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Africa and its 'Outsiders': Nationalism, Race, and the Problem of the Indian Diaspora in African History

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Contents

Acronyms	03
Resume	04
Introduction	05
Historical Background: The Indian Diaspora in East Africa	07
The ‘Problem’ of the Indian Diaspora in African History	10
Between Nation and Diaspora: Constructing Race in the Social Space of Tanzanian Schools	12
Conclusion	19
Endnotes and References	20

Acronyms

TANU

Tanganyika African National Union

SRSS

Shaabans Robert Secondary School

Resume

Ned Bertz is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Hawai'i. He teaches classes about the history of South Asia, Africa, the Indian Ocean world, and historiography, among other offerings. Seeking to bridge area studies approaches and write about exchanges between South Asia and East Africa, Dr. Bertz has spent more than five years conducting fieldwork in India and Tanzania in preparation for finishing his book considering issues of race, nationalism, and Diaspora in the history of the Indian Ocean world. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Iowa, and his 2008 dissertation forms the basis of this book manuscript. His next project is a transnational history of the Partition of India, focusing on the Indian Ocean world.

Introduction

This paper attempts to reassess the role and place of South Asian immigrants in East African history and historiography. It seeks to accomplish this task by repositioning the ideas of nation and diaspora through a close examination of everyday histories of encounters between ‘Indians’ and ‘Africans’ framed within the Indian Ocean world. As we shall see, these interactions have invoked controversies concerning race, nationalism, and diaspora in Tanzania, in particular, which hold significance for African and South Asian history as a whole. But first, it is important to center the lives of people as we craft academic models, so let us open with two very different ‘indigenous’ perspectives on the history of Indians in East Africa to illustrate the ‘problem’ of Africa and its ‘outsiders.’

The first account is comprised of extracts from a 1971 poem written by a Kenyan Indian, a diasporic ‘outsider’ in a new African nation, who felt pressured by the racialized debate over post-independence citizenship that raged in all three East African countries, especially Idi Amin’s Uganda:

the past has boiled itself over/ and we are the steam that must flee...

the past has boiled itself over/ and we are the steam that must
flee...

i shall summon you therefore, ancestral spirits of my race,/ on this
great issue of citizenship,
and you must plead before the minister/ for being born so brown...

smile away the hurt of their unfriendly frown/ for the sweat is dry/
that built the railways,
and black blood must forget/ swamp sleeping savagery of
greenness/ that burst into an indian bazaar,
because the time and tide/ and the valour of your business mind
condemned the brown jew/ to comb his days in commerce and
trade...

farewell my dear beloved illusions,/ for i, too, would have liked to
think

only the toes of Africa were infected/ but the cancer of colour/ has
gathered fresh victims now...

and soon we shall be flying, unwelcome vultures all over the
world,
only to unsheathe fresh wrath/ each time we land.

we are the green leaves/ that must sprout no more,/ for the roots
have thrived
on black silence/ and the false kindness of the white race.

waste no ceremony/ for the unintentionally corrupted;
lead the ram to altar and wash away the sins of history.²

The second account, portraying an African nationalist perspective of the history of race and diaspora in the region, is a powerful letter sent to a Dar es Salaam newspaper during the twilight of colonialism. It was entitled “Who is a Tanganyikan?”, and signed by “One Who Wants to Know”:

[A]s there is no citizenship law in Tanganyika it is difficult to know who is a Tanganyikan. But it is also easy for people who come from far away to call themselves Tanganyikans... Let us ask them two or three questions: do they renounce their original citizenships?... Do they refuse to send their children to schools which do not accept African children? Have they troubled to learn Swahili? How many of them call themselves Tanganyikans when they go to their homes abroad? Tanganyikan Africans have no choice: they can only be Tanganyikans. It is difficult to agree to call the foreigners Tanganyikans until they have shown that they love and honour this country and have identified themselves with it entirely for good or ill. In the past the foreigners have done nothing to encourage the Tanganyikans and to assure them of their being at one with them. It is necessary that Tanganyika Africans should be given precedence because they are behind in education, in civilization, and in money-earning power and business. When all are equal then no preference will be given to anyone and all will travel in the same boat.³

