

THE PARTY AND POLITICS IN TANZANIA

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The pre-independence party in Africa was the main organizing centre of the African opposition to the colonial regime. The party acted as a unifying organ of all the Africans and their organizations. For example, TANU sought to bring under its umbrella all types of African organizations in the country — trade unions, farmers and pastoral unions, commercial organizations, professional groups, youth movements, women's movements, sports clubs, entertainment groups, tribal organizations etc in its opposition against the colonial regime (1954 TANU constitution). With independence, the party achieved its goal. If new goals and roles were not assigned to it, its continued existence was in jeopardy.

Fanon (1968) envisaged three possible developments for the party after independence: (1) disintegration - with independence the party disintegrates leaving nothing but the shell of a party, the name, the emblem, and the motto; the local party leaders are given administrative jobs... and the militants disappear into the crowd and take the empty title of citizen (Fanon 1968:171); (2) progressive transformation of the party into an information service — the party acts like a barometer and as an information service. The militant is turned into an informer — the party plays understudy to the administration and the police, and controls the masses - the party helps the government to hold the people down. It becomes more and more clearly anti-democratic, an instrument of coercion (Fanon 1968: 171); (3) turning itself into a tool of the people, through which they decide on the policy that the government carries out ... the party becomes the direct expression of the masses, the energetic spokesman and the incorruptible defender of the masses (Fanon 1968: 185).

The third possibility represents the ideal of what a true party in the post-independence period should be, but at the same time the most unlikely development, according to Fanon. TANU (particularly after the Arusha declaration in 1967) and later CCM (since the merger of TANU and ASP in 1977) claims to have become such a party. To what extent is this self-description of the party in Tanzania in resonance with reality? To answer this question we shall take a critical look at the changing role and function of TANU/CCM since independence.

1961 — 1965: Defining the New Role for the Party

Once independence was achieved and what came to be referred to as the TANU Government (in as far as its legitimacy stemmed from having been formed by party leaders) took over power, there was confusion as to the role the party should play in the newly independent Tanganyika. Slowly the party was being overshadowed or, better, being substituted by the government. As far back as 1960 Nyerere had stated, on becoming Chief Minister, that policy was to be decided by central government

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and not by local party representatives and that political party organs should not be concerned with the execution or implementation of policy. Party organs and representatives could ensure a good public reception of government policies but the responsibility for carrying out government policies was to lie with the civil service (Chief Minister's Circular Letter No. 1 of 1960). Nyerere was to repeat this substitution of the party by the government in policy formulation, implementation and decision making in his independence message to TANU in 1961. He stated then that "it is the job of the government to work out an overall plan and to chart the direction in which we move, *just as the TANU National Executive in the past worked out the tactics of the struggle*" (Nyerere 1966: 140).

In the same message Nyerere hoped that TANU would be a broad channel upon which ideas flow back and forth — "through it the people can and must express their desires and worries to the government. Through it the government can and must explain to the people what it is doing and why" (Nyerere 1966: 140); and that it would continue mobilizing and organizing the people for self help activities.

In the past, despite colonial government opposition, we have started educational campaigns, we have organized voluntary effort, we have even started our own adult college. Now we must intensify these activities, cooperating with the new government and co-ordinating our activities so that the direct initiatives of the people supplements the work which government can do and is supplemented by it. (Nyerere 1966: 140).

To these two Nyerere added a third, but more vague role for the party in 1962. The party was called upon to work for the people and take care of their day to day problems.

In *TANU na Raia* (TANU and the Citizen) Nyerere writes that:

The job of TANU is to work for the people. We cannot be a truly people's party if we do not involve ourselves in the normal problems of our people ...

I have given the example of somebody's house being burnt as one of the problems that daily face our people. But there are so many problems of this type. Sickness, death, harvest, getting food at least for one day, various travelling problems, and many different problems that face our brothers everyday. If we are people's leaders, and our party a people's party, then there is no problem of the people that we can say does not concern us. TANU is the one group in our country that must concern itself with everybody's problem (Nyerere 1962: 3).

Though there was no thought of abandoning the party altogether, it was slowly being relegated to second place by government administration to which the former party leaders had been incorporated. The party was at this juncture considered as an information channel though not in the pejorative sense in which Fanon envisaged it. Besides, it was to act as a mobilization agent of the government whenever called to do so for specific purposes like in the Self-help schemes where it was to supplement the community development efforts of the government. Finally, TANU was expected to act as a welfare organ for the people, a field that was totally beyond government action.

