

the global energy crisis of 1973, Tanzania was positioned at the wrong end of a neocolonial world system; the party-state had to abandon the assumption of an ‘oily’ socialist economy and instead find more obviously minimalist ways to survive (185). Grace’s account of the inner workings of oil barter in the Tanzanian Petroleum Development Corporation is an interesting and novel contribution to this history, though there is surely more to say about how the ‘self-reliance’ of government officials in the 1970s became a key ingredient of a new catch-as-catch-can capitalism in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup>

Grace’s conclusion offers a condensed but suggestive tour of the dramatically different auto world of the 1990s and 2000s: endless snaking *foleni* (jams), deadly car crashes, and *misafara* (quasi-militarized government convoys that stop all traffic for miles and hours). Three decades of cheap oil and liberalized imports (most recently of cheap motorcycle taxis from China) have ensured that urban Tanzania is utterly choked by private transport, while the endless construction projects of the Magufuli administration (2015–21) will only put more wheels on the road. And yet elements of the previous machinic complex remain, from the rough communalism of the minibus (predictably demonized by Western planners) to the general frustration that the rich travel in private, air-conditioned comfort while the poor commute cheek to jowl. Like other recent works, *African Motors* retrieves the histories of 1970s and 1980s — as well as the deeper histories of African ingenuity — and gives them a new salience.<sup>5</sup> As the planet confronts the limits of endless, petrol-dependent growth, *African Motors* shows us a different history of automobility, enriching our ability to think the car, development, and even modernity itself otherwise.

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## A Cold War City

### *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974*

By George Roberts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 352. \$32.99, paperback (ISBN: 9781009281652); open access, e-book (ISBN: 9781108990721).

Andrew Ivaska 

Concordia University

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George Roberts’s *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961–1974* provides a well-researched and engagingly written account of Dar es Salaam’s status as what he calls a ‘Cold War city’ (27) during Tanzania’s *ujamaa* era. It joins a raft of recent scholarship composing new histories of the city’s long-famous place in the worlds of nonalignment, Third World socialism, left-wing activism, and Southern African liberation.<sup>1</sup> An international

<sup>4</sup>M. Lofchie, *The Political Economy of Tanzania* (Philadelphia, 2014), 42.

<sup>5</sup>e.g. E. Brownell, *Gone to Ground: A History of Environment and Infrastructure in Dar es Salaam* (Pittsburgh, 2020).

<sup>1</sup>A non-exhaustive list includes J. R. Brennan, ‘The secret lives of Dennis Phombeah: decolonization, the Cold War, and African political intelligence, 1953–1974’, *The International History Review*, 43:1 (2021), 153–69; J. R. Brennan, ‘The Cold War battle over global news in East Africa: decolonization, the free flow of information, and the media business, 1960–1980’,

historian, Roberts's unique contribution to this wave of work is his attunement to the complexities of how the Cold War played out across the city's politics and inflected the government's state-making. He achieves this without neglecting Tanzanian political actors. Indeed, more than many international historians with similar roots in mostly globally northern archives, Roberts pays detailed, nuanced attention to the agential power of his cast of characters, African and otherwise — even if his focus is on a terrain of 'high-politics in the capital' (10). He explores this across seven chapters that work their way through some of the already canonical events and themes in early postcolonial Tanzanian history — the Zanzibari revolution, the 1964 army mutiny, the Arusha Declaration, Southern African liberation movement politics, youth protest, the ruling Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party's 1971 *Mwongozo* 'Guidelines'<sup>2</sup> — and adds new ones like East-West German rivalry for Tanzanian ally-ship and the operation of the press.

The Cold War frame generates both the book's strengths and limitations. Roberts succeeds in restoring Dar es Salaam to its rightful place as a city important to any account of the global Cold War. He resists easy assumptions of all-powerful superpowers, ideological binaries, and uni-directional flows of influence from American and Soviet patrons to pliant Third World client states. The book convincingly demonstrates that as much as the US, USSR, and their respective blocs saw Tanzania as a significant prize in their struggle for gaining allies among new nations throwing off the yoke of European empires, neither superpower was able to determine how the battle for influence would play out on the ground there, because a range of Tanzanian and other African actors — 'a mobile cast of politicians, intellectuals, and other activists who possessed the means to obtain an air ticket' (6) — had their own agendas and the tools to pursue them. This cast included those like the more technocratic economic advisers retained by Nyerere in the wake of the Arusha Declaration to assure the West that Tanzania was not pursuing socialism, to the party bureaucrats dedicated to mass mobilization that sometimes battled them. Even if he somewhat questionably opposes 'sound economic thinking' to 'political mobilization' in describing such battles (71), Roberts is at his best when tracking 'the creative state-making endeavors of this postcolonial political elite' as they 'brokered relationships inside and outside of the country, developing ideological visions of the future, and securing new-found nodes of power through patronage relationships' (13). Even within the new 'global turn' in Cold War historiography, this kind of attention to the details of decision-making in a Third World site is rare and highly important.<sup>3</sup>

