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EDITORS' NOTE

Our esteemed readers will recall that, in recent years, successive issues of this journal have typically featured four articles per issue. However, in a recent routine review the journal stakeholders recommended that the minimum number of articles per issue be increased to five. We are glad to report that we have taken that recommendation on board with immediate effect. The current issue therefore consists of five articles and a book review.

The articles are notably diverse both thematically and in spatial scope. Readers will especially note that one of the articles included in this issue focuses on Mozambique, which is obviously outside of the journal's geographical scope. The decision to include this article was based on its unambiguous relevance to the history of Tanzania, given that the theme it covers, that is, a cholera pandemic in northern colonial Mozambique, has historically been matter of public concern in colonial and post-colonial Tanzania. In addition, northern Mozambique as an ecological and cultural zone can hardly be distinguished from southern Tanzania.

Hence, in the first article Edward A. Alpers discusses the third global cholera pandemic (1839-1861) as manifested in colonial Mozambique. Taking a thread from other contributors to the medical history of Africa, such as Christopher Hamlin, Myron Echenberg and James Christie, Alpers closely examines demographic impacts of the pandemic and the public health measures taken by the Portuguese colonial government of the day. Based on evidence drawn from official reports and

unpublished documents, he suggests that, compared to its devastating impacts on East African coastal towns, inland northern Mozambique was less affected by the third global cholera pandemic. The author attributes this ‘relative sparing’ of the region by the pandemic to public health measures taken by the Portuguese colonial government.

The second article by Iddy Magoti, Samuel Kochomay and Jackson Akotir addresses a practical problem in the teaching of a particular sub-theme in Tanzania’s secondary school History syllabus, namely age-set systems in pre-colonial Tanzania. Based on their reading of the school syllabus, textbooks and other reference materials, the authors submit that the contents of this sub-theme are sometimes wrongly perceived and presented. According to the authors, the problem partly arises from confusions arising from failure to distinguish age-set systems from generation-set systems. Hence, the authors set out to examine how age-sets and generation-sets were formed, how they worked, and the extent to which they influenced socio-economic and political developments in societies where these systems existed. Drawing examples from Kuria, Kipsigis, Maasai, Pokot and Karamajong communities of East Africa, the authors conclude that there are notable errors in textbook sections that present these systems, and that there is no standard definition that fits the characteristics of these systems across all the ethnic groups in which the systems existed. They also argue that, contrary to what the textbooks say, age-set and generation-set systems are not post-colonial phenomena only, as they continued to exist and function in post-colonial societies.

In the third article, Gasiano Sumbai discusses anti-famine measures taken by the post-colonial government of Tanzania and local people's responses to the interventions, specifically in Singida District from 1962 to 1985. Framing his inquiry and analysis within the political economy and social constructionist theories, the author examines the variety of government policy and enforcement strategies applied on one hand, and local communities' agency and creativity on the other. The empirical data for the article was gathered from archival sources and through in-depth oral interviews. The main argument running through the article is that, although the post-colonial government introduced new methods and strategies for enhancing food security in the district, in the final analysis it was the resilience of time-tested local communities' practices that effectively allayed food insecurity threats in post-colonial Singida District.

The fourth article by Somo Seimu provides an historical account of small-holders' cotton growing and marketing in an area of colonial Tanzania known as the Western Cotton Growing Area. Covering the period from 1920-1960, the article focuses on the colonial government's efforts to promote cotton growing and marketing, which included establishment of relevant legislation and enforcement of such laws and related regulations. The article reveals that the colonial policies and legislation on cotton production and marketing favoured Indian merchants and facilitated exploitation of African producers. As a result, during the 1940s and 1950s the African producers formed associations that brought them together in

the effort to pressurise the colonial administration to allow formation of Africans' cotton marketing societies. This effort was supported by local chiefs, and in due course it resulted in remarkable achievements; such that by 1954 the societies were handling one-third of the total crop successfully. By 1960 they had established monopoly in the marketing of cotton in the entire area.

The last article by Reginald Kirey is about the intricacies involved in the handling of government records, with particular reference to German colonial records in Mainland Tanzania during and after the First World War. It provides an account of how the Germans hid their official records before departing from their East African colony upon defeat by the allied forces, and how the records were eventually uncovered and used by both the British colonial regime and the post-colonial administration. The author explains the manner in which official records were handled during and after the War in terms of cultural symbolism, which ultimately contributed to the shaping of state power, collective memory and national identity. This explanation leads to the author's main argument; that besides the direct and practical functions they are intended to serve, archival records also function as cultural objects which eventually contribute to the shaping of collective memory and national identity.

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