By 1964 however, a new role for TANU was beginning to emerge. TANU began to be seen as a unifying and stabilizing element. This vision was to gain credence in particular after the army mutiny. But even before that TANU was beginning to be depicted not just as a party but rather a nationalist movement uniting all sections of society. Writing in "Democracy and the Party System" (1963) Nyerere had noted that

Our own Parties (TANU) had a very different origin. They were not formed to challenge any ruling groups of our own people; they were formed to challenge the foreigners who ruled us. They were not therefore political 'parties' i.e., factions — but nationalist movements. And from the outset they represented the interests and aspirations of the whole nation (Nyerere 1966: 198)

The struggle for independence necessitated unity of all the oppressed under the nationalist movement. The task facing the new government calls for a similar unity "this, no less than the struggle against colonialism, calls for the maximum united effort by the whole country if it is to succeed. There can be no room for differences or division" (Nyerere 1961: 9). This new unity, like the old unity, can only be achieved under the party — nationalist movement.

But a national movement which is open to all, which is identified with the whole nation, has nothing to fear from the discontent of any excluded section of society, for there is then no such section of society. (Nyerere 1966: 201).

From the above argument Nyerere goes on to identify membership in this nationalist movement with patriotism — *Any member of our movement [which in this context, means any patriotic citizen since it is the national movement we are talking about] would be free to stand as a candidate if he so wished* — (Nyerere 1966: 202). A step further and Nyerere calls for the elimination of the party — a symbiosis of the two.

There would be no need to hold one set of elections within the Party and another set afterwards for the public. *In our case, for example, the present distinction between TANU and the TANU-Government, a distinction which, as a matter of fact, our people do not understand, would vanish.* We should simply have leaders chosen by the people to do the job (Nyerere 1966: 202).

There is in Nyerere's formulation, as Bienen (1964) was to note, a conscious obliteration of the party-state distinction, and the stressing of the all embracing aspect of TANU as a "union", that is, a national movement embracing all Tanganyika. Bienen concludes his article thus:

(The) party in Tanganyika, and in much of Africa, is considered as an entity not necessarily less than coextensive with the state and society as a whole. When Mr. Mboya writes that the Party is the Government he is not merely saying in short hand that KANU now forms a ruling party which constitutes a government in Kenya. He is saying something much more akin to the equating of Party, Government, state and people — something like "the Convention People's Party is Ghana and Ghana is the Convention People's Party". The distinction that has been made in western political commentary between party and state is a distinction not accepted in Africa. President Nyerere has claimed that the people of Tanganyika do not understand this distinction (Bienen 1964: 29).

Bienen attributes this mystification to the fact that (1) the colonial government was one of administrative politics and not party politics — hence the party — government symbiosis (2) the function of government are fulfilled by an array of structures and the functions of the governing party are fulfilled by an array of structures — hence the intermingling of the two. This attribution to colonial legacy and similarity of functions is not convincing at all.

Goulbourne (1977b) on the other hand regards this as an expression of the unitary ideology of the petty-bourgeoisie, that sought to establish its own hegemony and safeguard the accumulation of surplus. In this context the party was to become the integrative institution. For him one of the main changes with political independence was the realignment of social-economic forces “The development of a new petty-bourgeoisie alongside existing small owners who were also able to expand, the new arrangements between this class and the national-international bourgeoisie as a result of the political representation of the indigenous petty-bourgeoisie necessitated the founding of integrative institutions — in other words what is usually referred to in behavioral political science as institution building. In Tanzania TANU played this role after independence and until CCM was founded, continued to do so within a developing social formation” (Goulbourne 1977b: 14).

At best it can be noted that the pre-independence unity of the African population began to crumble after independence and the arising conflicts between different sections was threatening to mar the production process and the stability of the regime itself. The conflict between the Tanganyika Federation of Labour (TFL) and the Government and the army mutiny (1964) are representative of this type of conflict (Friedland 1967; Tordoff 1967; Bienen 1965; Ginwala 1964). This new unity could not continue to depend solely on the presidency, but also on the institution of the Party.

