

# **More than a Cold War scholarship: East-Central African anticolonial activists, the International Union of Socialist Youth, and the evasion of the colonial state (1955-65)**

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## **Abstract**

This article uses the *International Union of Socialist Youth* (IUSY), a youth international formed in Paris in 1946, as a prism through which to study how young leaders from Anglophone East and Central Africa forged transnational networks that allowed them to circumvent certain constraints of the late colonial state and the Cold War world. Adopting a regional perspective and focusing on non-state actors, the article foregrounds the importance of personal contacts, in order to travel abroad and participate in discussions about decolonisation and the contemporary world order. Mobile individuals from the region enabled IUSY to broaden its membership base, while IUSY's specificity as a youth organisation allowed it to fashion itself in a way that appealed variably to anticolonial leaders from this region, to the colonial state, and to private foundations. The priorities of both IUSY and its contacts shifted dramatically during the period 1955-65, initially coming together in the form of study tours, and later in projects based in the region, while the approach and fact of political independence raised financial concerns as IUSY's activities increasingly overflowed beyond the categories of 'youth' and 'education'.<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The *International Union of Socialist Youth* (IUSY) is today among the largest and most active international youth organisations. Celebrating its centenary with a self-published history in 2007, it attached great weight to its global credentials: among its affiliates, around half of all African states are currently represented (Annen et al. 2007). IUSY's membership looked rather different when it was formed in 1946, from the vestiges of the youth wing of the Second International (the 1907 foundation of which explains IUSY's celebration of its centenary and, more recently, its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary). In these early postwar years, IUSY's executive committee and affiliates, dominated by the democratic socialist parties of north-western Europe and Israel, had virtually no African contacts. This was soon to change: in parallel with countless other International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), during the decades of decolonisation, IUSY made sustained efforts to encompass youth groups from across the 'third world'. Anglophone East and Central Africa, where prospects for smooth transfers of power to socialist-leaning African governments appeared strong, was a particular focus from the mid-1950s (Luza 1970: 202).

The subject of this article is not IUSY *per se*. Rather, the organisation serves as a prism through which to understand, firstly, the mechanisms that enabled young, politically-minded men from this region of the decolonising world to work with INGOs and participate in the discussions about decolonisation and the Cold War that this entailed and, secondly, the value and meaning that these individuals attached to such opportunities. IUSY serves these purposes particularly well. As research on decolonisation seeks to move away from the metropole-colony framework (Collins 2017), a non-state organisation like IUSY, in a regional perspective, shows how anticolonial activists circumvented a late colonial state that attempted to isolate them from transnational networks and from neighbouring territories. In order to grasp how *these* actors perceived the relationship between mobility, education and anticolonial work, it is vital to acknowledge the strength of colonial restrictions on movement, and the dynamics of a 'mobility' that was sometimes forced upon political exiles.

The case of IUSY also nuances interpretations of interaction between Cold War 'worlds' (Byrne 2016; Westad 2005): as we shall see, activists from this region were less restricted and more interested in working with IUSY than with other INGOs partly because of IUSY's status as a 'youth' organisation

and partly because of its ability to cast itself variously as socialist, anti-communist, and non-aligned. This latter point is pertinent at a time when historians are beginning to explore the European Left's ambivalent attitude to decolonisation and the multiplicity of 'third ways' (Imlay 2017; Kalter 2016: 1-30; Gildea et al. 2011; Bracke and Mark 2015).

With these historiographical conversations in mind, this article follows several 'journeys of education'. The first section highlights the circumstances that favoured the development of a relationship between IUSY and African youth groups, pointing to the importance of informal networks of individuals and the potential for organisational structures to hinder as well as foster communication. Asking what was at stake at these initial points of contact, it shows how 'the scholarship abroad' took on a broader, often anticolonial, meaning. The second section takes as a starting point the participation of young people from the region in an IUSY team, as part of an anti-communist 'anti-festival' at the 1959 World Youth Festival in Vienna. It shows how IUSY's contacts engaged with the colonial and Cold War constraints that shaped possibilities for travel and how these constraints played out in the field of financial sponsorship as IUSY and its contacts turned their focus to projects 'on African soil'. The third and final section asks what self-government meant for the role of mobility in the relationships that had been forged, especially as activities conceived as 'youth' projects overflowed ever more freely into the realm of the diplomatic relations of emerging states.

