SWB II ME/189/B/5 23 November 1959.
[86] BBC SWB II ME/201/B/2, 7 December 1959.

Africa' explained that every true nationalist 'endeavours to strengthen and help our sacred jihad for freedom and unity', and that 'the independence and unity of the Continent of Asia support us in this jihad; perhaps many do not realise that were it not for the gap of the Suez Canal, Africa and Asia would have remained one expanse of land as in the old days before this waterway was dug.'[87]

Comparisons between Christianity and Islam formed a subtle undertone of *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts. Criticisms of Christianity were usually oblique. In June 1957, *Sauti ya Cairo* leveled a stinging attack on what it called 'Western Christianity'. The announcer observed that:

> Today we see these Western States, whose Christian religion eulogises fraternal love and equality between human beings, foremost in destroying the lives of their fellow-men in Japan, Kenya, Algeria, Port Said, Malaya, South Africa and elsewhere. These same States were responsible for the Jews' seizing the property and homeland of the people of Palestine . . Well, is this the form of civilisation for which we, the peoples of the colonies, ought to fight? Which among these things is beneficial for us that we should fight for it? Not a single one. If these Western States are truly Christian would it not be appropriate for them to do good and act justly in accordance with the teachings of their religion?[88]

Sauti ya Cairo devoted far more time in restoring what it saw as the besmirched reputation of Islam at the hands of Europeans. This was characterized above all by an acute sensitivity to portrayals of the history of the slave trade in East Africa. In a talk on 'Imperialism in Africa', Said Khalifa Muhammad argued that the Portuguese 'forcibly introduced slave trade' to East Africa, and that later the 'evil British imperialists' divided East Africa from Southern Arabia on the pretext 'that they had come to abolish the slave trade'. The British then started

> to pursue Arab ships on the pretext that they were carrying on the slave trade. The real reason was not this, but the British policy to destroy the strength of the African navy which would have opposed any foreign imperialism contemplating the occupation of the African countries.[89]

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[87] BBC SWB I ME/721/A/3, 2 December 1958.
[88] BBC SWB I ME/271/A/7, 14 June 1957.
[89] BBC SWB II ME/170/B/2, 31 October 1959.

While few broadcasts ventured this far into a historical discussion, recurrent counter-offensives against Western criticisms of Arab slavers became a staple of *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts until the early 1960s. In one elaborate talk on the subject, the announcer stated that '[t]he credit for the abolition of slavery is claimed with such sickening repetition that one is driven to believe that it is perhaps the only virtue that can be claimed', and that while 'much is made of Arab slavery', hardly anything is mentioned of British slavery in the Atlantic Ocean. 'Of all farcical things', he continued, 'is this tendency of claiming every progress and every benefit conferred on humanity to the Christian religion'. After contrasting noble Christian values with the reality of poor Western practices, the announcer went on to state that 'Modern civilisation, which is actually nobody's civilisation or everybody's, for among the greatest contributors were pagan Greeks and Romans, and Ancient Egyptians, the Arabs and Muslims generally, is called by the over-zealous but ill-informed as 'Christian civilisation''. He concluded by drawing attention to the (alleged) preaching of a priest at Moshi, who stated that 'it was right that there should be one law for the European and another for the Africans . . . Different classes must exist, emphasised the padre, for even among the angels god has ordained different grades. In heaven also the European Christian would occupy a higher position than his younger African brother'.[90]

Inevitably, Radio Cairo broadcasters would dwell on the imperialist conspiracies of Jews in general and Israel in particular. One broadcast stated that 'whoever cooperates with Israel is a traitor who is selling his country to those who give him money'.[91] In *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts, Israel represented a perverse inversion of the Afro-Asian ideal, for '[t]heir supreme aim is to set up their State in Arabia with branches in Africa and Asia', the branches of which 'will result in the African and Asian countries being economically and politically directed by the Jews and becoming

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[90] Transcript dated 6 June 1956 of talk entitled 'Who will cast the first stone', FO 371/119222/E1433/73.
[91] BBC SWB II ME/643/B/7, 19 May 1961.

colonies dominated by the Jews'.[92] Indeed one of the sharpest 'sub-imperial' competitions to emerge throughout sub-Saharan Africa after 1960 was between Egypt and Israel to gain influence over newly independent African nations' military training and cooperative institutions. This became particularly polarizing in Zanzibar, as the Afro-Shirazi Party continued to rely on Israeli assistance after 1960 for a number of legal representations.[93] Aggressive Israeli penetration into Sub-Saharan Africa through aid, trade, and training schemes had left Egypt far behind in this competition.[94]

