



Once again, Professor Shivji has come out with a compelling book that will force all of us to scratch our heads and think, a work so powerful and so insightful that it will be well nigh impossible for anyone who will have read it to engage in any discourse about political and constitutional developments in Zanzibar, or about the nature, history and problems of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar, without making reference to it.

As a historical record, it affords us a much clearer grasp of what came to pass at the various stages of the existence of Zanzibar as a nation and as part of the Swahili civilisation that has installed itself on the East African Coast over centuries. As a legal/constitutional treatise, it fine combs the major issues relating to legality, legitimacy and constitutionalism and bares the flaws that have plagued the Union because the principal protagonists in the narrative did not pay them the requisite heed. As a political commentary, the book brings to the fore the pitfalls inherent in trying to craft unity between states outside democratic processes on the one hand and, on the other, failing to comprehend fully the nature of the imperialist forces that

affect our lives as Africans and impel us to unite urgently. The book is a wake-up call that tells us that all is not well with the Union and it calls for more open debate on it.

What is more, as is his wont, Shivji is in no mood for taking prisoners; along the way, he does take quite a few sacred cows to the slaughter. It is this incisiveness and forthrightness in examining historical facts that lends this book its great value as a work of singular scholarship and a distinctive

contribution to our understanding of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar in particular and the question of African Unity in general. In the process, he does not mince his words in dissecting the actions of all the protagonists involved in the story, from Julius Nyerere to Abeid Karume, from Aboud Jumbe to Abdurahman Babu and others.

The book is divided into six chapters, each dealing with a thematic issue, offering

descriptive accounts and analytical insights, backed by earlier works by other writers (and Shivji's own earlier contributions) as well as personal testimonies of those still alive and able to recount the events as they lived them. It also has a rich appendix which should be a source of invaluable information for researchers. The end result is an invaluable reference document that has benefited from the contributions of a wide range of credible actors and worthy researchers.

Chapter One sets the scene by presenting a graphic description of Zanzibar during the struggle for independence and of the different ethnic, racial and class formations that vied with one another for political ascendancy. It is here that the book brings into relief the reality of Zanzibar as a sort of melting pot where groups with varied origins had already engendered a culture and civilisation and language that were distinctly Zanzibari in particular and Swahili in general, belonging to a large religious-cultural ensemble of city-states that straddled the East African Coast from Mombassa to Sofala in present-day Mozambique.

The rich tapestry of Zanzibari society thus brought together peoples who had

The Travails of the Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union

Jenerali Ulimwengu

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

by Issa G. Shivji

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