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Introduction by James Giblin, University of Iowa

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, African diplomacy took a dramatic and, for many observers, unexpected turn. Across the continent, governments chose neutrality and non-alignment rather than acceding to pressure from the Western powers. They have refused to treat Russian President Vladimir Putin as a pariah, while according cool receptions to diplomats from both sides who have sought their support. The most obvious sign of African states’ non-alignment was the voting of their officials in the United Nations soon after the invasion. On a resolution demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine, twenty-six of Africa’s fifty-four General Assembly members either opposed the resolution, abstained, or were absent. On a proposal to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council, African states contributed nine of twenty-four votes in opposition, twenty-four of fifty-eight votes to abstain, and eleven of eighteen absences. One might well conclude that, if a global non-aligned movement were to grow out of the Ukraine conflict, it would likely be led by Africa.1

In the news media, however, explanations for African non-alignment have been feeble. They overlook its sustained prominence in African diplomatic history. They treat it instead as an unforeseeable and somewhat mystifying eruption of feeling fueled by the mix of lingering resentment of colonialism and seething grievance over continuing exploitation or neglect. This is precisely where the value of George Roberts’s Revolutionary State-Making in Dar Es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974 lies. Roberts provides much of the history that is missing from recent journalistic accounts, and none of their preoccupation with emotional volatility. It is a history of diplomatic calculation, political initiative, and intellectual creativity. Roberts focuses on Dar es Salaam during the 1960s and early 1970s, a period when Tanzania’s first president, Julius Nyerere, articulated principles of non-alignment and Pan-Africanism as part of an effort to advance the liberation of southern Africa from apartheid while avoiding the entanglement in Cold War rivalries.

Though published before the Ukraine conflict, Roberts’s book has the effect of pushing back against the bad journalism which sees African diplomacy as little more than spasmodic emotionalism. He does so by arguing that foreign policy and global engagement became foundations of Nyerere’s efforts to build a sustainable, independent state. While Roberts doesn’t claim to do this, his approach leads readers towards a vantage point from which they can see that the landscape of divergent institutional priorities, political risks, and economic constraints which confronted Nyerere as he mapped out a policy of non-alignment was no less complicated than the challenges faced by contemporaries such as US President Richard Nixon. Indeed, the complexity of African state-building as a process both influencing and influenced by global interconnections is one of the main issues addressed in the reviews of Revolutionary State-Making below.

The reviewers, Jeffrey S. Ahlman, Monique Bedasse, Salvatory S. Nyanto, Natasha I. Shivji, and Lydia Walker, make several points in common. The first concerns Roberts’s research. All of them admire Roberts’s success in producing an exceptionally well-sourced study despite the lack of access to the records of the Nyerere state. He did so by finding sources in several languages from numerous archives in and outside Tanzania. Nevertheless, the reviewers do raise a couple of concerns. One is that reliance on non-Tanzanian sources may lead a researcher to adopt unconsciously a Western perspective, particularly when the sources are the products of Western security agencies (Bedasse). Another concern involves Tanzanian newspapers of the Nyerere period, which can be tricky to interpret because they were so heavily influenced by the ruling party (Nyanto, Walker). Nevertheless, Roberts’s approach serves as a model for research in post-colonial situations where access to government archives may be severely restricted or simply not exist (Bedasse).

The reviewers also agree that the freshness and originality of Revolutionary State-Making comes from its focus on the interface of domestic and transnational developments. Ahlmann describes the focus as “Nyerere’s

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intersecting domestic and foreign policy.” Shivji speaks of Roberts’s concern with “the connection between domestic political contention interwoven with global divergences” [her emphasis]. Bedasse suggests that Roberts’s study is located at a “historiographical turn” where “socialist state-building” meets trans-national influences.

All the reviewers are intrigued by Roberts’s choice of Dar es Salaam as his context. Walker, writing in appreciation of the “transnational breadth of the ‘Dar scene,’” comments on the “ramifications of using the city as a unit of analysis.” Walker suggests that Dar es Salaam is for Roberts “an analytic of, but not analogous to, the [Tanzanian] state.” Perhaps this is a way of saying that Nyerere saw Dar es Salaam as the nation in microcosm: many of the national dynamics which shaped his global thinking and foreign policy could be found in compressed form in Dar. Nyanto captures this quality of 1960s Dar es Salaam by describing it as a “contact zone” where “factions and animosity dominated city life.” This impression of social compression is heightened by the fact that Revolutionary State-Making confines itself mostly to one part of the city: the core downtown of government and media offices, bars and hotels, together with the beaches where politicians, journalists, southern African exiles and visiting Pan-Africanists hung out on weekends.

As Roberts acknowledges (and Ahlmann reminds us), Revolutionary State-Making is very much about “governing elites.” It does not reach out to the urban periphery where city met countryside, aside from the University of Dar es Salaam campus, a peripheral location that is fleetingly mentioned. Yet this was where student activists, as Nyanto points out, encountered many transnational influences while also feeling the heavy restraining hand of Nyerere’s state. Nor does Revolutionary State-Making venture into working-class residential neighborhoods and workplaces. Yet, for historians of 1960s Tanzania, understanding those locales is crucial. For it was in the city’s factories and port where a new foundation of Dar es Salaam’s incorporation into post-colonial globalism was laid down. The newly laid foundation simply eradicated public expressions of concern over the enormous discrepancy between Africa and the Global North in the value of labor. Like many other colonial cities, in the decades before independence Dar es Salaam witnessed unceasing struggles by workers for improved renumeration. Following the reset of labor relations imposed by the Nyerere state in the 1960s, however, the issue simply vanished. Its disappearance was the clearest possible sign of Dar es Salaam’s assimilation by post-colonial globalism. As a result, persistent poverty of workers and their families shaped post-colonial Dar es Salaam more than any other factor, and their poverty endures despite unprecedented improvement in workers’ standards of living in the Global North. This state of easy, untroubled coexistence of poverty and affluence is surely the quintessence of the global urbanity which, as Revolutionary State-Making shows, lay just on the cusp of Dar es Salaam’s future in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the reviews below, the sharpest criticism of Revolutionary State-Making is Shivji’s contention that Roberts focuses too much on conflicts among politicians and intellectuals in Nyerere’s Tanzania, and too little on the substance of the ideological debates in which they engaged. Roberts replies to this critique in his response below. Shivji also calls upon scholars to consider more carefully “the intricacies of discourse production locally.” As criticism, this remark is more appropriately aimed at the global media than at Roberts’s book. As a guidepost in debate, however, it usefully invites us to return to the complexity of African non-alignment. As Roberts shows, in newly emerging post-colonial states such as Tanzania, the ideological debates about Pan-Africanism, non-alignment, South African liberation, and progressive foreign policy were intertwined with a broad range of influences and priorities. For intellectuals and politicians such as Nyerere, their positions on these issues were influenced by considerations ranging from assessment of national security threats to domestic political strategies and praxis. Roberts leaves no doubt that Tanzanian transnationalism was neither derivative, to be lifted turnkey-ready from the texts of Western thinkers, nor generated merely by grievance. It grew out of careful consideration of political and economic realities at the scales of nation, region and globe. Surely the same can be said of African non-alignment in the current day.
Contributors:

**James Giblin** is Professor of African History at the University of Iowa. He has specialized in the history of Tanzania for many years.