Historical Background: The Indian Diaspora in East Africa

We will come back to these two evocative and competing perspectives on the presence of Indians in East Africa after a brief survey of part of this history. Prior to the twentieth century, trade links were vigorous between western India, especially Gujarat, and the Swahili coast. One element of commonality in this maritime region had historical roots in the major Indian cloth industry of urban Gujarat, supplied by cotton grown in the black soil belts of the Gujarati heartland. Michael Pearson tells us that “the vast bulk of the inhabitants of the Indian Ocean area in [the early modern period between 1500 and 1800] wore Indian cottons.” This trade continued into the British colonial period in South Asia, and in the second half of the nineteenth century East Africa was a growing export market for Gujarati textiles produced in the cities of Bharuch, Surat, Ahmedabad, and Baroda. In exchange for cloth, India imported primarily ivory and slaves from East Africa. In 1856-7, India received 23 percent of all East African exports, while goods from India comprised 17 percent of East African imports. India’s share in the East African trade rose to 44 percent of total exports and 40 percent of total imports by 1886-7, with the merchandise still dominated by Gujarati cloth being exchanged for ivory and now cloves from East Africa. At the turn of the twentieth century, aided by the development of railroads and industry, Gujaratis shipped finished textiles to the trading ports of the Swahili coast, building on the activities of their ancestors who had produced the hand-spun cloth popular in the early modern period across the Indian Ocean world.

In the 1880s, Germany began the colonization of the area that today comprises mainland Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi, calling it German East Africa. After their defeat in the First World War, the Germans relinquished control of their African colonies to League of Nations’ Mandates. The portions that now form Rwanda and Burundi were split off of German East Africa, and Britain established an administration under one Mandate to govern the rest, naming it Tanganyika Territory. While there are scattered reports of Indians living in East Africa for the better part of the Common Era, larger communities did not form in colonial Tanganyika until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The specific reasons behind the dramatic increase in emigrants moving from western India to eastern Africa at this

time are not well documented in the historiography of East Africa or India. Most accounts suggest that trade opportunities in East Africa- created by favorable economic and political circumstances- pulled Indian migrants, while they were also pushed to emigrate by economic depressions in Gujarat caused by repeated epidemics, droughts, and famines. Gujarati traders and other Indian migrants to East Africa later brought their wives and families, including extended kin. South Asians continued to immigrate to Tanganyika and Zanzibar throughout the first half of the twentieth century, numbering about 112,000 at independence in 1961. Gujaratis today likely comprise roughly 80 per cent of the total Indian population in Tanzania. In Dar es Salaam, the colonial administrative and commercial capital, the total city population reached 25,000 residents in 1931, 4000 of whom were Indians. In 1924, the colonial government created three racial zones across the city, drawing on patterns of segregation devised by the Germans when they started to build up their new colonial capital. The colonial planners rooted the division of urban space in their understandings of biologically determined levels of civilizational capacity and achievement, as defined by three monolithic categories of race: European, Indian, and African. The European area (Zone I) hosted government offices and comfortable residences. Zone II consisted of the busy commercial center, the location of the majority of Indian homes and businesses. Beyond a sanitation buffer zone of one hundred yards, Africans' Zone III sprawled westwards through the dense planned neighborhood of Kariakoo. Dar es Salaam at independence had 160,000 residents, including about 30,000 Indians. The effects of the colonial-era physical separation of urban space lingered beyond independence, however, continuing to give visceral meaning to ideas of race in the daily lives of city residents.

During the post-World War I period in Tanganyika, the British extended privileges to Indians that they denied to Africans. The Indian economic advantage caused friction with the African population, especially in the years immediately preceding and following independence, a time that witnessed an acrimonious debate over citizenship. African nationalism contained many shades, including some aspects which were permeated from inception by popular if not official racialism. Politically, the ruling party Tanganyika African National Union's (TANU) doctrine of non-racial nationalism dominated, including in the Arusha Declaration in 1967, when President Julius Nyerere officially declared the goal

