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SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON

THE TANZANIAN EXPERIMENT

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SOME PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE TANZANIAN EXPERIMENT

The Tanzanian experiment in village-level socialism has received harsh treatment from the outside world in recent years. After the brave start of the 1960's, there has been a general retreat from the high expectations that here at least was one country in which things were being being right. The Tanzanian ideal had been to build an organic unified society on the basis of rural transformation. The excesses of wealth and poverty, which mark so many third-world countries would be avoided through a policy of bringing up the entire society to a reasonable living standard, rather than allowing the educated, exploiting few to fatten themselves on exploitative exports of raw material and expensive imports of finished products. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 was the fundamental policy document outlining the way to African socialism, based on what was believed to be the traditional African way.

If one listens to reports and reads newspapers and books about the fruits of this experiment, it would seem that the result has been hunger, poverty, stagnation and corruption. At the beginning of March, 1982, the BBC carried the report from the London Daily Telegraph that Tanzania was the worst-governed state in Africa, and that President Nyerere was a ruthless thug posing as an apostle of Christian charity. Oscar Kambona, former foreign minister of Tanzania who left the country in 1967 because of disagreement over the Arusha Declaration, could scarcely conceal his delight in a BBC interview at the highjacking of a Tanzanian airplane by members of a revolutionary youth group whose stated goal was Nyerere's resignation, even though pro forma he indicated disapproval of their methods.

This public image of Tanzania is epitomized by Edward Hughes' article in the July 1980 issue of the South African edition of Reader's Digest. The article is entitled "Kenya and Tanzania: a Tale of Two Nations", and characterizes Kenya as a dynamic land, filled with signs of material progress and development. Tanzania, on the other hand, is a place with nothing to buy, with roads that go nowhere and are impassable in the rains, and with an apathetic population that cares little for the ideals of its president.

I had the opportunity to spend 11 weeks in rural Tanzania in mid-1981, helping the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations design an integrated rural development plan for Mbeya region in the southwest of the country. I participated in two investigations, an intensive study of 7 scattered (and hopefully representative) villages and an extensive study of all the villages in the region, to determine the resources

and attitudes of the people. The 7 villages for the intensive study were chosen so as to cover the great diversity of Mbeya region, from the lush productive shores of Lake Nyasa to the dry scrub forests of the northern districts, and from failure to success. The extensive survey yielded data for 563 villages, with perhaps 15 villages omitted. Moreover, on the basis of results from the extensive study, it became clear that the 7 villages selected for intensive study covered the whole range from apathetic, corrupt stagnation to well-motivated, productive forward movement. In these efforts, I worked with a team of articulate and able secondary school graduates, temporarily employed between school and their next assignments.

Our method in the intensive study was to live in each village for between 3 and 7 days, sharing whatever accommodation the village provided us, and being as much part of the village life as we could manage. I did not speak Swahili, but my assistants were both helpful and expert in helping me communicate with villagers. One served in each village as my translator and guide, while the others conducted detailed interviews on village needs, changes and goals. After each village stay, I transcribed and analysed the survey results from that village, in preparation for comparative computer analysis, while I wrote up in detail the results of my observations and interviews.

The extensive survey was quite different. Essentially the same group of secondary school graduates, with some changes as individuals were placed in school or permanent jobs, traveled by Landrover throughout the whole region, requiring about an hour in each village to interview its leaders on the basis of a broad-ranging and mostly qualitative survey form. The results of this study were also coded and computerized.

The analysis of these surveys has been reported in detail in two reports, A Sociological Study in Mbeya Region (November, 1981) and Poverty and Wealth in Mbeya Region (February, 1982), issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for use by the Mbeya Regional Integrated Development Programme. In addition, all survey data are stored at the Lesotho Government's Computer Centre in Maseru, for updating and additional analysis as required.

I wish to draw on these surveys to assess the degree of success of at least one area where the Tanzanian experiment was applied. Obviously, I must qualify my remarks, since they apply only to one of John M'Chale's regions and there only to the rural sector. Moreover, the Mbeya region is, for several reasons, unusual in Tanzania. First, it is highly diversified, with rain forest, lake, river, mountain, plain and thorn bush.

