

Impact of Arusha Declaration on Higher Education in Tanzania*

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Higher education in Tanzania dates back to 1961 when the University College of Dar es Salaam was established as an affiliate college of the University of London.¹ This was the first institution of higher education in the country which in 1963 joined Makerere College in Uganda, and the University College of Nairobi, in Kenya, to form the University of East Africa. It was soon afterwards followed by the establishment of certificate and diploma level professional institutions such as the Dar es Salaam Technical College, the Institute of Development Management at Mzumbe (IDM), the Institute of Finance Management (IFM) and Ardhi Institute.² Since the Arusha Declaration affected the University College first and later the University of Dar es Salaam before affecting other institutions of higher learning which came into being in the early 1970s, I am, in this paper, going to use the response of the former institution to the Declaration as a case study. That is to say, I intend to examine what has happened at the University since 1967 in order to show how the policy of socialism and self-reliance has affected higher education in general in this country during the last twenty years.

In its development as an institution of higher learning, the University of Dar es Salaam has passed through three main stages or phases since its inception in October, 1961. The first of these phases is the pre - 1967 period during which it functioned first as an affiliate college of the University of London and since 1963 as a constituent college of the University of East Africa and was academically dominated by the so - called "Africanist" or "Nationalist" aspect of Western scholarship in the social sciences.³ The second was the 1967 to 1970 period, which, as a result of the introduction of the Arusha Declaration and the break-up of the University of East Africa, was characterised by serious debates about the role of the University in the development of a country aspiring to become socialist. The third was the post - 1970 period during which attempts have been made to depart from previous trends in both teaching and research in order to accommodate the policy of socialism and self-reliance. I will now examine each of these phases in detail.

When it started in 1961 and when it became part of the newly established University of East Africa in 1963, the University College of Dar es Salaam was greatly influenced by the University of London in every respect. Most of its academic and senior administrative staff, for example, were expatriates; its curricula were similar to those of London and other British universities and its research activities reflected the interests of expatriate staff and their home institutions. Even in terms of organization and administrative structure, it adopted the British pattern of university administration.

As regards the College's social function as a centre of higher learning in the country, it was quite similar to that of universities in Britain and other former British col-

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onies. That is to say, its main social function was to produce and sustain a small intellectual elite. The background to this kind of social philosophy has been adequately summarised by Eric Ashby as follows:

Colonial universities were to begin as most of the Provincial Universities in England began: as "University Colleges" which would be transmitted into universities when they acquired charters to grant their own degrees. From the outset they were to be self-governing societies, demanding from their students the same entry-standard as demanded by London or Cambridge; following curricula which might vary in detail but must not vary in principle from the curricula of the University of London; tested by examinations approved by London and leading to London degree awarded on the recommendation of London external examiners. And as for their social function, the colonial universities were completely residential, and their prime purpose was to produce "men and women with the standards of public service and capacity for leadership which self-rule requires". In short, they were, as in England, to nurture an elite.⁴

What Ashby states above corresponds to what the De la Warr Commission on higher education in East Africa had recommended in 1937. According to the De la Warr Report, the main purposes of higher education in East Africa were: (1) to provide post secondary education to qualified students; (2) to train students for the professions, namely teaching, agriculture, medicine, veterinary science, and engineering; (3) to engage in research; and (4) to maintain close association with other research organizations in the world, especially Britain.⁵ This means, therefore, that the University College, Dar es Salaam, and its sister colleges in Kenya and Uganda, were founded on the British philosophy of education. This philosophy had, at the time of their establishment, three main attributes, namely autonomous status for the University, concern for narrow specialization and high standard of academic excellence comparable to those of the University of London, and the production of a small educated elite group regardless of the actual manpower needs of the country concerned.