of building a socialist Tanzania. Soon thereafter, the government implemented a policy of 'Africanization' in the civil service, and nationalized select industries and properties, including urban rental properties with the Acquisition of Buildings Act of 1971. A massive exodus from Tanzania of over 40,000 Indians followed. By the late 1970s only about 25,000 Indians still lived in Dar es Salaam, a small portion of an exploding city population of three quarters of a million. Many of those South Asians who remained in Tanzania flourished through under-the-table 'unsocialist' transactions, including smuggling and bribery of government officials. By the middle of the 1980s, Tanzania, like many other African countries, was in an economic free fall, prompting the liberalization of its economy in exchange for desperately needed foreign loans. Since the socialist policies generally had not affected Indians' economic prosperity, they were in excellent position to take advantage of liberalization by putting their capital toward international trade. Once seen as economic saboteurs of the socialist nation, Indians became 'rehabilitated' and grew wealthier as the African poor bore the brunt of the liberalization reforms. As a result, especially after the one-party state gave way to multi-party politics in the mid-1990s, political rhetoric by oppositional African politicians contained a strong anti-Indian sentiment, a situation that continues occasionally today. Indians comprised a tiny minority by the turn of the century, likely numbering about 30,000 out of a city total of over three million in Dar es Salaam.

The ‘Problem’ of the Indian Diaspora in African History

Almost unwittingly, historians have replicated the nationalist and diasporist positions on the history of Indians in East Africa represented above by Jagjit Singh’s poem and the letter by “One Who Wants to Know,” in part due to the division of the academic discipline into areas of specialization based on national and continental geography. In fact, the writing of history itself has reinforced these two ‘indigenous’ positions, most notably by placing their perspectives inside or outside of national or diasporic community narratives. Amitav Ghosh’s lyrical book *In an Antique Land* illustrates this process very poignantly. Ghosh, an anthropologist and novelist, concretely realizes the historian’s limited power over embedded narratives and established structures of knowledge during a return visit to Egypt, the country of his doctoral fieldwork. Sparking his epiphany was a struggle to explain to an Egyptian government official why he, a Hindu Indian, wanted to visit the tomb of Sidi Abu-Hasira, a nineteenth-century Jew who had converted and become an Islamic holy man. Ghosh muses,

But then it struck me, suddenly, that there was nothing I could point to within his world that might give credence to my story—the remains of those small, indistinguishable, intertwined histories, Indian and Egyptian, Muslim and Jewish, Hindu and Muslim, had been partitioned long ago... It was then that I began to realize how much success the partitioning of the past had achieved; that I was sitting at that desk now because the mowlid of Sidi Abu-Hasira was an anomaly within the categories of knowledge represented by those divisions. I had been caught straddling a border, unaware that the writing of History had predicated its own self-fulfilment.

In a similar way, scholars have divided the histories of Africans and Indians into separate academic worlds, overlooking their historical connections across the Indian Ocean world. The use of an Indian Ocean frame— even if only capturing the movement of peoples, products, and ideas through fixed social spaces, as in this paper— can reveal overlapping processes and underlining themes that commonly structure the lives of Indians and Africans. Despite a scholarly literature dominated by paradigms measuring segregation versus integration (or assimilation), I argue that an interaction of public discourses about race historically shaped (often transnational) social spaces in urban Tanzania. In turn, these exchanges over urban spaces have played a major role in colonial and post-colonial

Tanzania, including in the construction and negotiation of colonialism, nationalism, socialism, liberalization, and globalization. It is also important to recognize that this history cannot be confined within states, whether national or colonial: Tanzanian society overflowed its borders, and must be viewed within a long history of cosmopolitan connections throughout the Indian Ocean world.

However, the current scholarly dialectic pitting nation and diaspora in opposition obscures an Indian Ocean frame. Historical precedents instead depict that when Diasporas encountered nations; the resulting collision lingered and haunted memory. So it might seem in present-day Tanzania, where politicians' cries for 'indigenization'- the redistribution of economic resources to Africans from Tanzanians of Indian descent- echo those for 'Africanization' heard in the high nationalist period of the 1950s and '60s. Nonetheless, the historical context of these conflicts was more complex than standard depictions portraying strict social segregation and the intrinsically opposed interests of European colonialists, African nationalists, and immigrants of the Indian diaspora. Instead, diverse African, Indian, and European voices all contributed to the creation of racial categories that came to structure city spaces as well as race relations. Repeatedly throughout this historical encounter (although beyond the scope of this paper), the Indian diaspora proved to be a loose category that failed to contain variant opinions on the links between race, urban space, and nationalism. Similar to the theoretical weakness of diaspora as an explanatory concept, nationalism- despite its enormous impact on people's lives, and its centrality in national narratives- equally fails to provide an academic approach that explains the historical relationship between ideas of race and place. The rest of this essay details a tentative attempt to move beyond national histories and diasporist analyses to demonstrate how to situate better the complex historical encounter between immigrant communities and a nation.