Second, it is generally productive, with a long history of being able to feed itself. Third, its people by tradition live in settled villages rather than in scattered homesteads. These three factors make development much easier in Mbeya than in the less well-endowed regions of the country, and thus conclusions drawn from Mbeya may be misleading. There was always enough food in the market during the period I was there, and whereas there was a frequent shortage of such basic consumer goods as soap and sugar and roofing material, people were not evidently suffering.

Granted the advantages enjoyed by Mbeya, it is still possible to assess the effects of the Tanzanian policy of village-level socialism by looking at the differences between villages where this socialism is being practised and neighboring villages where, for one reason or another, the national policies have not been effectively applied. Social science can only draw comparative conclusions, since absolute statements are either meaningless or misleading. In what follows, I will try to compare successful and unsuccessful villages in rural Mbeya, and relate their success particularly to the extent of application of national policies.

I will start with the extensive survey of 563 villages, and then draw supporting data from the intensive village visits. In the intensive survey, we selected an initial set of 25 variables to help identify and understand the differences between villages. These variables are given in Table 1, as well as their mean values and standard deviations for the entire group of 563 villages.

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
Number of families	382.1	174.1
Village leaders	5.21	3.34
Part. members per family	0.80	0.60
Family heads living away per family	0.131	0.348
Family heads working away per family	0.025	0.156
Income earners per family	0.85	0.95
Village businesses per family	0.098	0.099
Distance to public services	14.38	12.34
Vehicles per family	0.002	0.009
Distance to local resources	1.18	2.16
Months without services	2.54	2.51
Total water quality	2.85	2.57
Basic consumer goods available	1.31	1.02
Village shop capital per family	0.04	0.14
Teachers per family	0.025	0.034
Pupils per family	1.22	1.45
Pupils per teacher	56.7	61.6
Adult learners per family	1.29	2.94
Total sufficiency of food crops	7.09	7.25
Total sufficiency of cash crops	3.91	3.63
Communal farm bags per family	2.36	13.81
Communal farm acres per family	0.31	0.63
Farm supplies available	4.37	4.53
Days farm advice available monthly	12.57	19.73
Livestock units per family	4.79	7.46

Basic Socio-Economic Variables
Table 1

These variables require explanation, in order to make clear exactly what was asked of the village leaders we interviewed. In the following paragraphs these explanations will be provided.

By village leaders we meant either such officials as the village chairman, secretary, manager and accountant, or any other village persons employed and paid by the village itself. The latter category may include village shopkeepers, mill operators, night watchmen and vehicle operators, but does not include school teachers, public health workers or other regional government employees. Party members include card-holding members of the national political party Chama Cha Kibindi or its women's, youth or parents' organizations. In this case, as in other cases discussed below, we have calculated the number of members per family rather than the total number, since the raw data are clearly and wholly dependent on the total number of families. In the remaining cases, such as the number of village leaders, that dependence is absent and the number is used directly.

Family heads living away were defined as family heads who maintained a residence in the village, but spent most of their time working elsewhere. Those working away we defined as family heads who commuted between their village and their job on a daily basis. Income earners were defined as people within the village engaged in such money-earning activities as brewing, tailoring, blacksmithing, shopkeeping and milling. Village businesses were defined very similarly, and included mills, shops, and establishments of blacksmiths, tailors, tinmiths, mechanics, carpenters and masons. Obviously many of the village income earners were employed by these village businesses, although some were independent of these establishments, notably women who brew beer.

The distance to public services was the average distance in kilometers to the nearest post office, bus stop, market, crop storage center, crop buying center, general shopping center, grain mill, dispensary, health center, guest house, livestock dip, diesel supply and all-weather road. In some cases these services were directly available in the village, in which case the distance was recorded as zero. The number of vehicles included private cars, four-wheel drive cars, pickups, lorries, buses and tractors. The distance to local resources was the average distance in kilometers to family fields, dry-season pasture, water supply and firewood supply. The months without services are given as the average number of months per year when these local resources are unavailable. The water quality is measured for each of the three main water sources of the village on a scale of 1 (poor), 2 (fair) and 3 (good).