**George Roberts**, PhD, is a Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Sheffield and a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute, Florence. His current project concerns the “politics of scarcity” in Eastern Africa during the commodity shocks of the 1970s. He also continues to work on the history of the decolonization of Comoros and has published in the *Journal of African History* on this topic.


**Monique Bedasse** is Associate Professor of African History at New York University. Her interests include the intellectual, political, and social history of decolonization, black internationalism and African diasporic politics. Her first monograph, *Jah Kingdom: Rastafarians, Tanzania, and Pan-Africanism in the age of Decolonization* was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2017.


**Natasha I. Shivji** is the Director of the Institute for Research in Intellectual Histories of Africa, based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. She completed her PhD at New York University, NY in African History and previously held a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Cambridge.

**Lydia Walker** is Assistant Professor and Myers Chair in Global Military History at The Ohio State University. Her book, *States-in-Waiting* (forthcoming with Cambridge University Press), analyzes the intersection of nationalist insurgent movements and their transnational advocacy in the emergence of postcolonial nation-states in South Asia and Southern Africa. Her scholarship has appeared in *The American Historical Review, Past & Present* and elsewhere.
Among Africanists, Tanzania has long been a site of unique interest, particularly for those studying mid-twentieth-century politics. Not surprisingly, much of this interest has revolved around the philosophy and politics of President Julius Nyerere’s government during the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, Nyerere’s *Ujamaa* (“familyhood”) gave voice to a conception of mid-century socialism that not only deviated from the evolutionary socialism of the European Marxist tradition, but also distinguished itself from the more abstract conceptions of African socialism articulated by many of the Tanzanian president’s contemporaries.¹ *Ujamaa* and the transformative policies that followed in its name in turn became touchstones for scholars ranging from Giovanni Arrighi and John Saul, to Walter Rodney and Anthony Bogues, to James Scott as they sought to assess the possibilities and constraints of *Ujamaa* in transforming Tanzanian society in particular and, for some, Africa more broadly.² Others—most recently including Priya Lal, Emily Callaci and Andrew Ivaska—have turned their attention to the experiences of those living through the radical changes brought about by *Ujamaa*, villagization, and the global Cold War that surrounded it.³ Likewise, still others such as Monique Bedasse, Seth Markle, and Lessie Tate have interrogated how the pan-African politics of Nyerere’s government paved the way for a rich community of diasporic expatriates to grow within Tanzania and re-imagine the linkages connecting the continent and the Diaspora through Tanzania’s revolutionary transformation.⁴

George Roberts’s *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974* innovatively builds upon aspects of all of these historiographical strands in Tanzanian and African Studies. On its face, Roberts’s book could be understood as a conventional diplomatic history, as it interrogates the postcolonial politics of Nyerere’s Tanzania during the first decade-plus of self-rule. In this vein, Roberts skillfully unpacks the particularities of a diverse array of Tanzanian interests in the pan-African politics of mid-century African liberation and the pressures, incentives, and dangers of the Cold War. To accomplish this task, Roberts divides his book into seven chapters, each of which examines a distinct aspect of Nyerere’s intersecting domestic and foreign policy, and includes chapters on the postcolonial political remaking of Dar es Salaam, the internal debates within the Tanzanian government over the 1967 Arusha Declaration, Tanzanian triangulation in the German Cold War, the assassination of Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) President Eduardo Mondlane, youth protest and “Tanzania’s ‘68,” the internal conflicts and dynamics of the Tanzanian press, and Mwongozo (“TANU Guidelines”). In framing all of these debates, as Roberts asserts in his introduction, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam* is a book focused on the “governing elite” (11).


However, the historical and historiographical implications of Roberts’s work extend far beyond that of the Tanzanian governing elite. For instance, in his opening chapter on Dar es Salaam, Roberts describes the postcolonial transformation of Dar into a “Cold War city.” As Meredith Terretta, Jean Allman, and myself have shown in the case of Accra and Elaine Mokhtefi, and as Jeffrey James Byrne has done for Algiers, these and a handful of other prominent cities became—to use Terretta’s phrasing—“extra-metropolitan” hubs. From these hubs, aligned and competing alliances of activists and freedom fighters formed. As such, these cities not only provided the space for anticolonial freedom fighters to express their revolutionary ambitions, but they also created a context for the transnational re-articulation of these ambitions as part of a broader continent-wide or even global struggle for liberation. As the travels of the African-American activist Bill Sutherland suggest, as places like Accra faded from prominence during the 1960s, Dar es Salaam took its place. What Roberts so deftly shows through his analysis of Dar, though, is that the transformation of the city into such an “extra-metropolitan” hub has to be understood as much as an urban history as a political or diplomatic history. Major political events such as the revolution in Zanzibar and a mutiny among soldiers in the Tanganyika Rifles did not simply cause upheaval within the country’s local political ranks. More broadly, as Roberts demonstrates, they simultaneously invited into Dar new levels of Cold War intrigue that shifted the way Tanzanians as well as expatriates related to space within the city. In doing so, Dar’s hotels, bars, and embassies, among other key locales, became sites of gossip and rumor, reshaping the city’s political and social dynamics.

Roberts’s chapter on the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane does similarly novel historical and historiographical work. As he notes in his brief biography of Mondlane, the Mozambican freedom fighter moved to Dar in 1963. From the city, he helped build FRELIMO and launch its war of liberation against the Portuguese a year later. For Roberts, Mondlane’s unsolved 1969 assassination represents more than the political killing of a prominent figure in the Dar es Salaam freedom-fighter community. More importantly, it also offers a lens into the complicated and even contentious political culture of that community. As in Roberts’s chapter on the city itself, the postcolonial and Cold War transformation of the city is key to understanding the implications of Mondlane’s assassination, with political and class tension central to his appraisal. Among the expatriate community, experiences within Dar differed drastically, as most lived in refugee communities just outside the city, while the leadership of many African liberation movements frequented the city’s international hotels and bars. Likewise, Tanzanians raised their own concerns about everything from the potential of subversion within certain movements to the influx of arms into the city. Roberts does not, however, draw a direct line between specific tensions and Mondlane’s murder. Rather, much as Luise White did with her book on Herbert Chitepo’s 1975 assassination in Zambia, he suggests that Mondlane’s assassination and, more fundamentally, the conspiracies surrounding it, offer important avenues through which to better reflect on the day-to-day political and cultural environment surrounding Dar’s freedom fighter community.


