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POPULAR RESISTANCE IN TANZANIA:

LESSONS FROM SUNGU SUNGU.

by

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POPULAR RESISTANCE IN TANZANIA: LESSONS

FROM THE SUNGU SUNGU

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Introduction

During the 1980's in rural Tanzania there arose a "traditional" army called the Sungu Sungu. This army ascribed to itself the authority to maintain peace in the regions of Tabora, Mwanza and Shinyanga. In this period of the intense capitalist crisis where new forms of accumulation were developing in rural Tanzania the activities of plundering the natural resources had reached such a stage that the established organs of law and order of the state were integrated in a contradictory manner into the structures of export of capital. Ivory, gold, diamonds, cattle hides and skins were being taken from these regions when the return for labour was such that the people were eking out a bare subsistence. In the face of armed seizure of cattle, brigandry, and death from the gold mining in Kahama and Geita, and other mines the poor developed their own measures to fight the accumulators, called cattle rustlers. The Sungu Sungu (or as they are called in some parts ruga ruga) in reverting to the mode of dress, weapons and medicinal practices of the pre-colonial village had developed a method of self organisation and self mobilisation which by passed the courts, the police and the party structures of governance in the rural villages of the above three regions.

Through popular democratic villager assemblies the Sungu Sungu dispensed justice and mobilised the energies of the youth to conceptualise their ability to enter the decision making process

where they lived and grazed their cattle. In essence though based on democratic village assemblies the core of the movement was male dominated. Thus after the original burst of energy to curb, cattle thefts and racketeering had subsided the Sungu Sungu turned their attention to the other sources of insecurity and became preoccupied with witch craft, eradication. Older nationalist members of the party understood the plotical implications of this sort of movement. They remember how during the anti-colonial struggle "witch craft could be used for political ends".

After four years of efforts by the state security organs to infiltrate, find the leader and subvert the movement the party decided in 1983 that the best way to control this peasant uprising was by embracing the movement. By 1983 the party leadership embraced the Sungu Sungu calling it the true people militia. In true administrative style the idea of resistance which issued from the Sungu Sungu was to be controlled with repressive tolerance. That is the party would laud the peoples efforts while more subtler efforts would be used to bring the movement under party and state authority, including the extension of the administrative structure in Shinyanga. The measure of success could be seen by 1987 when the party could call out the traditional peasants army to form a guard of honour for the President on Peasants day in Shinyanga region of Tanzania.

The contours of peasant resistance in Tanzania in the eighties in an independent African Society twenty years after independence raise many important lessons about the form, content and political direction of popular resistance. In the specific context of Tanzania the idea of popular resistance is firmly linked to the anti-colonial struggle.

From the armed uprisings of the Maji-Maji in 1905-1906 to the strikes, marches, boycotts, and tax evasion of the forties and fifties the episodes of anti-colonial resistance are documented in the history books of Tanzania. Because of the nationalist historiography seeks to rob the masses of their history, the social movements of the anti-colonial phase are moulded to fit a specific conception of one partyism. The books and papers on resistance do not alert us as to how the spirit of rebellion could strengthen the people as they face new forms of exploitation by international capital and their local allies.² Such a critical analysis of the form, content and the nature of the resistance would allow for new appraisals of the strength and weaknesses of these resistance and how new forms of resistance could re-establish the right of the people to full democratic participation in the process of transformation.

That the nature of resistance in post colonial Tanzania took many forms is still an area which requires research and documentation. Without doubt similar to the period of the depression and World war II at present there are numerous forms of passive and not so passive resistance in the political life of Tanzania. The rise of the Sungu Sungu was the overt and dramatic end of resistance which is taking place in a society of crisis and 'structural adjustment'. Whether in the form of worker protests, (e.g Kilonbero sugar factory), the cutting down of coffee trees, cash crop hold-ups and diversion, the refusal to pay the head tax (called development levy) or the failure of the Nguvu Kazi, (Human Resource Development Act 1983) the resistance of the people asserts itself as a factor of Tanzanian politics in the eighties.

These episodes of resistance can be distinguished clearly from the anti-colonial, or anti-settler acts of rebellion in the continent of Africa. In this period the masses can identify local agents as the sources of their exploitation and domination.

This new form of popular resistance is not unique to Tanzania in this period when there is an intensification of exploitation of the continent of Africa. All over this continent of debt, hunger, armed struggles and militarisation there are social movements struggling to transform their material conditions. Hence to be able to document and bring to light the popular aspirations of the African masses is for the African intelligentsia a concrete expression of solidarity with the poor. However, this solidarity requires that the study is not simply a description of the social movements but the kind of analysis which can strengthen the organisational capacity of the producing masses as they meet their day to day hardships.

To be able to conceptualise the components of popular resistance and the potentialities has also been sharpened by the fact that a social movement calling itself a National Resistance Army has come to the Summit of state power in at least one African territory. The success of the guerrilla army in Uganda and the exercise of power by the National Resistance Movement led by Yoweri Museveni also alerts the committed African scholar as to the fundamental differences between resistance and social transformation. For in Uganda a resistance movement has the reins of state power but is confronted with the concrete problems of how to generate real political participation by the masses.

Unfortunately the resolution of this question of the direction of the transformation of the Ugandan economy is now compounded by war and new forms of resistance which are linked to the history of the politicisation of region in that battered society.

This resistance army in Uganda also brings to mind the numerous rebellions which are going on all over the continent in independent states. Some of these rebellions have developed into full scale guerilla wars as in the Eritrean war. However, the nature of African Universities and the present intellectual climate on the continent ensures that those in the imperialist centres know more about the Eritrean struggle or that the Sudanese people Liberation Army than the intelligentsia in Africa. Thus in East Africa security pariahs by leaders prevent genuine intellectual discourse on resistance movements such as Mwakenya when other human rights organisations or think tanks in the West fully study the political implications of these movements.

That the centres for international capital study the potential of popular resistance is without doubt. But now in a period of anti-war sentiments in the capitalist metropolises when their own citizens cannot be motivated to fight oppressed peoples, the study and understanding of popular resistance movements in Africa take on new meaning. This is best illustrated in Mozambique where counter-revolution and South African destabilisation carry the label of resistance and exploit the ideology of precolonial practices in the rural areas. At present the counter revolution of the Mozambique National Resistance Movement dictates to the progressive scholar that in the analysis of social movements and ideas there must be a conscious effort to ensure that the foundation of intellectual inquiry is linked to strengthening the masses against new and more covert forms of manipulation.

Where imperialism seeks to use social science to undermine the sovereignty of the African people the progressive scholar needs to build up an intellectual culture which will be part of the culture of harmonising the knowledge of the people with modern scientific techniques.

In the regions which gave rise to the Sungu Sungu in Tanzania are to be found a people which call themselves the "Sukuma" and Nyanwezi. Whether the Sukuma constitute a tribe, a nation or a dispersed ethnic group is still a matter of intellectual controversy. But the fact is that without a materialist history of pre-colonial Tanganyika it is still difficult to say how and why the largest population group of the Tanzanian society speaks one language. The people who are called the Sukuma comprise more than 15% of the population of Tanzania. Together with the people who are called the Nyanwezi and who share certain cultural traditions with the Sukuma they constitute 18-20% of the population in three of the richest regions of the territory. Yet if it seems that there is some hesitation in using the terms 'Sukuma' on the part of this writer it is because a serious scholar must be constrained by the unscientific nature of the studies on the peoples and regions from which the Sungu Sungu came. For the history of the region showed that the conception of the 'Sukuma' tribe came after efforts by the colonial state to create 'tribes' for more effective indirect rule.

Bourgeois scholarship falters in its preoccupation with superstructural elements without serious and prior study of the accompanying production relations. Hence in the voluminous literature on the peoples of the regions of Tabora, Kwanza, and Shinyanga there is very little analysis on the mode of production,

the levels of specialisation or the nature of class formation which could have led to the development of the Sukuma language and culture. The intellectual traditions of the west start from the perspective that the African had nothing to contribute to the development of the human community thus the studies of the Sukuma abound with ethnographic materials on the chiefs and other religious leaders. And even in this limited objective, this scholarship fails to penetrate the real foundations of the dancing groups and secret societies. Hence while the 'Sukuma' are one of the most studied peoples in Tanganyika the continuity in the resistance from the period of colonialism to Sungu Sungu is obscured by the anthropological emphasis of the structure, functions and roles in the society.

This is most evident in the work of the sociologist anthropologist Hans Cory. ³ The voluminous papers of Hans Cory form a veritable wall against a proper study of the regions of Tabora, Mwanza and Shinyanga. Most studies on the Sukuma begin with Cory and even those which seek to differ challenge Cory on the same grounds; i.e. the preoccupation with chiefly structures and customary laws. ⁴ It is important to underscore that this methodological approach not only represents a particular world view but this kind of intellectual work is concerned with social control. Inevitably this control is always disguised under the banner of development and the rehabilitation of the land. One study of the Sukuma brought to light the real mandate of Cory. It clarified that:

"The government hired Hans Cory, an Austrian immigrant turned anthropologist-sociologist, to investigate secret societies among the Nyamwezi and the Sukuma.

In particular, he was directed to discover whether such societies might be potentially subversive organisations." 5

All over Tanzania at present there are studies which have the same purpose to see the ways in which the cultural aspirations of the people could be channelled to serve the purpose of the deepening of capitalism in the rural areas. Present scholarship on the cultural dimension of development from the Bulletin of Third World Forum alerted us to the importance of cultural resistance among the masses.