The variable measuring basic consumer goods totaled the number of the following items actually available for sale within the village on the day of the interview: soap, sugar, good-quality cloth, batteries and kerosene. The total village shop capital was measured in 1000's of Indonesian shillings.

Teachers included all those employed by the government to teach in village schools, and pupils included all children attending regular government schools. Adult learners, on the other hand, included all adults participating in adult literacy classes.

The sufficiency of food crops, as well as that of cash crops, was measured by the following formula. The four most important food crops, and the four most important cash crops in each village were listed, and for each a qualitative assessment was made by the village leaders, ranging from 1 (inadequate) to 2 (barely sufficient) to 3 (profitable surplus). The sufficiency index was the sum of all these numbers. In some cases village leaders named less than four crops, in which case the sufficiency index would be smaller than the expected maximum, but we assumed the reason behind this was the difficulty of growing a variety of crops, and thus we accepted such a result as yielding a low score.

The production from the village communal farm was usually diversified among several crops. As a very rough measure of productivity, we simply added the total number of bags of those crops. A more sensitive measure of productivity could have been developed, based on the difference of value among crops, but it did not seem necessary under the conditions of this summary report. Likewise the total acreage of communal farms was simply the sum of all the acres devoted to the various crops.

The farm supplies available were the total number of the following items available at the appropriate time of year: fertilizer, insecticide, seeds, hand tools, ploughs and seedlings. The number of days farm advice was available per month was the total number of days that any type of agricultural advice, on such topics as cropping, livestock and specialized cash crops, was available. The number of livestock units was based on a ratio of 5:1 in evaluating cattle on the one hand and sheep, goats and pigs on the other.

The averages in Table 1 are indicative of the general level of development in the Mboya region of Tanzania. The standard deviations are divisional, large, indicating a high degree of variability in the data. In some cases, the standard deviations are altogether too large, probably because a few data were recorded or coded incorrectly, but the relative orders of magnitude are generally trustworthy.

In particular, it is worth noting that villages are generally small, and relatively close to the mean. None were smaller than 100 households and only one was larger than 1000 households. Village leaders were generally limited in number. On the other hand, there was an average of almost one party member per family. One family head in 8, on the average, lived and worked away from his village, while only one in 40 commuted to work, probably reflecting the general difficulty of transport. This difficulty is supported by the average distance of over 10 kilometers to basic public services. On the other hand, local resources were generally close to the house, and available for 9-10 months per year. The water supply is the equivalent of one good or two fair water systems per village.

There was almost one income earner per family and about one village business for every 10 families. Consumer goods were clearly in short supply, but village shops were generally reasonably well capitalized, reflecting the fact that it is goods and not money that are in great supply in rural Tanzania. Each family sends slightly over one child, one adult to school, while there are more than 50 pupils per teacher. Food crops are reasonably plentiful, since the average index of 7 indicates either two good crops or three adequate crops. Cash crops, however, are generally inadequate, with an average index of less than 4. The communal farms are on the average small and unproductive, although there is a very wide variation, reflecting not just spurious data but what appears to be genuine differences. Farm supplies and advice are regularly available to most families, although here too there is wide variation. The average family, finally, has the equivalent of about one head of cattle or five sheep, goats or pigs.

In summary, Mbeya region is not a poverty-stricken area, nor are its citizens apathetic. Weak points are present, of course, notably distance to services, lack of consumer goods, unprofitable cash cropping, and low-quality communal farming, but otherwise people are working, supporting the party, stocking their village shop, teaching their children and learning new skills, growing enough food to feed themselves, and finding fuel and fuel. Mbeya may be exceptional in Tanzania, but certainly the grim picture painted by Hughes in Reader's Digest is not borne out by the village survey.