The Republican constitution of 1962 had established the executive presidency system. It had been argued at the time that the enormous economic and social tasks ahead of the country called for unity. And this was interpreted as rallying behind a leader, realigning all efforts behind effective leadership.

In the pursuit of ‘life more abundant’ for all Tanganyikans, we need to rally behind a leader who can do things. Every ounce of the nation’s strength in now needed because of the challenges which confront us on the economic, social educational and ethical fronts (Hansard 28 June 1962 col. 1086).

The presidency was expected to overcome divisions and act both as a stabilizing and mobilizing organ.

With time however the institution of the presidency alone did not prove to be effective for guaranteeing unity and stability in the country. Another institution was necessary to supplement the presidency. There were two possible institutions on which to base the new efforts of unity and stability: The Party and the civil service. The civil service had been the instrument of rule of the colonial regime (thus discredited) and was not strong enough, being composed of foreigners and newly promoted apolitical African civil servants. In fact the first political crisis in

Tanzania that led to Nyerere's resignation as Prime Minister in January 1962 was centred on this institution — which the politicians wanted not only Africanized but also subordinated to the politicians. Given the above circumstances the civil service institution could not therefore serve as an instrument of unity and stability. The Party that had served as a unifying and moderating factor in the pre-independence days was seen as able to play the same role in the post-independence era. It was this intention in view that a call for a one-party state system was made.

1965 - 1970 Institutionalization of the One-Party State System.

The decision to have a one-party state was made in January 1963, however, the appointment of the commission to work out the details was made in January 1964. In his guidelines to the commission the president stressed the fact that it was not the work of the commission to consider whether Tanganyika should be a One Party State.

That decision has already been taken. Their task is to say what kind of One Party State we should have in the context of our national ethic and in accordance with the principles which I have instructed the commission to have (Commission Report 1965:1)

Among the instructions given to the commission was that — Tanganyika shall remain a Republic with an executive head of state: Thus the commission was from the start prohibited to consider the presidency save with regard on how he should be elected. This fact is important for as we have noted above the institution of the presidency was both a unifying and stabilizing organ. This organ could not be tampered with.

The commission was charged to consider first the Party - Government relationship, in particular their representative organs. Here the question of amalgamation or not of party and government bodies was to be resolved. Specifically the commission was asked to consider (a) the existence of the National Assembly and the National Executive Committee of TANU and their relationship (b) the existence of District Committees of TANU and District Councils and their relationship (c) should qualifications be laid down for membership of the legislature, or any other policy-making body; if so what qualifications, who shall determine whether these are possessed by candidates. Second the commission was to make recommendations on (a) Party membership — should membership be open to all without regard to opinions in any issue, character, or any other matter except Tanganyika citizenship, (b) Party organs — through which National policy is formulated, the people's will constantly finds expression, changes can be brought about through peaceful means and corruption or abuse of power is overcome.

On the issue of Party - Government relationship the commission rejected the president's amalgamation proposals noted above. The commission notes that:

Our first approach to this problem was to consider the possibility of amalgamating the NEC and Parliament by substituting a single authority to carry out the functions now undertaken separately. *This ideal is attractive. It has the merit of simplicity. Simplicity is important if the ordinary citizen is to*

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follow and participate in the process of government. It also has the merit of emphasizing the identity between Party and Government to which we have already referred. However, we have on balance rejected the possibility of amalgamation (Commission Report 1965: 40).

The reasons given for this rejection are that (1) Their roles are essentially different. NEC is concerned with the formulation of the broad lines of policy while Parliament is concerned with giving effect to government policy through appropriate legislation measures and exercising vigilant control over all aspects of government expenditure. (2) The NEC is elected by Party members while Parliament is elected by universal suffrage. But while both institutions were retained, the National Assembly was turned into a rubber stamping body of the NEC decisions. As Kjekshus notes, the constitutional changes in 1965 led to a position where;

Parliament's functions are negligible and ideally restricted to an august replay of consensus themes worked out in the process of Party deliberations of policy measures. Parliament's present position in legislation and as a control instrument is strictly circumscribed by the Party and Parliament's original role in the political system would seem to be in doubt (Kjekshus 1974: 79).