### **Individuals and organisations on the road to a working relationship**

Following several preparatory meetings as the Second World War came to a close, IUSY officially formed in Paris, 1946, in an atmosphere of disagreement and dissent. The delegates at Paris represented the youth wings of variously 'socialist' and mainly European political parties – most had been involved both in previous youth internationals and in wartime resistance movements and were at least thirty years of age. Crudely summarised, two 'camps' emerged: the French delegation led a Marxist group, which understood IUSY as a potential ideological instrument in the struggle to form a European working-class front, while a Scandinavian-led bloc believed that youth wings should follow their respective parties in matters of 'ideology', and confine themselves to purely youth-related issues, particularly education. Ultimately, the latter attracted a majority following,

and as such the executive committee during IUSY's first decades was dominated by Scandinavian, Dutch, British, Austrian, Israeli and later West German delegates. The Scandinavian dominance was a point of tension, and IUSY soon transferred its headquarters from Copenhagen to Vienna. The first two years of IUSY's work were consumed by efforts to collect subscription fees and to find common ground on issues including the admission of German representatives, the campaign against the Franco regime and the Sovietisation of East and Central Europe (Luza 1970: 61-129; Solari 2007).

During these early years, then, there was little room for considering the extra-European world. Despite IUSY's first president recalling in an interview that decolonisation was an early priority (Molenaar 2007), this was not evident in its communication with other organisations. For example, when stating its aims in a 1947 letter to UNESCO seeking closer cooperation, IUSY referred to a struggle for peace and improved living conditions but did not mention the struggle against colonialism (IUSY 1020). It was at a congress in Louvain in August 1948 that expansion into Asia, Latin America and Africa, a policy that attracted broad agreement, was first prioritised. IUSY's anticolonialism, which would become better-defined and increasingly central to its organisational identity throughout the 1950s (Luza 1970: 133-224) developed in tandem with attempts to broaden its membership base.

IUSY's engagement with the extra-European world, and Anglophone East and Central Africa in particular, was also stimulated by Cold War competition between INGOs. The *World Federation of Democratic Youth* (WFDY) was founded in London in 1945 by a Soviet-dominated executive, while the *World Assembly of Youth* (WAY) was formed by UN member states in 1949 to provide a more 'universal' (less European) alternative, although it was soon understood to represent Western interests (IUSY 1210; Kotek 2003). The competitive expansion drives of these youth internationals were conditioned by the fact that NGO consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council could be refused on the grounds of overlapping membership (IUSY 1100). Hence, the organisations developed regions of prominence; WAY was stronger in much of Francophone Africa, for example, although IUSY did have good contacts in Algeria (Luza, 1970: 187-196).

The realisation of IUSY's ambitions depended on contemporary developments in British East and Central Africa. The first half of the 1950s witnessed the creation or consolidation of many of the anticolonial nationalist parties that would feature prominently in the region's independence struggles, together with a realisation that self-government was a viable, if long-term, demand. These parties were rapidly connected to international and global forums by the first wave of political figures now returned from overseas education, perhaps most famously Jomo Kenyatta, and by the activities of a younger generation still abroad. A series of crises in 1952-3, notably the Mau Mau uprising, the imposition of the Central African Federation, and the deportation of the Buganda kingdom's ruling Kabaka, turned international attention to a region previously perceived as calm in an increasingly volatile sea of anticolonial protest. As a result, from the mid-1950s, East and Central African political leaders approached, and were approached by, growing numbers of INGOs with various visions for a transition to majority rule in the region. Information about these organisations spread slowly and unevenly, in IUSY's case typically among circles of African trades union and cooperative leaders, civil servants, school teachers and students.