Yet if Roberts's book powerfully intervenes in Cold War scholarship, the Cold War frame generates somewhat different effects when viewed within Tanzanian and African historiography. Roberts claims the book works in the 'opposite direction' to most accounts of postcolonial Tanzanian statehood, arguing that it turns 'away from the countryside and grassroots experiences of socialism and towards the capital and governing elite' (11). In fact, the book builds upon a

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*Journal of Global History*, 10:2 (2015), 333–56; E. Burton, 'Hubs of decolonization: African liberation movements and 'eastern' connections in Cairo, Accra, and Dar es Salaam', in L. Dallywater, C. Saunders, and H. Adegard Fonseca, *Southern African Liberation Movements and the Global Cold War 'East': Transnational Activism 1960–1990* (Berlin, 2019); A. Ivaska, 'Leveraging alternatives: early FRELIMO, the Soviet Union, and the infrastructure of African political exile', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 41:1 (2021), 11–26; A. Ivaska, 'Liberation in transit: Eduardo Mondlane and Che Guevara in Dar es Salaam', in C. Jian et al. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation Building* (London, 2017); P. Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World* (Cambridge, 2015); S. Markle, *A Motorcycle on Hell's Run: Tanzania, Black Power, and the Uncertain Future of Pan-Africanism* (East Lansing, 2017); C. Williams, *National Liberation in Postcolonial Southern Africa: An Historical Ethnography of SWAPO's Exile Camps* (Cambridge, 2017).

<sup>2</sup>The 'Mwongozo Guidelines' issued by Nyerere and TANU's national executive committee in Feb. 1971, was a document designed to enshrine the ruling party as the embodiment of all that was 'revolutionary' about Tanzania.

<sup>3</sup>In the wake of Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge, 2005), key works in this global turn in studies of the Cold War include H. Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York, 2010); L. Luthi, *Cold Wars: Asia, the Middle East, Europe* (Cambridge, 2020), and J. Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

considerable body of scholarship on Dar es Salaam, including on the politics of urban life and the city's status as a mecca for activists (work that populates Roberts's footnotes). Indeed, work on Dar es Salaam has been so prevalent that the opposite charge has sometimes been made: that in a state even more focused on the rural than much of Africa, academic writing on Tanzania has had a rather urban bias.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps even more importantly, during the 1960s the city's radicalism had multidirectional influences, including many homegrown ones that lay outside or exceeded formal politics and call into question whether 'state-making' truly drove what was 'revolutionary' about Tanzania at the time. Labelling Dar es Salaam a 'Cold War city' and making a top-down investigation of formal politics the ground for the study is too narrow a lens to capture the city's radicalism. Indeed, some of the key phenomena Roberts covers — the Zanzibari uprising, the army mutiny, youth protest, and struggles within liberation movements like the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) — were driven by redistributionist notions of justice and the proper conduct of authority that the domain of high international politics does not truly capture. Although Roberts correctly notes that broad categories of left and right did not always apply in Tanzania, in his analysis it is other modes legible within state-driven formal politics (often what he calls President Nyerere's 'pragmatism') that fill the gap. Treating the government's navigation of the Cold War as the signal playing field of Tanzania's radicalism underemphasizes, for instance, the degree to which Dar es Salaam's homegrown Marxist left — influenced by international thinkers who were critical of existing state socialism — saw the country's leadership as a 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' whose 'so-called "African socialism"' was suspect.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, arguing that 'Tanzanian youth were Third World nationalists who mobilized themselves through the structures of the ruling party' (196) minimizes the deep sense of grievance that many of Dar es Salaam's young had with their elders in this early postcolonial moment, as well as the complicated relationship that youth had to the state. Declaring one's willingness to 'defend' the state or performative praise of it were just as often a means of making vigorous claims on the government and holding the state to its duties to provide, rather than simply nationalistic support of it. Redistributionist demands cast in vernacular terms similarly marked many of the struggles foregrounding Africanization — forms of mobilization to which Roberts sometimes refers as 'seeking political solutions to economic problems' (73) — in a way that is occluded by a narrative centering the Cold War players and those brokering with them.

To query how a Cold War framing, no matter how nuanced, risks drawing our attention away from other deeply-rooted moral economies that shaped the politics of street and state in Dar es Salaam is not to detract from the importance of Roberts's contribution to new international histories of the Cold War and Tanzanian statehood. Rather, it is to ask a question that needs to be asked of all our global histories: how do we construct accounts that not only connect Africa to, and foreground Africa within, global historical patterns, but which also center distinctive African political cultures and their capacity to reshape our global frames and categories?

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<sup>4</sup>Lal, *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania*.

<sup>5</sup>I. Shivji, et al., 'Tanzania: the silent class struggle', special issue of *Cheche* (1970), journal of the University Students' African Revolutionary Front; and 'Statement from the chairman', in *Cheche*, 1 (1969), quoted in I. Shivji, 'Rodney and Radicalism', in I. Shivji, *Intellectuals at the Hill: Essays and Talks, 1969–1993* (Dar es Salaam, 1996).