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## LITERARY STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM: A MIRROR OF TANZANIAN SOCIALISM<sup>1</sup>

Carol Sicherman

During the 1960s, University College Dar es Salaam, the youngest of the three units of the University of East Africa, developed rapidly from its birth in 1961 with fourteen law students. The infant college, while professedly "independent" and "African," was led on foreign guiding strings, for the staff—both the tiny number of Africans and the expatriates who predominated—had been educated in Western institutions. Dar did, however, differ somewhat from other universities in newly independent African countries because of what Ali Mazrui sarcastically termed "Tanzaphilia": a "romantic" attraction to Julius Nyerere and to his socialism that drew foreign intellectuals to the College, particularly to the departments of Literature, History, and Political Science.<sup>2</sup> While such socialist idealists were a small minority, they dominated the Department of Literature, whose melancholy history mirrors the rise and decline of Tanzanian socialism.

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<sup>1</sup> Research for this paper was partly supported by grants from the PSC/CUNY Research Foundation. I am grateful to Dr. Clement Ndulute, Chair of the University of Dar es Salaam Department of Literature, for making available materials in departmental files. I have also used material in the files of the Department of Literature at Makerere University (made available through the kind cooperation of Acting Chair Ernest Okello Ogwang). Discussions with members of the Department of Literature at the University of Dar es Salaam as well as with other Tanzanians concerned with literary study has enriched my understanding of the curricular evolution; of course, I take full responsibility for my conclusions. For finding time to talk in Dar es Salaam in February and March 1995—the "now" of this essay—I am grateful to Dr. Ndulute and to A. G. M. Ishumi, E. Kezilahabi, Isaria N. Kimambo, P. S. Kopwe, Adam Korogoto, Amandina Lihamba, Richard Mabala, Balla Fyp Masele, Ismael Mbise, Penina O. Mlamba, E. M. Songoyi, and Saida Yahya-Othman. I am also grateful to Joseph Mbele of St. Olaf's College for help in planning my visit to Dar es Salaam. Written sources include, for the years under review here, annual reports of the University of Dar es Salaam (*Report on Research and Report on the Activities of the University of Dar es Salaam*), the *University Calendar*, and various syllabi and similar documents in the Department of Literature files. For the wider context, see my article "Revolutionizing the Literature Curriculum at the University of East Africa: Literature and the Soul of a Nation," *Research in African Literatures* 29.3 (Winter 1998): 129-48.

<sup>2</sup> Ali A. Mazrui, "Tanzaphilia: A Diagnosis," *Transition* 6.31 (June/July 1967): 20.

### "Philistine Smugness" and a "Crisis of Relevance"

In 1967, while the fledgling college was searching for its identity, a gifted young Ugandan, Yoweri Museveni (later, of course, his country's President) chose Dar es Salaam for his university education over his own country's famed Makerere College. As he himself explained, he had been seduced by "the exaggerated image of Tanzania's anti-imperialist stance" that prevailed abroad, and he had expected the college to embody African self-assertion and socialist principles.<sup>3</sup> On his arrival in July 1967, however, he found not only "reactionary authorities in the College" but, worse yet, students who were "hostile" to socialism and even to "African liberation"<sup>4</sup> — absorbed instead, as a socialist colleague recalled, in "films, fashion and females."<sup>5</sup>

Those few students sympathetic to Museveni's politics complained that "philistine smugness reign[ed] supreme over . . . the POWER HOUSES of taste and culture" (i.e. the College), whose atmosphere of "lowbrow indolence" persisted despite an epochal event the year before he arrived.<sup>6</sup> In 1966, the Tanzanian government proposed that students repay their impoverished country for their education through compulsory National Service in the two years following graduation. On October 22, outraged students marched to President Julius Nyerere's residence to present their objections; an even more outraged President rusticated them all.<sup>7</sup> By the time Museveni

<sup>3</sup> Yoweri Museveni, "My Three Years in Tanzania (Glimpses of the Struggle between Revolution and Reaction)," *Cheche* no. 2 (1970): 12.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Issa G Shivji, *Intellectuals at the Hill: Essays and Talks 1969-1993* (Dar es Salaam: Dar es Salaam University Press, 1993) 10.

<sup>6</sup> The quoted phrases come from an unsigned editorial, "The Dormant Power Houses," inaugurating the College's literary magazine, *DarLite* 1.1 (1966): 2. In 1970, there were an estimated 40-100 "militants" ("a saving remnant") among the 1600 students (John S. Saul, "Radicalism and the Hill," *East Africa Journal* 7.12 (1970): 27-28). For a depiction of the College, see Austen Bukkenya's novel *The People's Bachelor* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972); Bukkenya was in the first cohort of Literature students.

<sup>7</sup> The proposed National Service was to consist of six months in a National Service camp (at the National Service pay scale) and eighteen months in positions for which the students were trained, for which they would receive 40% of their salary, the remaining 60% going to National Service funds. My summary of these events accords with most accounts (cf., however, Chris Peter and Sengodo Mvungi, "The State and the Student Struggles," in Issa G. Shivji (ed.) *The State and the Working People in Tanzania* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1986)

arrived in Dar es Salaam some nine months later, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU, the governing party) had responded with a revolutionary policy statement—the Arusha Declaration (February 1967)—intended to guide the country to Tanzanian socialism, or *ujamaa* (“familyhood”). A month later Nyerere issued his “Education for Self-Reliance” (ESR), which became the touchstone for discussions of educational policy at every level. In another response to the student protest, in March 1967, government and College authorities convened a Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam in a Socialist Tanzania. Thus began the “crisis of relevance” that was to “haunt” the College for years.<sup>8</sup>

The October 1966 events thus served as a catalyst of socialist reform, yet a reform implicitly compromised from the start. Even though the first College classes took place in an appropriately political setting (the TANU building in the run-down heart of Dar es Salaam) the College soon moved to a brand-new, expensive, isolated campus on a hill ten miles outside the city center.<sup>9</sup> Literally and figuratively lofty, the campus resembled both physically and socially “a University translocated from Britain and cultivated in a simulated English environment.”<sup>10</sup> The conservative and self-seeking students were inevitable products of a colonial system that—wrote Walter Rodney, one of Museveni’s faculty friends—“destroyed social solidarity and promoted the worst form of alienated individualism without social responsibility.”<sup>11</sup> Against these students were pitted the TANU leadership, a tiny number of socialist students, and the few (and disproportionately vocal) radicals among the staff. Nyerere, the socialists’ most important ally, thought students should “regard themselves as servants-in-training” of the people;<sup>12</sup> but the reinstated

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164-73, depicting the government as corrupt and the resisting students as heroes of the “toiling masses”).

<sup>8</sup> Ali A. Mazrui, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978) 241.

<sup>9</sup> See Mazrui, *Political Values*, 253.

