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Imagined Generations: Constructing Youth in Revolutionary Zanzibar

Historians working in Africa have not ignored youth, but the overwhelming tendency has been to simply note their youthfulness without examining the historical significance of their age. Historians' reluctance to ascribe importance to generational identities probably results from the absence of any canonized script or normative theoretical guidelines to which scholars may refer in order to understand a generation's interests, mentality, or conduct in public life. Generation contrasts in this regard with class; it lacks "master terms" like "exploitation."[1] Nor do generations appear as a rule to share the same material interests. As Mark Roseman suggests, "Generations have always seemed rather flimsy craft compared with the sturdy steamships of social class…. The historian of generations cannot have recourse to the same well-rehearsed set of understandings."[2]

Generation also lacks the demographic measurability of gender, and, to a much lesser extent, ethnicity. Generational identities vary widely according to time and place; they tend to emerge out of local idioms and languages. They sometimes appear not as primary but as secondary identities. Youth do not always appear as a homogeneous, discrete or boundaried category, possessing a long and recognizable local, as opposed to global, history of political mobilization. In African resistance movements youth are "temporary subversives," who comprise in most cases only a "potential or episodic oppositional coalition."[3] Thus generation has remained an obscure reference point on historiographical maps; with its legibility in doubt, the identity has remained ambiguous.

The Zanzibari Revolution provides an interesting example of how generation has been passed over in favor of other identities. In 1964 it brought a permanent end to Arab political and economic hegemony in the islands, as well as the death or exile of between a third and a half of the

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[1] Lewis Feuer, "The Sources and Traits of Student Movements," in *The Seeds of Politics: Youth and Politics in America*, Anthony Orum (ed.), New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1972, 365-66.
[2] Mark Roseman, "Introduction: Generation Conflict and German History, 1770-1968," in Generations in Conflict: Youth Revolt and Generation Formation in Germany, 1770-1968," M. Roseman (ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 3-5.

Arab population,[4] in a wave of violence that was "genocidal in proportions."[5] Scholars have disagreed mostly over the extent to which the uprising was motivated by race or class divisions in Zanzibari society. Michael Lofchie has argued that Zanzibar's political parties "were separated by elemental and irreducible racial fears." Africans feared "perpetual economic servitude and political subjection to a racial minority … the end of their hope for a better life."[6] Abdul Sheriff countered this argument in 1991 with his claim that in Zanzibar racial identities were only "skin deep," even lamenting that they appear to have "mesmerised" historians.[7] In the same volume, B.D. Bowles asserted the study of Zanzibari history "depends on thinking of workers as they actually were, that is, workers, rather than mainlanders or Africans, and to think of employers as employers and not as Zanzibaris or Arabs and Asians. To do otherwise is to write the history of images."[8]

Sheriff and Bowles' advocacy of a materialist approach to understanding the origins of the revolution has not discouraged more recent researchers from continuing to emphasize the islands' troubled racial relations, despite their alleged ephemeral reality. Jonathon Glassman's work reconstructs nationalist newspaper debates that were responsible for the emergence of mutually

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[3] Donal Cruise O'Brien, "A Lost Generation? Youth Identity and State Decay in West Africa" in *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger (eds.), London: Zed Books Ltd., 1996, 68.

[4] For a range of estimates of revolutionary casualties, see Abdul Sheriff, "Race and Class in the Politics of Zanzibar," *Afrika Spektrum*, vol. 36 (2001) no. 3, 314. Don Petterson, serving as American Vice Consul in Zanzibar, estimated that by the summer of 1965, "Zanzibar's pre-revolution Arab population of 50,000 had been halved." Don Petterson, *Revolution in Zanzibar: An American's Cold War Tale*, United States: Westview Press, 2002, 191. The CIA offered the same estimate. Special Report, CIA, United Republic of Tanzania, Vol. II, 2/65 - 12/68, Box 100, National Security/Country File/Africa: Tanganyika, LBJ Library. The revolutionary government's own census in 1967 recorded the number of Zanzibaris living on Unguja who claimed Arab identity declining to eight per cent, half the pre-revolutionary figure. On Pemba, which had not experienced nearly the same level of violence, the number remained virtually the same as in the post-war era: 25 per cent. See Deborah Amory, "The Politics of Identity on Zanzibar," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1994,125.

[5] Sheriff, "Race and Class," 314-5. The mortality figures place the Zanzibari Revolution within the same category as the Mau Mau Emergency in Kenya, which has attracted considerably more scholarly attention.

[6] Michael Lofchie, *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965, 269-70.

[7] Abdul Sheriff, "Introduction: A Materialist Approach to Zanzibar's History," in *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*, ed. by Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson, London: James Currey, 1991, 7. Writing a decade later, Sheriff held a different view: "the primary contradiction in the Zanzibari society on the eve of independence was neither race nor class exclusively, but a complex combination of the two," a position not far removed from Lofchie's original thesis. Sheriff, "Race and Class," 313. Jan-Georg Deutsch has recently contributed another assessment that foregrounds inequality in Zanzibar in terms of access in the post-war years to the commodities, ideas and practices of modernity. In a highly cosmopolitan society, people readily articulated their differences in terms of unequal access to material, cultural and political resources; the revolution may be considered mobilized resistance to the "modernity of the few." Jan-Georg Deutsch, "Jazz at the Goan Club: The Making of Modern Zanzibar c.1945-1964," paper presented at the annual African Studies Association Conference, Washington D.C., 2002.

[8] B.D. Bowles, "The Struggle for Independence, 1946-63," in *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*, ed. by Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson, London: James Currey, 1991, 84.

exclusive notions of racial identity. In the attempt to prove which community were the true "sons of the soil,"[9] each side engaged in "reciprocal dehumanization that culminated in bloodshed. … Discourses of civilization and of race informed and fed off one another, as if locked in a deadly embrace."[10]

The origins of the Zanzibari Revolution are located not only in the structure of the islands' social and economic relations, or in the inflammatory rhetoric of the era, but in the nature of nationalist mobilization, which both simplified and complicated the issue of identity. Islanders living in an era of mass politics maintained their previous identities, or they chose to adopt new, multiple identities as they observed or participated in nationalist mobilization. What were once in the colonial world often private and individual choices regarding identity now came to possess immense political significance. Colonial subjects reconsidered their position in a society deeply divided over the question of who should and should not be considered true "sons of the soil." Nationalists for their part freely borrowed from one another and from overseas as they experimented with various mobilization techniques. Nationalists framed their messages in terms of identities that possessed widely varying degrees of local currency. They did not hesitate to employ identities arranged by their own imagination and subjective reading of history. By provoking local debate, articulating aspirations, identifying common enemies, referring to a common historical heritage, introducing key terms, and founding new associations, nationalists influenced the construction of identities that were both substantive and ephemeral, but which attained at least a passing, public reality during nationalist mobilization.

Thus parallel to the politics of race and class in Zanzibar was a fairly systematic effort to exploit generational identities for purposes of nationalist mobilization. In party rhetoric and strategy, youth were regarded as necessary for the strength of any successful political coalition. Youth were targeted for recruitment and obtained official status with the formation of their own youth associations attached to the leading nationalist parties. The construction of elaborate networks of branches and committees responsible for youth mobilization served as a measure of the vitality of competing nationalist organizations. Nationalists articulated generational identities in order to energize party volunteers and to distribute power, tasks and responsibilities within their parties. By the late-1950s the necessity of recruiting youth had become an unquestioned given in conventional nationalist wisdom in Zanzibar. The following, then, is a narrative of the Zanzibari Revolution in which I have ordered historical materials in a way that will make legible the story of how islanders imagined generation, the position of youth in public discourse, and the role they played in the Zanzibari Revolution.