The vast majority of listeners to Radio Cairo's Swahili early broadcasts were Muslim men from the Islands of Zanzibar or Tanganyika. Between 17 August - 26 October 1955, 85 of 113 correspondents to *Sauti ya Cairo* were from Zanzibar, Pemba, and Tanganyika[95]; for the period 2 November 1955 – 18 April 1956, 234 of 258 correspondents were from Zanzibar, Pemba, and Tanganyika.[96] For these two periods, 368 of 371 had Muslim names, and 354 of 371 had male names. Later evidence of listeners in the BBC *Summary of World Broadcasts* for the period 1959-1962 offers much less systematic information on the correspondents to *Sauti ya Cairo*, but shows roughly that the listening audience is still overwhelmingly Muslim, but also more cosmopolitan in its origin, with Zanzibar and Pemba slightly less prominent, Kenya and Tanganyika somewhat more prominent, and a greater number writing from far flung places such as Nigeria, Comoros, Qatar, Dubai, Musqat, Riyadh, Bombay, and Birmingham.

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[92] BBC SWB II ME/22/B/2, 9 May 1959.

[93] Summary Intelligence Report for December, 1962, in Mooring to SS Col, 3 January 1963, CO 822/3058/1.

[94] *The United Arab Republic's Policy in Africa* (LR 6/17), F.O.R.D., December 11, 1964 (22659), D[ominions] O[ffice, Kew] 206/14/1.

[95] BBC SWB I ME/618/A/6-8, 4 November 1955. Of the 113 total, 39 from Tanganyika, 24 from Pemba, 22 from Zanzibar, 21 from Kenya, 3 from Ruanda-Urundi, 2 from Uganda, and 1 each from Egypt and Kuwait.

[96] BBC SWB I ME/669/A/1-5, 4 May 1956. Of the 258 total, 95 were from Tanganyika, 80 from Zanzibar, 59 from Pemba, 8 from Kenya, 8 from Kuwait, 4 from Egypt, and 1 each from Uganda, Belgian Congo, Somaliland, and Somalia.

British counter-offensives to Radio Cairo

For the most part, the British response to Radio Cairo's broadcasts to Sub-Saharan Africa were piecemeal tactics carried out on a territory-by-territory basis. An examination of one effort to form a unified defense and counter-propaganda strategy for the region demonstrates the limited means and ambitions of a British government too wrapped up in managing decolonization to counter Cairo's daily polemics. Moreover, officials in Whitehall felt that matching polemics with polemics was ultimately ineffective, and opted to pursue a more subtle policy of rebuttal through emphasizing the virtues of accuracy and objectivity in BBC broadcasts, while suggesting Egypt's fundamental dishonesty through anonymous radio and print items planted in local media.[97]

In May 1958, Roy Welensky petitioned Harold Macmillan to arrange a defensive pact against Russian subversion in Africa. Welensky was acting in his capacity as Prime Minister of the Central African Federation – a union of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland formed largely to secure white privilege in the region – and playing on Whitehall's Cold War anxieties. He identified a potential domino effect whereby Somalia, then still under British, French, and Italian rule, would fall under 'Egyptian/Soviet domination', and that neighboring young states would subsequently be unable to resist this domination. Welensky proposed closer co-operation of NATO Powers and emerging Central and Eastern African states to form a sort of African SEATO or defensive pact.[98] In a meeting with Macmillan's cabinet later that year, Welensky stressed that Cairo 'was being clever in appealing to Moslem sentiment', and the Minister of Defense suggested that spreading counter-

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[97] This is the subject of an article that I am currently writing on British and American counter-propaganda strategies during the 1950s and 1960s in Eastern Africa. What follows is a shortened version of the relevant section from this article.

[98] Welensky to Macmillan, 16 May 1958, CO 968/698/E/1B; Campbell to James, 3 June 1958, CO 968/698/3. I thank Philip Murphy for bringing this file to my attention.

propaganda through television might be effective.[99] While the East African High Commission in Nairobi had months earlier taken a similarly anxious view towards Egyptian/Russian interference in Somalia[100], the Colonial Office in London balked at Welensky's suggestions, finding that, from the point of view of an East Africa now rapidly approaching decolonization, such a defensive pact with South Africa and Southern Rhodesia 'would be very unpopular'.[101] Closer liaising between governments was limited to sharing intelligence.[102] The British government hesitated to press for any organized defensive pact, if for only counter-subversive purposes, but did press for a coordinated strategy of discreet Western aid to countries that would otherwise be embarrassed by association because of their neutralism.[103]