"In the West as well as in Japan, material development was supported by internal changes in social and human relationships. The process, incidentally, was stretched out over a very long span of time. As a consequence, there was no radical break; instead, what took place was an extremely complex process in which selected elements of the old culture were re-absorbed within the context of technical and economic development. Modern capitalism is deeply rooted in Native Western (or Japanese) traditions, helping reciprocally to strengthen it through a positive process of evolution that removed obstacles to technical creativity and economic initiative."

From this analysis of the relationship between the rise of capitalism and its integration with Western cultural values,

We are reminded:

"Africa's situation is different. The historical conditions under which capitalism penetrated the continent, plus the circumstances of its later expansion, have meant right from the beginning, economic development has clashed with the local cultures. Concurrently, the impulse for changes in social and human relationships has come mainly from abroad, quite often with the help of Brutal force". 6 (our emphasis)

Because the role of force is so central to the reproduction of capitalism the study of resistance in Tanzania as in Africa must involve the strengthening of the tools of analysis which will help to instill confidence in the people. For as in Tanzania and other parts of Africa there is the push to deepen capitalist relations under the banner of the International Monetary Fund. This renewed effort by international capital must inevitably clash with local cultures and it is the argument of this paper that the expression of Sungu Sungu was a reflex action by the poor to the looting of the countryside. Hence the purpose of this paper is to seek to give meaning to the clash which gave rise to the Sungu Sungu taking care to make a clear link between the cultural resistance of this movement and the changing political economy of the society as a whole. The concepts of regional differentiation and capital accumulation are tools to enrich our understanding of young men bare chested and crowned with feathers using spears to chase criminals and cattle rustlers. The Sungu Sungu filled a spiritual void for the youth and was a resource for pre-capitalist ideas to fight the modernisation schemes of the Rural Integrated Development Programmes (RIDEP). By resorting to 'traditional' cultural forms the Sungu Sungu gave concrete expression to the clash where the commoditification process and processes of exploitation were masked by the language of rehabilitation, conservation and proper land use. But this kind of resistance could not turn into a sustained political struggle because of the contradictory nature of pre-capitalist ideologies. The involvement of the Sungu Sungu in (witchcraft eradication' and other activities which persecuted older women in the village brought to the fore Cabral's notion of culture and resistance.

Amilcar Cabral the African freedom fighter provides a firm theoretical foundation for the study of cultural resistance of the type such as the Sungu Sungu. Cabral had affirmed:

"The value of culture as an element of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation on the ideological or idealist plane of the physical and historical reality of the society that is dominated or to be dominated. Culture is simultaneously the fruit of a people's history and a determinant of history, by the positive or negative influence which it exerts on the evolution of relationships between men and his environment, among men or groups of men within a society, as well as among different societies." 7

The positive and negative lessons of the Sungu Sungu can be penetrated with the help of Cabral's theoretical tools.

For all over the continent the relationship between men and women in the environment engender social struggles which can either take the people forward or help to confirm new efforts to harmonise the economic and political domination of the people with their cultural personality. Imperialism is acquiring some experience of latter enterprises. American scholarship in its study of the military aspects of Zulu dance try to mould this information to strengthen Inkatha. Hence the progressive scholar need to clarify the positive and negative aspects of cultural resistance so that a scientific outlook is developed to understand the nature of the contradictions among the people. The questions of real transformation, of the social agents of this transformation, of the principal allies of any resistance and of any resistance movement, of the ideological basis of the resistance and of the objectives of the resistance are all sharpened by the present period in African history.

In 1967 Tanzania embarked on a policy of Ujamaa and self reliance. After twenty years of this process imperialism had declared that even the limited initiatives towards social welfare must be reversed. Social welfare must be replaced by a more explicit form of class selection and capital accumulation. Hence the idea of liberalisation and prosperity based on the private individual. Before the effort to make liberalisation respectable the Sungu Sungu had been publicly involved in the war against Economic sabotage. Now that the former 'Walanguzi' have been given the stamp of approval by the state the role and purpose of the Sungu Sungu has declined. The embrace of the party stole the thunder from this movement of resistance but the conditions of capital accumulation in the rural areas will continue to generate new forms of resistance among the peasantry. Our task is to attempt to grasp the context of the social struggles which brought forth the Sungu Sungu and to inspire the kind of research which strengthen the masses in their struggles for real transformation.

The Context or the antecedents of resistance in Sukumaland

The rise of the Sungu Sungu was a process of resistance in the period of the capitalist depression in Tanzania 1978- the present.

There is no precise date as to the foundation of the Sungu Sungu. There was no conference, there was no clear leader and the formation of this traditional army mushroomed all over the regions of Mwanza, Shinyanga and Tabora. This much is evident from the present studies on the rise of the Sungu Sungu."⁸ These studies have rightly recognised the significance of the spread of the Sungu Sungu and the fact that (a) there is no person or group of

persons who could be called the leaders (b) they are not confined to the village or district (c) that they are not confined to one ethnic group and that (d) they took the law in their own hands even to the front of arresting police persons and overthrowing village governments - singing songs of resistance, dancing, running over long distances and effecting new forms of communication the rural areas the Sungu Sungu stamped a new sense of collective justice while establishing itself as the cultural reference point in the village community between 1981- and 1986. After one hundred years of intensive Christian proselytisation the precapitalist cultural patterns were unearthed to confront the oppressive accumulation through forced commoditisation of cattle.

The Sungu Sungu are usually referred to as coming from the Sukuma people. According to the ethnographic statistical framework of the population of Tanzania the Sukuma comprise the largest single ethnic' group in the Tanzania society of close to 25 million in 1987. Out of this the Sukuma comprise about 15 per cent of the population. But because of the weakness of ethnographic intellectual outlook the Sukuma are sometimes grouped with the Nyanwezi without clear reasoning. In the specific case of the Sungu Sungu the analysis of the regions from which they arose include the region of Tabora which is supposed to be populated by the Nyanwezi. This confusion over who the Sukuma are arises directly from the ideation of tribalism which guided colonial scholarship.

Colonialism wanted to remove African people from history. Colonised peoples were passive objects providing an exotic base of study for colonial anthropologists who came to study primitive society. Colonialism in the main, determined that Africans were not makers of history and were only objects to be looked at

for usual features such as structures of chieftainship, secret societies and witchcraft. The negative impact of colonialism was quite dramatic. African political entities lost their power, independence and meaning. In the specific case of the peoples who are called the Sukuma, in the two regions of Mwanza and Shinyanga the people were multi-ethnic and the social expansion of the peoples made anything like tribal loyalty a thing of the past. New ties based on specialisation, production and social differentiation had substituted : clan' and tribal loyalties. However as in all parts of the world the substitution of class ties for purely ethnic ones is a lengthy historical process. The fact is that in the regions of Tanganyika this process was arrested by colonial rule. Colonialism blocked the evolution of national solidarity among a people who lived in a territory bigger than many European states. The degree of the homogeneity of the Sukuma language and culture requires an understanding beyond the intellectual heritage of the scholarship on tribalism and cultural change.

The colonial state created the myth of the 'Sukuma' tribe. It is not insignificant that since the work of Cory the principal studies of the Sukuma have been carried out by the Church as part of their civilising mission in Africa. It is outside the scope of this short paper on the resistance of the Sungu Sungu to study the history of this region but part of the emancipatory political process of the Tanzanian people must be the development of a new epistemology with respect to the African past and present. Just as how colonialism went about the creation of tribes to implement indirect rule the scholarship of Cory, Malcolm and Rounce went the methods of social control of the peoples in the name of

improved animal husbandry, proper land use, the individualisation of land tenure and environmental problems. But the important fact of this region for the purposes of our paper was the way in which a Sukuma identity was linked to opposition to external overrule.

Future research from the point of view of social reconstruction in Africa will shed light on the ecology, production, class formation, ideology and labour processes among the peoples who are called Sukuma. What were the relations with their neighbours, how did they avoid the rapacious slave trade and how did they emerge from colonialism without a destruction of their cultural personality? These questions are linked to the continuity and change which is evident and more significantly to the cultural clash between Western capitalism and the cultural life of the people. This is clear from the numerous schemes to speed commodity production in Sukuma land from the period of the Sukumaland Development Scheme in the forties to the present Mwanza/Shinyanga Rural Development project. In the introduction of the socio-cultural Sukuma the ideologues of this Ridep insist on studying Sukuma organisation and culture for this may be a 'source of resistance to proposed innovations.