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[9] Jonathon Glassman, "Sorting Out the Tribes: The Creation of Racial Identities in Colonial Zanzibar's Newspaper Wars," *Journal of African History*, 41, (2000), 409.

A Vanguard Generation

In Zanzibar youth as an identity had both recent and ancient origins. Young people came to participate in politics as either vanguards or plebeians, for whom generational identity meant very different things. For some, their generation was an historical cohort formed by the unique historical terrain of the late-colonial world, permanently setting them apart from other generations older or younger.[11] Access to western education was very much a part of that unique landscape. As late as 1939 60 per cent of all adult males in Zanzibar island were literate in Swahili written in Arabic script, while only 2 per cent were literate in the Roman script.[12] Enrollment in Qur'anic schools in 1939 was three times that of colonial schools.[13] Then in the 1940s the British introduced Qur'anic education into their school curriculum, and in so doing gained for the first time the interest and support of Zanzibari parents. Numbers of students multiplied as western education spread rapidly, especially through the capital. By 1959 35 per cent of the boys and 22 per cent of the girls of the islands were studying in colonial primary schools, learning the Roman alphabet and English as a second language.[14] Furthermore, between 1955 and 1961 secondary school enrollment in the colony rose from 442 to 984 for boys and from 185 to 526 for girls.[15] Graduates of Zanzibari secondary schools were able in the 1950s to go on as never before to higher education overseas. As late as 1949 there were 21 Zanzibari students overseas; by 1963 approximately 400 were in Great Britain alone on government scholarships.[16] These numbers suggest the extent to which the British became interested in the post-war era in preparing Zanzibaris, Arabs in particular, for careers in their islands' civil service.[17]

Meanwhile, beginning in 1958 the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) also organized hundreds of overseas scholarships, for purposes of youth mobilization and recruitment. The two parties in fact could not find enough qualified students to accept all the

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[10] Jonathon Glassman, “Slower Than a Massacre: The Intellectual Origins of Racial Nationalism in Colonial Zanzibar, 1927-1957,” forthcoming article, photocopy in author’s possession, 47.

[11] According to Karl Mannheim’s classic definition, historical cohorts are so shaped by their particular historical experiences that they retain their separate generational identity through the remainder of their lives. They define themselves in opposition or even hostility to other generations that have not passed through comparable historical circumstances. Roseman, "Generation Conflict,”7.

[12] F.B. Wilson, "A Note on Adult Literacy amongst the Rural Population of the Zanzibar Protectorate," (Zanzibar, 1939), as cited in N. Bennett, *A History of the Arab State in Zanzibar*, Cambridge: Methuen and Co., 1978, 229; also L. Fair, "Pastimes and Politics: A Social History of Zanzibar's Ng'ambo Community, 1890-1950," (University of Minnesota, 1994), 239.

[13] J. Cameron and W. Dodd, *Society, Schools and Progress in Tanzania,* (Oxford, 1970) 76.

[14] Bennett, *Arab State in Zanzibar*, 244.

[15] Cameron and Dodd, *Society, Schools and Progress*, 129.

[16] Public Records Office, London (hereafter PRO) CO 822, E56ii, Appreciation of Zanzibar Central Intelligence Committee Report, July, 1962; see also Bennett, *Arab State*, 243-4.

[17] See Rhodes House Library, Oxford (hereafter RHL), Mss. Afr. s. 2250, Zanzibar symposium; RHL, Mss. Afr. s. 2249, interview of J. R. Naish, Oxford, 16 Oct. 1971, by J. Tawney; see also Frederick. Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 138, 168; Lofchie, *Background to Revolution*, 63, 77, 90.

scholarships offered by nations such as Egypt, China, and East Germany, which were intent on influencing a generation of Zanzibari leaders reaching maturity during the height of the Cold War. Such politically-inspired patronage gave Zanzibari youth able to meet minimum educational requirements far more concentrated access to universities than any other community in East Africa. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that in the 1950s travel became an initiatory experience for many young Zanzibaris, marking their transition to maturity. It represented a new form of pilgrimage, this time to learn the secular skills necessary for inclusion in an emerging literate generation back in Zanzibar. They gained in northern universities crucial resources of extraversion, such as new consumer tastes and leisure styles; they were now conversant in a world of modernist images, signs and commodities.

In some instances, as in the life of Abdul Rahman Muhammed "Babu," they absorbed new vocabularies, political doctrines and training. In the mid-1950s Babu was active in London among a network of Zanzibari and East African students and workers, some of whom, like himself, came to identify themselves as socialists. Recruited by the ZNP in 1957 to serve as that party's Secretary General, Babu returned to the islands and soon became, along with Ali Muhsin, the ZNP's leading strategist. Despite his socialist convictions he embraced the ZNP as then the only expressedly multi-racial, anti-colonial party in Zanzibar. He almost immediately set about recruiting youth into the party by establishing the Youth's Own Union (YOU), as the party's semi-independent youth wing. For the next five years the YOU came to play a central role in the ZNP's mobilization efforts. The YOU started a newspaper in 1958, Sauti ya Vijana (Voice of Youth),[18] and opened a bookshop in the ZNP party headquarters which distributed party newspapers and various political texts, many of which were donated by the Chinese. The YOU established three different " societies," for education, drama, and debate. The YOU organized frequent demonstrations in order to put young people on the streets to perform ritualized demands for more secondary schools, an end to racial discrimination, or in support of the Algerian liberation struggle.[19] YOU members paraded in red and white uniforms, drilled in a small "Guard of Honor," and performed in their own traveling brass band. Probably the

[18] One of at least ten newspapers affiliated with the ZNP during the nationalist period. Unfortunately copies of this newspaper were unavailable to this researcher. The Zanzibar National Archives houses an extensive but incomplete collection of some of these pre-Revolution newspapers. See M. M. A. Hamdani, "Zanzibari Newspapers, 1902 to 1974," M.A. Thesis, University of Dar es Salaam, 1981, 42-45, 51.

[19] PRO CO 822, 1377, British intelligence report, November, 1957; PRO CO 822, 1377, British intelligence reports, March-June, 1958. According to Babu the ZNP also developed a "clear-cut international stand" against apartheid in South Africa, for the Palestinian liberation struggle, for the People's Republic of China's admission to the United Nations, and the unification of Korea and Vietnam. See A.M. Babu, "The 1964 Revolution: Lumpen or Vanguard?" in *Zanzibar Under Colonial Rule*, ed. by Abdul Sheriff and Ed Ferguson, London: James Currey, 1991, 227.