Even then, the question of establishing an initial point of contact was not self-evident. For IUSY, one opportunity arose with the founding of the *Asian Socialist Conference* (ASC) at Rangoon in 1953. The ASC was a non-aligned organisation of broadly socialist parties, including those of India, Burma, Indonesia and Japan, with roots in the late 1940s. It established an independent relationship from the then European-dominated Socialist International, largely because of the ambivalent attitude to colonialism among the latter's affiliates. The Socialist International was, at this time, a sort of 'parent' organisation to IUSY, representing many of the same labour, democratic socialist and social democratic parties (making little distinction between these categories), and it hoped to bring the ASC under its umbrella, partly because of fears that the latter would expand into Africa. Thus, the ASC was able to force the issues of 'time-bound' decolonisation and the right to national self-determination into discussions previously revolving around gradual political reform and minority or individual rights (Rose 1959; Imlay 2017: 422-461; Niclas-Tölle 2015: 148-164).

The ASC provided a framework for connecting IUSY to political developments in East and Central Africa, via individuals from the region

who were resident in India. Joseph Murumbi, of mixed Kenyan-Goan parentage, was in exile following the Mau Mau uprising and was involved in the ASC's Anticolonial Bureau, while Northern Rhodesian Munukayumbwa Sipalo was studying in New Delhi and formed an Africa Bureau linked to the ASC. A meeting between ASC and IUSY executives in early 1954 granted IUSY observer status (IUSY 1508) and, by the time of its November Congress the same year, IUSY declared itself on the path to becoming a 'universal youth international' (Labor Action, 31 January 1955). ASC encouraged this move and at the beginning of 1956 congratulated IUSY on its improved contacts in Africa (IUSY 1508). In this way, IUSY benefitted from individuals whose journeys had already forged links between anticolonial and socialist forces in the 'third world', including those in exile: mobility was not synonymous with emancipation. When IUSY's Menahem Bargil was preparing for IUSY's 1957 Africa tour, he wrote to Murumbi asking for contacts (MAC/KEN/82/7). There was nobody better placed: Murumbi had an enduring interest in education as a tool of development: he was involved in African student organisations in New Delhi, London and Cairo, and later developed an enthusiasm for Scandinavian-style 'folk schools' (MAC/KEN/81/6).

Another point of contact was through London. Anticolonialism on the British Left had a long history, and gained momentum in the early 1950s especially, not least because of events in East and Central Africa, as well as heightening opposition to South African apartheid. New and existing lobbying and pamphleteering groups in London placed the issue of 'racialism', or the problem of 'multi-racial' societies, in this region centre stage as they sought to harness public interest in (anti)colonial affairs and manage contacts with increasing numbers of African delegations, exiles and political leaders (who were often also students) (Howe 1993). Some of the individuals involved were crucial in linking the work of IUSY to London-based anticolonialism. For example, John Stonehouse, later to be elected a Labour MP, became involved in IUSY during his student days, then spent 1952-4 in Uganda working for the *Federation of Uganda African Farmers*, the predecessor of the *Uganda National Congress*, during which time he served as IUSY's 'liaison officer' for Africa (Stonehouse 1960: 19; Luza 1970: 149). On his return, Stonehouse was a key figure in the newly formed *Movement for Colonial Freedom* (MCF), of which Joseph Murumbi was briefly treasurer, and, like Murumbi, Stonehouse helped with arrangements for IUSY's Africa

tours (EAP121/1/5/14). Indeed, activities in London and Rangoon were interconnected: in November 1955 MCF, ASC and IUSY co-sponsored a 'World Conference for Colonial Liberation' in Margate, UK. Few East or Central Africans attended, but those who did had high profiles, such as Harry Nkumbula, president of the *Northern Rhodesian African National Congress*, and Hastings Banda, later president of the *Nyasaland African Congress* (and then independent Malawi) (IMO 159).