Welensky's initiatives raised the question of monitoring and jamming broadcasts from Moscow and Cairo beamed to sub-Saharan Africa. While East African Governments had regularly taken action to prevent 'undesirable' visits to the Soviet Bloc and Cairo, or attendance to various Pan-African and Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee meetings, and had also banned undesirable literature, it had not yet formulated any coherent policy towards hostile radio broadcasts, Radio Cairo propaganda in particular.[104] The commitment to monitor Radio Cairo's broadcasts to sub-Saharan Africa had been forcibly raised by the aggressive expansion of Cairo's programs in more languages and longer duration. BBC continued to monitor East Africa's programs, through local listening posts – the major one still located today at 'Karen' in Nairobi – as well as at its headquarters in Caversham, Berkshire. This had come at significantly mounting expenses by 1958,

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[99] 'Record of a meeting held at 10 Downing Street on Friday, November 21 [1958]', enclosed in De Zulueta to Cole, 24 November 1958, CO 968/698/84.
[100] Hutt to Watson, 26 May 1958, CO 822/1781/7.
[101] Minute of A. Campbell to Gorell Barnes, 28 July 1958, CO 968/698.
[102] Minute of Carstairs to Gorell Barnes, 5 December 1958, CO 968/698.
[103] 'The Defence of Africa: United Kingdom Action to Counter Egyptian and Communist Penetration in the Independent Countries of Africa', Foreign Office, 15 January 1959, CO 968/698/E100, enclosed in W.L. Allinson to Watson, 21 January 1959, CO 968/698/100.
[104] 'Counter-measures in British Colonial Territories', n. a., n. d. [ca. 15-21 Jan 1959], CO 968/698/E100, enclosed in Allinson to Watson, 21 January 1959, CO 968/698/100.

with the concomitant expansion in Radio Cairo and other broadcasters as well as the British and

American 'consumption' of reports, yet financing remained scarce and antiquated.[105] The United

States' monitoring service, the Foreign Broadcasts Information Service (FBIS) was taking over

Anglo-American responsibilities to monitor of North Africa by mid-1958, while BBC retained its

responsibility to monitor East Africa, but the inadequate monitoring and translation services for

Swahili and Somali broadcasts to East Africa was both monitoring services' chief African concern.

Kenya's special branch employed two full-time Swahili translators and one part-time Somali

translator working in Nairobi, while Hargeisa had no adequate equipment for monitoring, and

Aden, Zanzibar, and Tanganyika did only a minimal amount for their internal purposes.[106] Even

the BBC's skeleton staff in Cairo was recruited to monitor the Swahili broadcasts, but refused to

do so on technical as well as security grounds.[107]

The tactic of jamming Radio Cairo raised more difficulties and expenses than the Britain

considered appropriate for the threat. Jamming foreign broadcasts had been officially banned by

United Nations resolutions in 1950, but continued to be used by Cold War adversaries afterwards,

particularly by the Soviet Bloc, at tremendous expense of technical labor and equipment. As the

United Kingdom regularly condemned the Soviet Union for jamming indiscriminately, they had

left themselves limited moral ground to pursue such tactics in the eyes of bodies such as the

International Telecommunications Union. Officially, jamming was a policy of last resort for

Britain, used 'on a strictly limited basis against broadcasts aimed at inciting violence'.[108] When the

question of *Sauti ya Cairo* was raised in Parliament, the Foreign Secretary stated that the broadcasts

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[105] Minute of Oliver, 22 August 1958, FO 371/135631/ZP17/8. At this point, all 45 minutes of each daily broadcast was monitored in Caversham. Annex, 'The Activities of Cairo Radio and their impact on territories towards which they are directed', enclosed in Ellingworth to Waterfield, 30 August, 1956, BBC WAC E1/1848/1.
[106] Record of an informal meeting held at Foreign Office on 15 August 1958 to discuss monitoring coverage of Arabic and African language broadcasts, with Appendix entitled 'Note on monitoring in East Africa', in FO 371/135631/ZP17/8.
[107] John Rae to C.O.S., 9 April 1956, BBC WAC E1/1848/1.
[108] 'Measures against hostile broadcasts: monitoring and jamming', n. a., n. d. [ca. 22 January 1959] CO 968/698/104.

had worsened in their inflammatory nature, but had not yet reached the point where jamming was necessary – despite pleas from the British tabloid press to jam Radio Cairo.[109] Although there is no evidence that Britain jammed Radio Cairo's Swahili broadcasts to East Africa, both Radio Cairo announcers and listeners fully believed that they were being jammed, given the frequency of extremely poor receptions, particularly in 1956.[110]