YOU' s most ambitious project was a massive literacy campaign that reportedly reached several thousand pupils in 120 branch schools.[20]

The activities of the YOU foregrounded youth in the political struggles of the time; a seemingly endless succession of fundraisers, rallies, debates, demonstrations, performances and service projects encouraged many youth to imagine themselves a vanguard generation in the history of their islands. Such shared events encouraged a sense that theirs was a generation " moving [together] onward through calendrical time." [21] The British, meanwhile, closely monitored the YOU, considering it " an attempt, and a successful one, to attract to its ranks the youths of Zanzibar."[22] It was " clearly following the pattern of militant youth movements that caused such trouble in other parts of the world." [23] YOU activism earned praise, however, in an editorial in the ZNP-affiliated newspaper Mwongozi. The editors effused,

> It is remarkable that whenever a country is in a transition to political maturity its youths tend to get more and more militant. Political parties with more progressive platforms invariably attract larger numbers of the younger element, who in turn adorn the older parties with their youthful spirit.
>
> It is an established fact that the older people... are notoriously sceptical about independence..... at least they [the youth] are more realistic than the older generation which faces the future with its head permanently turned to the past.[24]

Although Babu supervised YOU programs, these generally served to enhance political mobilization without necessarily promoting any specific socialist agenda. Nevertheless, according to his personal statements, it was Babu's intention that YOU exercises would ultimately encourage youth to grasp that non-racialism should not only be defined by Islamic principle, but socialist commitment. Babu wanted young people to turn towards socialism as a means of transcending the intense racial conflicts of their islands, and as a model for nation building. Confident young "intellectuals" were most able to discern the correct path of national development, they, in partnership with "workers," were to play a vanguard role in Zanzibar's anti-colonial struggles.[25] To cultivate young intellectuals, Babu collaborated with Ali Sultan Issa, a close friend, fellow socialist and

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[20] RHL, MSS. Brit. Emp. s. 390., Clarence Buxton papers, Box 5, "Commission of Inquiry into Civil Disturbances," Ali Muhsin testimony, 10/6/61; Dawn in Zanzibar, #3, July-Aug. 1961, 19.
[21] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev.ed. London: Verso: 1991, 27.
[22] PRO CO 822, 1377, General intelligence report on ZNP.
[23] PRO CO 822, 1377, British Resident to Secretary of State of Colonies, 29 March, 1959.
[24] Mwongozi, 11 Apr. 1958.

London-veteran,[26] to obtain scholarships to colleges, universities and institutes throughout the socialist world.[27] This was in addition to the approximately 800 Zanzibaris who attended schools and colleges in Egypt from 1958 to 1963, a ZNP scholarship program initiated by Ali Muhsin.[28]

Whether in Cuba, Egypt, China or Eastern Europe the Zanzibari students overseas nurtured a sense of their own importance in the political struggles back home. In 1962 the YOU in Cairo published a statement that declared: " The Zanzibar youths under the leadership of the Youths Own Union shall always be in the forefront in the struggle to oust British colonialism and neo-colonialism in Zanzibar." [29] The conference resolutions of the All Zanzibar Students Association meeting in Prague in September, 1963, expressed the same sense of self-importance:

> We as true sons of our people, feel that we have a great role to play in the present developments that are unfolding in our country. We have always been at the forefront of our people's struggles against colonialism and imperialism. We will continue with this good tradition of ours until all the forces of oppression, reaction and capital are wiped out completely from the face of our motherland.[30]

Thus by the early-1960s Babu and Ali Sultani, who were still in their thirties, and who had only preceded the flood of student travelers by a few years when they themselves arrived in London in the early-1950s, were now patrons and "elders" over their own growing network of scholarship routes for party youth. This was especially worrisome to the British and ZNP conservatives, since regardless of where students enrolled, and what sort of politics they absorbed overseas, return flights and voyages always deposited them back in Zanzibar Town, where they commonly came to associate with Babu' s faction within the ZNP, depending often on where they had studied. Babu's success

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[25] Interview, Abdul Rahman Muhammed Babu, Dar es Salaam, 24 Aug. 1995.

[26] Ali Sultan Issa joined the British Communist Party in 1954, and attended the Moscow Youth Festival in 1957, at his own expense. He returned to Zanzibar in 1958 and was appointed a member, like Babu, of the ZNP's Executive Committee. See his forthcoming memoirs, *Walk on Two Legs: A Memoir of the Zanzibari Revolution*, edited by the author.

[27] In his memoirs Ali Sultan Issa claims they sent out as many as 600 students to socialist countries. British intelligence placed the number somewhat lower – around 116. PRO CO 822 2070, E56ii, Appreciation of Zanzibar Central Intelligence Committee Report, July, 1962.

[28] Such patronage was part of Nasser's general interest in making Cairo the international capital of African anti-colonial movements, by providing their representatives free office space, salaries, unlimited air travel, and scholarships. By 1964 there were in total about 2,000 African students in Cairo. See A. M. Barwani, "Conflict and Harmony in Zanzibar," (unpublished memoirs), 98-105; PRO CO 822 1378, British intelligence report, May 1959; PRO CO 822, 1382, British intelligence report, October, 1958; Bennett, *Arab State*, 194-5; Peter Mansfield, *Nasser's Egypt*, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965, 100-1.

[29] PRO CO 822, 2132, Robertson to Morgan, Colonial Office, London.

[30] ZANEWS, 17 Sep. 1963, 26 Sep. 1963.

marked him in the eyes of the British Resident in Zanzibar as having a dominant "hold over the frustrated, unemployed youth of the ZNP."[31] He observed " the building up within the country of a measurable body of young people, who, even if they do not become card carrying Communists, at least become so imbued with the doctrines of Communist subversion that they must constitute a threat to future security." [32]

In the early-1960s " youth" thus emerged as a political identity commonly employed by ZNP nationalists, colonial officials, and young people in reference to the unprecedented mobilization of youth in a new era of mass politics. As the first cohort in large numbers with access to bilingual fluency and western education, some began to attach a deep significance to their youth. They appreciated their unique historical endowment and the differences between themselves and their seniors and country cousins. "Youth" possessed most currency in the physical and intellectual context of Zanzibar Town, where young people in the ZNP had most access to all of the shared events that together combined to encourage generational identity in the nationalist period: parades and demonstrations, debates and party volunteer work, schools and scholarships. As youth followed the nationalist contests in Zanzibar and other colonial territories in the newspapers and on the radio they discussed the content and meaning of independence, reflected on local political dramas in the context of a world stage, and the role they were to play in the years ahead.[33] Youth emerged as an imagined generation comparable to and in rhetorical relationship with elders, workers, women, and racial terms employed in the partisan discourse of the time. They nurtured a sense of purpose as a generation and they fantasized about the prospects of the years to come. The sum total of hundreds of separate student diasporas was a keen awareness among youth of the opportunities of a moment "of considerable mobility and category jumping."[34] In their reading of history youth imagined themselves members of an emerging vanguard generation.[35]

The Umma Party

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[31] PRO CO 822, 2047, British Resident to Secretary of State, Zanzibar security situation, 23 June 1962.
[32] PRO CO 822 2070, British Resident to Colonial Office, 6 Oct. 1962.
[33] Some sense of this may be derived from Abdulrazak Gurnah's, *Admiring Silence*, New York: The New Press, 1996, 65-6.
[34] Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review*, December, 1994, 1519.
[35] See an excellent study of two generations of Ethiopian intellectuals educated abroad in pre-World War II Ethiopia: Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2002. For comparable processes in Egypt in the 1930s, see James Jankowski, *Egypt's Young Rebels, "Young Egypt": 1933-52*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975, 1-8; Jacques Berque, *Egypt: Imperialism and Revolution*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967, 457, 549.