In fact the constitutional changes with regard to the relationship between the NEC and the National Assembly sparked off a confrontation between the two organs which ended up in the subjugation of the Assembly and the expulsion from the Party and hence from the Assembly of nine members of Parliament. This confrontation is well documented elsewhere and need not be touched here (Msekwa 1977; Kjekshus 1974; Van Velzen and Sterkenburg 1972).

With regard to the Party the commission endorsed the President's view of open membership. The only condition for membership was the acceptance of the Principles of TANU. In regard to this the commission states:

The principles of TANU as set out in Article 2 of the TANU constitution do not contain any narrowing ideological formulations which might change with time and circumstances. They are a broad statement of political faith. *We believe they carry the support of the vast majority of the people in Tanganyika and must strike a responsive cord in men of good will in every civilized country in the world.* A party based on these principles and requiring adherence to them as a condition for membership would be open to all but an insignificant minority of our citizens and would, we believe, be a truly *national movement* (Commission Report 1965: 38).

Once there is a national movement then all political activities must be conducted by and under the auspices of the party (The Interim Constitution of Tanzania 1965. Part 1, 3 (3)). This makes the curtailment of any political activity save under the umbrella of the Party thus undercutting all potential opposition to the regime.

With regard to the Party organs the commission took the NEC as the soul and conscience of the Party and as a body concerned with the formulation of the broad lines of policy. However the Party constitution of 1965 still maintained that "the national conference shall be the supreme organ of TANU and shall be responsible for formulating the general policy of TANU and shall generally superintend the activities of TANU. Under this National Conference is (1) the National Executive

Committee as the Chief executive organ of the Party and directly answerable to the National conference; (2) the President who is also answerable to the National conference for the general direction of the policy of the party. But this same president of the Party is also the President of the country (although the constitution does not state that the president of the Party must be the president of the country, the process is automatic). As the president of the country he is free to act on his own discretion and seek advice from whichever angle he chooses. Thus the process of a one party system further enhances the president's power, who is from the party angle empowered to override the NEC.

What the institutionalization of the one-Party system did was to transfer the process of decision making from both the cabinet and parliament to the Party forums, that is from public debate to private discussions. It enhanced the position of the Party and NEC under the guidance of the President by conferring to them the power of unifying, and control of political activities and above all the power of mediation in all conflicts arising in the political arena. All conflicts were from now on to be resolved in private under party umbrella. This was exemplified best by the manner in which the conflicts between the West Lake Members of Parliament and the Regional Commissioner in 1968 was resolved. As Van Velzen and Sterkenburg (1972) were to point out this case serves as a restatement or a creation of norms under which MPs (and any other leader) should act. On the main these norms were that: (1) Any dispute should be settled in the proper TANU manner — “This norm implies a severe restriction of manoeuvre for an MP (or any other leader) no matter his misunderstandings with a Regional Commissioner or TANU Chairman, he should not bring the matter in the National Assembly (Open public)”. (2) All efforts should be made by the leaders not to cause a “division of views” in public. This automatically implies a threat to an individual leader's (MPs) freedom of political manoeuvre. Thus the Party was to be the mediator in any conflict and was to acquire supervisory role over political expression of leadership.

1971 - 1975 Towards Party Supremacy

The Arusha Declaration noted that in order to build socialism it is essential, among other things, that the ruling Party should be a Party of Peasants and Workers. Then, a committed member of TANU will be a socialist, and *his fellow socialist* — that is, his fellow believers in this political and economic system — *are all those in Africa and elsewhere in the world who fight for the rights of peasants and workers*. Tanzania is considered to be a country of Peasants and Workers. This formulation makes it possible on the one hand for TANU to continue to claim its all embracing character, but also gives TANU power to exercise control in the name of peasants and workers. The first control that comes with the Arusha Declaration is the control over the leadership (viz. Leadership code). The second acquired control is over membership of the Party. Part Four of the Declaration that deals with TANU membership notes that:

... National Executive feels that the time has come when we should put more emphasis on the beliefs of our Party and its policies of socialism. That part of the TANU constitution which relates to the admission of a member should be adhered to, and if it is discovered that a man does not appear to accept the

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faith, the objects, and the rules and regulations of the Party, then he should not be accepted as a member. In particular, it should not be forgotten that TANU is a Party of peasants and workers (Nyerere 1966: 248).

This control of membership was used to expel nine Members of Parliament in October 1968 from the Party and hence Parliament as noted above.

