

BOOK REVIEW

Ned Bertz. *Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean: Transnational Histories of Race and Urban Space in Tanzania*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. x + 275 pp. Bibliography. Index. \$59.00. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-8248-5155-2.


Ned Bertz joins a number of other scholars in mining the history of race and nationalism in colonial Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and independent Tanzania in his book *Diaspora and Nation in the Indian Ocean: Transnational Histories of Race and Urban Space in Tanzania*. Like James Brennan, Jonathon Glassman, and Laura Fair, to name just a few, he examines the development of racial consciousness concurrent with the rise of African nationalism in what would become Tanzania. Bertz focuses on relations between Africans and the immigrant diaspora from South Asia in Dar es Salaam, the colonial capital of Tanganyika. He sites his study in two contested locations in the city, cinemas and schools.

Bertz begins with an interesting theoretical discussion of the development of an urban cosmopolitanism along the Swahili coast up through the nineteenth century. He then contrasts the more fluid social interactions of that era with the twentieth century after colonial conquest. He sees not only the colonial construction of race in the new urban environment of Dar es Salaam, but also the intimate connection between the rise of nationalism and racial thinking in both India and East Africa. As in India, nationalism in Africa never totally suppressed communal and religious identities among South Asian groups, but these divisions did not prevent both social solidarity and political activism. Bertz's wholistic overview provides a welcome corrective to the works of Glassman and Brennan, which sometimes seem to place the rise of racial animus solely on the side of Africans.

After his excellent introduction, Bertz turns to his two social spaces. He uses business and colonial records as well as oral history interviews in his analysis. His overview of the importance of cinemas as both a site of leisure and a place of social interaction that broke through colonial racial barriers is striking. Tanganyikans apparently were one of the African populations most enthralled by the cinema, especially films from India. His focus solely on Dar es Salaam limits his overview in comparison with Laura Fair's more recent cultural history of cinema across Tanganyika and Zanzibar. His attempt to use

a history of schools in Dar es Salaam as an entry into racial attitudes is less successful. These sections read as a gloss on the history of schools for South Asians and how they were desegregated at the end of the colonial era. While he includes interviews with both African and South Asian educators in this section, he does not capture both the colonial and international contexts of education. For both Africans and South Asians, beginning often with secondary school, education meant leaving home. Bertz does note the absolute paucity of education above the primary level for Africans in colonial Tanganyika, contrasting it with the existence of community-supported schools for South Asians that resulted in near universal enrollment in secondary school.

Bertz supplies an interesting take on the history of race in Dar es Salaam. Unfortunately, the cases he uses to frame his examination do not capture the full complexity of the situation. Likewise, limiting the study to cases from only Dar es Salaam does not do justice to the strength of the book or to the full scope of movement and ideas that continued to flow across both the colonial context and also the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, this book will be of interest to persons interested in the history of nationalism and race in East Africa. It also makes a contribution to the growing field of leisure studies, capturing its importance as a social crucible.

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For additional reading on this subject, the ASR recommends:

Ahearne, Robert M. "Development and Progress as Historical Phenomena in Tanzania: 'Maendeleo? We Had That in the Past.'" *African Studies Review* 59 (1): 77–96. doi:10.1017/asr.2016.9.

Hodgson, Dorothy L. 2017. "Africa from the Margins." *African Studies Review* 60 (2): 37–49. doi:10.1017/asr.2017.47.

Sanders, Ethan R. 2015. "RETHINKING PATRIARCHY, RESPECTABILITY, AND WOMEN'S MOBILITY IN ZANZIBAR...." *African Studies Review* 58 (3): 225–30. doi:10.1017/asr.2015.84.