<sup>10</sup> A. S. Meena and G. R. V. Mbari, “Post-Secondary Training and National Development.” *The Educational Process: Theory and Practice, with a Focus on Tanzania and Other Countries* (Dar es Salaam: Department of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, 1978. Mimeo, “preliminary edition”) 129.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, 255.

<sup>12</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, “The University in a Developing Society,” *Présence africaine* 61 (1967): 9.

students, as well as the new intake that joined them, turned out to be not the hoped-for vanguard of revolution but merely "rather docile."<sup>13</sup>

### Socialist Response

This was hardly the result anticipated in the Arusha Declaration, which rallied the nation for a self-reliant "war against poverty and oppression."<sup>14</sup> Its initial effect was instantaneous and dramatic: banks and other businesses were suddenly nationalized amid popular marches that one eyewitness now deems "hysterical."<sup>15</sup> At the College, the Arusha Declaration inspired debates during which "committed" students labeled lecturers "bourgeois" or "revolutionary." Among the committed was Museveni, who joined forces in November 1967 with a few like-minded colleagues to form the University Students African Revolutionary Front (USARF). Together with the campus chapter of the TANU Youth League, USARF propagated "germs of revolutionary thought" to infect "the strongholds of reaction"; before long, Sunday Ideological Classes were helping to breed the infection.<sup>16</sup>

Nyerere's warnings in ESR were lost on the radical students. They cared little for the historical context valued by Nyerere, who explained that the kind of education inherited at independence privileged individual attainment measured in material terms. In the colonial period, separation of students from their communities was an inevitable consequence of secondary and tertiary education, for students at those levels studied in residential enclaves—well-fed and housed at a cost that became questionable in a socialist state.<sup>17</sup> To combat the social divisiveness of such a system, Nyerere called for education conducted in a spirit of "co-operative endeavour, not

<sup>13</sup> Donald G. W. Schutte, "The University of Dar es Salaam: A Socialist Enterprise," *Universities Facing the Future* (London: Evans Brothers; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972) 81.

<sup>14</sup> TANU National Executive Committee, "The Arusha Declaration: Socialism and Self-Reliance," in Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism/Uhuru na Ujamaa: A Selections from Writings and Speeches 1965-1967* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968) 235.

<sup>15</sup> Isaria N. Kimambo, Personal interview, Dar es Salaam, 13 March 1995.

<sup>16</sup> Museveni, 14; Shivji, 37. There were "hardly more than 15" formal members of USARF, but larger numbers of students (and staff as well) attended the Ideological Classes (Shivji 203-07).

<sup>17</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, "Education for Self-Reliance," in Idrian N. Resnick (ed.) *Tanzania: Revolution by Education* (Arusha: Longmans of Tanzania, 1968) 57.

individual attainment."<sup>18</sup> In speech after speech, he advocated a university whose curriculum, pedagogy, and administrative structure would serve "the needs of a *developing socialist Tanzania*."<sup>19</sup> He objected as well to the uncritical embrace of European socialism by the left-wing (and mainly expatriate) lecturers: the College should not "turn out intellectual apes, whether of the right or of the left," nor should it give "too narrow a definition to the word 'relevant'" when devising curricula.<sup>20</sup> Despite such warnings, ESR was too often one slogan amid others.

The examination-driven pedagogy inherited from the British changed little despite Nyerere's demand that examination results carry less weight.<sup>21</sup> Such "hortatory appeals," including a government-sponsored attack on "the ambush type of examinations," had no effect.<sup>22</sup> In 1970, Marjorie Mbilinyi mocked students and teachers for parroting the slogans of ESR while retaining "authoritarian and hierarchical" styles of teaching and administration that encouraged a competitiveness at variance with Tanzania's supposedly egalitarian ideals.<sup>23</sup> A survey of motivations for university study in 1972-73 found that "future material and social well being" and acquisition of a degree ranked above "service to the people."<sup>24</sup>

In 1974, TANU met at Musoma to reflect on "what we promised to do" and "where we got stuck" as a result of "ap[ing]"

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, 54.

<sup>19</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, "The Role of an African University," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 9.1 (1971): 110.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 111-12.

<sup>21</sup> Nyerere, "Education for Self-Reliance," 61.

<sup>22</sup> Philip Foster, "Education for Self-Reliance: A Critical Evaluation," in Richard Jolly (ed.) *Education in Africa: Research and Action* (Published for the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1969) 100; TANU, "Directive on the Implementation of 'Education for Self-Reliance'" ["Musoma Resolutions," 1974] *Utafiti* 2.1 (1977): 145.

<sup>23</sup> Marjorie J Mbilinyi, "An Open Letter to Fellow Teacher-Learners," *DarLite* 5.1 (Oct. 1970): 33-35; David Court, "The Experience of Higher Education in East Africa: The University of Dar es Salaam as a New Model?" *Comparative Education* 11.3 (1975): 214; Foster, 89-90.

<sup>24</sup> Abel G. M. Ishumi, "A Survey of Students at the University of Dar es Salaam." *Tanzania Notes and Records* 84/85 (1980): 141-4; for similar pre-Arusha respondents, see E. L. Klingelhoff, *Studies of Tanzanian Students* (Dar es Salaam: University College, Dar es Salaam, Feb. 1967, Mimeo), chapter one.

irrelevant "international standards."<sup>25</sup> The resulting Musoma Resolutions required applicants to the University to work full-time for several years after leaving secondary school, with their eventual admission depending not only upon their A-level results (previously the sole criterion) but also upon their "political consciousness and commitment to National policies" as assessed by their employer and by TANU.<sup>26</sup> But "the reality of elite selection" belied "the rhetoric of mass socialization,"<sup>27</sup> and once again ESR failed to bear the intended fruit—a socialist society created by people educated to think "scientifically," a society free of poverty, ignorance, and disease. While ESR succeeded in integrating Tanzania's diverse regions and in achieving mass basic literacy in Kiswahili, its effects on the University (an English-medium institution to this day) were more superficial. In 1980, ten years after it had achieved autonomy, Nyerere questioned whether it was "really more socialist now than it was in 1970."<sup>28</sup>

### A Socialist University

At the very moment when the Arusha Declaration and ESR were fresh from the government printer, the Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam in a Socialist Tanzania took place on 11-13 March 1967 in a suitably socialist fashion, with participation from staff, students, and administration of the College, as well as from people outside the College in government, labor unions, TANU, and other groups. Because "the social ethic of the nation"

<sup>25</sup> TANU, "Directive," 134-36. This "Directive on the Implementation of 'Education for Self-Reliance'" is known as the Musoma Resolutions; the governing assumptions were that secondary (like primary) education should be seen as terminal and that those who eventually went on to university would do so as a separate venture (Isaria N. Kimambo, "Higher Education and National Development: The Case of the University of Dar es Salaam," in Atle Hetland (ed.) *Universities and National Development* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1984) 61). See C. J. Galabawa's *Implementing Educational Policies in Tanzania*, World Bank Discussion Papers, Africa Technical Department Series, No. 86 (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1990) analysis of the failure of the Musoma Resolutions, which were abrogated in 1984.