By the time Welensky offered his proposal in 1958, Whitehall had already arrived at a consensus that jamming all broadcasts from Moscow and Cairo to Africa was simply impracticable. The U.K. cost estimate to jam Cairo's 'Voice of the Arabs' in the Persian Gulf and Aden alone by early 1959 was £800,000 in capital expenditure and £250,000 in annual running costs, which would have rapidly risen if Cairo increased its signal strength and range of frequencies.[111] Diffusing subtle counter-propaganda to all possible media outlets was viewed as cheaper and ultimately more effective. Whitehall's first Official Working Party in 1957 understood the best way to counter the influence of Radio Cairo was by means of a 'light' program of news and entertainment.[112] Following the Suez Canal War, during which Radio Cairo's African language broadcasts were suspended, the Colonial Office had pushed ahead plans for a regular BBC World Services in Swahili (as well as in Somali and Hausa) to counter 'subversive broadcasts from Cairo to East Africa'.[113] Britain began transmitting a regular short-wave Swahili World Broadcast in 1958, which was followed by Swahili-language short-wave broadcasts from Russia, Israel, Ghana, and Nigeria in 1960.

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[109] Minute of Watson, 7 March 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/16; British Embassy Cairo to Foreign Office, 17 March 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/18; Watson to Stowe, 19 March 1956, FO 371/119219/E1433/23; 'Jam Today Not Tomorrow', *Daily Mail*, 2 Feb 1956, BBC WAC E1/1854/1.

[110] Zanzibar monitoring of Radio Cairo Kiswahili broadcasts for week ending 4 August 1956, enclosed in Ag. British Resident to Lennox-Boyd, 9 August 1956, FO 371/19223/E1433/82.

[111] *Ibid*. A famous example of the economic inefficiency of jamming foreign broadcasts is Poland, which in 1956 ceased jamming altogether at the savings of $17.5 million per year, or about the total annual budget of Voice of America. Hale, *Radio Power*, pp. 132-3.

[112] Challis [?] to Alport, 12 February 1957, DO 35/9645/2.

[113] Colonial Secretary to Officers Administering Governments of Lagos, Gold Coast, Tanganyika, Kenya, Zanzibar, Somaliland, Uganda, and Nyasaland, 26 February 1957, DO 35/9645/15.

Rather than transforming BBC services into simple anti-propaganda vehicles, the British

government chose instead a more subtle and wider-reaching option. The BBC did at last launch a

regular Swahili language service (bi-weekly) in June 1957, which would grow to a daily service by

the early 1960s.[114] But the key was to influence local media outlets. The Foreign Office's

Information Research Department (IRD) in late 1958 began to produce a wonderfully named

service, Transmission 'X', which was an un-attributable and imprint-less daily political

commentary charged with the task of rebutting hostile Egyptian propaganda world-wide within

forty-eight hours. The transmissions were sent out daily to the various Foreign, Colonial, and

Commonwealth Relation Office posts in the nearly fifty countries affected by Radio Cairo, by

teleprinter, air mail, or diplomatic pouch. From these posts, British information officers and other

liaison officials would place these items – mainly news or editorial items correcting matters of fact

or shifting the political-interpretive 'balance' – in local print and radio media within each country,

often for free, sometimes for a bribe.[115] British officials in the countries were never fully satisfied

with the product, as the news items were either often too removed from local interests, too

oblique in addressing specific events and people, or were simply used to pursue local feuds,

particularly in the Middle East. From the point of view of East African officials, the material was

too focused on responding to events in the Middle East.[116]

For East African governments, the issue of aggressively countering Radio Cairo was

particularly pressing between 1956-1959. Counter-propaganda had until 1956 been largely geared

around print media, delivered mainly through the IRD's imprintless pieces as well as the

circulation of standard texts such as Kathleen Stahl's *British and Soviet Colonial Systems* and Carew

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[114] *Mombasa Times*, 28 June 1957; **other source?**

[115] Minute of Carless, 23 December 1958, FO 1110/1236/PR1125/1; minute of Hopson, 15 February 1961, FO 1110/1370; minute of Roberts, 10 March 1960, FO 371/150926/VG1051/37. The same Transmission 'X' was referred to as RIVAROL in East Africa.

[116] Morris to Carless, 21 January 1959, FO 1110/1236/PR1125/3A; minute of Riley, 21 January 1959, FO 1110/1236/PR1125/10; minute of McMinnies, 18 October 1960, FO 1110/1337/PR1125/46.