It is likely not necessary to dive into additional chapters here, for each chapter in *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam* makes equally important contributions to both Tanzania’s postcolonial history and to that of Africa more broadly. This can be found in everything from Roberts’s interrogation of Tanzanian-German relations, to his discussions of Tanzanian youth politics in 1968, to his unpacking of the internal dynamics of the country’s newspaper industry. In each case, Roberts guides his readers with meticulous detail honed through research in a wide-range of archival collections in Tanzania and beyond to deeper understandings of the rich interconnections inside and outside of Dar es Salaam formed through the country’s pan-African and Cold War politics. In doing so, Roberts builds upon the long and vibrant scholarly interest in Nyerere’s Tanzania. However, he also helps to push it further by systematically deconstructing the debates, policies, and ambitions that helped conjure the aura around Tanzanian politics that drew so many to the country during the 1960s and 1970s, and has made Tanzania perhaps the epicenter of contemporary Africanist scholarship on the continent’s first decade-plus of self-rule.

Roberts’s *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam* thus ought to become a go-to book for anyone who is interested in mid-century Tanzania. His ostensible framing of the book as one that explores the “governing elite” adds to the book’s accessibility, especially for those who are unfamiliar with the intricacies of mid-century Tanzanian politics. Yet, through imaginative and nuanced storytelling, Roberts takes us far beyond the high politics of the moment by weaving together the best traditions of African historical writing over the past twenty to thirty years. A transnational political history at heart, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam* equally maintains a sustained commitment to engaging Dar’s unique social and cultural histories.

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Recent years have seen great interest in transnational approaches to the history of post-independence Africa. George Roberts’s timely new monograph, Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974, adds to the body of work that has made this historiographical turn for Tanzania’s history, in particular.1 Roberts argues that the “politics of Cold War rivalries, African Liberation movements, and socialist state-building” were deeply intertwined in Tanzania and that the “challenges” of this reality “were a significant factor in the shutting down of political space in the country” (10, 11). Those who are steeped in Tanzania’s history will appreciate a different approach to well-known occurrences such as the 1964 army mutiny, the assassination of Mozambique’s Eduardo Mondlane, and the union with Zanzibar. Roberts widens our analytical frame by placing each incident within the context of the global Cold War, and by venturing beyond Tanzanian archives and perspectives to show the interplay between the local and the global.

At the heart of Roberts’s study is his treatment of Dar es Salaam as a Cold War city. Adding to the stellar existing urban histories of Dar es Salaam, Roberts is interested in how the “Cold War became inscribed into the urban politics” of this African city.2 He begins by establishing how and why Tanzania became a site of Cold War competition, and he skillfully invites the reader to traverse the streets of the “vibrant social scene” that was Dar es Salaam, with its restaurants, clubs, bars, and hotels (53). Of great importance here is his discussion of Dar es Salaam as “rumorville” in this period, a characteristic that has much to do with the “suffusion of Tanzanian political discourse with the language and tropes of the Cold War” (57). Rumor and secrecy run through the book and set the tone of the Cold War city where propaganda, half-truths, and conspiracies were active characters in the histories he documents. Importantly, Roberts’s Cold War framework adds to our understanding of how the main principles of Tanzania’s foreign policy—pan-Africanism, African liberation, and non-alignment—were actually lived within the geopolitical context of the period under study.

Relying heavily on German state archives, Roberts offers a deeper understanding of how Dar es Salaam became a battlefield for the German Cold War. To his credit, Roberts is careful not to lean into the simplistic notion that to present Dar es Salaam as a Cold War battlefield is to replace Eurocentric notions of the Cold War with one that overstates the agency of this postcolonial African state. He provides us with a multi-layered history of how a range of issues, including internal rivalries within the Tanzanian government, opened up spaces for Cold War actors to localize the German battle in Dar es Salaam. As the German Democratic Republic (GDR) fought for recognition, West Germany worked to prevent it. Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam places this conflict within the context of the politics of the day as West Germany maintained ties with Portugal and South Africa, and the GDR identified with and supported decolonization in Africa. Rather than a simple choice based on the politics of decolonization, however, this distinction did not determine where President Julius Nyerere’s allegiance fell at different points in this struggle. Roberts’s use of this chapter as a testing ground for the Tanzanian government’s commitment to non-alignment is illuminating; Nyerere’s decisions regarding how to respond to the tactics of either side had much to do with the connection between this aspect of his foreign policy and his pursuit of real autonomy, sovereignty, and independence for Tanzania. Though dependent on economic aid, these principles propelled Nyerere’s choices and, as Roberts

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shows, rendered North-South dynamics as important as the East-West pressures of the Cold War. He painstakingly describes the North-South divide as well as the East-West problem, and demonstrates the power that the global North continued to wield in the postcolonial period (underscoring a reality that was clearly articulated by African leaders such as Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah).³

Tanzania’s role as a base for liberation movements has long served as evidence of its stated commitment to pan-Africanism, even as the government worked to secure national sovereignty. Roberts offers us a rich, textured account of how liberation politics actually worked on the ground in Dar es Salaam. We get a real sense of what the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) brought to the city, as well as the impact of the city on the history of the movement. His use of the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane as the prism through which he examines this very messy history with “shifting factional and personal alliances” (136) is a brilliant move as the assassination itself captures the danger within this Cold War city, and dramatizes the extent to which the “Cold” war did indeed become “hot” at points. Roberts roots FRELIMO in Dar es Salaam as, for him, this is a movement in exile that became deeply embedded in the politics of its host city. This chapter also complements recent studies that highlight both the promise and the limitations of pan-African practice within Tanzania through its deft treatment of the “entangled relationships” and the “personal rivalries” that emerged as freedom fighters waged their anti-colonial war in a local space heavily influenced by the Cold War.⁴

Roberts concludes that though the “dynamics of the Cold War were certainly a significant influence on post-independence developments in Dar es Salaam,” they “cannot—and did not—make an effective guide to understanding them” (281). Here he lays bare the tension associated with any history that examines the relationship between the local and the global. The archives used to delve into this relationship determine the arguments one is able to make. Depending heavily on diplomatic archives, Roberts’s impressive multi-cited and multi-lingual research has certainly proven Jean Allman’s point about the extent to which the histories of postcolonial Africa demand that we engage a scattered, transnational archive.⁵ Yet, we still run the risk of overstating the perspectives of non-African actors, especially when many Tanzanian governmental papers from the period remain restricted. As such, the second component of Roberts’s argument concerning the extent to which the Cold War contributed to the growing repression in the country raises questions that are difficult to answer without greater access to papers documenting the thoughts and deliberations of Tanzanian government officials. In the final analysis, though, Roberts prudently and readily confronts the limitations of his sources, while also providing us with a model of how to engage the diplomatic records and documentary evidence of intelligence-gathering from outside Africa, which Africanists have begun to consult with enthusiasm in recent years.