<sup>26</sup> TANU, "Directive," 141.

<sup>27</sup> Brian Cooksey, David Court, and Ben Makau, "Education for Self-Reliance and Harambee," in Joel D. Barkan (ed.) *Beyond Capitalism vs. Socialism in Kenya and Tanzania* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1994) 203.

<sup>28</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, "Ten Years of Dar University," *Taamuli* 10.1 (1980): 6.

meant "hard work, frugality and service", declared the optimistic Vice-Principal, an expatriate, students should cease to "regard education as an avenue to a well paid job."<sup>29</sup> The University must become "a committed socialist institution" befitting a "classless society," observed the Minister of Health, a Tanzanian.<sup>30</sup> The socialists (who dominated the conference) maintained that "Marxist methodology, Marxist outlook, Marxist theory should be upheld at all cost."<sup>31</sup> Swept up by the rhetoric of an "educational revolution," few could then recognize that the discussions had been inflated by "Revolutionary Hot Air."<sup>32</sup>

The most influential contribution to the Conference was "Proposals for Discussion," a long document offered by what became known as the Group of Nine, that included Grant Kamenju of the Literature Department and Walter Rodney of the History Department).<sup>33</sup> The Nine, like the Conference as a whole, assumed that the *raison d'être* of the College was the training of "people who think and act as socialists"—and who saw that it was "doing no such thing."<sup>34</sup> To fulfill its purpose, said the conferees, the College would have to ditch the "mythical 'international standard'" and an academic culture "based on hierarchy and privilege"<sup>35</sup>—and yet, in blatant contradiction, they also recommended reform "without lowering . . . academic standards in an international context."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Reginald C. Honeybone, "The Organisation, Operation and Plans of the University College, Dar es Salaam," in *Conference on the Role of the University College, Dar es Salaam in a Socialist Tanzania* (Dar es Salaam, March 11-13, 1967, Mimeo) 38.

<sup>30</sup> Babu, A. M., "The University College and the Community," in *Conference on the Role*, 43.

<sup>31</sup> Shivji, 205.

<sup>32</sup> This was the title of two publications—an editorial in the *Nationalist* (believed to be "officially inspired") that commented on a Dec. 1969 speech by Walter Rodney (Saul, "Radicalism" 28), and a 1970 skit by Bob Leshoai, a South African playwright teaching in the Literature Department.

<sup>33</sup> Besides Kamenju and Rodney, the Nine included seven expatriates—Giovanni Arrighi, Catherine Hoskyns, Frances Livingstone, James Mellen, Sol Picciotto, John Saul, and Herbert Shore (Group of Nine, "Proposals for Discussion Tabled by a Group of Staff Members," *Conference on the Role* 131). Shore, a close collaborator with the Literature Department, was hired to organize the Department of Theatre Arts, which began in 1967. Six of the Nine (including Kamenju) formed a die-hard core advocating abolition of the entire departmental structure (Kimambo interview).

<sup>34</sup> Group of Nine, "Proposals," 117.

<sup>35</sup> Nyerere, "Role," 107; Group of Nine, "Proposals," 125.

<sup>36</sup> Walter Rodney, "Role of the Varsity in Socialist Tanzania," *The Standard* (Dar es Salaam) 15 Mar. 1967: 3.



The Group of Nine successfully promoted the chief curricular recommendation to emerge from the Conference: a complete revision of the compulsory, interdisciplinary, three-year Common Course introduced in 1964 for Arts and Social Science students (now the two-year Development Studies 100 and 200). Aimed at promoting comprehensively integrated knowledge, the revision required a "new methodology" to reconstitute "the shattered and abstracted parts" of the College curriculum and enable "a new way of thinking about Tanzanian and East African reality and problems."<sup>37</sup> In short, it required a socialist way of thinking explicitly linked to TANU.

If the Committee of Nine did not achieve its ambition of destroying "complacent elitism,"<sup>38</sup> the Common Course was

one of the very few instances of successful . . . experiments in African universities to create areas of knowledge, and methods of acquiring knowledge, that are both indigenously relevant and interdisciplinary.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, first-year studies were to be entirely interdisciplinary; in the entire three years of study, 45% of the students' work was interdisciplinary, and 55% was disciplinary.<sup>40</sup> Even if the recommendations were never fully achieved,<sup>41</sup> and even if some elitist attitudes persisted, the academic socialists contributed significantly to curricular reform. The virtual absence of the arts from the Common Course, however, boded ill for the Department of Literature.

<sup>37</sup> Group of Nine, "Proposals," 118.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Yash Tandon, quoted in Court, 209.

<sup>40</sup> A. M. Nhonoli, "The University of Dar-es-Salaam: Emerging Issues in the 1970s," in T. M. Yesufu (ed.) *Creating the African University: Emerging Issues of the 1970s* (Ibadan: Oxford UP, 1973) 180.

<sup>41</sup> Isaria N. Kimambo, "Higher Education and National Development: The Case of the University of Dar es Salaam," in Atle Hetland (ed.) *Universities and National Development* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1984) 65.

### Justifying the Literature Department

At Dar, virtually everyone in the Literature Department was passionately socialist. They had to be, if literature in English was to successfully "fight for a place" in an inimically structured curriculum.<sup>42</sup> With English language taught in a separate Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, the Literature Department took as its province world literature written or translated into English, excluding, of course, Kiswahili literature which had its own department. How could one justify spending scarce resources on a Literature Department in a University charged with producing graduates whose skills "would correspond to current and future requirements" of "a three-acre-and-a-hoe economy"?<sup>43</sup> These skills included the ability to communicate in Kiswahili with the masses—the vast majority of whom would receive only primary education (conducted in Kiswahili)—and knowledge of English sufficient for educational and commercial purposes.<sup>44</sup> Kiswahili was the national language, even as English remained the medium of instruction in most subjects in secondary and tertiary education. The language issue, avoided during the Conference, threatened the very existence of the Literature Department. In addition, Tanzanian cultural policy (insofar as any existed) dictated that "art and literature should be of, by, and for the masses."<sup>45</sup> Some observers, considering literature in English "a luxury," advocated that it

<sup>42</sup> G. D. Killam, "African Literature, National Identity, and the University." *Umma* (Dar es Salaam) 1.1 (1970): 49.

<sup>43</sup> A. C. Mwingira, "Tanzania's Educational Development," in *The Challenge of Development*, Papers from a conference sponsored by East African Institute of Social and Cultural Affairs, Sept. 1966, Contemporary African Monographs, no. 7. (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968) 131, 138.

<sup>44</sup> C. P. Hill, "Some Developments in Language and Education in Tanzania Since 1969," in Edgar C. Polome and C. P. Hill (eds.) *Language in Tanzania*, Foreword N. A. Kuhanga. Ford Foundation Language Surveys (New York: Oxford UP for the International African Institute, 1980) 374.