The British Resident, Sir George Mooring, noted for the first time in July, 1961, a growing friction between Babu and Ali Muhsin over the distribution of scholarships to communist countries.[36] Oral sources suggest the colonial state placed increasing pressure on Muhsin, informing him the ZNP would not be permitted to inherit power if Babu remained in party leadership.[37] Mooring considered Babu a "menace to the peaceful development of Zanzibar."[38] Chief Secretary P.A.P. Robertson regarded Babu not just "a thorn in the flesh" but "the most sinister man in Zanzibar… an evil genius."[39] Muhsin appears to have been compromised in 1961-3 between desires to maintain ZNP unity and keeping Babu on his side, while demonstrating to the British and his conservative base that the ZNP was not a socialist party intent on overthrowing the Sultan or becoming a communist satellite state in East Africa. When the British imprisoned Babu in mid-1962 for sedition, Ali Sultan Issa openly accused Muhsin and other party officials of complicity, and was expelled from the ZNP. When Babu was released in early-1963, informed observers not only anticipated winning the final round of elections before independence, but also a decisive confrontation between Babu and Muhsin. This came at a party conference in June, in which Babu formally resigned from the party over a dispute about which candidates to nominate for the elections.[40] Immediately following his resignation Babu and his faction founded the Umma Party, which soon developed into a well-organized party far more influential than its relatively small numbers might immediately suggest.[41] Babu wrote rather prosaically in the early-1990s that:

> The youth of all parties who were beginning to be demoralised and disenchanted with the political atmosphere were immediately charged with new enthusiasm. The first mass rally of the new party on the second day of its formation attracted several thousand young people, especially young workers from all political

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[36] PRO CO 822 2046, British Resident to Secretary of State, 13 July 1961.

[37] Interviews, Hussein Kombo, Zanzibar Town, 7 July 1996; Ali Sultani Issa, Zanzibar Town, 4 July 1996; Muhammed Abdullah Baramia, Zanzibar Town, 22 Aug. 1996; Shafi Adam Shafi, Dar es Salaam, 26 June 1996; Khamis Abdallah Ameir, Zanzibar Town, 15 May 1998. Pressure may have also come from Mohammed Shamte and other conservative ZPPP leaders. Babu claims that they required "the ZNP purge its radical and socialist elements" as a precondition for agreeing in 1961 to a political alliance. See Babu, "Lumpen or Vanguard?" 233.

[38] PRO CO 822, 2166, Secret file on Babu; RHL, MSS.Afr.S.1446; R.H.V. Biles interview.

[39] RHL, East Africa, MSS.Afr.S.2250, "Zanzibar Symposium," tape recording of interview at Oxford University by Alison Smith, 16 Oct. 1971.

[40] A more detailed narrative of the split within the ZNP may be found in Thomas Burgess, "An Imagined Generation: Umma Youth in Nationalist Zanzibar," in *In Search of a Nation: Histories of Authority and Dissidence From Tanzania: Essays in Honor of I.M. Kimambo*, eds. Gregory Maddox, James Giblin, Y.Q. Lawi, London: James Currey, in press.

[41] In its six-month existence Umma reportedly signed up approximately 3,000 members. Interviews, Saed Baes, Zanzibar Town, 8 July 1996; Ali Sultani, Zanzibar Town, 13 July 1996; anonymous, Zanzibar Town, 8 July 1996.

parties. The first week of the party's existence saw the registration of masses of youth as card-carrying members.[42]

Umma held most interest among youth in Zanzibar Town. Despite consistent recruiting efforts in the last months of 1963 Umma found virtually no support among the old, in rural areas of Unguja, or anywhere in Pemba.[43] Umma broadsheets were distributed in the countryside, with little effect. According to Umma's former Secretary General, the other parties were too "strong," and "the youth didn't know." Furthermore, there was not enough time before independence to "awaken the people."[44] As the prodigy of a new era of mobility and secular influences, Umma was thoroughly associated with the capital. The party evoked hostility among Zanzibaris for whom Umma members were atheists, communists, and infidels.[45] Umma identified with a set of political doctrines of at least partial foreign ancestry that did not organically emerge from the dominant nationalist debates that Glassman describes.[46] The party also suffered from the stigma of race. More youth from the ASP would have joined the new party had Umma not been identified by many as another "Arab" party.[47] Leading Umma intellectuals (Babu, Ali Sultan, Khamis Abdallah Ameir, Salim Ahmed Salim, Ali Mafoudh, Ahmed Abubakar Quallatein) were all of at least partial Arab ancestry. In Zanzibar such mixed origins commonly translated into identification as "Arabs" rather than as "Africans" or the adoption of a distinct creole identity.

The appeal of the party was therefore limited to a relatively small number of youth, both African and Arab, who gravitated towards Zanzibar Town, who participated in the currents of socialist discourse that Babu and his colleagues attempted to foster there. It is probably also true that issues of race and religion mattered less in their political calculations, and that they had a general interest in accessing the resources of extraversion the movement had to offer. Umma sought to define itself through a series of printed manifestos as the friend of the poor African majority, for whose class interests party cadres struggled, regardless of their own heterogeneous backgrounds. According to "A People's Programme," Umma sought to replace colonialism with socialism, the only system that could ensure the "dignity" of the individual. In this task, the new party was "a conscious vanguard of the oppressed people of Zanzibar. It represents the broad interests of the African people who today are bearing the brunt of economic oppression." As participants in a vanguard

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[42] Babu, "Lumpen or Vanguard?" 237-8.
[43] Unguja and Pemba are Zanzibar's two principal islands. Zanzibar Town is located on Unguja.
[44] Interview, Abdul Razak Mussa Simai, Paje, 23 July 1996. This informant was also one of those nominated by Babu in the 1963 ZNP party conference.
[45] Interviews, anonymous, Zanzibar Town, 7 Aug. 1996; anonymous, Zanzibar Town, 24 July 2001.
[46] Glassman, "Sorting Out the Tribes."
[47] Lofchie, *Background to Revolution*, 260-5; Anthony Clayton, *The Zanzibar Revolution and its Aftermath*, London: C. Hurst and Co., 1981, 59-61; Bennett, *Arab State*, 264.

movement, it was necessary for each member of Umma " to be strictly disciplined" and " to endeavor to raise the level of his consciousness and to understand the fundamentals of socialism and the theory of African revolution." [48] In "A Programme of People's Youth," Umma propagandists described their party's youth wing as "a serious and conscious youth movement," and " a forefront in the battle of the oppressed and exploited masses of the African youth of Zanzibar…." Its object was " to win the young generation for the democratic and socialist regeneration … [when] the younger generation' s mental and physical development will enjoy boundless opportunity." Open to all people ages 14 to thirty, it was the duty of members to read the party newspapers, take part in local branches, and serve "the people and youth," by working among them and getting to know their problems.[49] Umma youth were to be characterized by their discipline and selflessness.

Some young people, however, gravitated towards Umma not so much out of an identification with socialism but as a system of patronage alternative to that of other parties. Some were interested in education and jobs and saw Babu as most in a position to help. Umma intellectuals nonetheless imagined their generation, despite the identity's demographic imprecision and shifting theoretical foundations, as occupying a position on the front line of historical progress. Umma' s rank and file members were neither wholly African nor Arab, were neither poor nor rich, but they were young, and they supported propaganda that criticized colonialism, feudalism, and capitalism. Umma members were uniquely informed by their *times,* and not necessarily their heterogeneous backgrounds. They were able to establish cooperative networks among youth wanting to bring down the old order represented by the ZNP which crossed the frontiers of race, class, and neighborhood.