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4 See Markle, A Motorcycle on Hell Run and Bedasse, Jah Kingdom.
On Wednesday, 19 September 1962, the popular Kiswahili newspaper *Ngurumo* ("Roar" or "Thunder") contained several headlines, including Dr. Wilbert Kleruu's dismal remark, "Wanachuoni siasa yenu inanuka ukoloni" ("University students, your politics is rotting from colonial mentality"). Dr. Kleruu, who was working as Ideology and Publicity Secretary of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), issued the statement in response to a demonstration of the students of the University College Dar es Salaam (now, University of Dar es Salaam) against the "political development in Ghana" (maendeleo ya siasa ya nchi ya Ghana). The march, said Dr. Kleruu, "has tarnished Tanganyika’s image to African countries" (yamepunguza sana safari ya Tanganyika katika badhara ya nchi ya Africa). TANU, added Dr. Kleruu, "has been displeased with the demonstration because “Nkrumah’s government has pledged its allegiance to supporting Africa’s liberation.” Five decades later, in 2020, Francis da Don, a pseudonymous identity on the leading social platform, *jamiiforum*, initiated a thread, "Napendekeza TCRA wapige marufuku matangazo ya BBC nchini Tanzania. Wameitukana kumbukumbu ya Mwl. Nyerere" ("I suggest that TCRA ban BBC in Tanzania [because] they have insulted the history of Mwl. Nyerere"). He contended that the British Broadcast Corporation had livestreamed a session on the liberation of Africa and acknowledged Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, and Jomo Kenyatta as legendary figures of Africa’s liberation, but Julius Kambarage Nyerere, “in spite of his contribution to the liberation of Africa, has not been mentioned” and this was “a truth half told.”

Students’ activism and government response at the then-University College Dar es Salaam, and the commitment of Nyerere’s government to the liberation of Southern Africa, lie at the center on George Roberts’s *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam*. The book centers on a wide range of eyewitness accounts, memoirs, official publications, and primary source materials and newspapers in multiple languages that have been deposited in archives in Africa, America, United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, and Australia, to show how Dar es Salaam became “a city of hope and dreams,” “a hive of revolutionary activity in Africa,” and “a center of revolutionary thinking, organization and mobilization,” as well as “a mecca of liberation in East Africa” and “an entrepôt of colonial liberation south of the Sahara” (2, 21). Amid nation-building and Cold War politics, argues Roberts, rumor, propaganda, and espionage dominated the public sphere and the city in diplomatic receptions, clubs, restaurants, and bars, leading the city to become “Rumorville” because “the boundary between rumor and news was always unclear” (60). In the end, Dar es Salaam, which had earned an estimable reputation as the “Mecca of Revolution,” turned into a “Mecca of Mice” (140).

Indeed, this book embodies an all-embracing account on Tanzania’s postcolonial experience that puts together a range of the sources in multiple languages into one volume. The mastery of the subject matter deserves an indisputable accolade for allowing the author to produce a thought-provoking and elegantly written account that is well-argued and lucid, with coherent narrative on state-making in Dar es Salaam and its place in the Cold War politics and liberation of southern Africa. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the wide range of works on the liberation of southern Africa, notably “hubs of decolonization,” “Living in Exile,” and *National Liberation in Post-Colonial Southern Africa*, there remains no concise history that would be analogous to this work. The publication of this long-awaited book is timely because it sets Cold War politics, the liberation

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2 “Wanachuoni siasa yenu inanuka Ukoloni - Dr. Kleruu.”
3 TCRA is an abbreviation for Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority, established by the TCRA Act No. 12 of 2003, as an independent Authority for the postal, broadcasting and electronic communications industries in the United Republic of Tanzania.
of southern Africa, and state-making into the historiography of postcolonial Tanzania, by including the perspectives of a range of Tanzanian politicians, liberation movement cadres, Cold War diplomats, radical journalists, and youth activists (21).

The grasp of the subject matter rests on Roberts’ skillful use of a la longue durée process of decolonization in Africa to show that 1960s and 1970s Dar es Salaam followed in “a long genealogy of globally connected revolutionary cities,” and that struggles against imperialism and post-colonial state-making “were shaped by the movement of people, texts, and ideas” (3). Further, Roberts’ argument that Dar es Salaam became “a contact zone in which revolutionary politics was enwrapped in local state-making as TANU attempted to construct an African socialist society” (6) corresponds to Mary Louise Pratt’s conceptualization of “contact zones” to describe “spaces” where “cultures, meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power”[6]

Roberts is adept at guiding the reader through the dynamic characters of the rise and fall of the city from a “Cold War city” and “Mecca of liberation in East Africa” to a “battlefield in a Cold War subplot” (21 & 100). He shows the tangles of liberation politics in Dar es Salaam to cement his contention that the liberation movements did not have an easy ride in the city. Rather, factions and animosity dominated city life and “drew support of Tanzanian elites, OAU, and foreign diplomats” into the row (137 & 140). The assassination of Eduardo Mondlane—President of the Mozambican Liberation Front and founder and leader of Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) until his assassination in 1969—and the resultant fracture of FRELIMO, and the series of reconciliatory meetings of ANC and SWAPO to curb mounting cliques, were indicative of divisions, acrimonies, and apprehensions that represented an “aperture onto Dar es Salaam’s liberation politics and contested spheres of power they involved” (135, 170). Institutionalization of TANU control over the media, and students’ protests amid the threats over insecurity, gained momentum as a smokescreen to “eliminate dissenting groups” under the pretext of state-making and “the enemy within” (98, 145, 197).

At the heart of Dar es Salaam’s revolutionary networks, writes Roberts, were the liberation movement leaders who operated in the city’s diplomatic margins but remained central to political life (279). That life at Nkrumah Street and its vicinities “fostered a sense of shared colonial enemies and cosmopolitan urban spaces” that inspired leaders to forge “affective relations with local musicians” in the city (142). The fact that the leaders remained central to political life reinforces the range of networks they created in the city in pursuit of their common end. These networks, however, abounded in 1960s and 1970s Tanzania and transcended the limits of city life to reach “colleagues” in the refugee camps, often amounting to “fictive” and “networked” kin relations between “freedom fighters” (wapigania uhuru) and residents despite the austere barracks life style and harsh training programs (141).[7]

Finally, while the success of students’ activism in “domesticating” and “nationalizing transnational protests” cannot be downplayed (192), students were not free from limits. Roberts situates 1960s and 1970s Dar es Salaam amid the “transcontinental landscape of protests” and “youth politics” to show how texts and ideas produced in various parts of the world made inroads in Dar es Salaam’s public sphere and shaped local responses to events abroad. He further demonstrates that the idioms of liberation and anti-imperialism and

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colonization “provided ideological fuel for newspaper columns” (174, 192). Students’ activism encountered the strong hand of TANU, which attempted to institutionalize and control the University by jettisoning dissident groups and, in no time, the University Students’ African Revolutionary Front (USARF) whose journal, Checha, “carried an extended Marxist critique of the Arusha declaration” “became a story of the past” (197). Nevertheless, as Issa G. Shivji argues, “intellectual activism” of the “intellectuals at the Hill” dominated the “Dar es Salaam School of Thought,” and professors were also at the forefront of not only shaping the production of historical knowledge, but also the ethos of the University’s revolutionary thinking of “struggle to learn [and] learn to struggle.”