Between Nation and Diaspora: Constructing Race in the Social Space of Tanzanian Schools

Education was critically positioned in both the fashioning of a European colonial state in Tanganyika and the imagination and construction of a new African nation in Tanzania. Colonial governments used education to create categories of difference, and in response anti-colonial nationalists used the discourse of race to imagine an independent nation. Schools were also important city spaces where individual actors and communities in colonial Tanganyika encountered racialized boundaries established by the government. As urban schools became racialized public spaces, disparities in funding and curricula led to educational inequities, and deepened understandings of racial difference. Indian and African groups challenged elements of colonial education practices, but in doing so they had to largely work through the political categories established by the government. Nonetheless, these debates over education involved interactions between otherwise segregated groups of Africans, Indians, and Europeans. Certain Indian organizations in particular contributed to the maintenance of separate systems of education through political struggles to retain or expand their communities' educational privileges. Through these actions, the initially deeply divided Indian communities started to form a more coherent diasporic political identity, partially enhanced through Indian Ocean transnational connections such as the importation of teachers from India. From the 1920s to the early 1950s, shifting ideas about race permeated urban schools, creating lasting educational inequalities that helped to ensure the perpetuation of racialized discourses into independent Tanzania. This section seeks to show how diaspora and nation were not pre-formed entities which collided due to inherently opposed interests, but instead were formed through interactions between diverse communities and the state, encounters which also often revealed fissures within groups' political and social identities.

In 1927, the British concretized a tripartite educational system with separate "Committees on Education" for Europeans, Indians, and Africans; funding, however, was quite unequal between groups, in per capita terms. In separating the races and ruling them differently, the colonial government heightened racial consciousness and ensured that racialized rhetoric

would occur in opposition to their rule. Thus, despite living in towns with significant racial diversity, Tanganyikans had almost no opportunity to attend multi-racial schools. Their stories demonstrate how colonial education helped to racialize urban schools and create social differences, and how individual actors experienced and understood these processes. For example, Mr. B. K. Tanna, a Hindu Indian, was born in 1941 in Chunya, a small village located near the gold mines of southwestern Tanganyika. Chunya's population at that time consisted of 1175 Africans, 121 Indians, 45 Europeans, 14 Arabs, five "coloureds," and two "others." However, Tanna's primary school mates in the late 1940s consisted of 20-30 Indians, with all six standards taught together in a single room. The Ismaili community ran the school, the only Indian one in town, and the language of instruction was Gujarati. The biggest social division in his childhood world, Mr. Tanna remembers, was not Indian-African but rather between Hindus and Muslims of South Asian descent, especially after the Partition of India in 1947. He explained that every night, all the Hindus used to meet in the evening to pray and chat, while the Muslim Indians gathered together elsewhere. The more numerous Ismailis bullied the Hindu children, and, after Partition, both communities annually celebrated their loyalty to either Pakistan or India on their respective and adjacent independence days, August 14 and August 15. Nonetheless, "everyone cried the day Gandhi was shot" after the one radio in the village spread the sad news in 1948. These anecdotes demonstrate the power of transnational connections across the Indian Ocean to affect South Asians living deep in rural Tanganyika, and these networks also influenced the structures of colony-wide education: Mr. Tanna's textbooks all came from India, and they spoke of that country as "Mother India." As a result, Tanna says, "India was my home, our country. I think at that time the way I grew up [our assumption] was that one day we would have to leave Africa and go to India." As it turned out, Mr. Tanna did not see India until quite late in his life. Things changed for Tanna in 1951 when, at the age of ten, his family sent him to Dar es Salaam for secondary school. He remembers that when a European school opened in 1954 or '55 in Iringa, a larger town near to his father's shop, Mr. Tanna asked him, "Why must I live in Dar es Salaam when there is a school here? And the answer obviously was, 'It's not for us.'" Instead, he was enrolled at the Government Indian Secondary School in Dar es Salaam. He stayed in a boarding house for upcountry members of his specific Hindu caste group- the Lohanas- and lived a racially circumscribed existence. Mr. Tanna