A Plebeian Generation

Although the Afro-Sirazi Party claimed to represent the large majority of Zanzibaris of African descent, party leaders were forced to respond to the growing threat posed by effective ZNP grass-roots organization. In response to the expanding institutional profile of the YOU, ASP Chairman Abeid Karume and other party elders founded the Youth League, or ASPYL, in May 1959. According to the official ASP history, "while giving advice to the young people, Mzee Karume and other ASP leaders stressed the need for a firm unity among themselves and also informed them that all the eyes and the strength of the leaders were focused on the youth."[50] The ASPYL was intended as a recruiting mechanism; it established an extensive network of branches throughout the islands

[48] RHL, Mss. Brit. Emp. s. 390, Clarence Buxton Papers, Box 3, "A People's Programme."
[49] RHL, Mss. Brit. Emp. s. 390, Clarence Buxton Papers, Box 3, "A Programme for People's Youth."

parallel to that of the ASP. Under Chairman Seif Bakhari the Youth League came to embody Karume's most unified and extensive network of support within a party increasingly paralyzed by chronic factionalism.

The ASPYL did not, like the YOU, cultivate an image of vanguard youth parading, performing and protesting across the national stage. Especially in Zanzibar Town it was an organization far less visible and far less interested in scholarships, debates and literacy campaigns.[51] While Babu sought to include island youth in what he considered the progressive transnational historical march towards socialism, Bakhari was far less concerned with working out a Youth League stand on distant anti-colonial conflicts, sending youth overseas, or securing foreign patronage. From oral testimonies it appears the Youth League operated according to a different logic altogether. While for some in the YOU youth was a new identity shaped by a particular generational cohort's unique access in the post-war era to valuable resources of extraversion, for those with far less access to such resources youth was instead an old identity with its origins in pre-colonial African age relations. Historical cohorts meant far less in the ASP in the construction of youth identity than phases in the life cycle. In such discourse, generations were determined not so much by their distinctive formative circumstances as by what position they occupied within the life cycle between birth and death, with youth possessing its own characteristics as a generation, and its own separate social and political roles to play.

It has become a commonplace in a vast anthropological literature to suggest that age has to varying extents historically determined men's access in rural African societies to authority, status, women and ritual power. Age has served as a prominent distinction in male society between economic autonomy and dependency. Despite endless local variations, it was normal for age to "assume a preeminent role as a principle of social structure."[52] Deeply conservative, senior men dominated village politics, legal and religious systems. Male initiation rites provided instruction that commonly reinforced age-deference as a principle necessary for social stability. Despite enforcing strict social and economic hierarchies based on age, generational identities also commonly ensured reciprocity in community relationships. While they institutionalized stratification, they also typically guaranteed eventual advance. Public ceremonies formally transferred power between the generations and ensured corporate mobility and promotion; they also gave acceptable and controlled public expression of generational antagonisms.[53] Young men achieved promotion corporately in the case of

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[50] Afro-Shirazi Party, *The Afro-Shirazi Party: A Liberation Movement*, Zanzibar: Government Printer, 1973, 92.

[51] As far as scholarships were concerned the Soviets were the ASPYL's main international patrons.

[52] Bernardo Bernardi, *Age Class Systems: Social Institutions and Politics Based on Age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 2.

[53] Sally Falk Moore and Paul Puritt, *The Chagga and Meru of Tanzania*, London: International African Institute, 1977, 74, 126; P.H. Gulliver, *Social Control in an African Society*, Boston: Boston University Press, 1963, 34ff; Monica Wilson, *Community Ritual Among the Nyakyusa*, Oxford: Oxford University

more formalized age grade systems, or individually through the institution of marriage. In societies where elders' capacity to control land and production was severely limited, they instead sought to exercise their control over the reproductive capacities of the community.[54] Until they had established themselves as independent householders, juniors were sometimes called upon to perform labor service for their elders.[55]

While anthropologists have described how generational identities have determined social rank and authority, historians have shown less interest in examining how generation endures as an identity in urban environments or in post-colonial Africa. Despite John Iliffe's contention that "conflict between male generations [has been] one of the most dynamic and enduring forces in African history,"[56] historians have given limited attention to the manner in which, for example, nationalist agendas revived, expressed, or sought to manipulate or diffuse these age-old conflicts.[57] In Zanzibar, both conflict and cooperation between generations were at the center of nationalist agitation, revolution, and the construction afterwards of a socialist society. The ASP under Karume appropriated historical memories of generational deference in order to cement party unity, and to distribute power and responsibilities within the party. The Youth League recruited members who were generally male, somewhere beyond childhood and before serious physical decline, and who usually had not yet become heads of large households. Their status within the party commonly reflected their junior social status in private life; social juniors were not by definition considered in a position to dispense patronage, and therefore were considered to belong on the margins of decision-making circles in the party. They volunteered to perform whatever tasks their party seniors saw fit to

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Press, 1959, 49ff, 96, 160, 218; O.F. Raum, *Chagga Childhood: A Description of Indigenous Education in an East African Tribe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940.

[54] See, for example, Peter Geschiere, *Village Communities and the State: Changing Relations Among the Maka of South-Eastern Cameroon since the Colonial Conquest*, London: Kegan Paul International, Ltd., 1982, 49, 91-3, 125.

[55] In polygynous societies, junior-senior conflicts over access to cattle, women and land were, however, complicated by female agency. All-male generational disputes were sometimes forgotten when women sought to renegotiate their rights as wives and daughters. Junior and senior men formed alliances when their control over wives and daughters was threatened. See Margot Lovett, "Elders, Migrants and Wives: Labor Migration and the Renegotiation of Intergenerational, Patronage and Gender Relations in Highland Buha, Western Tanzania, 1921-1962," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1996.

[56] John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 95.

[57] Mamadou Diouf represents a notable exception; see "Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics: Dakar 1988-1994," *Public Culture*, 1996, 8, 225-249. Jean-Francois Bayart has given youth some attention as well, as both an "ancient" and postcolonial identity. He remarked, "We should remember that ancient lines of inequality may be grafted onto, and, as Marxist anthropologists have emphasized, may reinforce, contemporary procedures of accumulation." *The Politics of the Belly: The State in Africa*, Translated by Mary Harper, Christopher and Elizabeth Harrison, London: Longman, 1993, 115. Not an historian, Boubakar Ly has also suggested continuities between rural social structure and nationalist movements. Boubakar Ly, "African Youth Between Tradition and Modernity," in *Youth in the 1980s*, Switzerland: UNESCO Press, 1981, 175; Boubakar Ly, "The Present Situation of Youth in Africa," in *Perspectives on Contemporary Youth*, ed. by J. Kuczynski, Hong Kong: United Nations University, 1988, 153-5.

assign them. Plebeian youth sought to earn merit, and anticipated opportunities in the future to call upon their elders' patronage and to obtain generational mobility. Thus although the very name of the Afro-Shirazi Party suggests politics based on race or ethnicity, the party was also founded on a generational alliance between elders and youth, patrons and plebeians, that defined power relationships within the party. Youth carried out the will of party elders who devised strategies and gave orders. Such arrangements in nationalist practice nevertheless derived their power from memories of patriarchy and cherished cultural consensus, now "petrified in a synchronic picture," "reduced to folklore."[58]

The Youth League remained loyal to Karume as the ASP underwent a series of defections and electoral defeats. In 1959 the contest was between ASP politicians of "mainlander" identity and "Shirazi" identity. Such terms referred respectively to communities of shorter or longer historic residence in Zanzibar and which particularly on Pemba Island represented serious cultural differences between relative newcomers and those who regarded themselves as "true sons of the soil." Leading Shirazi politicians left the ASP to form a third party, the Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party (ZPPP), which in 1961 formed an alliance with the ZNP.[59] The ASP then suffered electoral defeats to the ZNP-ZPPP alliance that resulted, upon the final withdrawal of the British in December, 1963, in the installation of an independent ZNP-ZPPP government. At this juncture the ASP was deeply demoralized and divided between mutually hostile factions. Kassim Hanga and Hassan Nasser Moyo, leaders of the party's trade union movement, publicly recorded their disenchantment with Karume, and began to openly cooperate with leaders of the Umma Party,[60] with whom they shared a common socialist identity, and with whom they shared experience studying or visiting socialist lands. A further blow came on January 2, 1964, when four of the most educated and respected senior ASP leaders (Othman Shariff, Hasnu Makame, Idris Wakyl and Saleh Saadalla), formally resigned from the ASP in protest of Karume's failed leadership, due in part, they claimed, to his lack of western education.[61]