At the only university in the country where the “articulators of policy were produced and various ideological trends contended openly,” debates at the Hill became the “hallmark of academic life” because they attracted radical academics from far and wide, and shaped major policy-decisions in the country. Thus, debates on class, the state, imperialism, and teaching curricula influenced the University of Dar es Salaam’s aim to be of “service to the needs of a developing socialist Tanzania” in order “to uplift the conditions under which the masses of the people of the union live.” The impetus of developing socialist Tanzania determined the subjects which were taught, the contents of the courses, the methods of teaching, and the organization of the University and its relations with the community in general. But the “bureaucratization of the University,” Shivji argues, increased “apathy, frustration, low morale, numerous grievances and discontent” among “radical” professors at the Hill.

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10 “Well Done College: Mwalimu Has a Great Day on University Hill,” The Nationalist, 22 August 1964.
In response to the universalization of Eurocentric discourses, recent trends in histories of the global South are moving towards a reorientation of the focal point of the global. This approach has largely been a response to limits of nationalistic histories and the universalisms of western-dictated global histories. Various debates are surfacing from diverse intellectual arenas that rethink the idea of the “global” from the South, for instance in the monumental edited *Global Intellectual Histories* and debates that resituate discourses on borders and nationalities by focusing on oceanic studies. This means rethinking what globality could mean outside the conscriptions of contemporary power relations, theorizing developments in the West from the perspective of the South, destabilizing the origin of ideas, and focusing on their mobility and discursiveness instead. These studies are creating an arena of debate that does not ignore the formation of unequal, Eurocentric universalisms; instead, it approaches them from a different focus, with the purpose of producing meaningful concepts that provide an opportunity to rethink the global. The task of rethinking concepts of the global must uncompromisingly take into account the structures of inequality that are inherent in contemporary discourses of the “universal” emanating from the global North. The idea is to produce histories that are intertwined and informative of each, without reproducing and conscripting local discourses to serve the universal.

Not only has this approach been instrumental in moving away from Eurocentric formulations of historical trajectories, but it has indeed enriched the study of how we engage and write specific histories in the global South. Much of this history relies heavily on rethinking theoretical trajectories. In works on Africa, this has meant largely relying on the pre-colonial histories that provide different registers of globality and interconnectedness or futuristic determinations of what the contemporary political landscapes can inform us about global trends outside of Africa. It is difficult to focus on colonialism and its immediate aftermath to draw out theories of global histories that reposition Eurocentric discourses primarily due to the very problematic of sources and exploitation that necessitate assuming Eurocentric discourses to be central and determining. Historical writing on this particular time frame of colonial exploitation and independence movements in Africa has therefore tended to rely heavily on nationalistic discourses of anti-imperialism in order to re-assert and position the political landscape, the economic restructuring, and the social discourse against the overdetermining and exploitative presence of imperialist institutions. The question of whether there is another way of writing this history is seemingly central to George Roberts’s work. His main point is to take into account what he calls the “transnational” and “international” political developments to assess the very specific political history of Dar es Salaam. The question nevertheless remains as to whether this is sufficient to constitute writing of history in another way.

Roberts’s *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974* is a richly researched text that presumably moves with the current of reorienting history-writing away from “national” while still preserving the “local.” Seemingly the move away from “nationalistic” histories to local histories is a turn away from a political discourse that is relegated to a particular time to a situated discourse...
that takes into account the specificity of time and space through the “entanglements” woven into it from the “outside.” Roberts does so by reconstituting nationalist discourses that focused on institutional structures and the underpinnings of systemic inequality in order to produce a discourse of revolutionary statemaking. This reconstitution is twofold. First, it involves disentangling key moments that made up the “revolutionary” discourse. Roberts is not necessarily reinventing the wheel, but just reassembling parts, and, secondly, analyzing those moments as part of a larger fabric of political influence of Cold War ideologies and rivalries and liberation movements in Southern Africa in particular. The theoretical framework that brings together this narrative and the different historical moments remains quite unclear throughout the text. The result is a narrative that relies heavily on individual political actors, their predilections, and their positioning in the local structures of politics and in reference to foreign political climates.

As informative and well researched as this text is, the question this reader is left with is whether such an approach, in the final instance, narrows political thought to individual actors who are driven and motivated by self-interest and foreign propaganda. Does this illuminate discourse and give us an alternative historiography or simply leave us at the level of realpolitik? If it is the latter, then Roberts’s theory of individual agency runs the danger at times of being reduced to conspiracies and connivances, intrigues, political back stabbing, rumour mongering, and propaganda. It does not include an analysis of intellectual and political discourses in the radical landscape of Dar es Salaam, during the most militant period (1961–1974) which produced a historical document like the Arusha Declaration and a militant statement like Mwongozo, which became the harbinger of the most intense working class struggles that the country has seen. Roberts’s stated aim in the text is to move away from nationalistic histories by resituating Tanzania within larger global politics, rather than nationalistic histories, hence reorienting global histories from the perspective of the global South. Nonetheless, without paying sufficient attention to the intricacies of discourse production locally, where building the nation and structuring the state was the central concern, the contentions within the local political sphere seem puppeteered by foreign concerns.

Roberts does not miss a step in the key moments of “revolutionary” statemaking in Tanzania (written through the city of Dar es Salaam) that any reader with a familiarity of the country would immediately recognise. The socialist discourse in relation to global politics, the Pan African solidarities, the formation of a strong political party as an instrument of the state and a central figure of authority that seemingly held it all together are all there. Roberts primarily situates the city of Dar es Salaam within larger Cold War politics and the liberation movements in order to derive the deep political contentions that existed within the political sphere in Tanzania. Each chapter heavily focuses on the numerous contentions that existed between individual politicians involved in the state apparatus. The cause of these contentions is largely based on the position that individual politicians held in relation to the myriad of external influences whether through Cold War politics, Maoism and Chinese influence, and larger Marxist debates. However, with such great attention paid to the rift between these politicians, one wonders what the substance of the actual intellectual discourse was. Were political actors simply responding to external “propaganda” (178)? Were they simply acting and performing in a public sphere rife with “rumours” (57)? Were they simply driven by crass self-interest? For instance, the disagreement in political approach and ideology between President Julius Nyerere and Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu, a Minister in Nyerere’s cabinet, was centered upon the strategy of achieving a socialist revolution, whether through industrialization (Babu) or agricultural reform (Nyerere) (240). The discord between Oscar Kambona, the first Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tanganyika, and Julius Nyerere similarly is on the intensity of the path towards socialism (73). Much of it does not take place within Roberts’s landscape as substantive debate giving rise to an intellectual discourse, but instead is conspiratorial and confined to individual actors.