What is striking is that IUSY's 'foothold' in Africa was *not* obtained via its 'parent' organisation, the Socialist International, of which the British Labour Party (with its extensive range of contacts among East and Central African political figures) was a central member. In fact, despite its London headquarters, the International had no contacts to speak of on the African continent during the 1950s (SI 499). This was, in part, because IUSY proved more willing than the International to whole-heartedly support liberation struggles. For instance, the ASC suggested that the International co-sponsor the previously-mentioned Margate conference, but only one observer, without delegate status, was sent (SI 513). In December 1958, while IUSY was declaring support for the resolutions adopted at Kwame Nkrumah's *All-African People's Conference* in Accra (Luza, 1970: 200), Albert Carthy, the International's (British) general secretary, was busy asking Labour's International Department to share their African contacts. The reply was evasive. Labour insisted that 'no purpose would be served by establishing relations between the Socialist International and these organisations' because '[s]uch a connection might be used by them as evidence of outside recognition before it is possible to form any opinion as to their future or the likely character of their leaders' (SI 499). Among liberal wings of the British labour movement in particular, carefully-managed support for 'responsible' leaders was understood as a bulwark against instability (and ultimately communist influence) in the transition to majority rule: this required a monopoly on contacts in the region.

The International's unsuccessful struggle for African contacts has a noteworthy implication for understanding the importance of IUSY as a 'youth' organisation in its interaction with East and Central Africa. It is hardly surprising that the youth wings of European democratic socialist parties (IUSY's affiliates) had a generally more radical tilt than these parties' central bodies (the International's affiliates). Given the developmentalist and reformist currents within, for example, the British Labour Party (Imlay

2017: 458-461), it is also not surprising that anticolonial leaders often preferred to work one step further away from the party, even when Labour was in opposition during the 1950s: in 1957, Murumbi told IUSY that he was 'suspicious' of Labour Party activity, doubting their commitment to unconditional self-determination. He believed that IUSY was in a better position to 'spread socialism' in Africa (MAC/KEN/82/7). Equally, while the ASC guarded its independence from the Socialist International, it allowed youth wings of ASC members to affiliate to IUSY. This despite the fact that IUSY, like the International, was concerned about the ASC's independence: in 1956 joint secretary, Israeli Menahem Bargil warned the ASC for the need of 'common action' among all socialist movements (IUSY 1508). Radical individuals within the British labour movement, like Stonehouse, also preferred to work with IUSY over the International, and Labour did not block IUSY's access to the region as it did the International. This can partly be explained by considering that, at this early Cold War moment in the mid-1950s, 'youth', and IUSY's interest in 'education', were not attributed the same potency as a decade later; the work of organisations such as IUSY seems to have been considered relatively innocuous, even apolitical.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, when IUSY executive member Peter Schieder looked back on the early 1960s he emphasised that the Socialist International later developed its contacts with African political parties precisely *through* IUSY's existing contacts with party youth wings (Schieder 2007).

If all these circumstances enabled IUSY to contact East and Central African leaders, however, the question remained of whether these leaders were interested in working with IUSY. National youth organisations in East and Central Africa were themselves only just coming into existence, and some did so in conversation with international youth groups like IUSY.<sup>3</sup> The informality of these nascent youth organisations worked to IUSY's benefit: later, once youth wings had become well-established within the party structure, their leaders, acutely aware of the ways in which they were implicated in larger power struggles, were hesitant to become official IUSY affiliates. For example, on hearing that the youth league of the *Tanganyika African National Union* would affiliate with IUSY in 1960, one youth league member questioned, in a letter to IUSY, the benefits of affiliation with a

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<sup>2</sup> In the Soviet Union, for example, the discursive emphasis on youth became pronounced only after Stalin's death (Mark/ Apor 2015: 854f.).

<sup>3</sup> There is little literature devoted to these youth wings. See, for example, Brennan 2006.



body whose membership included 'organisations from countries which deny Africa its inherent right of self-rule', citing Portugal specifically and fearing that affiliation 'may commit our country to cold war' (IUSY 1348). By this time IUSY already had strong links and exchanges with the youth league and individuals involved; the question concerned *official* affiliation. Similarly, the *Malawi Congress Party* Youth insisted in 1961 that they were 'not allowed' to join, because they were part of a national body, which, presumably, considered it important to regulate the alliances formed by its youth wing – although the letter-writer was keen to join as an individual (IUSY 1318). In a somewhat ironic symmetry, IUSY used its professed neutrality as justification for declining requests for material support. For example, when Clement Lubembe of the Kenyan Federation of Labour enquired about membership in 1960, IUSY replied that it was 'by no means a rich organisation', the reason for this being that it preferred to remain independent of Cold War power blocs. As such, it could not give material support to its members as other (unnamed) organisations might, but could offer 'advice and guidance' (IUSY 1311).