The political lives of young party volunteers residing in rural districts or in poor urban neighborhoods of Unguja were, however, relatively unaffected by such divisions. They remained mobilized within local branches of the Youth League whose Chairman Seif Bakhari shared with Karume status as a relatively less educated mainlander. As Karume prepared to submit to the reduced role of leader in parliament of a fractured and weakened opposition, Youth League leaders refused to accept their party's latest electoral defeat. They mobilized approximately a thousand men through the elaborate structure of Youth League branches throughout Unguja, without assistance

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[58] Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy, Myth and Reality*, translated by Henri Evans, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996, 160.

[59] Lofchie, *Background to Revolution*, 195; B.F. Mrina and W.T. Mattoke, *Mapambano ya Ukombozi Zanzibar*, Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, no date, 68-9.

[60] Lofchie, *Background to Revolution*, 261.

[61] Clayton, *Zanzibar Revolution,* 92n.

from party elders. In January, 1964 they executed an uprising not in defiance of ASP elders, but in order to seize power on their behalf through extra-constitutional means party seniors were unwilling to endorse, and who for the most part remained in hiding until success was assured.[62]

The revolutionaries appointed Karume president, and reserved for themselves seats on a new 32-member Revolutionary Council. This council was indeed revolutionary: it was composed of individuals who a few weeks earlier were for the most part social and political juniors, moving and working on the margins of urban society. Their claims on power and public reverence rested solely on their participation in the revolution. Before assuming seats on the Council they were not members of urban elite society in Zanzibar, which made claims on superior social status according to wealth, networks of clients, piety, "manners," ancestry, and scholarship. Their sudden ascension to privilege and reverence demonstrates to what extent the revolution inverted a social pyramid and swept away hegemonic standards of culture and civilization present in the islands since the 19th century. The contrast between their obscure origins and their inclusion after the revolution in the new ruling oligarchy was a vivid illustration of what the Zanzibari Revolution was supposed to be about.

Revolution

For the youth leaders who organized the uprising, the idea was to seize power and to retaliate against a myriad of past offenses. They possessed no fundamental text, guidebook, or historical model for how to establish a new nation. This was keenly understood by Umma youth, who joined the revolution within a few hours of its inception, and who played a significant role in subsequent events in Zanzibar Town. After the Umma Party formally dissolved and merged with the ASP a few weeks after the revolution, Umma youth continued to regard themselves as a distinct faction within the emerging ruling establishment. They not only denied involvement in the most serious forms of racial violence that had recently taken place, they also claimed to possess "new political ideas" necessary to give socialist meaning to the insurrection. "For us we joined the Revolution because we thought they had manpower but no idea about how to organize and develop,"[63] is a representative comment. The common distinction drawn in these memories is between young vanguard intellectuals, who were capable of exercising restraint and who spoke the modern language of socialism, and the lumpen "illiterates of the ASP," without such a vocabulary, for

[62] Despite the revolution's long shadow, who was actually responsible for its planning and execution remain a matter of controversy. See Babu, "Lumpen or Vanguard?" and H. Mapuri, *The 1964 Zanzibar Revolution: Achievements and Prospects*, (Tanzania, 1996). While these two authors both give credit to the ASPYL, they disagree regarding the contribution of the Umma Party in the execution of the revolution. The author's own research, based upon extensive oral history data, suggests members of the Umma Party played a significant role in revolutionary events, but only in Zanzibar Town, and only after the key initial seizure of weapons by the ASPYL was already complete. Thomas Burgess, "Youth and the Revolution: Mobility and Discipline in Zanzibar, 1950-80," Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 2001.

whom the revolution had a very different meaning. Such Leninist distinctions appear in Babu's writing, even in the very title of his essay, "The 1964 Revolution: Lumpen or Vanguard?" [64]

During the brief "100 days" of the People's Republic of Zanzibar the Youth League began slowly to establish itself under Seif Bakhari's direction as the enforcing agency of the regime. The principle of generational deference and cooperation demonstrated in the events of the revolution gradually became the framework for national power relations afterwards. This was not so obvious at the time, however, as the rapid political ascendancy of Babu and his comrades of Umma ancestry. Babu assumed a position of power in the Revolutionary Council second only to Karume himself, and Umma youth came to occupy influential positions in the new army and bureaucracy, as officers and junior ministers. Their overseas training and education were essential to a new government absolutely serious about replacing as soon as possible a colonial civil service overwhelmingly staffed by British expatriates, Arabs and Asians. Ali Sultan recalled that "we had to get our [Umma] boys in the administration, depending on their qualifications… if you get a chance to put someone in you are pushing your ideas as well. Mind you, the idea was to revolutionize the mind." [65]

Relative unity among Umma comrades in the new government dramatically enhanced their capacity to shape public policy and encourage the growing socialist orientation of the revolutionary regime. They believed in socialist tradition as a set of ruling strategies and techniques to address the perceived "backwardness" of Zanzibari society.[66] Like Ethiopian students in the 1960s and 1970s, they were drawn to the newly discovered global discourse not only for its "utopian vision of human liberation," but as "a story of how a weak and backward collection of nationalities, located outside of Western Europe, attained unity, wealth, and international respect: the allegory of the Russian and, later, the Chinese, revolution."[67] Nationalists sought to align with nations possessing comparable revolutionary narratives. Socialist nations, moreover, were not compromised by associations with past regimes, and they spoke a common language of development and anti-colonialism. As a common vocabulary, a "unifying code,"[68] or a set of discursive references, the creed also provided ideological sanction for the imperative of completing the African revolution in Zanzibar, revised as the triumph of workers and peasants over capitalist exploitation. As an imported discourse of

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[63] Interview, anonymous, Zanzibar Town, 8 July 1996.
[64] See "Lumpen or Vanguard," 240ff; also Amrit Wilson, *US Foreign Policy and Revolution: The Creation of Tanzania*, London: Pluto Press, 1989, 12-3.
[65] Interview, Ali Sultani Issa, 18 July 2001.
[66] See Donald Donham, *Marxist Modern: An Ethnographic History of the Ethiopian Revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, xviii. The problem of "backwardness" in Ethiopian society was a defining issue for Ethiopian intellectuals since the beginning of the 20th century. Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in Ethiopia*, 99ff, 209.
[67] Ibid., 123.
[68] Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 173.

universal improvement, socialism lent its prestige and authority to local desires to overthrow Africans' unequal historical relationship to Zanzibar's minority communities, now recast as feudalists and capitalists. Although a "derivative discourse,"[69] it was the most coherent, systematic and prestigious option; once wedded to nationalist aspirations and readings of history, socialism soon lost its alien origins in a complex African reformulation of the meaning of progress, citizenship, and modernity.