In spite of the British underlying philosophy of education upon which the University of East Africa and its constituent colleges were founded, there was nevertheless a general feeling among political leaders and top University administrators in the region that the University must serve the goals of development of East African countries. Julius Nyerere, for example, who was then Chancellor of the University of East Africa and President of Tanzania, stated that "the University has not been established purely for prestige purposes. It has a very definite role to play in the development of this area ..."⁶ In so saying, he challenged both students and professors at the University to play their part in the struggle against poverty, disease and ignorance in which the newly independent East African countries were engaged. Similar sentiments were expressed by the first Principal of the University College, Dar es Salaam, Professor R.C. Pratt, when he said: "The University of East Africa must be a committed institution, actively relating our work to the communities it seeks to serve".⁷ This, of course, was more easily said than done given the historical background of the institution.

According to the masterplan of the University of East Africa, each of the constituent colleges was supposed to specialise in the training of students in a certain field or fields. Makerere, for instance, was supposed to train doctors and agricultural experts, Nairobi engineers and veterinary scientists and Dar es Salaam was supposed

to train lawyers for the whole region. However, this distribution of university facilities in East Africa did not last long because national manpower requirements, particularly in Tanzania, increased beyond the capability of the University to meet them. The main reason for the failure of the University to meet these needs appears to have been the strict entry - requirements to degree courses and the overspecialization structure of undergraduate programmes which tended to produce a few highly specialised graduates with honours degrees instead of a broad stream of less differentiated graduates with general degrees.⁸ Moreover, as Tanzania adopted a planned economy in the 1964-69 First Five Year Development Plan, the need to meet manpower targets became even more imperative. As a result, the University College, Dar es Salaam, found itself establishing facilities of Arts and Social Sciences in 1964, Science in 1965, Medicine in 1968, Agriculture in 1969 and Engineering in 1973. The establishment of these faculties was among the efforts made by the College to cope with national problems of development.⁹

Similar efforts were made by the College to depart from the traditional Western concepts of "pure research" in order to cope with developmental problems. For this reason, problem-oriented research units were established in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, namely the Economic Research Bureau (ERB) in 1965 and the Bureau of Resource Assessment and Land Use Planning (BRALUP) in 1967, whose purpose was to provide knowledge relevant to the solution of developmental problems. But the introduction of problem oriented research did not necessarily mean a departure from traditional Western concepts of research methodology as Kimambo and Ishumi have rightly pointed out in their paper. They argue further that:

Apart from a shift in History at Dar es Salaam from "areas and periods" to "topics", the methodology remained very much the same. The inspiration from nationalism tended to magnify the political aspect of studying society, thus delaying concentration on more pressing issues, such as understanding the nature of colonial oppression with its manifestation in underdevelopment and need for economic liberation as opposed to political decolonization.¹⁰

It appears, therefore, that none of the main problems facing the University College, both in terms of training manpower and producing knowledge for national development were solved in the pre - 1967 period.

However, following the promulgation of the Arusha Declaration in February 1967, a new era in the history of the College appeared during which the role of the University in a country aspiring to become socialist was discussed with greater intensity than ever before. At first the Declaration appeared to the University community as if it was an official response to the crisis which had occurred in October 1966 when 334 students were sent home after demonstrating against Government decision to introduce the National Service programme to ex-Form Six students and to students in institutions of higher learning.¹¹ From the point of view of the University community, the new policy declaration had clearly touched on the rootcause of the crisis. For this reason, the College administration convened a Conference to discuss the role of the University in the development of a socialist society in Tanzania, only a month after the adoption of the Arusha Declaration.¹² Its participants included people from within and outside the College.

The recommendations of this Conference are very interesting because, despite the fact that they seemed to be very radical at the time, most of them now appear to