Resistance to innovation

The so-called resistance to innovation which is perceived by the World Bank is a long process of resistance to the deepening of capitalism in the rural areas of this region of Tanzania. Before the capitalist depression of the thirties the regions of Tabora, Shinyanga and Mwanza were part of the labour reservoir poor for the colonial trade economy. The 'war-like' history of the Sukuma plus the nature of the region prevented large scale white settlement. After the depression and World War II when

British wanted to intensify exploitation of the colonies these regions became the principal cotton growing areas of the Tanganyika territory. But the growth of cotton in this region reflected the needs of capital accumulation of British capital and not the social needs of the people. The growth of this cash crop speeded the process of differentiation in the Tanganyika territory and in the region. In comparison to the areas of Kilimanjaro, Mbeya, Tanga and Bukoba the intensity of colonial capital did not bring about the same social differentiation. These regions were the areas of plantation, of more roads, more schools, more houses with corrugated iron sheets and more of the infrastructure of colonialism. So though Mwanza and Shinyanga were not as undeveloped as Mtwara, Lindi, Kigoma or Songea the formation of classes in this region was already underway before independence. By 1940, however gold and diamonds were discovered in Sukunaland so that added to the wealth in stock and agricultural produce, Sukunaland was the largest and richest area in the territory, both in actual and potential terms. The whole agenda of the British after 1940 with the Sukuna Development Scheme (SDS) was how to weaken the people of the region so that they could be more vulnerable to capitalist exploitation. This could be seen behind the efforts of the SDS, the evidence of the East African Royal Commission up to the present Mwanza Shinyanga Rural Development project. And for the weakening of the Sukuna to turn them into wage labourers or to be more dependent on the state it meant the reduction of the cattle herd. This was at the heart of the destocking campaigns of the region. Destocking was only one of the maze of ordinances and regulations which controlled the peoples. There were rules and regulations affecting all aspects

of life. G. Maguire said that the Sukuma peasant "was being pushed around".... "He had to ridge and manure acres of cassava and cotton, plant at certain times and pull out cotton stalks by certain dates for burning after harvest, refrain from cultivating near gullies, cutting trees or transporting cattle without a permit, have his cattle dipped or innoculated against disease, slaughter or sell a certain percentage of his cattle and produce on request certificates indicating sale of attesting that the hide from slaughtered beasts had been seen by the appropriate government officer." All these measures were predicated on teaching the Sukuma how not to overgraze and how to use the soil. It was never reasoned that the regressive nature of cotton production was the real nature of soil erosion. To the extent that there was a crisis in land use methods in Tanganyika by the fifties, the colonialists were responding not merely to the backwardness of existing African technology but also to consequences of cultivation without offering any possibilities of improved technology to replace an African technology which was adequate when there was shifting cultivation and a smaller population. The force of colonialism all over Tanganyika territory was linked to the establishment and spread of the so called cash crops. But in the case of the Sukuma force served a direct economic function by incorporating into the capitalist system value which initially lay outside the said capitalist system. This was explicitly so in the 'destocking' legislation of the 1940's which forced the people to sell their cattle at give away prices.

Destocking and resistance in Sukuma Land.

The force of colonialism during the post war period of Tanganyika could be seen in every aspect of social reproduction. The coercive legislation and the web of regulations which were implemented as wartime requirements became permanent features of the colonial economy. This continuity was not explicit in the destocking campaign which in the parlance of the neo-colonial period is called the need for 'proper livestock farming to prevent overgrazing'. The campaign actually began in the thirties when the colonialists began insisting that the pasture was overstocked and that Africans would do themselves a good turn by selling cattle and destocking.¹⁰ This is in spite of the fact that the colonial enterprise had unleashed a major rinderpest epidemic between 1880 and 1920 and more than 90% of the cattle herd of East Africa was decimated. Lord Lugard had boasted of the impact of the rinderpest on the pastoralists of the region where vast herds of cattle were wiped out, in some localities as much as 90 per cent.¹¹ Studies on the ecology and cattle complex of the region since then have shown that the decline in cattle herds led to a falling human population and the subsequent spread of tsetse wild game eco-system.¹² Up to the present the peoples of East Africa have not regained their independent initiative in relationship to the natural environment.

Despite the clear evidence of the decline of the decline of the cattle herds the colonial state embarked on a massive destocking campaign in the region of Shinyanga and Mwanza. World War II had brought a dramatic increase in the demand for beef to feed British troops. Thus the British meat processing firm of Liebig's had established a buying station and factory in 1939 at Athi River in Kenya.

The colonial propaganda machinery induced the pastoralist of Tanganyika to part with some livestock as their contribution to

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the War Fund. But as the war intensified the colonial state turned from exhortation to forced destocking. Walter Rodney in his study of this period showed how the Defence Regulations were invoked to ensure compulsory sale of cattle in 1942.

Under the provisions of the Wartime Regulations, Defence (Compulsory Sale of Cattle) Regulations it was decided that Kwimba, Maswa head of cattle required from the Lake Province. Quotas for Rodney showed how "the resistance to the compulsory sale of cattle formed a special part of African resistance in the rural sector during the war. After the war the colonial state helped British capital by establishing Tanganyika Packers Ltd.

Even during the war it was clear that there was no problem of over-stocking so that after the war it was necessary to devise new measures to take value out of Sukuma land. Serious problems had risen for though the Beef for Britain campaign was linked to a capitalist enterprise located at Athi River in Kenya the factory drew 90% of its supplies routes. So to be able to continue the destocking campaign and the compulsory sale of cattle at low prices the colonial state sheltered British capital by the establishment of a company formed jointly by the colonial government and Liebig's under the name of Tanganyika Packers Ltd. The company was incorporated in November 1947. In the twenty year period between 1947 to 1967 this company survived and prospered through state subsidies. Not only was this company subsidised by compulsory destocking thus assured of supplies but the company was given tax concessions, profitable prices and the necessary infrastructure of feeder roads,

reduced freight rates and priority access^{to} transport from the Railway authorities. This explicit support for colonial capital with its political impact of compulsory destocking in the rural area meant that Sukuma land became a pivot of the anti-colonial resistance during the fifties. The resistance to cattle sales took many forms and even the colonial sociologist Hans Cory in testifying to the East African Royal Commission testified to the unpopularity of the destocking measures to support Tanganyika Packers Ltd. He had warned that "without the Tanganyika Packers Ltd. a compulsory destocking campaign could not be executed, because the surplus cattle could not be sold,"¹⁴ Cory arguing in the liberal tradition that men should have the right to dispose freely of his property argued against forced destocking.

It was therefore not insignificant that in the anti-colonial struggles of the period the opposition to forced destocking was at the top of the list of the measures that the African nationalists wanted to be removed. So when in 1954 the Sukuma Union drew up an agenda for discussion with the colonial state the first three items were:

- (1) Necessity for destocking
- (2) Destocking (procedures)
- (3) Price paid by Tanganyika Packers.

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The area called Sukuma land was one of the most militant centres of opposition to colonial rule and the ferocity of the resistance in this period was such that the colonial state banned the operations of TANU in Sukumaland for three years.

Hans Cory who had been studying the subversive 'potential of the Sukuma secret societies' wrote a paper to the colonial state on the conditions which gave rise to the Maji Maji and Mau Mau. He was using his knowledge to prevent an up-rising in the regions of the Sukuma. In August 1954 the colonialists did not know the full measure of the nationalists so by banning TANU they drove resistance underground though some of the energies were channelled into the building of the cooperative society to market the growing cotton crop. When politics was driven underground in the regions of Mwanza and Shinyanga the fledgling nationalist politicians lost control over the peasant resistance and this was manifest in the Geita uprising of 1958. Geita, in Mwanza region is a rich area where today there is a gold rush in that part of Tanzania. The colonialists at that time undoubtedly knew of the existence of the vast deposits of gold and wanted to establish a multi-racial council as a new form of governance. The mass opposition to colonialism in this region climaxed in a protest march which opposed the specific establishment of the multi-racial council but the Geita uprising was part of the general unrest throughout Sukumaland as "dissidents flouted agricultural rules, sought to release the prisoners and threatened courts." This uprising speeded the decolonisation process as the colonial state gave more authority to the nationalists so that they could help to stabilise the region. The equivocal attitudes of the nationalist to the self-organisation and self activity of the people is captured for history. This is especially important for in the era of the Sungu Sungu the resistance was against the same state machinery, only this time commanded by the former nationalists.

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What is also of significance was the way in which the anti-colonial uprising was linked to the nation of a Sukuma identity. For a while the colonial state toyed with the support of the Sukumaland Federal Council which was the expression of Sukuma solidarity but J. Nyerere, the then leader of TANU, opposed the colonial support for this council for he had perceived the divisive potential of this form of organisation in the context of the Nationalist struggle. He opposed the Sukumaland Federal Council on the grounds that "We can't have another Katanga here".

The period after political independence brought a respite in the state of resistance. The forms of Sukuma identity which had led to the Geita uprisings and other forms of passive protest had been submerged by the euphoria of 'Uhuru'. Nationalist forms of governance replaced the indirect rule of the colonialists as the efforts of the state sought to effect greater political cohesion of the society through the political party. It was the strength of the party which enabled the nationalists to abolish the chiefly structures throughout the territory. Together with the promise of Ujamaa in 1967 and the efforts towards self reliance the Tanzanian society became distinguished from its neighbours by its relative stability. It is our view that the declaration of Ujamaa acted as a safety valve for the Nationalists but without a conceptualisation of how to harness knowledge of the village community the forms of colonial rule were bound to lead to new patterns of resistance.

The regions of Tabora, Shinyanga and Mwanza were rich regions but there were no plans to properly use the gold, diamonds and cattle for the social reproduction of the society. Instead the effort was to intensify the old colonial insistence on a narrow range of cash crops without the overt support of the state

Tanganyika Packers could not prosper as it did under colonialism. After the Arusha declaration the company was nationalised under terms which would be questionable by a state which was in any way responsive to democratic appeals. And to be able to get closer to the cattle of the Sukuma the TPL laid the foundations for a meat processing plant in Shinyanga. But like so many other projects in the neo-colonial period, after fourteen years the factory was not open. The link between the needs of the state accumulation and scholarship was expressed in a MA thesis which was written to develop a policy guideline for a guaranteed supply of meat to the proposed meat canning factory. ²⁰ The history of the Tanganyika Packers Ltd is still riddled with anti-people activities to the point that even the party had called for a ten per cent destocking in certain regions (viz Shinyanga and Mwanza, Arusha). But the government's own efforts to probe the maladministration has led to class solidarity in that the findings have never reached the public.

