African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania

Between the Village and the World

Drawing on a wide range of oral and written sources, this book tells the story of Tanzania’s socialist experiment: the *ujamaa* villagization initiative of 1967–75. Inaugurated shortly after independence, *ujamaa* (“familyhood” in Swahili) both invoked established socialist themes and departed from the existing global repertoire of development policy, seeking to reorganize the Tanzanian countryside into communal villages to achieve national development. Priya Lal investigates how Tanzanian leaders and rural people creatively envisioned *ujamaa* and documents how villagization unfolded on the ground, without affixing the project to a trajectory of inevitable failure. By forging an empirically rich and conceptually nuanced account of *ujamaa*, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania* restores a sense of possibility and process to the early years of African independence, refines prevailing theories of nation building and development, and expands our understanding of the 1960s and 1970s world.

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African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania

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I first began work on this book – in its initial incarnation, as a dissertation proposal – in 2006. The nine years of research and writing that followed have been a true adventure, full of formative challenges, unexpected discoveries, and delightful rewards. As my project matured over the years, so did I, both personally and professionally. Those who have supported my scholarly development have also enriched me as a human being, and vice versa. It is with much gratitude that I acknowledge some of them here.

In a broader sense, this project’s origins might be traced to a still earlier point – my time as an undergraduate at Columbia University. There Greg Mann introduced me to the excitement and potential of studying African history. With his encouragement, I entered a graduate program at New York University, where I encountered many influential teachers and peers. As my advisor, Fred Cooper was a steady and discerning intellectual guide. I owe more than I can measure to his thoughtfulness as a professor, reader, and mentor. Manu Goswami was an inspiration; she pushed me to think more expansively about the past and cultivate a comparative perspective in my work. Linda Gordon taught me how to think critically and creatively about gender. As my external readers, Greg Mann provided astute feedback and dependable support, and Jim Brennan deepened my understanding of the historical particulars of postcolonial Tanzania. In addition, the friendship and counsel of my brilliant and animated fellow students made graduate school stimulating and fun. I think especially of Abena Asare, Leslie Barnes, Maggie Clinton, Brandon County, Ezra Davidson, Anne Eller, Kendra Field, Bekah Friedman, Kiron Johnson, Rashauna Johnson, Seth Markle, Reynolds Richter, Naomi Schiller, Jenny Shaw, Franny Sullivan, Susan Valentine, and Qian Zhu.

Many more senior scholars provided crucial advice at the outset of my dissertation research, including Felicitas Becker, James Giblin, Linda Helgeson, Andrew Ivaska, Stacey Langwick, Jaime Monson, and Leander Schneider. In Tanzania, the following people made my research experience – the
x  Acknowledgments

bulk of which took place between 2007 and 2008 – lively and productive: Billy Bludgus, Rajabu Chipila, Bre Grace, Josh Grace, Amy Jamison, Edith Lyimo, Samuel Mhajida, Andrea Prichard, Dominic Rwehumbiza and his family, Julie Weiskopf, and Nawanda Yahaya. I benefited from the assistance of archivists and librarians at the Tanzania National Archives in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, the National Library of Tanzania, and the libraries of the Mwalimu Nyerere Academy and the University of Dar es Salaam. In Dar es Salaam, Amina Iddi’s translation skills proved to be an immense help in sorting through reams of source material. I could not have completed my fieldwork in southeastern Tanzania without Issa Chilindima, whose resourcefulness, gregariousness, and knowledge of Mtwara were a gift. I am, of course, indebted to the many residents of Mtwara – young and old, men and women, in the city and in the countryside – who entertained my questions and speculations about their lives and graciously shared their memories and reflections with me.

As my dissertation evolved into a book manuscript, numerous colleagues and friends provided indispensable wisdom and community. Among others, Jeff Ahlman, Monique Bedasse, Emily Callaci, Dan Magaziner, and Meredith Terretta offered useful suggestions on everything from conference papers to book proposal drafts. Countless conversations with Dushko Petrovich helped sharpen my ideas and arguments. Yuka Suzuki and Wendy Urban-Mead at Bard College and Fodei Batty, Grace Yukich, and Rob Werth at Quinnipiac University were supportive colleagues during a sometimes trying period of transition. Many of my fellow historians at Boston College – including Robin Fleming, Penny Ismay, Kevin Kenny, Dana Sajdi, and Ling Zhang – have made my current institutional home a wonderful place to work. Sana Aiyar and Kate Luongo have also been bright lights in the Boston area. Kendra Field, Shane Minkin, Katerina Seligmann, and Franny Sullivan have been my anchors in many ways; I have so appreciated their love, humor, and insight.

A variety of institutional support and funding materially enabled my research and writing: a Henry MacCracken Fellowship, a Meriwether-Sattwa Fellowship, and a Dean’s Dissertation Fellowship at New York University; the Social Science Research Council’s International Dissertation Research Fellowship; and research grants from Quinnipiac University. Allison Hughes, Arun Ivatury, Nilu Vajpeyi, and Christian Lyons generously opened their homes to me during postdissertation research stints in College Park and London. Will Hammell initially saw the value of my project, and the editorial and production teams at Cambridge University Press have since shepherded this book through the publication process.

Over the years, audiences, discussants, and fellow presenters at a range of venues have asked productive questions that prompted me to both widen and refine my analysis. These include the University of Dar es Salaam, New York University, Columbia University, the City University of New York Graduate
Acknowledgments


Long before I entered graduate school, my parents, Shail and Rajesh Lal, prioritized my education; in doing so, they made it possible for me to pursue a career that has brought me so much joy and satisfaction. More recently, Elizabeth Brett and Cathy Loula have helped me learn invaluable new ways of thinking about myself and the world, which have made me a better scholar. Finally, the curiosity and passion of many students at New York University, Bard College, Quinnipiac University, and Boston College have reminded me how urgent and illuminating it can be to ask probing questions about Africa’s past. I hope that this book will do the same for its readers.
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