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M. A. Katundu

## Book Review

# Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism? Lessons of Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union

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## Synopsis and Evaluation

In his book on, "*Pan-Africanism or Pragmatism? Lessons of Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union*", Shivji presents an account of issues, dramas, and politics surrounding the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar. He also includes an account of the January 1984 Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)'s Conference held in Dodoma that toppled President of Zanzibar, then Aboud Jumbe Mwinyi. This book brings back the debate on Pan-Africanism. Throughout the six chapters, the author emphasized that the stresses and tensions in the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar since its formation 54 years ago are not showing any sign of abating. He also argues that, imperialism under new forms and labels continues to bedevil the continent in ever-aggressive, if subtle, ways. The political federation of East Africa, which was one of the main spin-offs of the Pan-Africanism of the nationalist period, is reappearing on the political stage, though in a distorted form of regional integration. In his words, Shivji argue that, "the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar was born in the midst of debates on Pan-Africanism and in the thick of cold war. To this day, the Union carries its birthmarks, more of the latter than the former. The Union is the only surviving example of a political association of African sovereign states. Friends and foes alike often cite it as an exemplar of Pan-Africanist unity or an illustration of its failure" (P xv).

The main argument in this book is that the Union of

Tanganyika and Zanzibar was based on "shaky foundations" (pp. 97-99). Shivji further argues that the was Union formed without involvement of the people of Tanganyika and Zanzibar (P 98) and that Zanzibar did not ratify Articles of the Union (pp. 86-87). Mwakikagile (2008) who reports that some people in Tanzania today including some leaders who think the union was a mistake supports Shivji. They argue it was formed in hurry without seriously considering all the issues involved. According to him, only time will tell where the union is headed. Shivji further establishes that President Karume signed the Article of the Union politically without having legal advice (P 81). Consequently Shivji argues, people of Zanzibar opposed the union right from its infancy, immediately after signing of the Articles of the Union) are still doing so to date (P 82). The author further discusses a much contentious and issue of the nature of the Union especially the structure of the government. According to Shivji, the Articles of the Union, which is the constituent document of the union, provided for three governments and that the political association envisaged was a federation. He maintains that the articles of the union did not dissolve Tanganyika instead it provided for a three-government structure (P 209). Shivji emphasize that one party supremacy adopted during the late 1970s has been used to control and restrict the autonomy of Zanzibar's government (P 182).

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Researchers, academicians and University students especially those pursuing Political Science, Law, Social Sciences, Development Studies and the Government of Zanzibar and Tanzania (especially the departments dealing with union matters) will find this book a very good resource. It is also a useful for other African governments. Shivji have argued well on various controversial issues including the nature of the union, the Articles of the Union, and the Acts of the Union. Debate on these issues is still hot in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar for example, on Matters of the Union (*Mambo ya Muungano*) some Tanzanians still challenge the legality of additional matters outside the Articles of the Union (Ubwa, 2005; Mihangwa, 2014). They argue that, the list was expanded quickly without consultation of all stakeholders including the people of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, and that most of them were increased after the death of Karume from original 11 (P 94) up to 22 to date. Concerning the nature of the Union, Mbunda (2014) argues that the two-tier governments' structure of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar has been a matter of a serious controversy among politicians and analysts from both sides. He further argues that although there is a section of the Zanzibar population who would prefer to secede from the Union, the majority of those who express discontent regarding the Union are mostly pointing to its structure than the legitimacy of the Union itself. This in turn raises more concern about the objectives of the founders. The Argument by Shivji that the objectives of the Founding Fathers of the Union (Julius Nyerere and Abeid Karume) were different and did not have much in common is strongly supported by other researchers. For instance, Haule (2006) argues that self-preservation was the key motivating force on Karume's part, who was keen to protect himself from onslaughts made by the radical factions of his party, while Nyerere was concerned with protecting his ideas of African socialism in Tanganyika from being contaminated by communist doctrines, which could be infiltrated through the small island of Zanzibar. Likewise, it is important to note that some scholars believe that the Union was not an African initiative, but was engineered and orchestrated by the Americans and British in order to stop the spread of communism in eastern Africa (Sanders, 2014). However, the author ought to have briefly explained the causes for the failures and lessons that the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar can learn from Unions such as the Senegal and Gambia (Senegambia), Ghana and British Togoland, Italian and British Somaliland, Mali Federation, Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union, the Greater Maghreb Union, which were formed during the same time but all of them failed.

#### In the authors' own words

"... the legal framework of the Union would become a

huge contentious issue. There is no doubt that the process of the formation of the Union was fraught with legal manipulation and political expediency. The Union started on rather shaky legal and political foundation....." (pp. 98-99). "...the Articles of the Union, which is the constituent document of the union, provided for three governments and that the political association envisaged was a federation.....The Articles did not dissolve Tanganyika nor abrogated the Constitution of Tanganyika. It was Act (No.22 of 1964) of the Tanganyika Parliament ratifying the Articles, which abrogated the Constitution of Tanganyika. This was contrary to the Articles....." (P 209).

#### About the author

Professor Issa Gulamhussein Shivji is a Tanzanian researcher, academician and author who taught and worked at the University of Dar es Salaam's Faculty of Law for nearly 40 years. He is a distinguished professor in constitutional law, having built his reputation through the publication of over 18 books, numerous articles and book chapters. Shivji has served as advocate of the high court and the Court of Appeal of Tanzania since 1977 and advocate of the high court in Zanzibar since 1989.

#### Reviewer's details

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#### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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