Forced destocking of the colonial type could never be implemented in the neo-colonial era even though international capital had to find new ways to get the cattle of the people at low prices. So by the end of the seventies the region of Sukumaland became once more the area of intense cattle rustling. Where the TPL could not take the surplus from the people the old Athi River factory was one of the destination for the cattle of the people. So like the era of colonialism the value from the peoples labour was entering the circuit of capital accumulation through the Kenya Meat Marketing Board. It was not insignificant that Shinyanga region with over 32 per cent of the total cattle population of the country was the area of

the most intense violence and cattle theft.

Some studies have already pointed out how the policies of the Tanzania state dovetailed with those who were forcibly accumulating from the poor peasants. Kemal Mustafa in his study of "the pastoral question in Tanzania" said: the attitude of the planners and administrators towards the livestock producing peasants are generally negative with the livestock producing peasants being considered not yet settled". "Administrators continue to assert, usually without any empirical evidence, that without further destocking, there can be no development for the livestock producing masses." He continued

"Given the reluctance by the livestock producing peasants to reduce their cattle numbers under increasingly difficult economic conditions there has been a growing tendency to use both legal and illegal force to bring about this destocking in the interests of accumulation."

Linking this process of forced commoditisation to the increased plunder of the region especially after the Kagera War this writer like many others pointed to the use of heavy sub-machine guns to rob the pastoralists of their cattle.

"The oppressive nature of this accumulation on the basis of the livestock producing masses has been leading to an increasingly antagonistic relationship between the livestock producing peasants and the petty bourgeois class in control of state power in Tanzania. The rise of the militant Sungu Sungu movement in Mwanza, Tabora and Shinyanga regions, the heart of the so called livestock zone of Tanzania, in the 1980's is a direct response by the livestock producing peasants against this oppressive accumulation through "forced commoditisation." 21

It is clear from the above that the Sungu Sungu was a response to the deepening class struggle in the rural area.

This class struggle was no longer silent as the masses could not count in the state to protect them. According to the state's own statistics there were over 11,453 cattle thefts and 15 murders in Shinyanga, Maswa, Kahama and Bariadi districts in 1981. In 1982 there were 21,922 cattle thefts and 8 murders related to cattle thefts in the same districts. A total of 52,876²² cattle were reported stolen from the country in 1982. This meant that at 1982 prices the state was losing over US \$ 66 million dollars from cattle theft. Of course the state did not know the full extent of the livestock population of the country for up to the present many of the rural livestock producers associate the livestock census²³ with taxation or other anti-people legislation.

For the masses of these regions insecurity was engendered by cattle theft, smuggling, gold mining, and those kinds of activities associated with primitive accumulation. By 1980 Mwanza was like a frontier capital with the possibility of obtaining illicit goods. The deaths from the gold mines in Geita and Kahama gold fields were part of the primitive methods of mining and claiming stakes. Mining villages such as Bulyankulu in Kahama district became the magnet for all kinds of dealers and by 1987 over 30,000 persons were to be found in this village - which had to be divided into Bulyankulu 1, 2, 3, etc. stretching the limits of all forms of normal social interaction. Kahama district is a rich fertile district in Shinyanga region and it is not accidental that the Sungu Sungu first appeared in Kahama district. This region is one of the richest in Tanzania both in human resources, cattle and minerals.

Since the 1980's there have been many commissions by the state and the party into the forms of accumulation in this region for it was clear that the amount of gold, diamonds and other wealth being taken out of the society was not reflected in the ability of the state structures such as the Mwadui Mines or the state Mining Corporation. But whereas the state established silent commissions²⁴ the violence and insecurity required urgent attention and in order to halt the spread of violence insecurity and cattle rustling the people resorted to a traditional form of military organisation to form the Sungu Sungu.

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The Sungu Sungu

That the Sungu Sungu arose as the social force to resist the forced commoditisation in the rural areas was a profound statement on the form of the class struggles in rural Tanzania. The very name of the Sungu Sungu itself in its meaning reflects the search for solidarity and collective action by the people. Research into the nomenclature of the Sungu Sungu shows that it is very difficult to transpose a concept which is linked to tradition to the English language. For in this process the concept of Sungu Sungu is going through three layers of language. The concept of Sungu Sungu relates to "Cooperation in doing jobs" which is similar to the cooperation of insects which kisukuma are known as Sungwa or Sungu.²⁶ The Sungu Sungu are also called Wasalama which means those soldiers who have brought peace and security in the society. This name is a Kiswahili name and is linked up to the general acceptance of the work of the Sungu Sungu in the three regions of Mwanza, Shinyanga and Tabora where the people do not all claim to be Sukuma.

One important point however is the way in which the Sungu Sungu has brought to life a form of Sukuma identity, in the above - mentioned regions. So much so that in a region such as Tabora where the people have been called Nyanwezi, in the military operations associated with peace keeping in the villages - the Sungu Sungu in this region were also called Basukuma. It suggests that the Sukuma identity was taken on for cohesion and discipline, especially so in the area of Kahama which has attracted thousands of immigrants in the past 10 years.

P. Masanga in his study of the Sungu Sungu said that through legend the founder of the movement was one Kishosha, the grandson of Ng'wanamalundi. The legends surrounding this Ng'wanamalundi are all linked to his knowledge of traditional plants and his opposition to colonial rule to the point where he was exiled from Shinyanga by the British. Through oral literature tales are told of how he defied British authorities to escape detention and it is clear from these stories that they are meant to motivate the youth. A deeper investigation shows that the Sungu Sungu in its structure and organisation does not depend on an individual but on the collective self organisation of the village community. The spread of the movement in the short period between 1980 - and 1983 showed that there was a certain autonomy to each village assembly so that for years the state security organs were studying the leadership structure of the Sungu Sungu in order to curb the growth but could not do it. Here was an army of the people which later called itself "Jeshi la Ukombozi" which traversed an area of over 50,000 square kilometres establishing law and order according to the conception of popular village assemblies.

One researcher ~~in describing~~ ^{in describing} the Sungu Sungu said; 'The Sungu Sungu specialise in the apprehension and punishment of livestock thieves ... When the thief is caught he is taken to the location where the theft occurred and punishment takes place ... Sungu Sungu members appear quite exotic as they are barefoot and barechested, wear feathered headdresses, shorts, quivers of bows or spears on their backs, bells around their ankles and carry arrows and spears in thier hands. They dance and sing in a circle around the thief who sits impassively in the centre, appearing dazed and disinterested.' ²⁷

Beyond the exotic nature of this army the researcher captured the place of dance and songs in the place of this collective village security process. For the song and dance were a mere reflection of a deeper cultural manifeststion. And even an assesement of the dances of the Sungu Sungu would show that these dances are indeed the popular culture of the village and not the subversive secret societies that Cory had been mandated to study. Dance and song occupy a very important place in the village community. They are not only outlets for artistic and aesthetic expressions among the people but they also fill material, spiritual and emotional needs. Even though one of the Sukuma dances, the (Buyeye); snake dance is now used to entertain tourists the dance societies were related to entertainment, exercise and the skills of medicine, hunting and the herding of cattle. Undoubtedly the content of the dances and songs would have been affected by the transformations unleashed by colonialism and neo-colonialism. Thus while the Sungu Sungu seem traditional in the form of the songs sung or

the dances performed the traditional structures which were linked to homesteads, Kaya or established fields (matongo) were affected by the new production and social relations that had risen in the society. What was traditional was that the Sungu Sungu dug deep into the knowledge of organisation and collective security to develop an army which could confront cattle rustlers with sub-machine guns. Far more important than the exotic form of the Sungu Sungu was the class content. Fifty years earlier Cory warned the colonial state that it was powerless to interfere with the dance societies so that the state should be careful that the societies provide the focus for popular self organisation, (in colonial parlance discontent). After describing 17 societies including 3-5 dance societies he warned: "Although the societies described above do not muddle in administrative or political affairs there is the possibility that if changing economic conditions give rise to class distinctions based on wealth, one or more of these societies may provide the focus for discontent, because there is now even a tendency for the sophisticated and better off native not to join this kind of society".

After 50 years the sophisticated and better off 'native' of the Sukuma had become part of the state class in the party, the regional government or in the ideological apparatus of the state. For this reason though cattle rustling affected pastoralists more than it affected cultivators it was in the interests of the whole community to break the cycle of insecurity generated by the forced commoditisation of cattle.

The content of the Sungu Sungu was to defend the interests of the weak and poor; pastoralists and non-pastoralists.

P. Masanja in his notes while explaining the traditional Sukuma forms drawing extensively from his use of this language was at the same time clear content. He said "The Sungu Sungu initially emerged as a response by middle and poor peasants who been harassed by increasing armed cattle rustling, highway brigandry (known as Kodi ya Milembe or Masanja) and house breaking. In Kahama they considered themselves as Jeshi la Ukombozi against the much richer peasants who had created their own organisation known as Chama cha Kumi in which cattle keepers paid a membership fee of 200/= which alleged was used to grease the palm of those in authority to arrest thieves and as an insurance against theft." The social processes which gave rise to this movement were very specific to the nature of the regions with the large numbers of cattle.