All of this represented the temporary realization of Babu' s theories of a vanguard generation. While western observers nervously witnessed the emergence of a growing socialist consensus among Zanzibari political elites, Julius Nyerere initially looked upon these developments with some favor. American Ambassador William Leonhart quoted Nyerere as saying:

> Karume had mass support but for him fact that African revolution had been successful was enough.
>
> Left to himself he would merely replace Arabs with Africans in same feudal structure. This is not enough. If real social reform did not come, Communists would take over. Babu had ideas necessary for thoroughgoing social reform. Zanzibar had to be modernized and no regime there could remain in power unless social change was rapid and effective.[70]

The prominence of Babu and his faction within the government in 1964, and the perception that their influence would continue to grow until they either overthrew or sidelined the more moderate Karume, caused great anxiety among western observers. American representatives considered Babu to be personally at the epicenter of the "communist virus" in East Africa. Eventually Nyerere himself was alarmed, and pressured Karume to accept a political federation. The Tanganyika-Zanzibar union agreement announced in April 1964 should and has been considered, then, as an attempt to neutralize Babu's cohort of young socialists within the ASP government.[71] The federation between the mainland and the islands of Tanzania gave Karume the full backing of police and army forces from the mainland in order to remove Babu and other leading Umma figures to positions in the new Union government, and political exile from Zanzibar.[72] Despite such developments, Leonhart reported in August, 1964, that " UMMA types have built themselves into

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[69] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* London: 1986.
[70] Telegram, Leonhart to Secretary of State, 1/20/64, #6, National Security File, Country File, Africa—Zanzibar, Box 103, Zanzibar Cables and Memos, Vol. I, 1/64, LBJ Library.
[71] Wilson, *US Foreign Policy and Revolution*.
[72] Dean McHenry discusses the extent of Zanzibari socialists' influence in Nyerere's union government in the 1960s: *Limited Choices: The Political Struggle for Socialism in Tanzania*, London: 1994, 201-10.

second echelon all strategic ministries and organizations and will not be dislodged without fight." [73] The CIA reported the following month:

> The ruling authorities listen only to Communist advisors, exclude Westerners from contact with the people or with themselves, and systematically attack Western interests. Babu and his colleagues have brought Zanzibar further under Communist influence, or at least for the time being, than has been the case in any other African country.[74]

In following years, while Umma cadres continued to serve the revolutionary regime in various posts, the Youth League, mentored by advisors from the Eastern Bloc, expanded in terms of its mandate and institutional reach in Zanzibari society. For over a decade the Youth League served as the primary instrument through which the postcolonial state sought to impose revolutionary discipline on the populace. After the revolution, youth sustained a prominent position in official discourse as the key constituency necessary for sustaining revolutionary enthusiasm, for building the nation, and enforcing conformity to the regime's rather demanding standards of citizenship. Karume and Bakhari collaborated in an attempt to reconfigure society according to the patriarchal relationships of an imagined pre-colonial world. They believed that after the distortions of colonialism and capitalism, the revolution made possible the resurrection of generation as a fundamental organizing principle of the state. Generational identities promised eventual promotion within a society that claimed to have rid itself of all permanent class and ethnic divisions. Everyone could now find inclusion if they were willing to cooperate in the assumed affectionate and deferential relations of the ancient past, rediscovered in the alliance within the ASP between juniors and seniors, and now enacted on a national level. The revolutionary state thus did not simply maintain colonial institutions intact; it sought to explore "deeper currents"[75] of its own history to find means by which to exercise power. In an engagement between village discourse and the national apparatus left behind by the colonial regime, generational identities emerged as a primary idiom through which the state sought to order its affairs.

The politics of generation were at the same time inclusive and exclusive; the state recruited, celebrated, and foregrounded the vitality of youth on the public stage, and granted a measure of local power to its most committed cadres. And yet the state also excluded from its notions of citizenship images of youth that appeared to conflict with the nationalist imperative of building the nation and

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[73] Telegram, Leonhart to Secretary of State, 8/6/64, #52, United Republic of Tanganyika/Zanzibar, Zanzibar Cables, Vol. I, 4/64-1/65 [1 of 2], National Security File, Country File-Africa-Tanganyika, Box 100, LBJ Library.

[74] CIA memorandum, 9/29/64, URT-Zanzibar memos, Vol. I, 4/64-1/65, National Security File, Africa-Tanganyika, Box 100, LBJ Library.

[75] Stephen Ellis, "Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa," *Journal of African History*, 43 (2002), 11.

its selective invocation of African traditions.[76] Imagining the postcolonial state as a pre-colonial family in which plebeians affectionately serve their seniors inevitably provoked quarrels over the continuing consumption by young people of western film, music and clothing styles, over their alleged truancy, idleness, and consumption of alcohol. Youth were supposed to serve as the vigilant defenders and enforcers of the new order, yet they were also accused of some of its most flagrant transgressions. Nationalist discourse reminded youth they were the inheritors of a revolutionary heritage; the very possession of such an inheritance—encompassing land, freedom and equality—implied the indebtedness of all juniors to the elders of the revolution. This sense of indebtedness served to legitimate subjection and to justify state intervention in the world of work, leisure and consumption, in order to cultivate the social discipline considered necessary for nation building.[77]

By the end of the 1960s Karume and Bakhari had constructed an elaborate security apparatus that empowered Karume to rule virtually by personal decree. Many former Umma observers in Tanzania, still retaining their own networks of " comrades," were increasingly frustrated over what they considered to be Karume's betrayal of the principles of the revolution. In 1972 they launched a failed coup attempt that resulted in Karume's assassination and the imprisonment of approximately seventy of their own number, including Babu and Ali Sultani.[78] Their years of imprisonment, and their individual diasporas following release, ended for all time the political influence of the Umma cohort in Zanzibar. And yet as recently as 1991 the vanguard imagined by Babu was still generational. After a lengthy description of the untrustworthiness of the petty bourgeoisie, and the difficulties involved in the early-1960s in recruiting workers and peasants to a genuine liberation movement, Babu concludes his essay with a clear enunciation of what was to him the fundamental lesson of the Zanzibari Revolution. It "brought about an atmosphere of revolt in which the revolutionary potential of the Zanzibar youth revealed itself with a dramatic impact."[79]

Generation and Class

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[76] Mamadou Diouf's assessment of Senegalese politics of generation is rather more bleak; he argues that the "logics of exclusion based on tradition, like those of the postcolony's treatment of the young, render public space as an adult territory off limits to youth at the same time that it denies them a private space." Diouf, "Urban Youth and Senegalese Politics," 225-6.

[77] I examine these issues more closely in "Cinema, Bell Bottoms and Miniskirts: Struggles Over Youth and Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 35 (2), 2002.

[78] See for example H. Chase, "The Zanzibar Treason Trial," in Review of African Political Economy, 6 May, 1976.

[79] Babu, "Lumpen or Vanguard?" 245.

Recognizing that "to enumerate is never an innocent operation,"[80] an appropriate concern appears to be how to identify Zanzibari historical actors. Are politically mobilized young people to be known as " youth," or by some other name? The few Africanists who have ventured into this debate have tended to base their assumptions on whether or not "youth" may be employed as a term signifying a discrete and homogeneous social category, with shared political or material interests which they pursue as a collective whole. In other words, they ask whether or not youth behave as classes are conventionally understood to behave.[81] Or, according to Bowles, identities of race (and for that matter generation) are merely "images" that need not concern historians. What ought to be recognized, however, are the considerable ambiguities involved in attempting to distinguish between class and generation in Africa. Bernardo Bernardi's employment of the term "age class systems" suggests to what extent in Africa they have historically been conflated. If Marx defined classes according to their access to modes of production, anthropologists have described how access to women and *reproduction* determined men's generational status. For this reason it cannot be maintained in Africa that generation is a term ungrounded in material realities, or that it only has had an episodic historical role, without a legible history. The manner in which juniors in Africa have historically been cast as clients and plebeians in relation to their elders has been as real as class divisions between workers and capitalists in Europe.