Hunt's *The Theory and Practice of Communism*.[117] By the late 1950s, British Governors in East Africa simply wanted some sort of positive action from Whitehall against Radio Cairo. Richard Turnbull, Tanganyika's Governor, stated that 'I would feel a good deal easier in my mind' if the United Kingdom Information Office could do anything 'to counter the continual stream of vilification which is directed at us from Cairo'.[118] Such satisfaction was not forthcoming during the 1950s.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the broadcasts of Radio Cairo were no longer seen as a crisis by the colonial governments of East Africa, but it probably occurred sometime in 1960. The Colonial Office reckoned in October 1960 that 'the impact of Cairo Radio has been much reduced', and on British Somaliland, 'independence has relieved us (and Radio Cairo) of a propaganda stake'.[119] The Acting Governor of Uganda admitted in early 1960 that the effects of Cairo Radio on the country had been 'fortunately slight'.[120] As the perceived threat from Whitehall of Radio Cairo began to wane following the full re-establishment of diplomatic relations in 1960, Transmission 'X' was re-geared as a service addressing Soviet designs on the whole of neutralist 'Afro-Asia'.[121] Nasser was also clearly losing interest in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly after his policy debacle in Congo (see below). As Tareq Ismael has argued, the primary problem with Egypt's policy 'was the attempt to integrate Afro-Arab policies. Whenever African and Arab interests took divergent courses, Egypt's loyalty was clearly with the Arabs'.[122]

But even if the impact of the broadcasts had diminished by 1960, the potential for them to do more damage was clearly recognized. In negotiations between the U.A.R. and Britain to re-establish full diplomatic relations in 1960, four years after the Suez Crisis, the U.A.R. insisted on rights to open consulates in East Africa. Egypt was driven by a number of factors in this demand,

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[117] Minute of Cortazzi, 5 July 1956, FO 1110/959.
[118] Turnbull to Carstairs, 12 February 1958, CO 1027/336/34.
[119] Minute of McMinnies, 18 October 1960, FO 1110/1337/PR1125/46. See also Minute of Barclay, 5 January 1961, FO 1110/1455/PR1125/8.
[120] Ag. Governor Uganda to SS Col, 11 January 1960, FO 371/150923/VG1051/5.
[121] Minute of Barclay, 5 January 1961, FO 1110/1455/PR1125/8.
[122] Ismael, p. 70.

not the least of which was to keep pace with the Israelis, who had already opened up an honorary

consulate in Nairobi.[123] Kenya in particular was outraged at the prospect of having forced upon it

an Egyptian consulate. The Governor's Deputy wrote that:

> Cairo Radio still pours out vituperative abuse upon us all. The so-called Kenya
> Office in Cairo does infinite harm among Kenya Africans with their false
> statements. If the Egyptians really want to have friendly relations with us, should
> they not be asked first what they intend to do about these two foci of unpleasant
> propaganda. In other words, is the re-establishment of good relations to be a one-
> way traffic only?[124]

Britain initially considered offering only a consulate in Dar es Salaam – ironically so, as Nyerere

was the only major East African leader to oppose having an Egyptian consulate – and made it

clear that Kenya, Uganda, and Zanzibar were off-limits.[125] The British Resident in Zanzibar

protested even entertaining the idea of a consulate in nearby Dar es Salaam, pointing out that

'Cairo radio has in the past done considerable damage to race relations here', and had no doubt

that the UAR would take every opportunity 'to aggravate and exploit for their own ends the racial

tension between Arabs and Africans which constitutes our most serious threat to security and to

orderly constitutional development here'.[126] The Acting Governor of Uganda argued that, so long

as the 'poisonous propaganda' continued to emanate from Cairo Radio, there was no justification

for even a single consulate in East Africa.[127] The Foreign Office agreed that Cairo Radio

broadcasts 'continued to be offensive . . . [t]here is still violent language and abuse, and incitement

to violence'.[128] Despite intense pressure from the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office successfully

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[123] Crowe to Beith, 7 July 1960, FO 371/150929/VG1051/73.

[124] Governor's Deputy, Kenya to SS Col, 29 July 1960, FO 371/150929/VG1051/79. See also Renison to Lennox-Boyd, 12 January 1960, FO 371/150923/VG1051/5.

[125] Note of J.G.S. Beith, 13 December 1960, FO 371/150939/VG1051/205; Philp (Admiralty House) to Samuel (FO), 13 December 1960, FO 371/150939/VG1051/213.

[126] Mooring to MacLeod, 5 August 1960, FO 371/150929/VG1051/79.

[127] Ag. Governor Uganda to MacLeod, 23 December 1960, FO 371/150938/VG1051/198.