Far more research is needed on the links between cultivators and pastoralists and how social wealth by these communities is linked to the ownership of cattle and not to the newer symbols of capitalism. Yet from the present evidence it is clear that the poor whether cultivators or pastoralists came together to defend their communities. This is seen from the basis of the social organisation of this army of resistance. "The Sungu Sungu basis of social organisation is the village community (kijiji or Nzengo). All inhabitants of the kijiji are Basungu-sungu. While initially the Sungu Sungu were a few able-bodied men who secretly met to plan out strategies for defence, now every inhabitant is deemed to be a Sungu Sungu."

There are no membership fees as such, though in the day that the kijiji constitutes itself into Sungu Sungu, word is passed around that from the neighbouring village, Sungu Sungu will come to install the leadership and contributions of 20/= are collected from each kaya household. The enthusiasm with which people readily pay is an indication of the positive response from the peasantry and the way they wish to be identified with this movement. ... The village community has its assembly to which all belong and participate in its deliberations The assembly elects in a public gathering their Ntemi leader, katibu (secretary) five elders and a makanda to head each group of 10 able bodied young men." ²⁹ This description and other works on this army emphasises the democratic and popular nature of the movement where free elections, open accountability and collective resistance superseded the social domination of the party and state with the layers of functionaries who were seen to be cooperating with the thieves and corrupt elements. In more than one instance the Sungu Sungu even apprehended police persons and replaced village governments. The Sungu Sungu gave themselves the mandate to return the security to the villages by removing cattle rustlers, thieves, racketeers (walanguzi) and alleged 'witches'. Before the era of liberalisation in 1984 the prosecution of the racketeers in the village was carried out with such vigour that the village community had reasoned that magendo brought insecurity. Thus walanguzi was held on the same place as witches. This was a tremendous development in the popular consciousness but the Sungu Sungu lack the ideological tools required to deepen this profound transformation in the consciousness of the poor peasants.

The Sungu Sungu had no links with the workers in the towns so that when they are acclaimed by the state and the party as having restored peace and security, it could be legitimately asked who benefits at present from that security.

Despite the ideological limits of the Sungu Sungu the nature of its organisation was such that the nature of military organisation did not take the form of a standing army. The Sungu Sungu were integrated into the village community and were answerable to and carried out their conception of justice with the power of the community behind them to guarantee enforcement. This power of the community to sanction justice outside the legal framework of the state had been noted by colonial officials who studied the Sukuma. This form of law enforcement by community action meant that the army was totally integrated into the community. In this sense the Sungu Sungu was a real peoples army totally self reliant on the community. This is clear from the weapons system - bows, arrows, knowledge of the environment and medicine (the proper chingira), the command control and communications system of the army called the Sungu Sungu. The command structure is linked to the Ntemi and the commander who must be a person with medical practices and the sort of training necessary for fighting and endurance. While tracking cattle rustlers the Sungu Sungu moved in small groups of 8-10 or the size of the section of platoon of the Western army. The sungu Sungu used guerrilla tactics for survival and draws heavily from the ruga ruga traditions: i.e. the military skills which were used by Chief Mirambo in the battles of the 19th century.

The Sungu Sungu developed their own unique methods of communication over a region of 50,000 sq. kilometres with over 5 million persons. The process of establishing this sort of control was linked to cultural bonds between the peoples and the fact that the power of the poor peasants held away over the rustlers and racketeers. Sungu Sungu went from village to village and carried out a ceremony called kutonya (some researchers including my own informants call this an enthronement ceremony but this ideation contradicts the popular basis of the movement. It seems that there is no adequate English translation for this process). In this ceremony the Sungu Sungu dance and sing the following song:

Gininiga ng'watwizilike ng'wali ng'wakunuka wibi
Na basambo abo ng'watogwa kubulaga
banhu sagala,
Mnane giki Sungu Sungu itabembelejaga,
Lelo ng'wacha.

Gininiga you have come to call us,
thieves were dominantly threatening everywhere,
Witchcrafts rejoiced to kill people,
Let you all know the facts,
Sungu Sungu has no mercy on you,
death is upon you,
be prepared.

The military organisation of the Sungu Sungu described above proved adequate as long as the resistance remained within the politics of the districts from which the army arise. It could not confront a real army bent on moving down peasants armed with bows and arrows. So while there was a high rate of success of the Sungu Sungu trapping cattle rustlers this form of military organisation could not succeed in battles elsewhere. This was clear in a major battle in may 1984 where scores of Sungu Sungu were ambushed in a battle with the Wataturu.

The party Secretary General was rushed to Shinyanga region and the party prevailed upon the Sungu Sungu not to take revenge. Instead the party promised that it would "equip the traditional defence groups with modern defence techniques to enable them to be more effective". This was only one more effort of the state to pacify and demobilise the Sungu Sungu. Since that time the official line has been that the Sungu Sungu represents the true embodiment of the Peoples Militia and as such should be recognised under the law governing the Peoples Militia. For more than four years the state had wanted to physically crush the Sungu Sungu especially in areas the local state machinery helped smugglers and cattle rustlers. The older party leaders know of the potential of this kind of uprising and thus in order to control this form of popular resistance the party gave the Sungu Sungu its blessing while restraining its autonomy. From that time the Sungu Sungu became cheap unpaid labour to keep the peace in the villages especially in the frontier gold mining villages of Geita and Kahama. During 1983 when the nature of racketeering was out of control the Sungu Sungu were deployed in the towns and became part of the peace-keeping apparatus of the state. This was a major achievement for the party commission which studied the Sungu Sungu were old enough to know the consequences of driving resistance underground as the colonialists did in the same regions in the fifties. But in their embrace of the Sungu Sungu the party did not bring any clear leadership and thus embraced all the aspects of the Sungu Sungu including the contradictory aspects of the male dominated community organisation.

This contradiction is most explicit in the witchcraft eradication campaigns of the Sungu Sungu. Hence the party exhorts the Sungu Sungu to refrain from the persecution of witches without developing the kind of society which would transform the peasants understanding of witchcraft. The tactic of party recognition for the Sungu Sungu was a short term measure of repressive tolerance but was inadequate for the long term resolution of the social conditions in rural Tanzania which gave rise to the Sungu Sungu.

For this reason the confusion exists over the lines of authority between state organs such as the police, the courts and the Sungu Sungu.

The Sungu Sungu and the State

The spread in the size and operations of the Sungu Sungu in rural Tanzania was a profound response of the peasantry to the way in which state control over the lives of the people had been strengthened by villagisation and the administrative machinery developed in its wake. Sungu Sungu was to be a source of confidence for rural villagers ~~that~~ they could develop autonomous forms of popular assembly which was a resistance "to the plethora of appointed officials who have power at the local level". The take over of village governments and the take over of police stations by the Sungu Sungu was a dramatic response to the forms of governance in the rural countryside. This form was authoritarian, and its content anti-democratic, and the political expression of the socio-economic policies being pursued in the society.

The fundamental problem lay in the basis for accumulation in Tanzania.

Though the ideology of the state since 1967 had been predicated on ujamaa and self reliance there was a marked continuity in the direction of economic policies. Where the nature of village organisation changed to resemble the collective aspirations of the people called ujamaa, the essence of the village structures was to supervise the production of surplus for the world capitalist market. The gold from Kahana and Geita, the cotton, cattle and diamonds did not go to build the foundations for a socialist economy, these commodities entered the circuit of international capital in ways which guaranteed super exploitation. More than one study has documented the way in which villagisation was the culmination of the efforts that started way back in the colonial days to restructure rural economic life so as to facilitate exploitation of the rural masses by international capitalism. To be able to test this assertion one need not remain at the level of the operations of the Tanzania state in the sense of the examination of the relevant organs; that is the coercive, the ideological, those of reproduction or those of legitimation. The links with international capital through 'donors' and missionaries were aimed at 'modernising' the peasantry and to intensify the colonial forms of cash crop production. While in other parts of the underdeveloped world the church has been transformed in the process of popular resistance, to link the ideas of theology to liberation the church in rural Africa is still rolling ahead in its civilising mission.

This mission does not seek to build on the knowledge and concrete experience of the people. So that in the programmes to eradicate hunger, poverty and disease the health projects reinforce the domination of the market by multi-national pharmaceutical firms (via aid called the Essential Drug Programme). Education for self reliance also forms its back on the knowledge which is reproduced in the village community. Hence the fact that the bulk of the Sungu Sungu were ex-standard seven leavers meant that the villagers were saying that the authorities for knowledge and law were in their own ranks. This was a major act of defiance against the school system, the church, the police the courts and in some cases village governments.

Defiance and resistance however while mobilising the energies of vast communities proved unable to generate the kind of outlook which could carry the people toward out of the insecurity generated by their relationship to the environment and to the state. But the state could only conceive of security in terms of the securing of the state. There were no real efforts to conceptualise a socio-economic programme which would involve transformation in the rural areas beyond the provision of raw materials for European and Western capitalist centres. Development involved the contradictory task of extending the acreages of cotton and tobacco. Tobacco production led to deforestation and the regressive nature of cotton production and its linkages in the economy meant that the people who produced the cotton could not afford the clothes produced from the cotton. The kind of scientific outlook necessary to lay the basis for real transformation was not forthcoming from the state, thus the repressive and coercive spate of administrative organs to control the peasantry.

Because the foundations of the Tanzanian state did not simply lay in the heritage of the colonial state the party which itself arose out of the resistance of the people took a different line from the coercive organs of the state.