The ambiguity between generation and class may also be seen within the world's leading revolutionary tradition of the 20th century, which certainly made its influence felt in Zanzibar in the 1960s. Lenin did not always share Marx's convictions regarding the revolutionary potential of workers. In one of his most significant revisions of Marxism, in *What is To Be Done?* Lenin argued that the working class, "exclusively by its own effort," was unable to develop revolutionary consciousness. For their understanding of socialism workers relied upon "the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by the intelligentsia."[82] Lenin's lack of confidence in the potential of "spontaneous" trade unionism to initiate revolutionary struggle explains his willingness to imagine a vanguard party drawing strength not only from workers, but intellectuals and youth from diverse social backgrounds as potential recruits. His writings in fact betray pragmatic interest for over two decades in mobilizing youth for

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[80] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, London: Verso, 2001, 62.

[81] See Jeremy Seekings, *Heroes or Villains? Youth politics in the 1980s*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1993; Jean Marie Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993. See also, by the same author, "The Young Men and the Porcupine: Class, Nationalism and Asante's Struggle for Self-Determination, 1954-7," Journal of African History, 31 (1990), 263-279. Richard Rathbone, "The Young Men and the Porcupine," Journal of African History, 32, (1991), 333-338.

[82] V.I. Lenin, *What is to Be Done?* Trans. by Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, New York: Penguin Books, 1962, 98. A number of authors have remarked on Lenin's rejection of the working class as privileged agents of revolution; see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998, 149-57.

revolution, and to canalize into his revolutionary cause "spontaneous" student protest that, in the last decades of Tsarist rule, had become a repetitive feature of the political landscape.[83] In "The Tasks of Revolutionary Youth," published in 1903, for example, Lenin argued that students were "the most responsive section of the intelligentsia."[84] In 1905 Lenin wrote in a letter,

> We need young forces. I am for shooting on the spot anyone who presumes to say that there are no people to be had. The people in Russia are legion; all we have to do is to recruit young people more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely, and again more widely and again more boldly, *without fearing them*. This is a time of war. The youth—the students, and still more so the young workers—will decide the issue of the whole struggle.[85]

Lenin's views on youth were not derived from any theoretical text but emerged instead out of tactical necessity and his own reading of the "concrete" political circumstances of the time: if deliberately and systematically mobilized, youth would continue to play a significant role in resistance to autocracy, liberalism and capitalism. Nor does it appear that Lenin advanced any specific theories of a vanguard generation, other than to suggest students were "the most responsive section of the intelligentsia," and therefore worthy of consideration as "substitute proletarians."[86] Soviet scholars in the 1970s, recognizing the revisionist nature of Lenin's views on what exactly constituted the revolutionary vanguard, sought to paper over the contradictions between Lenin's tactics and Marxist theory.[87] Since classical Marxism espoused the doctrine of the working class as the single *a priori* privileged agent of revolutionary struggle, it was not acceptable for theoretical space to be granted to other identities assuming historical tasks specifically reserved for the working class. Post-Marxists such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, recognize, however, that the working class is not "a privileged point of access to 'the truth', which can be reached only by a limited number of subjects."[88] In their effort to both reappropriate and transcend Marxist intellectual tradition, Laclau and Mouffe argue that society is not "an intelligible structure that [can] be intellectually mastered on the basis of certain class positions and reconstituted, as a rational, transparent order."[89] Politics is not "a rationalist game in which social agents, perfectly constituted around interests, wage a struggle

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[83] For the best collection of Lenin's essays, speeches and letters that feature discussion of youth, see V.I. Lenin, *On Youth*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970.
[84] Lenin, *On Youth*, 89.
[85] Ibid., 122; see also 128-30, 142.
[86] Claude Riviere, *Guinea: The Mobilization of a People*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977, 230.
[87] V. Desyaterik and A. Latyshev, *Lenin: Youth and the Future*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977, 8.
[88] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, 192.
[89] Ibid., 2.

defined by transparent parameters."[90] They wish to discard the notion of unified, homogeneous social identities, and assert instead they are precarious articulations, unbound by any sense of historical inevitability.[91]

The key issue, I believe, is whether or not the *process* wherein an identity such as generation gains local currency and significance should be regarded worthy of historical research, despite its "improvisational" character. If a local identity appears to scholars as neither discrete nor homogeneous, is it still historically significant? Should scholars consider African memories, vocabularies and categories of thought as valid tools by which to understand their strategies of dissent? Can we assume all social identities are equally preexistent in African societies, and that none emerge instead as "a cultural label, a projection or repository,"[92] or as a result of nationalist discourse and practice?

Finally, why must we assume an identity emerges around certain shared interests rather than as a unique group of historical actors capable of serving a diversity of interests and causes? This last question helps to explain why generation has been buried in so much analysis on nationalism and revolution in Africa and elsewhere. The history of socialism in the twentieth-century, for example, reveals repeated instances where socialist strategists like Lenin and Babu poured considerable thought and energy into the mobilization of youth from heterogeneous class backgrounds for the cause of a workers' and peasants' revolution. They targeted youth not in order to appeal to their material interests per se, but because of their observed characteristics as a generation which, local wisdom asserted, justified their status as privileged actors. Complicating the picture somewhat in Zanzibar was the dominance of ethnic/racial nationalism which meant that young people who aspired to inclusion in a vanguard generation were not only supposed to serve workers and peasants but also the African poor, despite their own heterogeneous racial identities or class origins. The architects of the Umma Party sought to establish a "conscious and disciplined" youth movement composed of recruits who in some cases were willing to abandon the supposedly monolithic interests of their race or class in order to serve the socialist cause. Such willingness to depart from the logic of dialectical materialism was one of the imagined characteristics of their generation.

Conclusion

Generation in Zanzibar was never codified but remained a shifting identity, with different images and associations depending on time and place. On an individual level, youth was fluid and temporary; youthful status was lost or gained through a variety of personal decisions and life events; the aging process itself contributed to the contingency of the term. Invisible to censuses and maps,

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[90] Ibid., 104.
[91] Ibid., 68.
[92] Roseman, "Generation Conflict," 9.

youth consisted of a constantly shifting population moving in and out of locally determined notions of youthfulness. Nevertheless, the politics of generation in Zanzibar were at the center of how nationalists first obtained and then exercised power. Youth was deeply enmeshed in the fabric of nationalist mobilization. Despite the reality of ethnic and class conflicts in Zanzibar, generation functioned as an autonomous political identity, defying submersion. Nationalists called into official existence generation as one of several privileged agents, each with uncompleted historical tasks and responsibilities to fulfill. Youth nurtured a sense of their own importance in their nation's history as either a vanguard generation, or as plebeians entrusted with the task of carrying out the will of party elders. Generational identities emerged through the unique circumstances of the post-war era, or as a result of the application to mass politics of pre-colonial ways of ordering the world. Young people before the revolution assumed political roles in reference to an imagined transnational cohort of vanguard youth, or to historical memories of patterns of social control. While among some youth there was an emerging conviction that their generation was endowed by history to occupy a position on the front line of progressive social change, others defined their role with respect to timeless "natural" principles of patriarchy and clientalism. For both vanguards and plebeians "youth" as an identity bequeathed individuals a sense of dignity and recognized position in nationalist mobilization. Their status as youth had meaning in reference to either local or global discourses of power.