Roberts does not analyze the writings and speeches of these debates, focusing instead on the actions of politicians who acted against each other while working under “external” influence. This is clear in his comments on the Arusha Declaration, where he writes, “These developments [in regard to the context of the Arusha declaration] have been understood in earlier political science literature through institutional structures
or the forces of class struggle. This chapter restores the agency of individual politicians to the contested politics in Arusha” (67). Who is this individual to whom agency is restored: a thinking individual or a Machiavellian politician? The notion of individual agency in political debate is commendable. However, what are the larger implications of this in developing a theory of the state? What were these politicians responding to domestically outside of conspiratorial politics and foreign propaganda? Chapter 2, by way of example, relies heavily on the context of the Arusha Declaration and the various contending voices from the perspective of individual politicians with varying interests, but does not fully engage with the intellectual discourse of these political actors as thinkers, theorizing the role of the state in relation to the economic realities and visions. In fact, Roberts argues, “Tanzanian politics at the time of njamoa was not so much of alternative ideological visions of the future but about speed, means and intensity of the journey” (77). This rendering of contentions on Ujamaa as simply differences in speed is trivializing of Tanzanian politics at the time. This conceptualization that focuses simply on the speed and intensity of the journey misses the debates and the polemic involved in the creation of a movement even if it is state led. This may well involve alternative ideological visions, contrary to what Roberts offers, even if they were not captured in “left” and “right” factional politics. While unfolding of the debates is discussed in the chapter, less attention is paid to the actual content of the debates and more to the context and influencing factors of the individual contentions.

According to Roberts the “influencing” ideology came from Cold War politics and the global political developments of the 1960s. Roberts discusses these developments in great detail in his first chapter on the making of Dar es Salaam as a Cold War city, in the third chapter on the position Nyerere took on the GDR and West Germany), and in the fifth chapter on the diverging responses to Vietnam and Czechoslovakia and global anti-imperialist movements. The grounding of these ideas and influences is often analyzed, by Roberts, as propaganda, and the response to it as pragmatic, with little room to understand the intellectual robustness of how these ideas were adopted. Perhaps the material that would have necessitated an engagement of the robust intellectual debate would have required a stronger focus on Pan African solidarities and student movements outside the party and the TANU Youth League. To the credit of Roberts, he does detail the space held by liberation movements in Southern Africa particularly the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) and its president Eduardo Mondlane (chapter 4), but he discusses them as transnational connections in flux, or “mobility” as he calls it (introduction). He does not think of them as Pan Africanist solidarities which may have afforded him greater room to discuss the ideological and intellectual debates surrounding these alliances. A Pan Africanist lens could have additionally shed light on the Tanganyika and Zanzibar Union of 1964. While his argument is quite thorough on the circumstances of the union, it does not fully engage with the intellectual rhetoric that accompanied it within the larger debate of rethinking continental unity. Undoubtedly these intellectual debates whether they came in the form of dissent or discourse were held with real politics in mind and the preservation of the state of independence, but they do nonetheless deserve deeper insight into the development of political thought and thinkers during this time.

There is an underlying assumption that is only stated explicitly in chapter 1, but is maintained throughout the text, that the “information ecology” represented the competing “ideological and geopolitical agendas” leaving “Tanzanian voices struggling to be heard through the welter of propaganda issued by foreign powers” (55). Coupled with foreign propaganda, the authoritative figure of Julius Nyerere both as an individual and politician and the consistent conspiratorial dissent against his authority made Dar es Salaam rife with rumors and gossip. The culmination of foreign propaganda and local conspiratorial politics, drowned out “Tanzanian voices” according to Roberts. The dichotomy that is implicitly suggested between an authenticity of voices and the instrumentalization of ideas is perhaps a false binary. The work sometimes diverges from the central thesis which is the “making” of a revolutionary state which must have involved rigorous intellectual discourse in the public sphere, not just an adaptation of foreign “propaganda” but an interaction with global ideologies in an attempt to theorize the formation of nation.
Chapter 7 on the *Mwongozo* is illuminating. In line with the critique above, *Mwongozo* was couched within fragmented local politics and crisis and the larger international imperialist offensive. Roberts’ approaches his discussion of *Mwongozo* in a pragmatic fashion, an attempt in theory to revive the socialist revolution but in reality, to consolidate the party as one with the state. Roberts alludes in this chapter to intellectual and ideological influence from Marxist discourse, such as the question of the Vanguard party but argues that the discourse of vanguardism was used vulgarly with “little precision” to mask “a more militant TANU” (258). The pragmatism of politics overshadows the potential to explore the intellectual thought and adaptation of conceptual framings within the context of Tanzania. While a few paragraphs are offered by way of critique of the vanguardist line of *Mwongozo*, from Nyerere himself who remained sceptical and from foreigners, very little is said of the intellectual inclinations and influence of some of the architects of *Mwongozo* such as Ngombale Mwiru. Discussion of *Mwongozo* in this chapter overarches and gives prominent voice to the critiques of *Mwongozo*, particularly to the economic critiques, such as by Derek Bryceson, Amir Jamal, and Paul Bomani to extrapolate the contention between economic pragmatism and political discourse. While politically *Mwongozo* may have been the party line, Nyerere was carefully treading economic agreements that could not be broken between the moderates of the party and foreign aid, Roberts concludes. The conclusion seems to point heavily towards *Mwongozo* being yet another instrumentalist tool that masked realpolitik in the form of pragmatic economic necessities.

The transnational and international context of the political moments in the genealogy of statemaking in Tanzania are central to Roberts’s contribution. They provide useful insights into thinking of specific instances within global histories that depart from the west as the epicentre for such junctures. Yet the emphasis on conspiracy and propaganda and the role of foreign influence in Tanzania tends to divert the focus on the actual engagement that Tanzanians had with trends of intellectual discourse within and outside the continent. While one has to agree that the political history of Tanzania must move beyond the history of Julius Nyerere, an overemphasis on context takes away from the crux of the issue: ideological diversity and an intellectual genealogy behind statemaking.