<sup>45</sup> Joseph L. Mbele, "Aspects of Cultural Policy and Imperialism in Tanzania," *Taamuli* 8.2 (1978): 26; see also Penina O. Mjama, "Tanzania's Cultural Policy and Its Implication for the Contribution of the Arts to Socialist Development," *Utafiti* 7.1 (1985): 11-12; and L. A. Mbuguni and G. Ruhumbika, "TANU and National Culture," in G. Ruhumbika (ed.) *Towards Ujamaa: Twenty Years of TANU Leadership*, A Contribution of the University of Dar-es-Salaam to the 20th Anniversary of TANU (Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, 1974) 278-79.

be "obliterated" from the curriculum in favor of more practical subjects like economics.<sup>46</sup>

Windy generalizations enabled vague broadmindedness and a narrow utilitarianism to coexist. With utility the main criterion at the College, top brass (dryly acknowledging that the English language was "a piece of useful equipment"<sup>47</sup>) recommended that it be learned by reading "thought-provoking" books "relevant to development."<sup>48</sup> Such thinkers considered literature potentially dangerous, for even (or especially) Shakespeare might "inculcat[e] alien values."<sup>49</sup> Yet Nyerere's translation of *The Merchant of Venice* (as "The Capitalists of Venice") suggested the Bard's utility: a production at the University, "highlight[ing] the ideas of exploitation and man's inhumanity to his fellow human beings," showed how theatre can foster the social and moral education of a community.<sup>50</sup> Progressing beyond Pan-Africanism toward "proletarian internationalism," Tanzania might incorporate "positive achievements" of all cultures.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> This view was expressed in a letter to the editor (Fungo), an ostensibly disagreeing letter to the editor said it would "be wise to wipe out English literature" once sciences were taught in Kiswahili (A. S. Amour, "English Literature" (letter to editor). *The Standard* [Tanzania] 16 Mar. 1967: 4. The ironical term "luxury" is Arnold Kettle's, in an inaugural lecture as Professor of English in which he defends his discipline ("Is Literature a Luxury?" *Umma* (Dar es Salaam) 5.2 (1975): 120-33). To this day, language remains an unresolved issue: the recommendation of a 1982 Presidential Commission on Education that Kiswahili become the language of instruction at all levels has never been implemented, while the "level of English language proficiency" remains, in Ishumi's polite term, "seriously attenuated" (Abel G. M. Ishumi, *30 Years of Learning: Educational Development in Eastern and Southern African from Independence to 1990* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1994) 142, 145; see his examples, pp. 143-45).

<sup>47</sup> C. J. Brumfit, "English Language in the Secondary School," *Studies in Curriculum Development* no. 1 (1972): 77.

<sup>48</sup> Honybone, Reginald C., "The Nature, Scope and Function of Education for Development," in Anthony H. Rweyemamu (ed.) *Nation-Building in Tanzania: Problems and Issues* (Nairobi: Published for the East African Academy, Tanzania Branch, by East African Publishing House, 1970) 31.

<sup>49</sup> Brumfit, 85.

<sup>50</sup> Mbise, Ismael R., "Writing in English from Tanzania," in G. D. Killam (ed.) *The Writing of East and Central Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1984) 55; and Benjamin Letholoa Leshoi, "Drama as a Means of Education in Africa," Diss. U of Dar es Salaam, 1978, 133.

<sup>51</sup> Mbele, "Aspects," 30, cf. Mbuguni and Ruhumbika, 277-78.

### Building the Literature Syllabus at Dar

Such a socialist cultural vision appealed to the early members of the Department of Literature, whose first chair was Molly Mahood, a well-known scholar of drama who prepared the soil for socialist seed.<sup>52</sup> On her arrival in 1963, Mahood drafted a syllabus that accorded with the recommendations of an expatriate-dominated international conference held in April of that year in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on integrating African literatures "into general literary studies."<sup>53</sup> Colonial assumptions about the primacy of British literature persisted nonetheless; early efforts at reform amounted to no more than "reshuffling of old syllabuses" to accommodate African works.<sup>54</sup> With hardly any Africans in literature departments, fundamental innovation was nearly impossible. At Dar, for example, oral literature (an optional course) focused on European material and "one East African ethnic group." Even though a third of the texts in their first-year modern literature course were African, the pioneer class took a final

<sup>52</sup> In the four years following Mahood's departure, other expatriates chaired the Department. Arnold Kettle (1967-70), a leading British Marxist scholar of the novel (Kettle's disciple Robert Green served briefly as Acting Head before Kettle arrived) and G. D. Killam, a Canadian pioneer in the study of African literature (1970-71). Since 1971, the Department has been chaired by Africans, with Gabriel Ruhumbika (1971-1972) and Grant Kamenju (1972-74) serving during the period of curricular change. Ruhumbika, who joined the Department in 1969, had a doctorate in Francophone African literature from the Sorbonne and had published a novel (in English) in 1969. In 1967 Kamenju, a Kenyan, received an M.A. from Leeds University and joined the Department as Lecturer. The swift localization of the Literature Department was atypical of the University (see Meena and Mbari 142). The speed of "localization" of staff in East African universities differed considerably—by 1973-74 reaching 73% at Makerere, 46% at Nairobi, and 30% at Dar (Court 195). The low figure for Dar is partly attributable to its success in producing graduates to staff the upper echelons of the civil service, 94.1% of which was occupied by Tanzanian citizens by Dec. 1972 (Court 198); the University staff, competing with government and parastatal organizations for the same enlarging but still small pool of graduates, was 72% Tanzanian by 1981-82 (Kimambo, "Higher Education" 69). The University administration was 100% Tanzanian by the early 1970s (A. M. Nhonoli, "The University of Dar-es-Salaam: Emerging Issues in the 1970s," in T. M. Yesufu (ed.) *Creating the African University: Emerging Issues of the 1970s* (Ibadan: Oxford UP, 1973) 181).

<sup>53</sup> Rather than separating them as "a special paper," see "Resolutions and Recommendations of the Conference on the English Language Literature of Africa and the University Curriculum, Freetown, 3-8 April, 1963," Typescript.

<sup>54</sup> Arthur Ravenscroft, "University Syllabuses and 'African Literature,'" *Bulletin of the Association for African Literature in English* 1.1 (1964): 4.

examination that included a paper on the novel much like examinations set in British universities.

No matter how innovative they thought themselves, early curriculum planners in Africa (nearly all of them Europeans) perceived African universities as localized versions of Western institutions. The mission of the University of East Africa, said Mahood in a representative statement, was "to provide students with an education which really is the equivalent of that they would get overseas."<sup>55</sup> This "international standard" was particularly hard to achieve in Tanzania, where—in contrast to neighboring Uganda and Kenya—sixth forms hardly existed in the secondary schools attended by Tanzanian Africans.<sup>56</sup> Most students entering the College therefore required additional work in English language, and few had had opportunities to read much literature in English.