Whereas the police and the courts called for greater powers over the Sungu Sungu the party as the ideological arm of the state and the source of state legitimation first studied the Sungu Sungu. Sociologists and party officials studied the movement to ensure that "It was not driven underground". A party commission was formed as state intellectuals warned:

" It is important to avoid coercive measures and instead adopt political measures that can transform and modernise the movement into an effective and highly disciplined grass roots organisation rooted in the history and culture of the peoples it is intended to serve." ³⁴

The party commission took this modernising theme to heart and this was reflected in the speeches of party and government leaders promising the Sungu Sungu modern weapons and uniforms. Up to the time of writing the Sungu Sungu still wore their exotic uniforms.

As the principal administrative arm of the state the one practical recommendations which came from the party commission was to create another district in Shinyanga region. Thus Maswa district was divided into two to create the districts of Maswa and Meatu. From time to time there were reports in the press that the party was preparing training programmes for villages and which offences were to be handled by both the Sungu Sungu and those which were to be handled by the police. These distinctions were never codified in law.

The embrace of the party and state to the Sungu Sungu took a filip after the other threats to the security of the state were manifest in the planned military intervention of January 1983. The state identified a new class of accumulators called economic saboteurs as part of the problem and for a year the Sungu Sungu were mobilised by the party in the rural areas to flush out corrupt elements, racketeers and saboteurs. The then Prime Minister in the heat of this campaign commended the Sungu Sungu for 'carrying out a cultural revolution in the country' in their efforts to fight crime and build socialism. The Prime Minister who was then the Secretary of the National Defence and Security Commission of the party said that the society had forgotten the role of their tradition and cultures in defence and security. Statements such as this endeared the Prime Minister to the Sungu Sungu to the point where one of the most favourite songs of the Sungu Sungu was on the untimely death of this Prime Minister in April 1984.

Sokoine uli Nsalama ugongwa gali
guseka amasambo
Galilila no amataifa, kila bupande nasikitiko
Mungu bebe leka na nile baba U-Sokoine
Nuchopa abasambo

Roughly translated

Sokoine was the upright man
The enemies of the people planned an accident
He died and they rejoiced
Sorrow spread everywhere
Ah God, I cry for Sokoine
I will hunt for his conspirators.

When the state identified the enemies of socialism as exploiters the Sungu Sungu identified itself with the party to call itself the army of the party. The Prime Minister, the President and the Secretary General called for the recognition of the Sungu Sungu under the law governing the peoples militia. So successful was the Sungu Sungu in curbing cattle rustling that by 1985 the rustlers moved to Mara region. When the party leaders called on the people to form traditional defence groups of the Sungu Sungu genre to combat insecurity and murders in Mara. Up to 1987 the Party Chairman was calling in the government to recognise the traditional defence the 'baraza' in Mara and the Sungu Sungu in Mwanza, Tabora and Shinyanga regions.

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This position of the top party leadership was always at odds with the local party officials and with the legal authorities in the society. Firstly during ^{the} Anti-Economic Sabotage campaign there were many instances in the regions of Tabora, Mwanza and Shinyanga where regional leaders and police persons were harassed by the Sungu Sungu. Secondly after the 1984 budget when the racketeers were allowed to import goods under the liberalisation programme these who called for greater efforts to curb the Sungu Sungu raised their voices even more. In the initial period of the new direction which was in fact the old colonial strategy - the party turned to calling on the Sungu Sungu to plant trees and to increase agricultural production. This was the beginning of the demobilisation of the Sungu Sungu and this was to be carried forward by the donors who introduced a special scheme of "incentive goods for rural Tanzania" especially among the Sukuna.

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Incentive goods were to be thousands of bicycles which could induce the rural poor to produce cotton despite the fact that the world price was below the cost of production.

By 1987 the coercive arm of the state felt confident enough to proclaim that the CCM recognition of the Sungu Sungu³⁸ does not have the force of law. This problem of the Sungu Sungu and the law highlighted the contradictions of the state and its inheritance both in relation to the people and to the colonial statutes.

As it was pointed out above colonial officials had discerned a parallel law enforcement in Sukumaland. The colonial state noted the closed associations and the power of the community to enforce strict control over the activities of members of the community. The decision by the party to allow the Sungu Sungu some freedom to organise was a major political retreat. But this tactical retreat meant that there were contradictions with other organised branches of the state such as the police and the Stock Theft Prevention Unit. This unit was explicitly established to curb the export of capital via cattle rustling. The Sungu Sungu however identified many elements of the police and this unit as collaborators of the rustlers. A clear contradiction existed between the agencies of the law, the law itself and the Sungu Sungu.

Though the party exhorted the Sungu Sungu to follow the laws of Tanzania the party leadership from time to time called for the court to respect the rulings of their assemblies but the law was never changed to give a legal base for the activities of the Sungu Sungu. So when the local state functionaries found their strength again they started to arrest the leaders of the movement.

Whereas under English common law a person is innocent until proven guilty the Sungu Sungu had their own code of investigation and those arrested are presumed guilty. At independence Tanzania inherited the British legal system with the change of the names of some courts but essentially with the same functions. What the party had wanted was for the activities of the village assemblies to have the force of the primary courts. These courts have a limited mandate and can only pass certain sentences. The Sungu Sungu however at times carried out the death sentence after their trials. It was this conflict which led to the repeated calls by state officials for the movement to hand over suspects to the police. This was particularly the line of the Ministry of Home Affairs. This line was even more strident after the movement seized at least one police station in Mwanza region when the weapons they seized from 'racketeers' were found on the streets again. Behind the Ministry of Home Affairs lawyers have argued that the Sungu Sungu is illegal and should be disbanded. Behind the legal community are those who assert that the Sungu Sungu is a terrorist organisation, terrorising innocent persons in the rural areas. This potential for the Sungu Sungu to turn into its opposite emerged from the efforts of the party to use this movement to enforce unpopular laws such as the Human Resources Deployment Act- called Nguvu Kazi by the masses.

The dialection of the positive and the negative in this movement was to emerge in the problem of witchcraft. For the party in embracing a movement with a precapitalist ideology had embraced it with all its contradictions and one of the manifest contradictions of rural Sukunaland has been the prosecution of old women as witches.

The Sungu Sungu, witchcraft and Socialism

The ideation of witchcraft remains one of the most baffling questions for socialists in their conceptualisation of the requirements of the transition to a higher form of social organisation beyond the poverty and destruction of neo-colonial capitalism. Inevitable as in the case of the Sungu Sungu all conflicts in the rural areas touch on the problem of witchcraft. Witchcraft has been defined by anthropologists in many books but as of the present these understandings begin from a colonial standpoint. The authors in a much quoted book on witchcraft and sorcery in East Africa defined "witchcraft as a mystical and innate power, which can be used by its possessor to harm other people". Such a definition is static and begins from a starting point which ignores the cosmology of peasants in African societies. In the present struggle in South Africa where real questions of social transformation are posed there is no attempt to define witchcraft but to understand its place in social reproduction. When popular defence committees were involved in witchcraft eradication one publication asked the relevant question whether witches are just a superstitious remnants of the dark pre-colonial past or is there a more rational explanation for their existence. Other questions were: Is the belief in witches necessarily reactionary or can such beliefs be transformed into a progressive ideology? Is the political and cultural isolation of the countryside just a passing problem that will disappear in the march towards liberation? Or does it reflect profound difficulties in the ability of urban people to understand and interact with rural culture?

From these profound questions the same comment maintained "To Christians, Christ exists. To Muslims, Allah exists. To Marxists, Class exists. To many living in the countryside, witches exist." Such a starting point allows for a more sympathetic approach beyond the colonial witchcraft ordinances which sought to outlaw a popular custom. It requires a scientific and philosophical outlook to grapple with the transformations in the society which generates the kind of insecurity which leads to the practices associated with witches and witchcraft. There are many questions raised by the problem not in the least in the way the idea witchcraft is firmly embedded in the consciousness of the people. A graphic example of this fact is that there is hardly a soccer team in Africa which does not travel with its own ~~witch~~ doctor.

The colonial state even while passing legislation against witchcraft did not ignore the social consequences of this belief. It is for this reason that the colonial state paid close attention to the practice of witchcraft and the potentialities of witchcraft eradication movements. They were aware that witchcraft eradication (of which the Sungu Sungu is one of form) could develop into mass movements. In the specific case of Tanzania the British took care to ensure that there was no alliance between the nationalists and the witchcraft eradicators. There is evidence that at least one such person Nguvumali was mobilised to work on the side of the colonialists. In the popular mythology of the anti-colonial struggle in Tanganyika there is one witch-doctor Osale Olango who is positively identified with the struggles of the workers.

This aspect of the nationalist struggle is not yet properly documented but there is work which links the Maji Maji revolt of 1905-1906 to witchcraft eradication movements. Hans Cory in his extensive study of witchcraft had warned the colonialists that witchcraft and traditional beliefs could be used to mobilise anti-European feelings. In next door Kenya during the struggle of the Land and Freedom Army, called Mau Mau, the colonial state called a conference of witchdoctors to mobilise them against the freedom fighters. Where the intellectual starting point of anthropology and bourgeois scholarship was concerned with control and repression an emancipatory intellectual framework must be developed to be able to transcend the sociology of control. The potential in this direction was demonstrated during the struggle for political independence in Zimbabwe. In the process of waging armed struggle against settler colonialism the guerillax did not turn their backs on the ideological outlook of the peasants. Through a definite sense of the place of spirit medium in the guerilla armies mobilised traditional diviners and spirit mediums in the guerilla struggle.