Roberts has succeeded in weaving together various archives to create an array of “registers” to draw upon in rethinking Tanzania’s political history. Relocating this history beyond Tanzania is not novel in of itself; rather, the connection between domestic political contention interwoven with global divergences provides room for a new set of questions. These questions, however, create their own limitations at the onset of their being asked, the most troublesome of which is that despite the rigor of debate in the city of Dar es Salaam, it is not clear: is it always influenced and playing into foreign discourse and crisis? In focusing on some of these questions, the success of the book is undeniably in the meticulous research in diverse archives that Roberts uses to bring these questions to the fore in the first place. Despite this, his methodological approach in engaging with political actors as individual agents is problematic in that political actors tend to be reduced to conspiratorial individuals overdetermined by rumor and propaganda rather than by discourse and intellectual creativity.


Review by Lydia Walker, The Ohio State University

*Revolutionary State-making in Dar es Salaam* by George Roberts places the city of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania at the center of anticolonial nationalist movements and global Cold War politics. Words used to describe Dar es Salaam during the second half of the twentieth century often attempt to capture a particular, potentially illusory, affective sensibility that swirled around the city—from the “Dar scene” to the city’s “revolutionary vibe” (1), from the city as a site of postcolonial modernist cultural transformation to its vibrant newspapers and entrepreneurial classes articulating and debating what the postcolonial nation-state could or should be.1 Drawing upon the interventions of urban and cultural histories of colonial and decolonizing port cities,2 Roberts demonstrates the transnational breadth of the “Dar scene” as the city and its environs became a nexus for anticolonial nationalist liberation movements as well as international intelligence gathering efforts on their activities. He depicts an urban landscape of “spies, guerrillas, secret papers, [and] rumour” where the “conspiratorial tropes of the Cold War and anticolonial [nationalist liberation] suffused” with both the experience of living in the city itself and the aesthetic dimension of the city’s cultural and political portrayal (273).

This is a richly researched transnational political history of African anticolonial nationalism, which will be of considerable interest to scholars of decolonization, East Africa, the global Cold War, and anticolonial nationalist liberation movements. If I could probe Roberts’s scholarship further, it would be to highlight the potential ramifications of using the city as a unit of analysis in the international history of decolonization—not simply as a hub or nexus—but as an analytic of, but not analogous to, the state.3 Cities, particularly capitals, are often metonyms for their state’s government. Washington, D.C., for the United States, New Delhi for India, etc. In *Revolutionary State-making*, Roberts uses Dar es Salaam as a metonym for transregional anticolonial nationalism as well as Tanzanian statemaking. What does the relationship between these two different formulations of Dar es Salaam offer to further study of the international history of decolonization? Disaggregating a revolutionary city from its postcolonial state has the potential to rearrange scales of space (urban, national, regional, international) and politics (in this context, colonial, anticolonial, postcolonial, and Cold War) in the international history of decolonization. Roberts’s work crafts a history that is of a city, of a state, of a set of nationalist movements that surrounded and moved through the city, and of the global geopolitical process of the Cold War that often framed how their actions were understood to international audiences.

To address the urban, national, and international scales of analysis, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam* has a multi-national archival base, including archival research from fifteen countries, four on the African continent. In his introduction, Roberts nicely grounds the limits and opportunities he encountered in researching anticolonial nationalist movements and postcolonial state-building in Sub-Saharan African national archives, how he utilized international archives to work around these challenges, and is transparent about the need to problematize the potential adoption of the Eurocentric lens of many of these sources. Chapters adopt different perspectives of the intertwined layers of geopolitics emanating from and in-circling the city, including that of the Cold War context, the Tanzanian state-building of the 1967 Arusaha Declaration’s African socialism, the political-economic centralization of early 1970s Mwongaze guidelines,

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arrested decolonization in Southern Africa, and the student protests of global 1968 as they featured in Dar es Salaam.

In particular, “Chapter 6: Decolonising the Media,” stands out for Roberts’s critical transparency in his use of newspapers as source material and how the newspapers, their editors and writers, participated in events. This chapter articulates the relationship between public and private information, as it relates to source base, methodology, theme, and challenge for political historians of the Cold War and postcolonial statemaking. For Roberts, the boundaries defined by official secrecy are not simply (or even mostly) walls that constrain research. They are important features of daily life in Dar es Salaam for those supporting and resisting processes of Tanzanian statemaking and Southern African national liberation. In this respect, Roberts’ depiction of the work, politics, and personality of Frene Ginwala—the African National Congress leader who established the ANC’s exile office in Dar es Salaam and edited the English-language newspaper the *Standard* after it was nationalized in 1970—deserves attention. As Roberts notes, the appointment of Ginwala as managing editor the *Standard* was a surprising move due to her “mixed history with Tanzanian authorities,” and the fact that she was, as “an Asian in a position of authority,” “in her own ‘an identikit picture of who should NOT be the editor’” of a Tanzanian newspaper during nationalization (225). Ginwala is a fascinating figure who is worthy of more consideration than she has received so far in the international history of decolonization. Roberts’s treatment of her work is a welcome intervention.

When reading a book based upon significant global research, it is hard not to think about how the COVID-19 environment has since re-shaped the conditions for carrying out such work. Do the modes of scholarship represented in works such as this one open new paradigms of research in the international history of decolonization, or represent a high-water mark? In addition, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam* ends when a new chapter of global interaction begins, that of China in Tanzania, and more broadly, Chinese engagement with African and African-American economic investment and political liberation projects. Fortunately, forthcoming work by Keisha A. Brown, Roudi Duan, Liang Xu and others are developing international histories of African, Chinese, and African-American exchange and contestation that promise to open further avenues of inquiry into regional, transnational, and international histories of decolonization and the Global Cold War.4

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I am grateful to Jeffrey S. Ahlman, Monique Bedasse, Salvatory S. Nyanto, Natasha I. Shivji, and Lydia Walker for taking their time to engage with my book in such generous fashion. I would also like to thank James Giblin for his introductory remarks, as well as to H-Diplo team for making this conversation possible.

**Response by George Roberts, University of Sheffield**

**Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam** is an attempt to better understand the dynamics of political life in a city which was suddenly propelled to struggles over the future of a world after empire. Explaining why Dar es Salaam emerged as this revolutionary capital was relatively straightforward: it is the product of a geography that set Tanzania on the frontline of the struggle against white minority rule, a remarkably principled internationalist foreign policy, and regional conflagrations that assumed Cold War overtones. Explaining how the city’s politics shaped liberation struggles, the global Cold War, and Tanzanian attempts to build a non-aligned, African socialist state, was a more difficult prospect. No book could ever capture this world in its entirety. The chapters are therefore designed as expressions of overlapping stories and dynamics, brought together in an urban setting. Moving beyond the typical analytical containers of states, governments, and liberation movements, the book foregrounds the role of a diverse cast of elite individuals as driving this revolutionary scene. These include not only politicians and guerrilla leaders, but less prominent youth activists, journalists, students, bureaucrats, diplomats, and intelligence agents. Through this multifaceted history, the book argues that Tanzania’s bold stance towards anticolonialism paradoxically created the circumstances which foreclosed political freedoms at home.