A similar impression was obtained from the intensive village visits. Problems emerged in these visits which were not evident from the interviews with the leaders, in many cases problems with those very leaders themselves! Of the 7 villages, one was clearly in bad shape. It was riven by corruption, distrust, drunkenness and malnutrition. It cannot

be said that our sample of villages for the intensive survey was biased in favor of showpiece villages, for we were given a free hand to choose where we wished to go, although it was suggested that we would do well to look at one particular village. That village was justifiably the pride of the region, clean, well-organized, cooperative and highly productive.

Of the other 5 villages, one was a highly individualistic, capitalist-~~free~~-enterprise-oriented village, with very profitable cocoa production. A second was a poor, dusty village, newly relocated from its old site on the shore of Lake Lukwa, following an unprecedented and unexplained rise in the level of the lake, rendering the old site uninhabitable. This village was objectively the poorest we saw, but was making vigorous efforts through the party organization to make a success of its unwanted but inevitable shift of location. A third village was a well-organized, commercially active village, with 500 acres in communal crops and its own low-passenger bus (65 seats, but always full to overflowing with people going to and fro throughout the region). A fourth was a village with potential for irrigation and hydro-electric power, but at the moment sucked into the black market trade with Malawi (less than 50 meters away, across the Songwe river), and thus less attentive than it might be to the immediate business of development. The fifth was a beautiful village, tucked into the highland mountains, where crops grew throughout the year because of the almost daily light rainfall, and where dairy cattle thrived. One of the main problems of this village was that the price offered for green tea by the local factory was so low that the people preferred to let their flourishing tea farms deteriorate rather than pick them regularly.

In short, the problems we saw in these villages were not problems of deprivation or government-imposed tyranny. Even the worst of the villages had the potential to work itself out of its problems, even though it seemed unlikely, without some kind of mass conversion. In fact, people in all the villages were feeding themselves, albeit with difficulty in the dusty new village and the problem village.

At their best, moreover, these villages clearly had the capacity to feed much of the rest of Tanzania. People were crying to us that they could do more, but did not have the incentive to do so. Crop prices were too low, payments were too uncertain, and consumer goods too infrequently available, to justify all-out efforts to realize their full potential. Angles might perhaps say "I told you so!", but I would disagree. Where the spirit of free enterprise was most evident, as in the cocoa-growing

village and the black-market village, there was not as much development as in the cooperating villages. The showplace to which we were directed, as well as the bus-owning village, were busy succeeding because of joint action among the citizens. In both these villages, there were large, well-kept communal farms, in which the productivity was high, better even than the also-flourishing individual farms. The communal crop-storage and crop-selling centers were well organized, and business was flourishing. The communal village shops were generally well-stocked (although, it must be admitted, without those desired items of sugar, cloth, batteries, soap and kerosene).

In the free-enterprise villages, on the other hand, certain individuals were doing very well indeed, but at the expense of the rest of the population. Black-marketeers flourished, as did individuals who bought and resold coconuts at a large profit margin, or who rented their excess land to those without land. Hughes' statement that Kenya and Malawi "provide an object lesson in the generative power of free enterprise as compared to state-controlled" simply misses the mark. He says "I think that free enterprise is more effective than state enterprise, but what I saw indicates that communal enterprise surpasses both."

As the 7 villages indicate, there are wide variations throughout the Aboya region, variations which are based both in the geographic/physical setting and in the villages' ability to mobilize their human resources. The extensive survey supports this diversity. There are important and significant differences among the 6 districts which make up the region. The northerly, dry district of Shunya has far more mobility than the other districts, with many people moving in and out and working in remote places, and with much greater distances to public and local services and resources. It is likewise less able to feed itself and grow cash crops for sale. On the other hand, the northern plains area has far more livestock than other parts of the region.