comments, “Our world revolved around all the Indians, we even spoke all the time in Gujarati, you know. So it was very much an enclave of Indians within a bigger picture.”

Given the description of colonial education by Mr. Tanna, it was not surprising that Tanganyikan nationalists attacked segregation in education. The rise of mass African nationalism in Tanganyika provided new momentum in the 1950s to eradicate the inequalities created by the racialization of urban spaces like schools. For example, TANU charged in 1954 that schools in Tanganyika were “merely preparing the African for being used as cheap labour for the immigrant races.” The Asian Association concurred, remarking in the same year that children in the colonial school “system grow up with set notions of watertight compartments, some with superiority, others with inferiority, and still others with hatred and ridicule.” Future President Julius Nyerere, whose philosophy of non-racialism first needed to dismantle existing structures of racial privilege in order to succeed, described the severity of this challenge in 1955 as follows: “Disparity of educational expenditure per head of the population in each racial group is always there...[but] this particular disparity is aggravated to the point of absurdity... For lack of education is one thing in which the African can claim undisputed superiority over the other racial groups.” I argue that urban public spaces like schools were surrounded by intersecting discourses about race in colonial Tanganyika, and became targets for the nationalist project to dismantle privilege. Even though specific nationalist grievances might have been more informed by class stratification, the language of race continued to advance complaints publicly well into independent Tanzania due to its historical political linkage with notions of social justice propagated by anti-colonial nationalism. We can only recognize this if we remove the binding analytical frames of nation and diaspora to see colonial and national contests over education as debates between many groups over critical urban spaces, rather than as timeless conflicts between monolithic racial groups. Although the independent Tanganyikan government sought to act quickly on its promises to integrate and expand education, reforms were halting during the 1961-67 period of national consolidation. In the early years of independence, ordinary Tanganyikans were as incensed as the TANU radicals who had urged faster educational integration prior to Uhuru, and they pressured the government into quickening the pace of reforms. So long as inequalities remained in education, it was nearly impossible for citizens

to transcend the racial categories that the colonial government had used to structure institutions of urban daily life like schools. Nonetheless, some Africans tried to infuse racialized political identities with new meaning. For example, one Zanzibari perplexedly wrote the following to a Dar es Salaam newspaper in 1964:

Of all the ambiguous words in this universe, the word “African” is surely the top one. Hence I would be very grateful if a learned African would tell us exactly “Who is an African?” At school we were taught that an African was a man who lived in Africa... Then petty politicians set in... To them the criterion is rested on the blackness of one’s skin and the coarseness of one’s hair... Personally I think all those who maintain that an African ought to be black, and black only, are as colour conscious as the whites of South Africa. They belong to the same category and are equally sinful of colour segregation... [T]here are many statesmen in East Africa who preach against apartheid but who daily practice it.²²

In between debating “who is a Tanganyikan” (as we saw from the 1960 letter quoted above) and “who is an African,” many Tanganyikans fervently wished that political and educational reforms could make the new nation a model for race relations. A headmaster in Arusha echoed this vision, hoping that integrated schools would instill tolerance in the “cosmopolitan population of the school... ‘We are black, we are brown, we are white. We are Christians, we are Moslem, we are Hindu... But despite these differences we live happily together. We are a really United Nations without this bloc or that bloc. We are together.’” To accomplish racial harmony, President Nyerere eventually desired to erase entirely categories of race such as those discussed by the Tanganyikans quoted above, a necessary precondition for his vision of a non-racial society. In addition to educational reforms, in early 1964 the government banned racial discrimination and abolished all distinctions between African and non-African citizens. The response was mixed across the country, and not all quarters of Tanganyikan society responded positively to Nyerere’s moves. The fiercest critic was the Tanganyika Federation of Labour, which was upset at the limited employment gains netted from just two short years of Africanization. The TFL claimed that “[t]he policy of Africanisation had not been given time to do what it was intended to do,” which was to rectify the “imbalance in development” between non-Africans and Africans. If Tanganyikans believed that opportunities like employment and education were still ascribed on a racially unfair basis, then calls to “integrate” inevitably would be targeted directly at the