Given, then, the informal nature of national youth leagues, specific to the mid-1950s, and the implications of official affiliation, early correspondence occurred on an individual level: IUSY made a conscious decision to exchange correspondence with interested individuals regardless of their affiliations (Luza 1970: 199). Many of IUSY's first contacts were with trade union leaders, some of whom would then take on leading roles in youth leagues (particulars of age, in common with many contemporaneous youth organisations, were negligible).<sup>4</sup> It is here that the centrality of 'journeys of education' comes into focus. When IUSY sought the affiliation of youth organisations in Zanzibar in early 1956, Abdullah Khamis replied that, before he could give an answer on behalf of his 'association' and in the 'common interest that I should assist you in finding the necessary contacts', he would require IUSY to pay his expenses to visit its Vienna headquarters and hear more about its work (IUSY 1508). A similarly 'conditional' reply came from Ally Sykes at the *Tanganyika African Government Servants Association* in September 1955. 'It is a pity to state', Sykes wrote, 'that there are many Africans who are quite capable of taking positions as leaders of

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<sup>4</sup> For example, in a letter to the District Commissioner on 25/08/59 regarding the opening of the Pare branch of the Youth League of the Tanganyika African National Union, the League secretary stated that some committee members were in their forties (A6/5 Vol. II).

political organizations, but they lack training, and further cannot afford going abroad'. Sykes hoped IUSY would work in the spirit of 'educat[ing] Africans to make us understand more about democracy etc' and under the heading 'VERY IMPORTANT' asked that he should be put forward for a scholarship (IUSY 1348). Meanwhile, Paul Muwanga of the *Uganda National Congress Youth* told IUSY that the material they had sent was 'creating interest', but IUSY's support 'could be more interesting and effective if you could enable some of our young promising lads more knowledge either by offering them scholarships to study abroad or by sending them any sort of books you can afford to spare' (IUSY 1357). In each case, the prospect of travelling abroad was attributed value through being linked to the acquisition of 'knowledge', which in turn was linked to a national readiness for self-government. This all came together in 'the scholarship abroad' and through the casting of youth as the manpower for the future nation-state. The personal scale here contrasts to the later correspondence mentioned above, which revolved around questions of official, organisational affiliation and its political implications. Tellingly, both Sykes and Muwanga became regular IUSY correspondents. The importance they and other early contacts attached to education and mobility was to form the basis of IUSY's activities in the late 1950s, and it is to these we now turn.

### **From European study tours to projects 'on African soil'**

In July 1959 Sam Kajunjumele, an active member of the then-informal Youth League of the *Tanganyika African National Union*, travelled from Dar es Salaam to Vienna to attend the seventh World Youth Festival. The festival was organised, with Soviet support, by the *World Federation of Democratic Youth* (WFDY) and the *International Union of Students* (IUS) and was being held outside of the Eastern Bloc for the first time (Rutter 2013: 193-212; Slobodian 2015: 23). Kajunjumele, however, did not attend at the invitation of either of these organisations; he went at the request of IUSY, as part of an alternative 'information service' within the main festival (or 'antifestival' as IUSY members referred to it among themselves) in cooperation with the Austrian state and, indirectly, the CIA.