These district variations are both predictable and less important for our purposes than the variations based on social factors. We set standards, admittedly somewhat arbitrary, for the 16 most critical basic variables, below which we asserted that a village was in a state of poverty. For instance, a village with a food crop sufficiency index of 3 or less, or a village with 1 livestock unit per family or less was considered in these respects to be below the poverty line. We found, on this basis, a total of 18 villages which were below the line on 7 or more variables. These villages turned out largely to be in remote or poor areas, but there was usually also a social factor which influenced their poverty. On the other hand, there were 20 villages which were above the line on all these

indicators of poverty. These, presumably the most prosperous villages, are found generally close to major town centers and along main roads.

The 525 villages which lie between the poorest and richest villages assume a wide variety of values on the basic economic and social variables. The extent to which these variables correlate more or less closely indicates which of them may vary fortuitously and which are strong indicators of development. Table 2 gives correlations between the 10 most inter-related variables. I have abbreviated the names of the variables and also replaced the indication "per family" by "pf" in order to fit the names into the table.

Variable	Party members pf	Businesses pf	Income earners pf	Vehicles pf	Teachers pf	Pupils pf	Heads live away pf	Heads work away pf	Communal bags pf
Businesses pf	.56								
Income earners pf	.50	.51							
Vehicles pf	.49	.50	.30						
Teachers pf	.44	.49	.33	.49					
Pupils pf	.42	.41	.24	.33	.45				
Heads live away pf	.44	.36	.30	.62	.40	.26			
Heads work away pf	.41	.43	.30	.79	.46	.29	.53		
Communal bags pf	.41	.36	.53	.25	.15	.12	.08	.02	
Total families	-.27	-.18	-.21	-.05	-.17	-.15	-.14	-.10	-.06

Correlations between Variables
Table 2

The variable which we found to be most indicative of other aspects of social and economic development is the number of party members per family in the village. The first column of table 2 shows the extent to which this variable is correlated highly with other important variables.

It is, of course, improper to infer that the number of party members causes economic success. Most likely there is a complex interaction of all factors, including support of the party, its goals and activities, as well as economic and social development. But one thing can certainly be said. Intervention by the national political party at the local village level is not the destructive force that Hughes and others claim it to be. Those villages where the party is weak are the very villages with few business establishments, few money-earning individuals, few vehicles, few teachers, few family heads with outside employment, few pupils and low communal farm production per family in the village. These 8 cor-

relations are all strikingly high, well beyond the range of casual chance relations, and compose a total picture of economic and social progress at the village level.

Only in a few cases are the correlations low, and these cases associate pairs of variables which are most likely genuinely unrelated. Specifically, the number of bags produced per family on the communal farm has no natural relation to the number of household heads living and working away from the village. Moreover, the production on the communal farm is only weakly related to the number of teachers and pupils per family.

Otherwise all the correlations are strikingly high. Party membership, businesses, income earners, vehicles, teachers, party and household heads living and working away from home form a tight knit collection of indications that the village is alive and well. Moreover, high scores on these variables suggest that the village also is making good use of its communal farm, which is supposed to be the first practical illustration of village-level rural socialism.

The final variable in Table 2, namely, the total number of families is consistently and negatively related to all the other variables. This may seem difficult to interpret, but I believe that it shows that there is an upper limit to the effective size of a village. As the families increase beyond a certain number, there are diminishing returns to the community, probably because the land is being used beyond its ability to sustain the village. This is particularly true in the southern and central parts of the region, where some villages have begun to show signs of overcrowding and involution. Mbeya region did not suffer the trauma that other regions suffered in 1973 at the time of consolidation of scattered homesteads into villages, since the ethnic groups in Mbeya have generally lived in reasonably compact villages. But now many of these villages are showing signs of overcrowding, without any evident solution in sight.

So far I have spoken of correlations among variables indicating social and economic progress. It is important to note that these variables do not include the number of village leaders or those variables of Table 1 which refer to private family agriculture. It is perhaps surprising that where there is more paid leadership there is not more development. It would seem that it is shared leadership, through party membership, rather than the incipient bureaucracy of a paid leadership that leads to development.