privileged position occupied by Indians. This occurred throughout 1964, in defiance of Nyerere's attempt to muffle the use of racialized language in Tanganyikan society. For example, the Tanganyika Standard editorialized, "The days of the settler communities are over... The choice before [the Asian community] is to identify themselves with the people among whom they live or remain as permanent outsiders with only diminishing hope of survival." In the face of constant criticism, some Indians publicly defended their commitment to Tanganyika, while most urged fellow South Asians to comply with the calls made by political leaders. Meanwhile, heedless of President Nyerere's appeal for non-racialism, some Africans vociferously supported the pressure being brought to bear on Tanganyikan Indians. Given the colonial-era racialization of privileges like education, one had to speak in racial terms to illuminate publicly the perpetuation of inequality in independent Tanganyika.

Although racialized disputes continued to surround education, integration in schools increased interactions and achieved progress in race relations, if only in Dar es Salaam and other major urban centers. One teacher at Shaaban Robert Secondary School (SRSS), an elite private institution in Dar, remarked in 2001 that very close friendships formed between Africans and Indians. Two history instructors at SRSS stressed that membership in elective clubs and societies did not follow a racialized pattern. Another teacher attributed increased social mixing to the urbanization of Dar es Salaam into a cosmopolitan city. He claimed that Dar es Salaam was a new society, created through decades of nationalist sacrifice to ensure that multi-cultural people could reside together without confrontations. This quote demonstrates the dual nature of nationalist discourse: exhortations to national unity and harmony coexisted with racialized aspersions of anti-national actions which exacerbated inequalities in educational opportunities. The liberalization era halted nationalist attempts to bring racial parity to education, while increasing economic disparities that manifested in the growth of private schools. Painful cutbacks in social services were the hallmark of the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s, and the axe fell particularly hard on education. Once as high as 20 percent of total expenditures, education's share of the budget dropped to about 12 percent in 1982, and further plummeted to approximately six percent for the period 1985-90. Unsurprisingly, race continued to be a salient feature of life in contemporary

urban Tanzania as many citizens, empowered by nation-building strategies which had for decades focused on schools, characterized growing educational inequalities as a return to the colonial-era racialization of schools. For example, in July 2001 an angry parent of an SRSS student wrote a long accusatory letter to a Dar es Salaam newspaper claiming, among other things, the following:

Referring to the student's sponsorship programme of students who cannot afford paying their school fees, the scheme the way I see it has religious and racial inclination. Students entitled to the scheme should be Hindu and of Indian origin otherwise he/she shall not be entitled to this scheme. I have deposition of my claims and I openly challenge the club secretary to produce names of non Hindu and non Indian students who have been granted sponsorship. On top of all these I have come to know from reliable sources the management of Shaaban Robert is misusing funds by recruiting teachers from India paying them in foreign currency while Tanzanian (*wazawa*) graduate teachers never get job to the extent that many teachers in future might become shoeshiners or salesmen. This is against human ethics. As Shaaban Robert School is not registered by Ministry of Education and Culture as a seminary or religious school it should not be on denomination of Hindu religion whereby presently non Hindus are prohibited eating non vegetarian food such as beef products or on all Hindu [occasions] school is closed such as Divali Day (Hindu new year) and on some [occasions] whereby students must participate in dancing and teasing and ultimately emitting fancy colours to each other as this is a common Hindu religious practice.³⁰

Although SRSS teachers denied these charges, the complaint's nationalist rhetoric and allegation of Indian privilege, buttressed by mocking Indian cultural difference, deeply resonated with the public. The following section of the letter further expressed parental frustration and even desperation over the diminishing educational opportunities caused by widening economic differentiation in liberalized Tanzania:

As one of the guardians of students at the school, I have noted that this [scholarship] scheme operates on an unfair basis because first, parents or guardians wishing their children to join the school are forced to pay compulsory donation [besides] fees for a club which is known as DSM Secondary School club run under management of Shaaban Robert Secondary School. And joining the club by parents who had applied for space for their children is compulsory otherwise admission is 'not' granted. On top of that, those who join the club are not told what benefit they would enjoy from their

membership. Membership fees are as follows Patron 1,000,000/- life member 500,000/- and ordinary member 250,000/-. One ought to ask why a parent or guardian is forced to join this club and pay a donation besides the legal school fees to Shaaban Robert as set by Ministry of Education and Culture. The kind of membership is determined by the Club Secretary according to the assessment done by the secretary himself who shall determine members capability. Joking part of this club is that once you have joined this club if after 3 or 4 years you intend to enrol another child again on all occassion you have to become a member and pay membership charges as indicted above. While negotiating on amount of donation for reduction I was told by club secretary that if I was not economically well off why did I bring my son to ‘this world.’ This was great abuse to me but as I wanted my child to be educated I had no other say.³²

The writer recognized what African parents had argued since early in the colonial period: a secondary education was necessary for social and economic advancement. For those many parents with limited funds, the small cadre of professional salaried workers and civil servants must have appeared very much like a “club” in which they (or their children) were unable to become “members.” As one teacher remarked about the scholarship scheme row, “There is the feeling that discrimination still exists here. Its form changes, but the content is the same.” While overt racial discrimination has been replaced by economic stratification in Tanzania, the teacher is exactly right in the sense that unequal educational opportunities continued or even increased despite national campaigns aimed at using schools to build an egalitarian society.

Conclusion

As a legacy of the colonial-era racialization of educational opportunities, Tanzania's growing economic divisions ensured that ideas about race still held great currency in the era of liberalization. Nationalist activists and ordinary citizens both continued to use the language of race to criticize educational and other privileges. However, this does not mean that Africans and Indians in Tanzania have been locked in an essentialized struggle between a nation and an immigrant diaspora. Instead, to understand the historical relationship between race, nationalism, and urban space in Tanzania, this paper tries to move beyond the exclusive deployment of diasporist and nationalist frames. Rather than a constant dialectical confrontation between the interests of nation and diaspora in Tanzanian history, African, Indian, and European groups possessed multiple shades, and all of them vigorously interacted in debates over race and the proper use of nationally important but quotidian urban social spaces. As the above section demonstrated, these multi-sided interactions also sometimes featured transnational connections. Framing such encounters within the Indian Ocean world also pushes the historical understanding of race in Tanzanian society beyond a paradigm that simply measures Indian segregation or assimilation. These scholarly initiatives are simply tentative efforts toward addressing Africa's "crisis of post-colonial citizenship," a manifestation of which is the role of Indians in East Africa as 'outsiders' in national society and scholarship. By closely analyzing everyday historical encounters between different groups in shared social spaces, we can see comparative models for cooperation and managing conflict that operate underneath highly charged and divisive public discourses. This essay also urges shifting the frame of African and South Asian history, especially in the fields' tight organization into national and diasporist spheres. Tanzania and especially Dar es Salaam face eastwards as much as westwards, joining the western edge of the Indian Ocean interregional arena. Establishing such a scholarly viewpoint better represents how Tanzanians envision their lives and histories, and allows one to see overlap across borders, hereby viewing strangers or outsiders as common denizens of a larger, more relevant shared world.