The events of 1966-67 described above helped accelerate change in the Department of Literature, which attempted to comply with recommendations that all new staff be "sympathetic to Tanzania [sic] socialism" and that they be, if possible, East African.<sup>57</sup> Two early hires, Marxists who knew each other from Leeds University, accorded with this goal: Arnold Kettle, the eminent authority on the British novel who came as Professor in September 1967; and Grant Kamenju (his former student), who was appointed Special Lecturer in 1966, just in time to play a prominent part in the Conference as a member of the Group of Nine. The rapid Africanization of the Literature staff occurring in the next several years made possible the parallel rapid evolution of the curriculum. Such moves were also facilitated when the University became autonomous in July 1970.

From the start, the need to develop "high-level manpower" ruled College policy, with top priority going to the sciences.<sup>58</sup> In the

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<sup>55</sup> M. M. Mahood, "Proposals for the Development of Drama at the University College, Dar es Salaam," Mimeo. Nov. 1964, Literature Department files, 2.

<sup>56</sup> O. W. Furley, and T. Watson, *A History of Education in East Africa* (New York: NOK, 1978) 234, 378.

<sup>57</sup> Rodney, "Role of the Varsity," 3.

<sup>58</sup> See Solomon N. Eliufoo, "The Aims and Purposes of Tanzanian Education Since Independence," in Resnick, 33-45; Lionel Cliffe, "Socialist Education in Tanzania," in Kenneth Prewitt (ed.) *Education and Political Values: An East African Case Study* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1971); A. J. M. Van de Laar, "Towards a Manpower Development Strategy in Tanzania," in Lionel Cliffe and John S. Saul (compilers)

Literature Department, the primary goal was to produce English teachers to staff the expanding secondary schools, yet the exclusion of the English language from its curriculum made its task ambiguous, as noted above. The Department strained to justify itself through a proselytizing zeal that claimed literature as a "tool" or "weapon" in the effort "to teach political and cultural consciousness"—an expression of Maoist "explicit utilitarianism" that suited the Arusha Declaration's declaration of "war" against poverty.<sup>59</sup> Writers and literary scholars well grounded "in the philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism" would, so the theory went, teach the nation "the nature of society."<sup>60</sup>

### Internationalizing the Literature Curriculum

Within several years, the curriculum became both more African and more widely international, as the department made the whole world (always excluding Kiswahili) its oyster.<sup>61</sup> The first marked curricular change occurred in 1967-68, when Emile Snyder, a visiting professor from the University of Wisconsin, initiated a year-long course in African Literature covering "*Négritude*, Afro-Cuban Literature, the Literature of West Africa with emphasis on Nigeria, East African Literature and the militant literature of South Africa." Clearly, the "bourgeois" notion "that intellectuals must be *objective, impartial*"<sup>62</sup> no longer reigned. Other innovations included new courses in

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*Socialism in Tanzania: An Interdisciplinary Reader, Vol. 2* (Dar es Salaam: East African Publishing House, 1973); and Pius Msekwa and T. L. Maliyamkono, *The Experiments: Education Policy Formation Before and After the Arusha Declaration* (Dar es Salaam: Black Star Agencies, 1979) 34.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph L. Mbele, "The Writer, His Freedom and Responsibility," *Umma* (Dar es Salaam) 4.1 (1974): 17, 21; M. P. Nyagwaswa, "Literature Syllabus for Secondary Schools—1973," *Tanzania Education Journal* 3.2 (1973): 4.

<sup>60</sup> Mbele, "The Writer," 18.

<sup>61</sup> Kamenju inaccurately traced the Dar curricular changes to the Annual Interdepartmental Subject Conference in Nairobi in 1969. That meeting did indeed ratify the Nairobi changes but did not decide "to abolish the three *English* Departments and to set up instead Departments of *Literature*" [Grant Kamenju in Bernth Lindfors, "Interview with Grant Kamenju." *Mazunguzo: Interviews with East African Writers, Publishers, Editors, and Scholars* (Athens, OH: Ohio U Center for International Studies, 1980) 38, emphasis his] but, rather two: the Dar department, in which changes were already under way, had been called Literature from the start.

<sup>62</sup> Shivji, 11.

American Literature ("with a special emphasis on Afro-American writers") and in Literature and Society.<sup>63</sup>

By 1970-71, the province of the Department was world literature in English, highlighting works by Africans and by members of the African diaspora, and representing much of the literature of the rest of the world in translation (with a modest role accorded to Britain).<sup>64</sup> When final revisions the following year completed the rout of the past, the syllabus set a pattern essentially reproduced today. In the heyday of socialism, the primary criterion in choosing texts was "political or ideological content," with the goal of developing the students' "commitment to the struggle to change society."<sup>65</sup>

In the curriculum as finally established, the two compulsory first-year courses were African Literature I and a new course entitled Theory of Literature: Origins and Role in Society. Taught "from a committed socialist point of view," the new course saw literature as a "branch of man's historically developing social consciousness" and inquired into the "social task which literature, as a branch of art, is peculiarly fitted to accomplish."<sup>66</sup> The two second-year courses, also compulsory, were African Literature II and a Drama course offered jointly with the Department of Theatre Arts (founded in 1967). The third-year options included five courses developed from previous offerings—Prose (fiction), Poetry ("principally African"), World Classical Drama, Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean Literature, and Oral Literature. The options also featured a new course called Literature and Revolution and, in a cooperative move, Swahili Literature, given in the Department of Kiswahili (founded in 1969-70).

The revised optional courses naturally reflected ideological goals. Students in Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean Literature were

<sup>63</sup> Literature and Society, which began in a typically colonial fashion (concentrating on "a short special period of modern English history and literature"), quickly took on a local coloration.

<sup>64</sup> The chair, G. D. Killam, explained that it was "a service department" and "in no sense a conventional English Literature Department" (letter dated 2 March 1971 to H. L. B. Moody, his counterpart at the University of Ife in Nigeria; Dar Department of Literature files). Killam noted that the annual intake of about 30 students was regulated by manpower needs (for secondary-school teachers).

<sup>65</sup> Kamenju in Lindfors 38.

<sup>66</sup> This description was repeated as recently as the *Calendar* for 1991-94; the next calendar, however, will omit mention of socialism (Ndulute interview).

expected to identify "with the plight of these black men and women who had experienced directly the iniquities of transportation, slavery and life as an oppressed minority." Prose covered "English, French, Russian, American, African and Asiatic" fiction so as to observe "the historical growth, development and modifications of various political, economic and social ideas." Oral Literature, nationalistic in purpose, required each student to collect material during the vacation and to transcribe and translate it into English; thus the students would help preserve "this manifestation of our people's culture, which is running the risk of disappearing."<sup>67</sup> Aside from Oral Literature, the syllabus did not place East African literature at its center, as did the revolutionized Nairobi syllabus:<sup>68</sup> in Dar, an author's political stance took precedence over regional origin.