Turning to agricultural variables, the total sufficiency of food crops or cash crops in the village is scarcely at all correlated with the basic

10 variables, and in fact are basically only correlated with each other. There is a slight tendency for food and cash crops to be poorer in the villages and greater distances to go to public services and local resources, or if these services and resources are unavailable for long periods. It is surprising, that the availability of farm supplies and farm advice has essentially no influence on crop production. Those who want farm supplies get them wherever they might be available, and those who want advice don't necessarily seek it from extension agents, who often know less than experienced village farmers.

In short, social and economic development at the village level concentrates on income-generating and skill-developing activities, and does not include agriculture. There is no incentive to produce substantially more than enough to eat, except in those villages where the political and social consciousness is sufficiently high to promote communal farming. Such communal farming, moreover, may well be born from loyalty to the political system and recognition that communal work is socially beneficial rather than a device for personal financial return. People in Moyo generally, however, do not eat, and prefer to put their further efforts elsewhere than in agriculture.

These findings are confirmed from attitudes expressed in the intensive survey of the 7 villages. We asked what the good life means to people. The top items on the list include modern housing, clean water, good transport, reliable supplies, a well-supplied village shop, a village grain mill, a local veterinary, cattle, schools and teachers, money and modern agricultural varieties, all mentioned in more than 3 percent of the responses, for a total of half the responses. Various aspects of crop farming only are mentioned below the 3 percent level and in all made up less than 18 percent of the responses. Agriculture is necessary, but is distinctly secondary for most people, as further indicated when villagers ranked their future of the good life in order of importance.

The people we interviewed emphasize the desire to reach these goals rather than specific means to accomplish them. Modern farming methods are not quite low on the list of causes, and even in this case money is considered a principal means to good farming, although it is also recognized that farming yields financial rewards.

The important changes that people have noticed are similar to their hopes for the good life. At the top of the list, totalling more than 50 percent of the answers, are schools, shops and consumer goods, medical services, modern houses and furnishings, high prices of goods, clean and filtered water, convenient transport, rural socialists, grain mills, roads,

the national political party, communal farms and shortages of goods. Only after these items, all of which are mentioned in at least 10 percent of the responses, came responses concerning crop farming at the individual level, which altogether make up less than 15 percent of the answers. Moreover, these agricultural changes are, as above, less important to the people we interviewed than changes in village life style.

The changes listed above are largely good, and reflect what the people hope for in the good life. It is true that they also mention that consumer goods are expensive and in short supply, but such complaints for the worse represent only a small minority of the responses.

It is striking that these changes are primarily attributed to the government and its associated agencies and activities. Heading the list of causes of changes are government, disease and death, rural socialism, development and modern life, and the village administration. And finally, the list includes disease and death, but by and large the major source of change is government. The changes brought about by government, whether at the national or the village level, moreover, are basically good, and include in particular the replacement of the old individualist system of chiefs with new village leaders, a new national party, village offices, communal life and work, and independence.

It must not be thought, however, that the government and its agencies have operated in a heavy-handed way through a paid bureaucracy to impose its ideas on the villages. On the contrary, the people reported in more than half the cases that villagers were responsible for decisions underlying change, or at least took the decision jointly with government leaders. This supports our finding in the extensive survey that the number of paid leaders was not correlated with indicators of village development.

There is a much higher proportion of agricultural decisions made to bring about change than in the previous contexts. Leading the list of decisions made at the village level is the decision to increase crop production, and not far behind are several other agricultural decisions. It would seem that agriculture is understood to be important in bringing about modernization and change, but, as I have reported earlier, certain problems make agriculture less central in fact than it might be in theory.

Some of the reasons why the good life is not achieved, and why the hoped-for changes are not realized, indicate the difficulties that still exist in rural Mbeya. The people lack building supplies, transport, good water, consumer goods and medical services, which account for 42 percent of all the problems named. Lack of various types of agricultural supplies make up another 13 percent of the problems.

The main causes of these problems are administrative in character, and appear to point to bad government. Lack of money tops the list, as might be expected, but after lack of money come poor distribution and unavailability of goods, poor government, bad administration, no water delivery system, low rainfall, and selfish leaders. Obviously, the government is not perfect, and specifically it is blamed for high prices of goods, lack of consumer goods, lack of a village shop and tractor, lack of building supplies, lack of a grain mill, and lack of fertilizer, to mention only the most important failings.