The Party powers of control were increased by Mwongozo that came in the wake of the coup in Uganda and the invasion of Guinea in 1971. Mwongozo in fact came out of the meeting of the National Executive Committee that was specifically called to discuss these happenings. In it, it was declared that:

The responsibility of the Party is to lead the masses, and their various institutions, in the effort to safeguard national independence and to advance the liberation of the African. The duty of a socialist party is to guide all activities of the masses. The government, parastatals, national organisations, etc; are instruments for implementing the Party's policies. Our short history of independence reveals problems that may arise when a Party does not guide its instruments. The time has now come for the Party to take the reins and lead all the people's activities (Para 11).

The Party is then given the powers to (a) spell out the national goals, (b) offer policies and guidelines concerning different aspects of the people's activities (c) organise the people — "it is the party which decides on the structure of government, various institutions, the army, etc. In addition, the party should provide guidelines on work methods and attitudes and decision making" (Para 13) (d) Supervise the implementation of the party's policies — "Ways must be found to ensure that the Party actively supervises the activities and running of its implementing agencies. It is the Party's duty to ensure that it assesses the effects of the policy implementation undertaken by its agencies". (Para 14) (e) Supervising the conduct and the bearing of the leaders

By 1974 Nyerere was already talking of Party supremacy. He noted then that:

... under our One Party Constitution, TANU is supreme. It is able to give directions to government about the general policy which must be adopted for national development, and it has power to give specific instructions about priorities of action in any aspect of our national life. Further, TANU can call the cabinet, any minister, or any government officials, to account for their activities and any failures in the execution of their duty. That is at national level. The same is true at local level. In the localities, the branch, district, or regional TANU committees are the people's representatives. It is their task to guide and supervise the actions of all government officials in the area, and to ensure that our policies are implemented in such a way that they bring benefit to the people as a whole (Daily News, 23 February 1974).

This supervisory role of the party was given constitutional status in 1975 with the inclusion in the country's constitution the phrase that "the functions of the organs of the United Republic of Tanzania shall be performed under the auspices of the Party" (Act to Amend the Interim constitution of Tanganyika 1965. (1975)).

The above doctrine of party supremacy has raised a number of questions. The

first concerns TANU/CCM's ability to perform the above supervisory role. This has been with regard to the party's administrative and technical competence to enable it to exercise effective control. It has also been with regard to the party's ideological clarity and coherence to be able to direct a socialist advance in Tanzania. TANU and now CCM has been found wanting in these two respects by many party analysts (Bienen 1967, Saul 1974, Cliffe 1972). Mwansasu (1979) in his most recent article traces for us the party's efforts to gain both administrative and technical competence particularly since Mwongozo, however he is silent on the issue of ideological clarity and coherence.

The second and maybe the most important question raised by the issue of party supremacy is on how to interpret this supremacy. Goulbourne's (1977) contention is that "the Party's supremacy ... represents in effect the power of the presidency" He notes that:

TANU's success has been the success of the executive in presenting itself in democratic yet powerful terms to elements of the petit-bourgeoisie and the submerged classes and in absorbing significant elements of these classes into a machinery which reproduces the much needed legitimacy of the regime (Goulbourne 1977: 3).

He bases the above assertion on the argument that in the underdeveloped capitalist formations imperialism at its post colonial juncture gives way to the development of an extremely strong executive which predominates over all other institutions of state.

At the present juncture of monopoly capitalism it may well be the case that in advanced capitalist countries one of the effects of the internationalization of capital is the decomposition (c.f. the UK, Spain, etc.) of the nation state which played such a vital role in the development of capital, but in the post colonial societies (PCS) centrality of the state and its increasingly important regulatory role in the economy forces the need for a vital centralism. Both pull factors have their historical ramifications. The phenomenon of *presidentialism* is therefore not an isolated instance in the pcs, it is not merely the institutionalization of the would-be weberian charismatic figure, it in fact represents the predominance of the executive arm of the state under imperialism. Just as parliamentary predominance may correspond to a particular phase of the capitalist state so may the predominance of the executive represent another phase in the same process (Goulbourne 1977: 30).