be quite modest when compared to what has already be achieved. The first one of these recommendations was the need for the introduction of political education in the University curriculum. There seems to have been a general feeling among members of the Conference that the demonstration against National Service in 1966 had been caused by lack of political awareness and commitment to national ideals on the part of the students. Hence, it was hoped that the introduction of a common course in the University curriculum, teaching Tanzanian socialism as seen against the African and international background, would solve the problem. The course was supposed to be "both theoretical and practical so that it should be linked with social and community service on the part of the students". The second recommendation stressed that there should be a thorough review of "the curriculum and teaching methods... without lowering its academic standards in an international context". A third recommendation concerned the staffing of the University. Four suggestions were made in this regard. That "less reliance should be placed by the College on overseas agencies or foundations, for both recruitment and salaries of staff"; that "it should give priority to the East Africanization of its academic and senior administrative and library staff" and that "East African staff at the College should be encouraged to take study leave in socialist countries". The fourth and final recommendation concerned work and service to the community. In this regard, it was suggested that "students... should practice self - reliance in their daily lives on the campus... and they should participate in routine cleaning and maintenance within the University College"; that ways should be found by which "students can perform regular useful community nation-building work" and that "Expatriates... should take part in an orientation course on arrival and be invited to travel up - country and take part in communal activities".

Other important things which were mentioned in the report of the Conference, though not included in the recommendations, included the need for the University College to have a close working relationship with the Party, Government and the community at large so as to destroy its "ivory-tower" image. This was high-lighted by the Principal of the College, Dr. W. Chagula, when he addressed the Conference. Among the suggestions which he made were the establishment of TANU and TANU Youth League branches at the Hill and the allocation of more seats to the Party, Government and other public bodies in the governing Council of the College.¹³

The final report of the Conference was never officially received or adopted by any organ of the College but its proposals appear to have greatly influenced academic and non-academic discussions at the College between 1967 and 1970 and almost everything suggested therein was subsequently implemented. One of the immediate effects of the Conference was the introduction of curriculum review debates on how teaching programmes could be restructured. It involved conscious re-examination of teaching programmes in order to determine how relevant they were to the new Tanzanian socio-political environment. In this endeavour, it was recognized that curriculum reviews should be continuous in order to make adjustments according to changes in the needs of the country. By 1970, almost all faculties at the College had set up curriculum review committees.

Besides adjustment in departmental programmes, groundwork was prepared for the introduction of the political education course which had been recommended by the 1967 Conference and for faculty reorganization. As regards the former, there was

a consensus in the College by 1970, that there ought to be an interdisciplinary common course which would teach the tenets of socialism and self - reliance to all students so as to make them aware of the developmental problems and needs of the country. In fact, the course, which became known as Development Studies, had already started in an ad-hoc manner by the time the University of East Africa ceased to exist in July 1970.¹⁴ It was formally launched by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences the following year when a department of Development Studies was established which later became an institute.

The most challenging task at the College during this period appears to have been the reorganization of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Until 1970, the Faculty was organized according to subject-based departments. Following the 1967 Conference, however, a hot debate ensued concerning the relevance of this organization in meeting the country's manpower requirements. At one extreme, there was a small group of conservative scholars who continued to insist that the single honours subject approach was still the best way of training manpower for the country; at another there was also a small group of radicals, who were demanding the abolition of departments and the adoption of career streams instead.¹⁵ This latter group regarded departments as "conservative structures" which were not likely to allow the necessary full restructuring of the Faculty. Eventually a compromise was reached which allowed the continued existence of departments, the introduction of career streams and substreams and the introduction of two more interdisciplinary faculty courses, namely East African Societies and Environment (EASE) and the Methods of Social Science Research. EASE was designed to give students a basic understanding of East African societies and the problems confronting them in their environment, while the Methods course was supposed to equip Social Science students with research techniques.

This compromise did not satisfy either of the two opposing groups because the debate at this point had become ideological with the conservative members of the Faculty smelling "red" in the proposals which the radicals were making, while the latter viewed the *status quo* as bourgeois and reactionary. In fact it is believed that some of the senior staff members of the Faculty quit the University in the 1970/71 academic year as a result of this controversy.¹⁶ Apparently, the general feeling among most expatriates at the time was that the University was being too much politicised for their taste because its status as an autonomous corporation was being eroded.

The years from 1967 were thus a period of hectic struggles at the College which prepared the way for the changes which have been taking place since the early 1970s to the present. These struggles, which took the form of discussions and debates, appear to have affected the research aspect of the College less than they affected curriculum review and Faculty reorganization presumably because the research which was carried out at the time was relevant to the solving of problems of development. Moreover, results of the research projects carried out by both the ERB and BRALUP did not begin to appear until early 1970s.