[128] Foreign Office to British Embassy Cairo, 24 Dec 1960, FO 371/150939/VG1051/217.

scuttled the Dar es Salaam consulate offer.[129] By 1962, after Tanganyika had gained independence and British interests had to be pursued through the High Commission, the IRD initiated a new counter-propaganda offensive against Egypt by stepping up the distribution of un-attributable publicity, as no consumers – i.e., Middle Eastern or East African media sources – would be interested in directly denunciating Nasser's activities. British ministerial authority had been granted to IRD to produce discreet anti-Community publicity, and was now asked to be extended to cover hostile activities by Egypt.[130] Radio Cairo was no longer a threat to colonial interests, but remained one to the more intangible target of Britain's regional reputation.

Twists of sovereignty: the waning of Radio Cairo & rise of national broadcasting, 1961-65

In 1961, the United Arab Republic, formed only three years earlier as a union between Egypt, Syria, and Yemen, broke apart with the withdrawal of Syria. Nasser reappraised his Sub-Saharan Africa policy with a colder eye. The country shifted away from its earlier explicit goal of political leadership and towards a new goal of cooperation, particularly within the economic sphere.[131] This followed Egypt's most severe African setback, in Congo, where Egypt committed itself to one faction but proved powerless to influence events. Nasser found himself badly embarrassed after vainly sending arms and aid to support Lumumba, and then recognizing Antoine Gizenga as head of state without support from other African states or the Soviet Union, and still again with the failed Stanleyville government of Gbenye in 1964, until Egypt pulled out completely in April 1965.[132] The Congo issue polarized all Pan-Africanists, and the subsequent formation of the UAR-

[129] Beith to Jerrom, 15 December 1960, FO 371/150938/VG1051/198; MacLeod to Renison, 20 Dec 1960, FO 371/150938/VG1051/198.
[130] Reddaway to Glass, 16 May 1962, FO 1110/1504/PR10116/6.
[131] Ismael, p. 72.
[132] Ibid., p. 229.

friendly, radical Casablanca group and a UAR-hostile, conservative Monrovia group displayed the sharp limits of Egypt's proclaimed leadership for all to see.

Reflecting this shift in Egypt, as well as the political changes within East Africa, Radio Cairo propaganda was becoming rather stale and hackneyed by 1961. The station had lost its monopoly over anti-colonial external broadcasts in Swahili by this time, with the Soviet Union, Ghana, and China each now offering a regular Swahili service. Cairo's Swahili broadcasts were increasingly disinclined to discuss deeply polarizing issues such as race in Zanzibar, or the future of the Kabaka and Bugandan exceptionalism in Uganda. Particularly problematic was the figure of Julius Nyerere – his unchallenged leadership of PAFMECA and unqualified support of ASP deeply frustrated ZNP supporters. Nyerere, who in 1959 had shifted his previous support of ZNP in favor of Abeid Karume's Afro-Shirazi Party, permitted the ASP to use the Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation for political advertisements on its radio broadcasts in early 1963.[133] Tanganyika (and from April 1964 Tanzania) would thereafter take the lead in propagating anti-colonial invectives for the region. Kenya's white settlers and British colonial officials served ever more monotonously as the chief targets of Radio Cairo propaganda after 1961, despite their increasing irrelevance. The politically unassailable demand to free the imprisoned martyr, Jomo Kenyatta, was stated over and over again, with almost mind-numbing repetition. The creation of this new, careful, even apprehensive political orthodoxy was driven in part by the one unambiguous position taken by Radio Cairo on a matter of regional political division – the support for the Kenya African National Union and a strong central state over the objections of the Kenya African Democratic Union's demands for regional autonomy. Unrelenting attacks on KADU and its leader Ronald Ngala dominated *Sauti ya Cairo* broadcasts after 1960.[134] Ngala was

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[133] Summary Intelligence Report for December, 1962, in Mooring to Maudling, 3 January 1963, CO 822/3058/1; Woods to Wool-Lewis, 18 February 1963, CO 822/3058/3; Wool-Lewis to Woods, 11 March 1963, CO 822/3058/5.
[134] BBC SWB II ME/643/B/7 19 May 1961.

relentlessly portrayed as an imperialist stooge who sought to divide Kenya, making it 'a second Congo' and its autonomous regions into 'a second Katanga'.[135] On 'Voice of Free Africa', the idea of *mwambao* separatism was already anathema by 1961.[136] Abdillahi Nasir, the unofficial 'Swahili' leader of the *mwambao* movement, came in for torrential personal criticism from the 'Voice of Free Africa' as someone conspiring to create "a second Katanga in Kenya by serving your masters the imperialists and the Boer dogs."[137]

After 1964, an angry sense of nationalist proprietorship over the airwaves had plainly asserted itself. An African observer admonished the radio listening habits of Indians, Somalis, and Arabs in Dar es Salaam, demanded that they stop listening to short-wave broadcasts in other languages, and to instead listen only to the nation-building advice offered by Radio Tanganyika in Swahili. He also observed that many who do happen to be tuned to Radio Tanganyika simply carry on with their business without understanding or even caring about the new orders of Tanzanian government officials.[138] The imperative of nation-building could ill-afford such indulgences as listening to short-wave radio broadcasts.