To be able to disentangle the cosmic world of the community which produces witches requires a transcendence of the kind of exhortation which is to be found in Tanzania. As the crisis in the countryside deepened after independence the incidence of homicides and murders of old single women have increased considerably. In particular in the region of the Sungu Sungu witchcraft provided for the general insecurity of the community as a whole. Sungu Sungu arose as an antidote to this insecurity and it is therefore not surprising that members of this peasant movement has been arrested on charges of the murdering of witches.

The party and government has called on the Sungu Sungu to refrain from persecuting witches but without laying the basis for changing the conditions which strengthens the outlook of witchcraft and its opposite witchcraft eradication.

A scientific view of the links between witchcraft and the labour process would seek to understand how the consciousness of witches is determined by the relationships between men and women and the natural environment. To be able to separate the real techniques of labour and the imaginary techniques of magic requires a philosophical outlook which grasps the social relations of production and the links to nature. ⁴⁸ A non-materialist starting point begins from the view that the existence of the idea of witches relates to paganism. This is because the philosophical outlook of Western capitalism separates matters of the spirit and the soul from sciences and technology. The philosophy of the West which was consistent with the rise of capitalism postulated that science and technology determined every sphere of life, transforming social relations in the process. The Sungu Sungu and its ideological infrastructure from which it sprung is one other manifestation of resistance to the ideological formulations of capitalist development which claims universal validity. This resistance in trying to preserve precapitalist forms could not thrive thus the success of the party in demobilising this militant form of uprising in the countryside.

The colonial state was not unaware that there was a big difference between those they called witches and those who have specialised knowledge of the herbs and plants of the African countryside.

As early as the 1930's the British were studying "Native Poisons and Native Medicines of Tanganyika".⁴⁹ Today when modern medicine is caught with the contradictions of the high level of chemicals in the products of transnational drug firms there is a major search for natural remedies in plants and herbs. Transnational drug companies are carrying out the research in the rural areas while the state imports the complex of health care generated by capitalism. If the state spent one tenth of the resources of the Essential Drug Programme on the Traditional Medicine Research Unit then the society would be making a major step in harnessing the knowledge of traditional doctors to improve the health of the people. Present research in other African states seek to link the University department of organic chemistry, to the medical laboratories to the patients using the knowledge of the local nganga. In Tanzania the effort of the state to marshal this knowledge is limited and just as how the peasant at present plants cotton and cannot buy the clothes the herbs and plants will be packaged by transnational drug companies and the rural peasants will not be able to afford it.

The Chinese communists in the process transforming the inheritance of backwardsness did not turn their backs on the knowledge of the traditional herbalists. In China one would find herbalists practicing alongside modern doctors and the treatment by acupuncture is now world famous.⁵⁰ The Chinese started from the point of view that socialism and socialist transformation involved the knowledge, skills and scientific techniques of its people accumulated over centuries. But in Africa the 'modernising elites' even where proclaiming socialism

turn their backs on the true spirit of self reliance of the people and seeks to harmonise the economic exploitation of the people with the impossible task of Europeanisation. But the rise of the Sungu Sungu should encourage research on the relationship between social transformation and tanbiko.

Resistance and Transformation

The rise of the Sungu Sungu was a major statement of the rural poor against forced commoditisation of their labour power. From the period of World War II to the present all the plans for economic development have been predicated on the weakening of the people to make them more vulnerable to the laws of capitalist accumulation. Scholars who want to see this process speeded up speak of "The uncaptured peasant", while social democrats call for capitalist development but with the learning from the experiences of the poor. The Sungu Sungu challenged the progressive scholar to discern the real spirit of this modern movement of resistance in the Tanzanian countryside. They sharpened the nation of the clash between Europe and Africa, between the deepening of capitalist relations and the possibilities for new forms of popular organisations. In this respect the Sungu Sungu cemented the place of the self organisation and self mobilisation of the popular masses. And at the same time the lessons of the ability of the party to take the movement under its wing reinforces the need for ideology and the clarity of who are the allies of the rebelling masses.

Popular discontent and resistance of the Sungu Sungu went beyond simple protests and took the form of armed organisation, albeit arms and weapons of a precolonial nature. As part of the historical process of the Tanzanian people this movement joined the long chain of passive and armed rebellions which are associated with capitalist penetration of the village community. Just as in the past capitalism retreated from other rebellions to find new forms of domination the rise and growth of the Sungu Sungu did not ⁱⁿ any way check the expansion of the exploitation of the rural poor. If the movement did not succeed in breaking the control of capital it exposed the hollow basis of the state's line of Ujamaa and self-reliance.

Significantly the Sungu Sungu clarified to other peasants that it is one thing to take over village governments but it is quite another to run them. In Mwanza region the movement removed corrupt leaders only to find out that if they were to ~~run~~ ^{run} 'development projects' in their villages then there would have to be a break in the way which the whole operations of the village has been integrated into the parallel market. Despite the claims of the Economic Recovery Programme of bringing essential commodities to the rural areas, the essential requirements for agricultural production could only be procured by participating in the called black market. Hence successful village projects require that even the villages sell hides and skins and other commodities to those who export them to neighbouring countries. And because the Sungu Sungu do not see anything wrong with this they bring peace to the gold mines of Geita and Kahama when 95% of the gold mined is taken from their communities and do not come back to help build schools, roads, clinics or other essential services.

The Sungu Sungu by concentrating on theft at the village level did not make links with the workers in towns such as Mwanza and Shinyanga. Nor did they try to deal with the real thieves who organise the nature of society thus creating the problems to which thieving is only a response.

This was a major weakness, one which was compounded by the campaign of some members of the Sungu Sungu against witchcraft. Thus though the movement eliminated one form of insecurity by doing the work of the stock theft prevention unit it created insecurity for the older women who saw the movement as a traditional aggressive form of authority which is repressive. Witchcraft eradication has been a feature of the peoples called the Sukuma and was one of the control mechanisms exercised by the society. In this period of crisis women tend to lose out because they do not have the power to determine where resources go and ultimately older single women are vulnerable to perceptions of ill omen in a community. Rural peasants are experiencing real hardships in Tanzania and it is not always easy to identify the state and foreign capital as the source of the trends in the economy. For this the party has been eminently successful in deflecting the energies of the poor to guarantee the legitimisation of the system.

The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other agencies of international capital have not been unaware of the demobilising place of the party. Together with the incentive goods and the promise of health, sanitation and welfare the exploiters of African labour survey the lessons of the Sungu Sungu movement.

The papers of these organs reflect on how to use the grassroots organisations as a management unit, "thus permitting the diffusion of a "management and control system down to the last family and kaya in the village" ... The potential usefulness of these grassroots leaders' mobilisation capability in the Sukuma context should not be underestimated by any

development endeavor".⁵¹ The promise here is to be able to mobilise the party and the Sungu Sungu to entrench capitalist relations of production. But as the problems of the bumper crop of cotton of the past year showed the people of Tanzania have no control over the world market of cash crops.

And inside Tanzania the state may exhort the peasants to produce the peasants will respond but the state does not have the infrastructure for storage, transport, ginning, management, marketing or to pay the peasants for their crops.

Out of this chaos there will be new frustrations and other forms of resistance will rise up in the countryside. Progressive scholars must be able to develop a scientific orientation so that there is theoretical guidance for the spontaneous outbursts of the masses so that these rebellions do not provide for new techniques of oppression. This was the concrete lesson from the results of the Mau Mau struggle.⁵² At the process of class selection expands under the IMF sections of the petty bourgeois will use the legacies of the Sungu Sungu for the purposes of the politicisation of ethnicity. The absence of the overt forms of this aspect of politics in Tanzania was not because of the absence of ethnic differences, but due to the weak development of the petty bourgeoisie.

Now this strata is using the welfare guise (burials and wedding) to rear its Head.

The Sungu Sungu has reestablished the right of the pastoralists to be part of the future of Africa. For two long the idea of development has been predicated on the destruction of the way of life of the pastoral peoples. The Ujamaa strategy for livestock development did not differ in content from the East African Commission Report of 1953 nor the subsequent investigations of the specialised agencies of finance capital. Speech after speech by national leaders call for the pastoral people to be linked to a cattle complex which deepens their dependence on Western grain, banking and drug firms. This experience of the Soviet Union where the dependence on imported grain is tied up to the acceptance of the Western model of animal husbandry should be studied by those who seek to develop genuine socialism and self reliance. A socialist strategy for Tanzania must draw from the storehouse of the experience of humanity, including the negative and positive lessons of capitalism and socialism. A prerequisite for social change must be the ability to build on the historical experience of the people; including the mobilisation of positive skills and knowledge transmitted over centuries.

Already the thrust of specialised investigations on the peoples such as the Masai and the Sukuma tend to study these people under the rubric of environmental conservation and wildlife. The ecological flag is raised to justify the physical elimination of these peoples from the continent in the long run.

The Sungu Sungu in defending the right of their communities have entered the legend of herdsmen who defended their cattle. This fact is now part of the history of Tanzania. Tanzania is a vast underpopulated land and the health, nutrition and change in the standards of living is linked to a healthy population with a healthy stock of goats, sheep and cattle. And if the pre-capitalist forms of livestock control are to be transformed then the progressive social scientists are confronted with fundamental problems. E. g. What should be the attitude of the progressive scholar to hunters and gatherers? What is the adequate form of the improving of the livestock yield of the pastoralists? How can new scientific skills be introduced in the village communities of Africa without destroying the skills and knowledge of the rural producers?