The opportunity to introduce changes at the University College availed itself in July 1970 when the University of Dar es Salaam was established to succeed the University of East Africa which broke up. This was a golden opportunity to create a University which would trully reflect the needs and aspirations of the country. It appears,

however, that the ability to do so was curtailed by the presence of expatriate staff who were still the majority and the structures which they had established. Nevertheless, the government was able to exert its influence on the new University by defining its role in the development of the country and by controlling the administrative organs. According to Part II, Section 4 of the Act which established it in 1970, there are seven objectives for having the University of Dar es Salaam. These are:

- (a) To preserve, transmit and enhance knowledge for the benefit of the people of Tanzania in accordance with the principles of socialism accepted by the people of Tanzania;
- (b) To create a sense of public responsibility in the educated and to promote respect for learning and pursuit of truth;
- (c) To prepare students to work with the people of Tanzania for the benefit of the nation;
- (d) To assume responsibility for University education within the United Republic and to make provision for places and centres of learning, education, training, and research;
- (e) To cooperate with the Government of the United Republic and people of Tanzania in the planned and orderly development of education in the United Republic;
- (f) To stimulate and promote intellectual and cultural development of the United Republic for the benefit of the people of Tanzania;
- (g) To conduct examinations for, and to grant degrees, diplomas, certificates and other awards of the University.

These objectives clearly indicate that the University of Dar es Salaam was established as a tool for development in accordance with the socialist principles of the country. They indicate how it was expected to play its role in the development of a socialist society.

It was from July 1970 that most of the changes which had been proposed following the adoption of the Arusha Declaration in the late 1960s started to be effected. Among the first ones to be introduced was the teaching of Development Studies as a Political Education course to which I have already referred. In this respect, the University of Dar es Salaam set the pace in the teaching of political education in institutions of higher learning in the country. In other words, the kind of political education introduced at the University was also introduced in all other institutions of higher learning which came into being in the 1970s and later on such as IDM at Mzumbe, IFM and Ardhi Institute in Dar es Salaam, and so on. Since it is an interdisciplinary course, Development Studies has been a great challenge to the staff at the University, particularly in the Institute of Development Studies. This is because it required teachers with an interdisciplinary training as well as organization skills. Whether it has succeeded in creating awareness and a good understanding and commitment among students it is difficult to say because no assessment of its success or failure has been made to date. But one thing is certain that the course is now firmly established in all institutions of higher learning.

Other changes which have been introduced at the University of Dar es Salaam since 1970 include curriculum reviews and faculty reorganization as I have already pointed out. In this regard, it was not only the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences which reorganized itself and reviewed its teaching programmes. The Faculties of Sci-

ence and Agriculture reorganized themselves too by introducing a course unit system. The need for scientists in a developing country like Tanzania was acknowledged by everyone. Yet the inherited training from the University of East Africa in broad subjects like Zoology, Chemistry, Physics, and so on did not give relevant training for an underdeveloped industry. The debate on what to do about this problem went on for a long time until eventually it was resolved in 1975 to adopt a course unit system which presents the subject in small one term units. It was argued that by combining relevant units from different subjects it would be possible to train a scientist who would be better prepared to do certain jobs without losing mastery of his main subject. A similar approach was adopted in the Faculty of Agriculture. Previously, graduates in agriculture had a general training in all areas of agriculture. Such training was said not to prepare them for the research functions which they were expected to do as agricultural officers. By specializing in one area of agriculture in their final year, it was hoped that they would be better prepared to play their role in the development of agriculture in the country.

As regards to non-academic changes which have resulted from the Arusha Declaration, they include transfer of control of the University Council from academicians to representatives of public bodies, establishment of Party and Youth League branches at the University, and the introduction of the people's militia. Apparently, in order to control the University, the Government started by appointing the then Secretary General of TANU as Vice - Chancellor and then deliberately instituted a governing council, which as the main policy making body, would represent interests of the general public. Of the thirty members of the Council, only three appointees of Senate and five student representatives are from within the University. The rest are from outside.