The new optional course, Literature and Revolution, both "counter-balanced" the "direct racial identification" fostered by the Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean course and explicitly served the national purpose. The description, italics and all, merits quotation:

The aim of this new course is to trace the fruitful inter-connections between various *revolutionary socialist movements* in the *20th century* and the outstanding revolutionary socialist writers from 1900 to the present day . . . [in order] to emerge with some general conclusions about the specific features defining *revolutionary literature in our era* and about the *specific role of literature in the revolution*.

In the socialist euphoria pervading the campus, the heart, not the mind, ruled curricular revision.<sup>69</sup> With Shakespeare condemned as a

<sup>67</sup> As a result of this effort, the University now has "the largest collection of traditional oral material" in East Africa; nothing, however, has been published [Clement Ndulute in Dianne Schwerdt, "Interview with Clement Ndulute and Lekan Oyegoke, CRNLE, October 1994," *CRNLE Reviews Journal* no. 2 (1994): 17].

<sup>68</sup> James Ngugi, Henry Owuor-Anyumba, and Taban lo Liyong, "On the Abolition of the English Department," in Ngugi wa Thiong'o *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*, (London: Heinemann, 1972) 146.

<sup>69</sup> Clement Ndulute, Personal interview, Dar es Salaam, 7 Mar. 1995.



"capitalist tool,"<sup>70</sup> the department vowed "to 'decolonize' the curriculum . . . by removing the study of Shakespeare from its former central place." By the following year, as seen in the annual report, the emphasis had further narrowed to two areas: African and African-diasporic literature, and "progressive literature" from everywhere (above all "socialist literature from the socialist countries of Europe, Asia and Latin America").

### Literary Activities and the Socialist Revolution

Shifts of emphasis in the Department of Literature soon became evident. By 1969, the two African members, Gabriel Ruhumbika and Grant Kamenju, were researching oral literature. In the early 1970s, staff and, in one case, a student published translations of into Kiswahili of such works as Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.<sup>71</sup> Ismael Mbise's *Blood on the Land* (1974), an accomplished first novel written when he was a Dar undergraduate, remained a rare example of Tanzanian anglophone literature. It was Kiswahili literature that would express the disillusionments of the 1980s.

The height of departmental activity was reached in 1974-75, when a series of seminars-cum-lectures on "Literature, Ideology and Society" supplemented the curriculum. Six of these lectures were delivered by the Barbadian writer George Lamming, a visiting professor. Other speakers lectured on such topics as "The Chinese Mass Media and Its Lessons for Africa," "Oral Literature and the Materialist Theory of Literature," and "The Revolutionary Tradition in Swahili Poetry." With similar talks in other fields drawing responsive audiences, the university was for a brief period "a major cooking place

<sup>70</sup> This is the recollection of Clement Ndulute, a student at the time. At the height of this anti-imperialist enthusiasm, in the same breath, students listed Shakespeare and James Hadley Chase (a popular writer of thrillers) as "cultural imperialists" (Mabala interview).

<sup>71</sup> Ruhumbika translated *The Wretched of the Earth* (Tanzania Publishing House) and *False Start* (East African Publishing House); Ndulute (then a third-year student) translated *Things Fall Apart* (East African Publishing House). In addition, Kamenju published *Mashairi ya Azimio la Arusha*, a 129-page book of Kiswahili poems on the Arusha Declaration (Dar es Salaam: Longman); and Ruhumbika edited a collection of Swahili stories, *Parapanda na Hadithi Nyingine*, and co-edited a collection of essays, *Towards Ujamaa: Twenty Years of TANU Leadership*.

of ideas."<sup>72</sup> "The spirit of the time," recalled one prominent activist intellectual, "was 'doubt everything' . . . Dare to think . . . Dare to rebel"—sometimes, he admitted, "in a fairly crude and dogmatic fashion."<sup>73</sup>

At times the debates were less a free exchange of ideas than a witchhunt against "imperialist spy lecturers" and the "student-puppets [they seduced] as allies."<sup>74</sup> Even as Marxists conducted a memorable and acrimonious "Great Debate" in 1976-77,<sup>75</sup> their energy was already dissipating; by the end of the decade, it had been killed by the glaring contradictions between ideological professions and reality,<sup>76</sup> justifying Bob Leshoi's earlier satirical label, "Revolutionary Hot Air." If the Literature Department, for all its promise, published little significant work, it was typical of the University as a whole.<sup>77</sup> No longer "the most international university . . . in the Third World,"<sup>78</sup> it had begun a slide into parochialism, despite the continued presence of stimulating scholars.

### Grant Kamenju in the Socialist University

In the heyday of the Department of Literature, the most important voice belonged to the "mesmerizing" Grant Kamenju,<sup>79</sup> who

<sup>72</sup> Haroub Othman, "The Intellectual and Transformation in Southern Africa," *Dar es Salaam Alumni Newsletter* 1.1 (1994): 10.

<sup>73</sup> Shivji, 211, 205.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, 210.

<sup>75</sup> See Yash Tandon (ed.) *The Debate (University of Dar es Salaam Debate on Class, State & Imperialism)*, intro. A. M. Babu (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1982).

<sup>76</sup> Amandina Lihamba, Personal interview, Dar es Salaam, 13 Mar. 1995.

<sup>77</sup> S. S. Mushi, "The University and the National Ideology of Socialism and Self-Reliance," *Taamuli* 10.1 (1980): 22-26.

<sup>78</sup> Othman, 10.

<sup>79</sup> Kamenju's former student Clement Ndulute characterizes him as "mesmerizing" and, in his prime, possessed of phenomenal energy (interview). Later "reduced to a pathetic state" by alcoholism, he was pushed out by his saddened colleagues and died in Nairobi in 1993 (Shivji 247). His "Defence of African Literature" (unpublished), as well as Kettle's inaugural lecture ("On Becoming") and later talk ("Is Literature"), were prompted by a speech in which the anti-intellectual President of Zanzibar, Abeid Karume, condemned literature as a useless subject (E. Kezilahabi, Personal interview, Dar es Salaam, 28 Feb. 1995). Kamenju, who had been goaded to write "In Defence of a Socialist University" by Mazrui's "Tanzaphilia," declared the College to be "Western bourgeois" in the curriculum and in every material circumstance, with the majority of the expatriate staff "either a-

had become a disciple of Fanon and a fervent Marxist while studying for his M.A. at Leeds. His essay "In Defence of a Socialist Concept of Universities," published in the aftermath of the 1967 Conference, argued for the transformation of Dar from an "anti-socialist institution" into one educating "creative and productive Tanzanian socialists."<sup>80</sup> Insisting that literary study take "the standpoint of the peasants and workers of Africa," Kamenju argued that it must "actively assist in the struggle to make a complete and total break with the neo-colonialist, capitalist and Uncle Tom mentality."<sup>81</sup>

In his belief that we must "learn to use books rather than to worship them,"<sup>82</sup> Kamenju substituted one kind of intellectual imperialism—that of Marx and Lenin—for another, the British. His polemical approach, in tune with the contemporaneous "parrot art" of Kiswahili popular poetry and songs,<sup>83</sup> offered undigested chunks of text glued together by Kamenju's own stridently ideological statements. Bearing epigraphs from Fanon and from Marx and Engels, his essay "Black Aesthetics and Pan-African Emancipation," centering on Okot p'Bitek's *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*, is typical. Even though Kamenju himself was researching oral literature, he never comments on Okot's innovative incorporation of oral forms.<sup>84</sup> All that matters is Okot's "message" (indistinguishable from Kamenju's own): Ocol is "the petty-bourgeois African politician spawned, nurtured and groomed by imperialism as its frontman, flunkey and pimp."<sup>85</sup>

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political . . . or hostile to socialist ideas" (17; for responses, see *Transition* 7.36 [1968]: 8-10 and 7.37 [1968]: 7-9).