Egypt retreated from its earlier role in East Africa as agent provocateur and political manipulator, and entered the business of religious proselytization. By 1964, Al-Azhar had placed over two hundred religious scholars throughout the world, most concentrated in Africa including Tanzania and Zanzibar. These many missions from Al-Azhar sought to protect Islam 'from the distortions of its enemies' and fight Zionist propaganda. Arabic lessons for Swahili listeners of Radio Cairo began in 1962. Broadcasts paid significant attention to alleged Jewish spy rings in East African countries, as well as devoted significant time to theological lessons which described

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[135] BBC SWB II ME/786/B/3-4, 14 October 1961.
[136] See, *inter alia*, BBC SWB II ME/82/B/1, 23 December 1961.
[137] BBC SWB II ME/742/B/1, 13 September 1961.
[138] Letter of M.J.D. Kwanoga, *Ngurumo*, 2 October 1964.

Jewish treachery in the days of the Prophet.[139] Nasser himself had given the impression, in a speech at the Addis Ababa Conference in May 1963, that he was more interested in strengthening pan-Arab and pan-Islamic ties than in staying atop African political events as a whole.[140]

In late 1964, Cairo launched the 'Voice of Islam', Al-Azhar's daily 13-hour radio program of qur'anic recitation, on short-wave to Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East – the following year it was expanded throughout sub-Saharan Africa, including vernacular broadcasts.[141] Egypt's investment in radio programming continued to expand rapidly, keeping pace with the growing number of short-wave vernacular programs beamed to Africa by other world powers. By 1964, Egypt transmitted 766 hours per week, second in the world only to the United States, and in March 1965 opened the world's largest and most powerful broadcasting station.[142] But by then, nearly ten years after the Bandung Conference, Cairo had already lost its monopoly of anti-colonial, Afro-Asian nationalism in African vernacular languages. Propaganda investment shifted to pan-Islamic planning. As early as October 1960, ZNP officials had met with Major Saleh Salim of the UAR to discuss the relations between the Arab world and Black nationalism. Salim stated that the Arab world could not at present interfere with African nationalism, but that this did not mean that 'the Arab world should allow themselves to be placed in a position where they were completely subjugated, a particular danger as many of the African Leaders were Christians'. Salim concluded that the only way to ensure Arab representation was 'through the Muslim religion', and he urged the ZNP and all other Arab states to 'secretly point out the possible dangers of African nationalism to followers of Islam, and to attempt to band all Muslims together into one single

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[139] BBC SWB II ME/913/B/6, 5 April 1962; BBC SWB II ME/822/B/6 16 December 1961; BBC SWB II ME/1095/B/2, 9 November 1962; BBC SWB II ME 1112/B/2, 23 November 1962.
[140] *The United Arab Republic's Policy in Africa* (LR 6/17), F.O.R.D., 11 December 1964, in DO 206/14/1.
[140] BBC SWB I ME/618/A/9, 4 August 1958.
[141] FBIS Station and Program Notes No.397, 4 August 1964, BBC WAC E8/41; Ismael, pp. 151-2.
[142] Ismael, p. 156.

political unit capable of demanding safeguards'. The ZNP delegation agreed to secretly contact

East African Muslims to gain their cooperation.[143]

Unfolding East African political struggles, into which Radio Cairo had earlier thrown itself

with alacrity but was now seeking to extract itself, were concretized in the new nationalist radio

policies of the independent states. Tanganyikan pan-Africanism represented the crest of a wave of

xenophobia as hostile to Egyptian-style intrusion as it was to Western or Communist influence.

The new head of the Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) issued a staff memo insisting

upon loyalty to African nationalist ideals, and rejecting 'foreign' propaganda from the West, East,

and Cairo. Staff members were instructed to approach all programming material with the

following questions:

> Let us ask ourselves 'What does this item mean in <u>Tanganyika</u> to an African? Is it <u>African</u> in thought, feeling and style? Or is it just a secondhand rehash of an alien idea?' . . . In short, we have all got to think as <u>Africans</u>, and if we are non-Africans, to make a conscious effort to do so. It is no part of the TBC's job to act directly or indirectly as a propaganda agent for any nation or organisation that is seeking, or will seek, to enter into our lives – and they are many.[144]

The disavowal of TBC's colonial past, both in the contemporary newspapers and later reflections,

involved proposing a dualism between a colonial source of oppressive propaganda and a now-

liberated source of 'truth' propaganda to provide real development to the new nation.[145] In Kenya,

the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation dramatically cancelled its relay of the BBC news a few days

after independence in December 1963, on grounds that the BBC had used the words 'terrorists'

instead of 'fighters' to describe Mau Mau guerrillas – a fitting if sudden dismissal of a decade of

British colonial propaganda and counter-propaganda.[146]

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[143] Extract from Political Intelligence Report Zanzibar, 24 October 1960, in FO 371/150939/VG1051/210.