The idea of opening Party of Youth League branches as well as the introduction of the people's militia was, I think, intended to integrate the University into the Tanzania community and to cast off the "ivory - tower" image which it had inherited from the University of East Africa. This pattern was adopted by other institutions of higher learning as they sprang up.

Another important development which has affected higher education in Tanzania in the post-Arusha Declaration period is the Musoma Resolution which was adopted by the TANU National Executive Committee in 1975. This Resolution changed the admission of students to the University and other institutions of higher learning from direct entry after Form Six to mature age entry. It has been argued that the procedure was introduced because it was felt that the people who could benefit most from University education and serve the nation better after graduation are those who have been working for some years before entering the University. Young people fresh from secondary schools were considered to have no experience and commitment to society yet and had therefore to work for at least two years after their National Service year in order to qualify for admission.

Lastly, the "nationalization" of the University in 1970 seems to have immediately led to a conflict between the student government of the day, DUSO, and the University administration apparently because the former wanted to act more independently of the latter. This conflict started with the Akivaga crisis of 1970/71 and continued to surface during most of the 1970s. Since the Government was very sensitive to unrest among university students, it eventually intervened after the 1978 demonstration

against the introduction of fringe benefits for members of Parliament and Ministers to abolish DUSO and institute a nation – wide student government known as MUWATA under the general direction of the CCM Youth Organization. Although it has taken long to be accepted by the majority of students at the University, I think it has started to gain ground in recent years.

When all these different developments are taken together, what could one say has been the impact of the Arusha Declaration on the University in particular and on higher education in general? It seems to me that it is still too early to come up with a conclusive statement because most of these development have not yet been carefully studied, analysed and evaluated. What is evident to all of us is that development such as the clear definition of the political objectives, the restructuring of courses, the localisation of the teaching staff, the introduction of a materialist approach in both teaching and research and the introduction of political education have been progressive moves and I think modest achievements have been made in these areas.

FOOTNOTES

1. Prior to 1961, Tanzanians got higher education, both at diploma and degree levels, either at Makerere College in Uganda or overseas.
2. For details on these institutions, see B.C. Sanyal and M.J. Kinunda, *Higher Education for Self-Reliance: The Tanzanian Experience*, International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, 1977, pp. 115–123.
3. This aspect of West scholarship on Africa has also been discussed by I.N. Kimambo and A.G. Ishumi, "Twenty Years of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: A Critical/Review". Paper presented on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam, October, 1984; B. Swai, "The Department of History at the University of Dar es Salaam and Professional Africanist History," *Pan – Africanist*, 9 (1982) pp. 24 – 31.
4. E. Ashby, *African Universities and Western Tradition*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1 1964, p. 20.
5. G. Mmari, "University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania", in K.W. Thompson, B.R. Fogel and H.E. Danner (eds), *Higher Education and Social Change*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1977, p. 191.
6. J.K. Nyerere, "Inauguration of the University of East Africa", in *Freedom and University*, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 218.
7. A.J. Nsekela, *A Time to Act*, Dar es Salaam University Press, Dar es Salaam, 1984, p. 80.
8. This rigid system is generally known as the 3:1:1 structure of subject combination which required students to take three subjects in the first year and one in each of the following years.
9. Mmari in Thompson et. al. op. cit. p. 193.
10. Kimambo and Ishumi, op. cit. p. 3.
11. I.N. Kimambo, "Higher Education and National Development: The Case of the University of Dar es Salaam", in A. Hetland (ed.) *Universities and National Development*, Almquist and Wiksell International, Stockholm, Sweden, 1984, p. 65.
12. See Report on "Conference on the Role of the University College Dar es Salaam, March 1967.
13. Ibid. pp. 56 – 58.

14. Kimambo in Hetland; op. cit. p. 66; and Kimambo and Ishumi op. cit. p. 5.
15. Kimambo and Ishumi op. cit. p. 6.
16. Ibid., p. 6.
17. "The University of Dar es Salaam Act, 1970" in the *University of Dar es Salaam Calendar* of any year.