<sup>80</sup> Grant Kamenju, "In Defence of a Socialist Concept of Universities," *Transition* 7.35 (Feb./Mar. 1968): 17, italics his.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Mbiye, "Writing in English," 56-57.

<sup>82</sup> Kamenju, "The Case for Commitment," *DarLite* 2.2 (1968): 157.

<sup>83</sup> Milama, 14-15.

<sup>84</sup> Some two-thirds of the essay consists of long quotations of Okot interlarded with generous portions of Fanon, W. E. B. DuBois, Malcolm X, Nyerere, Aimé Césaire, and Hegel (representing the racist enemy), as well as the requisite allusion to Mao. Kamenju used *Song of Lawino* as the main text for African Literature I, with the same group of supporting texts (Mabala interview).

<sup>85</sup> Kamenju, "Black Aesthetics and Pan-African Emancipation," *Umma* (Dar es Salaam) 2.1 (1972): 64.

Such reductive rant influenced impressionable students,<sup>86</sup> and, disdaining consideration of literary quality, it failed to distinguish literature from other forms of writing. It was language of this sort that inspired Bob Leshoi's satirical charge that mindless "theoretical revolutionaries" in "the Republic of Free Thought" say only "what Fran[t]z Fanon said[,] what Lenin said, what chairman Mao said and never what [they themselves] think."<sup>87</sup> An optimist, Leshoi ended his skit with the decapitation of "all ineffective and unthinking heads" and "a healthy thinking head transplant."<sup>88</sup>

### The Secondary School Literature Curriculum and the University Syllabus

Some sort of mental transplant was long overdue. In the early years of the Literature Department, students arrived from secondary schools with minds shaped by the leftover colonialism of an "academic, narrow and western-dominated syllabus"—a syllabus taught mainly by expatriates and dictated by the East African Examinations Council, a group answerable to authorities in Cambridge, not Dar es Salaam.<sup>89</sup> A short story by a Dar undergraduate pictured an expatriate teacher sharing a drink with his favorite pupil while chatting in clichés about Austen, Hardy, and T. S. Eliot. Angered when his protégé suggests stocking the school library with Achebe, Abrahams, Ngugi, Brutus, and similar writers, the teacher declares: "They definitely cannot teach you anything."<sup>90</sup> With such attitudes leading some pupils to regard "'enjoyment' and 'education'" as "a contradiction in terms," curricular experts recommended administering literature in "small doses."<sup>91</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, K. G. Kilewela, "Youth, Ideology and Commitment," *DarLite* 3.1 (Jan. 1969): 41-47, and Ali Mchumo, "Revolution or Romanticism?" *DarLite* 4.1 (Oct. 1969): 41-52.

<sup>87</sup> Leshoi, 26-27.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, 28.

<sup>89</sup> Sister Jane Vella, "Developing a Revised Syllabus in Literature for Tanzania Secondary Schools," *Studies in Curriculum Development* no. 3 (1973): 15. A conference in Dar in 1965 to revise the secondary literature syllabus had resulted in "grudging" change, "mov[ing] a few metres in order to avoid a collision" (Mabala, "Reading Competence" 99).

<sup>90</sup> Mukotani Ruyendo, "The Expatriate," *Umma* 1.1 (1970): 11.

<sup>91</sup> English Panel, Institute of Education, *A Handbook for English Teachers*, 2nd ed. (Dar es Salaam: University College, Dar es Salaam, 1970) 78, 84. Recommended texts—supposedly "relevan[t] to the pupils' experience"—were Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*,

Other reformers suggested a more extreme solution, "dumping . . . [colonial literary texts] into the sea or nearest lake or river."<sup>92</sup> But dumping needed to be accompanied by rejection of an examination system that regarded literature and geography as equally composed of little more than details, thus rendering literature "a tedious bore" with neither aesthetic nor emotional aspects.<sup>93</sup>

When Tanzania began designing its own secondary examinations in 1971, it became possible to attempt a coherent relationship between secondary and university literature syllabi. University staff and students were intimately involved in the revision of the secondary syllabus undertaken in the early 1970s by the Institute of Education for the Ministry of National Education. At the O-level, the study of literature in English was integrated with that of Kiswahili literature, and both were integrated with language study (English and Kiswahili were mandatory). The new O-level literature syllabus, in effect a course in African literature, was to abandon the restricted set-text format and reject rote learning in favor of "the student's personal response."<sup>94</sup> According to its proponents, it would arouse not the "distaste" produced by the "intimidat[ing]" Cambridge syllabus but an appreciation of literature "as a vital part of human life."<sup>95</sup>

Such language and goals were compatible with the ideas of Kamenju and his colleagues at the University, as was the explicit

Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Steinbeck's *The Pearl*, Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (English Panel 85). Teachers were advised to cultivate an "element of competition" and to inculcate their own ideas, even though both of these recommendations admittedly ran counter to socialist cooperation and the encouragement of independent thought, and might even be "unethical" (English Panel 81, 86). Besides African texts (9 of the 27 titles named), this syllabus included works by Americans (George Jackson, LeRoi Jones, John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, Richard Wright, Chester Himes, and Carson McCullers), Europeans (Sophocles, Brecht, Ibsen, Robert Tressell, Camus, Solzhenitsyn), and modern Chinese writers (Vella, "Developing," 24-25). The 1979 Forms V-VI syllabi added Malcolm X's speeches, Nyerere's essay "The Arusha Declaration Ten Years After," and Mbise's *Blood on Our Land*.

<sup>92</sup> Mbuguni and Ruhumbika, 283.

<sup>93</sup> Bren Hughes, "Teaching English Literature in East African High Schools," *East Africa's Cultural Heritage*, Contemporary African Monograph Series, No. 4 (Nairobi: East African Institute of Social and Cultural Affairs, 1966) 120.