The rise of the Sungu Sungu sharpened these questions as the society grappled with its past and confronted the future. The Sungu Sungu was a reassertion of the cultural strength of the African people. The party in its embrace of the movement embraced all its contradictions in order to demobilise and to diminish the growth of the uprising. There was no real effort to study the lessons of history. It would require another form of democratic politics to link up the positive aspects of this movement with the most modern scientific techniques. This is what the Chinese meant by science walking on two legs". This paper hopes to be part of the starting point for a more precise understanding of the content of popular resistance from the village communities as Africa struggles to be independent.

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FOOTNOTES

1. This was the precise title of a study undertaken by the colonialists in the 1950's see study made by Hans Cory. "How Witchcraft could be used for political ends". Hans Cory papers No. 235. University of Dar-es-Salaam Library. This study was presented to Witchcraft Committee of the Colonial Legislative Council in May 1958.
2. In particular the work of John Iliffé on Resistance in Tanganyika is linked to the ideas of modernisation and the deepening of capitalism in the rural areas. See John Iliffé. A Modern History of Tanganyika, Cambridge University Press, London 1979. Essentially the party history which is taught as 'Siasa' in educational institutions in Tanzania reflect the same emphasis on the party or important personages in the anti-colonial period. Alternative interpretations have been developing. See Walter Rodney "World War II and the Tanzania Economy" Cornell University 1976. See especially the section on "African Resistance".
3. The Cory papers in the University of Dar-es-Salaam Library consists of more than 250 papers on the peoples of Tanganyika, especially the Sukuma. The most frequently quoted works of Hans Cory on this region are
 - (a) The Nteni traditional rites of a Sukuma Chief in Tanganyika. London: Macmillan 1951.
 - (b) The indigenous political system of the Sukuma and proposals for reform, Kampala, Uganda Eagle Press 1954.
 - (c) Sukuma law and custom, London: Oxford University Press 1953.
4. Itandala, B. History of the Babinza of Usukuma, Tanzania, ph.D. Dalhousie, 1983.
5. G. Andrew Maguire, Towards 'Uhuru in Tanzania. The Politics of Participation'. Cambridge University Press 1969, pp 10.
6. Bulletin of the Third World Forum. "A Working - group on the cultural dimension of development in Africa". Dakar, Senegal, January 1987.

7. Anilecar Carbal, "National Liberation and Cultures" in Return to the Source, Monthly Review Press, New York 1973, pp 41.
8. Among the studies on the Sungu Sungu are
 - (a) Patrick Mwanja, "Some notes on the Sungu Sungu movement" Dept. of Sociology Seminar, March 8, 1984.
 - (b) Donna Kerner, "Witches, Cows Thieves, and party Politics: An examination of the Sungu Sungu Movement". Seminar paper 1983 - no precise date. Dept. of Education, University of Dar-es-Salaam.
 - (c) J. F. Mbwiliza and Donna Kerner, "The Sungu Sungu movement" History Seminar. UDSM 16 Feb., 1984
 - (d) Mashiku J. Sabasaba and Ndibalama G. Rweyenamu Exercise of Punitive powers outside the judicial process in Tanzania: A case study of Neo-traditional defence groups (Sungu Sungu). Research paper, Faculty of Law, University of Dar-es-Salaam 1986
 - (e) Various issues of the Daily News and Uhuru.
9. Maguire op cit pp. 30.
10. The idea formed the basis of the study by D. N. Maloolu, Sukumaland an African people and their country, Oxford University Press, 1953.
11. Lord Lugard, The rise of our East African Empire Vol. II Edinburgh 1893 - pp 525 - 526.
12. Helge Kjekshus, Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History, Heinemann 1977.
13. W. Rodney, op cit pp. 22-24.
14. Hans Cory papers No. 77 "Destocking in Sukumaland."
15. C. Maguire op cit pp 147.
- 16 Ibid No. 181-195 Maguire suggests that this was the result of an explicit agreement between Bonchi and Nyerere.

17. John Iliffe op cit pp 558-560. Iliffe actually saw this uprising as the break through which strengthened TANU vis a vis the colonial state. For a fuller discussion of the issues of the "Geita crisis" See Maguire pp 199-215.
18. Maguire, pp 282.
19. Bukuku, E.S. Marketed Cattle Supply in Shinyanga region: a study of producer's response to price and rainfall, MA Economics. University of Dar-es-Salaam, 1977.
20. Kenal Mustafa, "The pastoralist Question in Tanzania". Dept of Sociology Seminar Paper No. date.
21. Daily News, 10 August 1983.
22. According to the Minister of Agriculture there were 12.5 million head of cattle, 7 million goats, and 3,4 million sheep in Tanzania - by the 1984 census. Sunday News August 16/1987 pp 7.
23. The most recent commission was formed after the parliamentary select committee to study the mining operations in Mwanza, Shinyanga, Singida and Mara regions. Daily News 21/8/87.
24. Research on the Sungu Sungu was carried out over a period of four years by this author. Special thanks to Monica Morris who did field work and research in Mwanza and in Sengerema and to Kanata who carried out research in Bariadi district of Shinyanga. The author himself did the bulk of reading in the area, this work also drew heavily from P. Masanja's work. "Some Notes on the Sungu Sungu".
25. Notes of researcher from 1987. In some areas the Sungu Sungu are also called ruga ruga. The ruga ruga was the army of Chief Mirambo of the Nyanwezi in the 19c.
26. Donna Kerner, "Witches, Lows, Thieves and Party policies: An Examination of the Sungu Sungu movement.
27. P. Masanja, pp. 3.
28. Ibid, pp 14.

29. R.E.S. Tanner, "Law Enforcement in Sukunaland." Journal of African Administration, Vol. VII No. 4 October 1955.
30. The papers reported that 48 were killed in this battle but local party officials said that the figure was much higher. For the figures if the state see Daily News 19/6/84. Some villagers believed that the police assisted in setting up the ambush.
31. Daily News August 10/1983.
32. This is not to say that Ujamaa started out with the explicit objectives of strengthening capitalism in the rural areas but once international capital saw that this strategy was predicated on a narrow range of cash crops they supported the idea in order to defeat the genuine socialist aspirations of the people. See (a) Cheryl Payer, "The World Bank and Tanzania" in Third World Quarterly October 1983 and H. Mapolu, "The state and the Peasantry", in The state and the Working People in Tanzania ed. Issa Shivji. Codesria Books 1985.
33. J.P. Mbwiliza and Donna Kerner, "The Sungu Sungu" History Department Seminar Feb. 1984.
34. Speech by the Prime Minister Edward Sokoine in Mwanza region in October 1983. See Daily News, October 21/1983.
35. Daily News August 5/1987.
The people in rural Bukoba also formed a traditional defence group to combat armed bandits. Itahawa village in Bukoba rural district had arrested 50 criminals between November and January 1987 Daily News 14/1/87.
36. This was reflected in the Parliamentary debates. Every year since 1984 there have been heated debates in the Tanzanian Parliament on the existence of the Sungu Sungu.
37. Speech of the Attorney General in Parliament Daily News July 18/1987.
38. The ambivalent position of the legal community to the Sungu Sungu is captured in Exercise of Punitive Powers outside the Judicial Process in Tanzania. A case study of Neo-traditional Defence Groups (Sungu Sungu).

39. This was reflected in a very strong letter to the newspaper Daily News 6/March 1984.
40. P. Masanja and S. Mesaki, "Witchcraft" Homicides in Sukunaland" - A sociological background. Dept. of Sociology - University of Dar -es-Salaan, November 1983.
41. John Middleton and E.H. Winter, Witchcraft and Sorcery in East Africa, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1963.
42. "Burning the Herbs ... Youth politics and Witches in Lobowa" Work in Progress No. 48.
43. Tanganyika Standard 29 August 1957. See also L.E. Larson "Problems in the study of Witchcraft Eradication movements in Southern Tanzania" Ufahamu Vol. VI Number 3, 1976.
44. Hans Cory papers No. 84 "A Few Comments on Witchcraft".
45. J.C. Nottingham, "Sorcery among the Akanba in Kenya", Journal of African Administration Vol. XI Number 2, 1955.
46. David Lan, Guns and Rain: Guerillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe Publishing House. In Mozambique Mozambican side of the border in the cause of counter revolution.
47. This attempt is made in the study of "Traditional forms of Insurance and Social Security" in J.L. Kanywanyi, The effect of Ujamaa Socialism and Nationalisation on Insurance Law and Practice in Tanzania, PHD, Faculty of Law, University of Dar-es-Salaan, 1985.
48. W.D. Raymond, "Native Poisons and Native Medicines of Tanganyika". Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene October 2/1939.
49. Ralph C. Crozier, China's Cultural Legacy and Communism Pall Mall Press London 1970. See especially the chapter on the attitudes towards Traditional medicine.
50. Per Brandstrom, "Do we really learn from Experience?" Reflections on Development Efforts in Sukunaland" in Anders Hjort, Land Management and Survival Scandinavia Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden 1985.
51. "Tanzania: Mwanza/Shinyanga Rural Development Project." The Sukuna: A Socio-Cultural Profile" pp 22.
52. Al-Amin Mazui, "ideology, theory and revolution." "Lessons from the Mau Mau" Race and Class Vol. XXVIII No. 4 1987.



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