Endnotes and References

- 1 Mahmood Mamdani has identified conflicts caused through the creation of political identities, such as categories like “African” and “Asian” deployed by the colonial state in Tanganyika, as the root cause of what he calls the crisis of postcolonial citizenship in Africa. See, for example, his *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett, and Paul Nugent, eds., *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), including Ned Bertz, “Educating the Nation: Race and Nationalism in Tanzanian Schools”: 161-80.
- 2 Jagjit Singh, “Portrait of an Asian as an East African,” in David Cook and David Rubadiri, eds., *Poems from East Africa* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1971), 156-9.
- 3 Swahili letter to the editor signed by “One Who Wants to Know” and titled “Whois a Tanganyikan?”, October 6, 1960, *Ngurumo*, translated version held in “Summary of the Vernacular Press, 1960-61,” Tanzanian National Archives 540/DC 1/68.
- 4 Michael N. Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 36-7.
- 5 M. N. Pearson, “Introduction I: The Subject,” in Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson, eds., *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1987), 17.
- 6 Robert G. Gregory, *India and East Africa: A History of Race Relations within the British Empire, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 41.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 8 The most convincing evidence is contained in a volume written by an unknown Greek sailor near the end of the first century CE. See G. W. B. Huntingford, trans. and ed., *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1980). It specifically mentions Indian settlements on the East African coast, and creates a strong impression of vigorous commerce between East Africa and India. For a full survey of evidence of early connections, see Gregory, *India and East Africa*.

- 9 Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa: An Economic and Social History, 1890-1980* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 13.
- 10 Tanganyika, independent in 1961, merged with Zanzibar in 1964 to create the United Republic of Tanzania.
- 11 All population statistics in this paragraph are from James Brennan, Andrew Burton, and Yusuf Lawi, eds., *Dar es Salaam: The History of an Emerging East African Metropolis* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki Na Nyota, 2007).
- 12 See Andrew Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), 45-52, on the zoning of the city.
- 13 The historical outline in this paragraph is from Robert G. Gregory, *South Asians in East Africa* and Richa Nagar, "Making and Breaking Boundaries: Identity Politics among South Asians in Postcolonial Dar es Salaam," PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1995.
- 14 See especially Ronald Aminzade, "The Politics of Race and Nation: Citizenship and Africanization in Tanganyika," *Political Power and Social Theory*, 14 (2000): 53-90, and Richa Nagar, "The South Asian Diaspora in Tanzania: A History Retold," in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 16 (1996): 62-80.
- 15 Amitav Ghosh, *In An Antique Land* (New Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1992), 339-340.
- 16 From a life history of B. K. Tanna taped at his office in Dar es Salaam over numerous meetings between January and November 2001. All information below about Mr. Tanna's life story is from these interviews.
- 17 J. P. Moffett, ed., *Handbook of Tanganyika*, 2nd edition (Dar es Salaam: Government of Tanganyika, 1958), 306.
- 18 A world removed from Chunya, Dar es Salaam according to the 1952 census had a population of 99,140, including 72,300 Africans, 20,977 Indians, 3603 Europeans, 1570 Arabs, and all together less than a thousand Somalis, "coloureds," and "others." See Moffett, ed., *Handbook of Tanganyika*, 306.
- 19 See David R. Morrison, *Education and Politics in Africa: The Tanzanian Case* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976), 78.
- 20 Ibid., 79.
- 21 Ibid., 80-1.

- 22 Letter to the editor signed “Zanzibari” in the *Tanganyika Standard*, April 10, 1964.
- 23 “Headmaster hopes pupils will show tolerance,” *Tanganyika Standard*, December 9, 1964.
- 24 See “Directive Criticised: Unions seek explanation,” in the *Tanganyika Standard*, January 11, 1964.
- 25 “Youth Scheme,” *Tanganyika Standard*, December 17, 1964.
- 26 Interview with Mr. Joseph Nchimbi, August 16, 2001.
- 27 Interviews with Mr. J. Silas, August 7, 2001 and Mr. Musa J. E. Ludeng’hemya, August 20, 2001.
- 28 Interview with Mr. Musa J. E. Ludeng’hemya, August 20, 2001.
- 29 Lene Buchert, *Education in the Development of Tanzania, 1919-90* (London: James Currey, 1994), 148.
- 30 “Sponsorship by Shaaban Robert Casts Doubt,” *The Guardian*, July 19, 2001. All errors in the letter above are in the original.
- 31 An anonymous letter to the editor printed in *The Guardian* on July 23, 2001 also rebutted the accusations. When I visited SRSS many times throughout August, the episode was the talk of the school.
- 32 “Sponsorship by Shaaban Robert Casts Doubt,” *The Guardian*, July 19, 2001. All errors in the letter above are in the original.
- 33 Interview with Mr. Musa J. E. Ludeng’hemya, August 20, 2001.
- 34 See fn. 1.