<sup>94</sup> Sister Jane Vella, "Proposed New Directions in Teaching Literature and Language at Secondary School Level," *Studies in Curriculum Development* 2 (1972): 33.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, 33.

injunction against "literary analysis."<sup>96</sup> The "target" of the new and "somewhat flexible" syllabus was "the Tanzanian man . . . , he who has been politically, economically, socially and culturally disregarded, oppressed and exploited."<sup>97</sup> The most radical changes appeared in the two-year A-level syllabus for students being groomed for literary study at the University. These students, being trained to replace the expatriate secondary school teachers, would read African and some non-African writing classified under two main themes, "Response of the Oppressed" and "The Alienated Man."<sup>98</sup>

Some of this sounded good on paper; however, literature tended to be reduced to sociology or applied philosophy, and a wide gap separated the plan from its realization. Lack of expertise and the planners' haste led to ludicrous mistakes.<sup>99</sup> Secondary teachers had no training in the new syllabus, a deficiency too large to be remedied by a few in-service seminars and elementary "Background Notes in Literature" prepared by the Institute of Education.<sup>100</sup> For all the supposed encouragement of independent thought, students in fact

<sup>96</sup> Vella, "Developing," 19.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, 23, 17.

<sup>98</sup> Thus two collections of highly specialized essays on history edited by the Kenyan historian Bethwell Ogot appear on the Form IV list as "Hadith Okot," as if they contained myths, legends, and fables (one possible meaning of "Hadith") by Okot p'Bitek (Andrews 12; Vella, "Developing" 22). A teacher who commented on this mistake noted its economic consequences: his school had bought—sight unseen—sixty-one copies of *Hadith 1* and nineteen copies of *Hadith 2* (A. J. Andrews, "The Suitability of *Hadith* (ed. Ogot) as a Text for Literature 4," *Background Notes: A Bulletin for Teachers of Literature in Tanzania* no. 9 (1975): 13).

<sup>99</sup> To fill the need for local literature in schools, Mabala himself has written a number of lively, engaging short fictions with Tanzanian settings; see *Hawa the Bus Driver* (Dar es Salaam: Longman, 1988) and *The Sinza Gang* (Arusha: Eastern Africa Publications, 1991). The current abysmal level of instruction in literature in English is evident in a "Complete Course" for high school students preparing for A-level exams. Written by Michael Kadege, who teaches English language at the University, it exemplifies a pedagogy of "regurgitation" (Mabala interview). In an awkward and often ungrammatical and unidiomatic style, Kadege marches students through set texts, firing off questions, delivering information, and supplying opinions as if they were truths. A draft *English Language Syllabus for Form V-VI* (in the process of being approved in 1995) points to a better future; the curriculum expert in charge, a proponent of literature, hopes to commission new creative work from anglophone Tanzanian writers (P. S. Kopwe, Personal interview, Dar es Salaam, 1 March 1995).

<sup>100</sup> See I. J. Speares, "This Time Tomorrow" by Ngugi wa Thiong'o," *Background Notes: A Bulletin for Teachers of Literature in Tanzania* no. 9 (1975): 7-11.

listened passively to ill-prepared, over-burdened teachers.<sup>101</sup> The post-Arusha disregard for literature in English proved to be the biggest deterrent to implementation of the reforms, because it had contributed to a decline in command of the English language that continues today to affect the few schools that still attempt to teach literature in English. Even a proponent of (and contributor to) literature in English envisages it as playing only "a minor and supporting role" in Tanzania now and in the future.<sup>102</sup>

It remains an open question today whether the reformers of the early 1970s succeeded in changing secondary schools from "innately oppressive" cram schools fostering "a comprehensive regurgitation" of whatever the teacher had said.<sup>103</sup> The wished-for Freirean revolution required a radical change in pedagogy at all levels, yet today examinations still drive the education machine. The economic collapse of the 1980s has left unchanged in the 1990s the syllabus greeted so enthusiastically in the 1970s. According to a veteran of the curricular debates, literature has "been brutally clubbed to death by a whole crowd of murderers," among them not only the neocolonial British Council but the "committed socialists" who saw literature as useless except for propaganda.<sup>104</sup>

### The Collapse of Ideology

As already suggested, the "ideological fervour" of the early 1970s made the University inhospitable to nonconformists<sup>105</sup> and hence

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<sup>101</sup> Martha V. Mvungi, "English and Literature," in F. L. Mbuenda (ed.) *Teaching Practice Report 1975/76* (Department of Education, U of Dar es Salaam. Mimeo) 23.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Mabala, "Reading Competence—Literature in English: A Terminal Case," *Journal of Linguistics and Language in English* 4.2 (1989): 113. The British Council, determined to eliminate literature textbooks with politics it deems "unacceptable" ("i.e. most of African literature"), maintains neocolonial influence by supplying texts and funding studies (Mabala, "Teaching Literature" 46).

<sup>103</sup> Sister Jane Vella, "Creative Imagination and Liberation," *Tanzania Education Journal* 3.6 (1974): 12.

<sup>104</sup> Mabala, "Reading Competence," 93. See *Africa Watch* 109-14 on official repression of free expression from the late 1970s into the early 1990s, including a seven-month closure of the University in 1990.

<sup>105</sup> Court, 207; Germa Amare, "The Threat to Academic Freedom in African Universities," *Education in Eastern Africa* 7.1 (1977): 23, 25.

an unlikely site for critical thought or literary creativity.<sup>106</sup> That fervor early subsided into the weary disillusionment captured in Richard Mabala's poem "The Socialists": a self-declared "socialist," languidly sipping a "golden whiskey," urges "sacrifice to build this great nation of ours"—meanwhile sinking "softly into the sighing depths / Of the cushioned chairs" of the premier Dar es Salaam hotel. The history of *The Barbed Wire*, a short undergraduate play presented in Revolutionary Square during a 1972 University cultural festival, illustrates the life and death of socialist enthusiasm. Typical of the early 1970s, the play depicts successful peasant resistance to capitalist greed and government corruption; it ends as the peasants, encouraged by the Party, form an agricultural cooperative and shout: "Get to work with vigour!"<sup>107</sup> On its publication five years later, the play bore a gloomy dedication to "struggling peasants and workers" who have since learned "that things have always been as they are and shall forever be."<sup>108</sup> In those five years, the entire nation (and certainly the University) had come to resemble the character who enters the first scene looking "very tired and thoroughly disgusted."<sup>109</sup>

As the University reeled under the collapse of socialism and the economic crisis of the 1980s, hope of further evolution of literary studies in English vanished. Such hope had been feeble from the start, for literature had always been marginal. Not only had there been a precipitous decline in knowledge of the world language that was the essential tool of literary study, but it had proved impossible to defend such study as anything other than an elite activity, a luxury. Nonetheless, even while beset by shortages of time and money, the present Department of Literature hopes to evolve a world literature syllabus for the twenty-first century.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> While place names set the play in Uganda, the play is Tanzanian-socialist in spirit. Revolutionary Square gained its name from a USARF demonstration in 1968 (Peter and Mvungi 176).

<sup>107</sup> Ruyendo, *Barbed Wire* 35.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>110</sup> Ndulute, interview.