On the other hand, it is to the government, in collaboration with themselves, that people turn for solutions to their problems. They believe more than anything that their problems can be solved with government help, as mediated through the village leaders, committees and people. They do not reject the government, but just ask it to do its work more efficiently and in closer cooperation with the people. Government failures are one with failures in local leadership and in village organization, so that in a sense the government is the enemy.

Specifically, the people we interviewed largely accepted government policies, and responded favorably to the system of rural socialism, called ujamaa or family food. Not every person or village has applied the system, but there was little real objection to it.

We asked people to complete a series of open-ended sentences concerning the topic ujamaa, and the most common answers were that some people oppose ujamaa, that ujamaa is good and brings development, that they join and live in an ujamaa village, that the village accepts the ujamaa policy, that there was no ujamaa in the past, that ujamaa will grow well and not stop, that the village has a good ujamaa farm, and that the people understand the meaning of ujamaa. Each of these sentence completions was given by about 4 percent of the total set of responses, and together they comprise 40 percent of the responses, almost totally in favor of the system.

The most common answer, namely, that some people oppose ujamaa, was primarily a response to the introducers "I am sorry", "I cannot" and "I understand". The people to whom we spoke wished to identify themselves with the ujamaa policy and to disassociate themselves from the opposition.

There may have been an attempt to please us, but since all interviews were held anonymously and since many specific complaints were made during these interviews against the government and the village leaders, I feel that the answers at least represent people's public opinion, although perhaps not always their private actions.

Another striking fact about these responses is that the people we interviewed believed that ujamaa did not exist in the past. It was con-

considered a new policy, a policy brought in by the post-independence government which has done away with the old days dominated by chiefs and private gain. The dominant response to the sentence introducing "the past" was that there was no ujamaa system in former days and that people lived in an individualistic fashion. The Tanzanian government's idea that ujamaa promotes and preserves traditional African values is simply not true, according to the people we interviewed. They considered ujamaa to be the way of the future, which will grow to the point where everyone enjoys its benefits.

These answers to attitude questions help to explain why political party membership is so central to economic and social development in rural Mbeya. In order to achieve the good life, people seek certain changes in the old order. Specifically, they are glad to be rid of the chiefs and the individualism of colonial and pre-colonial days. They know agriculture is an important key to change, but they do not find private agriculture to be as profitable as it might be. It appears rather that change is most effectively and most profitably realized by a joint effort between villagers and government. This effort is centered upon the political party and its associated ujamaa policy, which can and in some cases does lead to significant structural developments at the village level. Unfortunately, these developments have thus far not included increased production on the family farm, but in the villages where rural socialism is most advanced communal farming is proving increasingly beneficial.

My conclusions are cautiously optimistic, and indicate that Tanzanian national policy is beginning to achieve positive results, at least in the relatively well-favored Mbeya region. The ujamaa system is generally accepted as the way of the future, an attitude which is reinforced by the close association of party activity with social development. The process is inevitably slow, since it requires building a complex social and economic system, where before there was little to benefit the common person. Such a process is surely slower than either the quick-gains exploitative policy of a free-enterprise society or the massive interventionist policy of a totalitarian state. It leaves cities and towns to stagnate, after the initial growth spurt of the colonial and immediate post-colonial era, while the rural areas catch up. Doubtless, the jaundiced commentators such as Hughes of Reader's Digest rarely left the dubious comforts of Dar es Salaam's deteriorating hotels, and complained in their reports about the conditions they met without realizing that small-scale guest houses are of more benefit to rural people than multi-story hotels.

I think, on the shaky basis of a few months in rural Tanzania, that the experiment is by no means over. On the contrary, it is still at its beginning, and the beginning looked good to me. Tanzania-style development will ultimately be built on a solid foundation of a decently-housed, well-educated, well-fed healthy rural population, and that foundation is being laid at the present.

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John Gay
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