[144] Tanganyika Broadcasting Internal Memorandum from Director General [M.B. Mdoe] to all programme staff, 12 February 1962, BBC WAC E1/1510/1. Emphases in the original.

[145] See *Uhuru*, 27 January 1962, in BBC WAC E1/1510/2; and David Wakati, 'Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam', in George Wedell (ed.), *Making broadcasting useful: the African experience* (Manchester, 1986), p. 212.

[146] 'Notes on cancellation of BBC news by KBC', n. a., 14 December 1963, BBC WAC E1/1448/1.

After independence, the inherited colonial government radio services jealously retained their local broadcasting monopolies. The Kenyan Government took over the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation's 'Voice of Kenya' in July 1964, and the Tanganyikan Government took over the Tanganyika Broadcasting Services in July 1965, renaming it Radio Tanzania.[147] Thereafter, Radio Tanzania became famous as the regional home of ongoing liberation movements, members of which would use the facilities as their international voice. It served as the 'one strong alternative voice' for Central and Southern Africa into the 1970s.[148] The logic of subsequent Radio Tanzania short-wave broadcasts to the colonized people of Africa was that, while 'Afro-Asian' solidarity was greatly valued, African national liberation (the Organization of African States' Liberation Committee being headquartered in Dar es Salaam) had first to be achieved by Africans.

Conclusion

Radio Cairo itself died a death of reputation following the Six Days' War with Israel in June 1967. Wildly optimistic reports of Egyptian victories on 'Voice of the Arabs' broadcasts gave way to realization of profound humiliating defeat. Ahmed Said and the radio station were seen 'not just as deceivers, but as the agents of Egyptian humiliation', and Said was imprisoned, kept under house arrest, and then condemned to lead 'a furtive existence in a still hostile Cairo'.[149] But the nationalist orthodoxies that dominated East African media during the post-independence years had drunk deeply from the wells of anti-colonial invective on offer from the Radio Cairo during the 1950s. Trans-regional anti-colonial propaganda of this period was domesticated and nationalized in the 1960s and 1970s as the defensive intellectual armaments of Africa's post-

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[147] Wakati, p. 212; Dawson Marami, 'Broadcasting in Kenya', in George Wedell (ed.), *Making broadcasting useful: the African experience* (Manchester, 1986) p. 187.
[148] Hale, p. 85. See also Steve Davis, 'Unomathotholo woGxotho; The African National Congress, Its Allies, Its Radio and Exile', M.A. Thesis, University of Florida, 2005.
[149] Hale, p. 75.

colonial states, whose very fragility fuelled the aggressive assertion of nation-state sovereignty at the expense of trans-regional political movements. Ironically, East Africa's post-colonial rhetoric of enemies, saboteurs, and parasites reflected both a quest for national independence from external interference in the hostile context of the Cold War, as well as a heavy debt to one country's peculiar but powerful campaign of external interference in the name of Afro-Asian liberation.

The idea of sovereignty holds within it the paradox of force and freedom. Meaningful individual freedom, Hobbes contends, can only be secured by a powerful and uncontested state. Power in Hobbes' state is both *unrestrained* – all law derives from the sovereign – and *limited* – individuals retain rights against the state that they originally covenanted in order to preserve their lives. In colonial East Africa, formal individual rights against the modern state were of course sharply curtailed for most of its subjects; the state was limited not by nominally ascribed individual rights but by its own economic means, cultural savvy, and political will to effect social change. The extension of formal individual rights in East Africa by expanding constitutional representation after World War II coincided with the extension of radio to colonial subjects. The ease with which modern states created shortwave broadcasts, coupled with post-war consumer economics that made radio sets affordable most everywhere, introduced a new unrestrained force of vocal polemics that could only be limited by counter-vocalization. Sovereignty's paradox of force and freedom, just as it began to take modern form in East Africa, was upended by the rhetorical force of international networks for whom sovereignty meant universal justice. But such international networks generated their strength by controlling the physical resources of territorial nation-states. It is within that paradox that nationalist voices of the 1950s became the strongest advocates of counter-vocalized polemics to defend nation-states from inter-regional and international subversion, transforming inspired anti-colonial invective into tired nationalist cliché.