For Goulbourne therefore, party supremacy in Tanzania should be perceived within the broader context of imperialism and the enforced centralism and the presidential phenomena. In this perspective the doctrine of party supremacy in Tanzania, particularly its presentation as representing the people's (workers and peasants) control of the state is a mere reflection of a populist ideology hiding the real concentration of power in the hands of the presidency. The presidency is thus regarded as the central and supreme decision making organ in Tanzania.

This assertion of presidential supremacy in Tanzania's political system is worthy investigating. To begin with, it is not only Goulbourne that has stressed this fact in Tanzanian politics. Most analysts of Tanzania's post independence developments

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have pointed to it (VIZ. Msekwa 1977, Cliffe 1972, Bismark 1979, Pratt 1976 etc.). For example Cliffe notes that:

The key decision making institution is in fact the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. His political style and the nature of the ideals he has set the country contribute in many ways to the way the Party goes about its work... not only do local officials make appeals in his name, but there has been a tendency for him to point out self interests that party and other party leaders have fallen prey to; and thus speak over their heads to the people directly. Thus there is a tendency for the necessary enthusiasm for mobilization to be generated without the organization and direction to sustain it. In this situation the politicians have limited view of their role as "announcing and exhorting" while the civil servant will not stick his neck out to frame new policies without much more specific instructions (Cliffe 1972: 275).

This major presidential role can be traced all the way back to the Republican constitution of 1962. This constitution provided for an executive head of government who was to act in all matters on his own discretion. It states that "except as may be otherwise provided by law, in the exercise of his functions, the President shall act in his own discretion and shall not be obliged to follow any advice tendered by any person." The establishment of a One-Party System did not change this situation. In fact the One Party System further consolidated his powers. The President under the One Party System becomes the Chief spokesman of the Party, the only expressor of political affairs. By this process all political matters become invested in the President. It is not surprising therefore to find that all political initiatives come from the President.

But this concentration of power in the hands of the President has a conditioning effect on the type of party organization and structure. In the first place the presidential institution militates against a strong party centre or party bureaucracy as this would tend to impinge on the presidential powers to act on his own discretion. The fact of the lack of a strong party centre or party bureaucracy has constantly been pointed out as one of the main weakness of TANU (Bienen 1967, Cliffe 1972, Bismark 1979) and was attributed to the lack of manpower and financial resources. The truth is that the presidential institution hampers this development. Secondly, it militates against the formation of a vanguard party or a mass democratic party as both would effect the position of the presidency. A hot debate has been carried out in Tanzania as to the possibility of TANU becoming a vanguard party with cadres and whether TANU is becoming a mass democratic party. In the Tanzanian situation the party can only remain a loosely organized movement. Lastly, it is impossible to have a clear cut ideology and program of action and implementing organ. Pragmatism is the only possible ideology.

In this situation the function of the party is to legitimize state rule and be part of the control system of the state, it is part and parcel of the administration.

Conclusion

We initially set out to investigate the party's (TANU and now CCM) claim that it

was not only a tool of the people, through which they decided on the policy that the government carries out, but that it also represented the direct expression of the masses and was the energetic spokesman and incorruptible defender of the masses. This we were to do by taking an initial look at the changing role and function of TANU/CCM since independence.

Our analysis has revealed that in the years following the attainment of independence (1961—1965), the dominant trend was towards the submerging of the party by the administration. The party was regarded as a communication channel between the government and people and as a mobilizing organ of the government. Following the army mutiny in 1964 and the formation of a one Party State System, the party became the unifying institution. To it was transferred the process of decision making from both the cabinet and parliament. This involved the transfer of decision making from public to private forms. To the party in general, and the National Executive Committee in particular was conferred the power of unifying and control of all political activities and above all the power of mediation in all conflicts arising in the political arena.

The question then became of how to interpret this supervisory role over all national activities. It was noted that the said party supremacy did not enhance people's control of the government or the party machinery as such. Concentration of power under the party represented the concentration of power in the hands of the president. The presidency became the main, if not only, decision making institution. But this concentration of power went hand in hand with the creation of a popular image around the party and the presidency. The Party (TANU and now CCM) is presented as a party (TANU and now CCM) of peasants and workers, a socialist party in that it stands for the rights of peasants and workers. Party supremacy in Tanzania thus hides the concentration of power in the hands of the presidency. It should be understood in terms of a legitimizing ideology of presidentialism.

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