As I write in the introduction, Tanzania’s socialist project—*ujamaa*—was “among the most ambitious of the Third World’s response to the challenges of decolonisation” (11). In her thoughtful review, Natasha Shivji asks whether the book’s focus on the cut-and-thrust of politics overlooks the rich intellectual debates about socialism and liberation that underpinned Dar es Salaam’s reputation as a revolutionary capital. Recent work has taken important steps in resurrecting the diverse visions of anticolonial intellectuals in imagining a new world after empire. Explaining why these ideas remain unrealized and why emancipatory, outward-looking futures became authoritarian, inward-looking presents requires paying attention to the context in which these developments played out on the ground. To foreground personal rivalries, clashes over policy decisions, international connections, or the even protection of private capital assets is not to diminish the intellectual work of decolonization, but helps us to understand how and why these ideological projects came—or did not come—into being. I think she also misrepresents the book’s argument regarding the influence of Cold War and other geopolitical factors on Dar es Salaam’s revolutionary scene. Certainly at no point do I suggest, as she writes, that “contentions within the local public sphere seem [to have been] puppeteered by foreign concerns”—in fact, quite the opposite, as the book stresses the limited ability of foreign powers to shape Dar es Salaam’s politics and the negative consequences of their sometimes clumsy attempts to do so.

The story of A.M. Babu, a recurrent figure in the book, offers a case in point here. Although Babu’s role in the Zanzibar Revolution is well known, his subsequent role in mainland politics following the union with Tanganyika is less understood. In contrast to the caricature drawn by Western diplomats and journalists that

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Babu was an extremist revolutionary with close links to China, the book demonstrates that he was an important voice within the contested ideological terrain of politics in the 
jamia era. While one of the architects of TANU’s militant Mwongozi (“Guidelines”) in 1971, Babu also opposed several government interventions, such as the nationalization of wholesale trade, on the grounds that they risked overstretching the state’s capacity and ultimately undermining the prospects of socialism. This mixture of revolution and caution represented the translation of his own cosmopolitan intellectual formation into a political economy adapted to time and circumstance. It also created friction with Nyerere. Yet his defenestration from cabinet and then incarceration in 1972, as the book argues, were rooted in developments in Zanzibar which culminated with the assassination of the island’s president. Babu’s intellectual contribution as a pan-African and Marxist thinker is not in dispute here, but the impact of this work only makes sense when contextualized within this complex political landscape.  

Piecing back together this landscape remains a challenge, however. Monique Bedasse rightly notes that some of the questions at the core of the book remain “difficult to answer without greater access to papers documenting the thoughts and deliberations of Tanzanian government officials.” While the book does make use of Tanzanian archival material, it is true that this is thin on the ground. Even when triangulated and treated with rigour, foreign diplomatic archives represent no substitute. The problem of reproducing external worldviews and obscuring local perspectives has been well appreciated by historians. Over time, I became concerned by another blindspot. Although these foreign diplomatic archives provided important insights into the actions and motives of Tanzanians and other Africans, they continued to foreground state actors. The encounters with local elites which Americans or East Germans reported in their dispatches home were largely interactions with government ministers and bureaucrats, as opposed to, say, senior figures in the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). Access to TANU’s archives remains difficult, though certainly not impossible. For a book whose narrative backbone rests on the growing power of a party-state, the party itself remains something of an elephant in the room. The myriad relationships that took place outside formal political spheres also leave little by way of an archival record. Another challenge remains the problem of tracing the movement of capital in these relationships: how did the politics of patronage, private business interests, and petty financial transactions shape a revolutionary scene? 

Lydia Walker raises the broader question of the ramifications of adopting the city as a geographical space of inquiry. She asks how it might be used as “an analytic of, but not analogous too, the state.” Jeffrey Ahlman, too, suggests that there is much to be gained by anchoring global liberation struggles in a concrete urban environment. Again, the archives shape and limit the possibilities of research here. While historians of metropolitan capitals have dug deep into police reports to reconstruct anticolonial urban geographies, the absence of a similar source base prevented a systematic inquiry into the politics of Dar es Salaam’s bars, cafés, hotels, and embassy receptions. I was keen to avoid recourse to a vaguer language of space and place, hubs and nexuses, which seemed more descriptive than helpfully explanatory. Comings-and-goings between

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5 For an important account of the role of private capital networks in Dar es Salaam, see Chambé Chachage, “A Capitalizing City: Dar es Salaam and the Emergence of an Entrepreneurial Elite (c.1862–2015),” Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 2018).

locations like the New Zahir Restaurant, the Kilimanjaro Hotel, the Communist embassies on “Red Boulevard,” and the liberation movement offices on Nkrumah Street are therefore deployed here to remind us of the importance of situated day-to-day political encounters beyond the abstractions of states and institutions.

One aspect in which the city does prove useful is by drawing attention to how circuits of information shaped political life in decolonizing cities. This is spelt out most explicitly in the chapter which explores Dar es Salaam’s newspaper scene, but it runs throughout the strands of the book. I like Walker’s comment that “the boundaries defined by official secrecy are not simply (or even mostly) walls that constrain research,” but were rather constitutive of Dar es Salaam’s politics itself. Politicians, journalists, revolutionaries, students, and anonymous pamphleteers advanced competing narratives and explanations through the circulation of texts. Ministers and diplomats sought to “fix” these accounts through issuing official statements, while the more ephemeral genre of rumour undermined them. Shivji suggests that the book’s protagonists emerge as “conspiratorial individuals overdetermined by rumour and propaganda.” But the archive reveals how individuals themselves, in print and in speech, and in public and in private, were preoccupied by the potential of information as either threats or assets. “Rumourville”—President Julius Nyerere’s moniker for Dar es Salaam—stuck for a reason. The Tanzanian press did routinely decry “foreign propaganda.” At the same time, they also extolled the power of information in guiding Tanzania’s socialist revolution. As Salvatory Nyanto observes, students took inspiration from radical texts from abroad when crafting their own theoretical interventions. Again, the boundaries between the loftier intellectual dimensions of decolonization and the everyday fabric of political life when situated within Dar es Salaam’s public sphere.

The themes raised in the book continue to echo in today’s Tanzania. The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war has led to fresh interest in the idea of non-alignment, as politicians grapple with adapting a concept born out of the Cold War for a quite different world. The commemoration of anticolonial struggles has assumed an important historical role in sustaining legitimacy of governments across Southern Africa, including by the conversion of the former headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity’s Liberation Committee into a museum. Dar es Salaam’s revolutionary era thus remains as relevant as ever, and there is much more to be written about it—and, as the contributors to this roundtable have shown, debated. In keeping these conversations going, I am happy to share the news that a print edition of my book for the Africa region is forthcoming with Mkuki na Nyota Publishers in Tanzania.

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Ismay Milford makes a similar perceptive point about information secrecy in her review of the book in *Cold War History*, 22 (2022), 380–382.