The IUSY executive conceived the idea of the antifestival as soon as it became aware of the main festival's location, which was considered to 'open up possibilities which should be used'. These possibilities were primarily in the realm of recruiting affiliate organisations – implicitly, ones already

affiliated to WFDY. IUSY imagined itself by this time to hold a more universal appeal than other youth and student organisations: in an internal memo, the Secretary General reminded the antifestival team that IUSY was the only youth organisation that could 'speak the language' of both non-European and Communist youth. Antifestival plans included seminars with 'socialist' leaders at the site of the main festival, such as 'The fight for colonial freedom', addressed by U Hla Aung of the *Asian Socialist Conference*, Nee Boi Doku of the *Ghanaian Convention People's Party*, and Nath Pai of the *Indian Praja Socialist Party*. A special publication on IUSY and its political views was printed in English, French, Spanish, German and Russian (IUSY did not *literally* speak the language of non-European youth) in a total of 70 000 copies. The publication explained that IUSY had declined an invitation to participate in the main festival because the event represented the interests of only one power bloc. It went on to condemn colonialism in all forms, including the persecution of 'socialist comrades' under Soviet rule. After the festival, IUSY's African 'volunteers' toured the offices of cooperatives, trades unions and labour parties in Switzerland, West Germany, the Netherlands and Britain (IUSY 701).

On his return from Vienna, Kajunjumele wrote to Paul Tofahrn, the Belgian general secretary of the trades union Public Services International, whose London headquarters was shared with the Labour Party. Kajunjumele's attendance of a communist-sponsored event had sparked some concern among Labour figures in London, not least because he was at the time a key figure in the *Tanganyika African Government Servants Association*. In his letter, Kajunjumele clarified that his attendance was with the IUSY antifestival delegation, and stemmed from his organisation's 'fraternal relationship with Socialists in the free world, and in particular IUSY and the Labour Party'. He went on to maintain a position of positive neutralism, which by this time had been extensively defined, notably at the first *All-African People's Conference* seven months previously:

We learnt [...] that the [Soviet] propaganda was mainly a hook with a worm for the fishes of under-developed countries to swallow [...] Although we are under-developed we are not ready to accept Communism in as much as we do not accept Western Imperialism even if it carries so many apparent economic benefits.

Kajunjumele then made a case for the benefits of the participation of the IUSY volunteers in the festival:

We confused the participants [...] we showed them freedom of the press in the free world [...] we had a glaring victory, I must say [...] I know what Communism is [...] I know the healthy part of Marxism and the nasty part. So there was no question of being converted overnight. (IUSY 1348)

Kajunjumele implied that African participants were converters, not the converted, and that the more freedom they had to participate in international forums, the more likely they were to pursue a path of which the western European Left would approve. His evocation of civil liberties went straight to the heart of the tensions within the current of 'socialist anticommunism' (of which IUSY was a part) between a championing of the 'free world' and a reluctance to support Africans who wished to engage with the other, 'non-free' world.

Like IUSY's earlier contacts, Kajunjumele paired his personal travels with the larger independence struggle, by way of education. When he wrote to Kurt Kristiansson, IUSY secretary general, after the festival, it was in reference to a topic that he and Kristiansson had 'talked, if not over-talked about': scholarships. He had been greeted by disappointment, he told, when he returned from his European tour without a single scholarship to offer young Tanganyikans. Kajunjumele understood scholarship agreements to be an important objective of his European 'study tour'. He continued: 'We are facing a very big temptation Kurt. The World Council of Peace, a hard-core communist organisation, has written to me, personally more than three times, telling me that they are ready to offer scholarships to us'. Kajunjumele was yet to reply: 'I just want to, sort of, keep the offer floating in the air'. The letter was a thinly-veiled threat. As Kajunjumele had reminded Tofahrn previously, 'Man unfortunately is not all spirit but is flesh as well': he was prepared to forfeit existing relationships in order to obtain material support (IUSY 1348).

This sort of source material might well give rise to an interpretation of third world pragmatic 'fence-sitting', whereby potential recipients of material support played interested parties against one another with implied promises of ideological alignment. Although a dearth of personal sources makes it difficult to ascertain the importance that individuals like

Kajunjumele attached to the origin of support and its implications, it is worth taking seriously his attitude as it materialises in this correspondence. There is a strong sense of Kajunjumele being 'in the Cold War, but not of it' (McCann 2013: 260): his own commitment was to Tanganyika's advance towards independence, and this demanded openness in terms of potential political models as well as material support, even while maintaining a non-aligned stance. Revealing, however, is the emphasis placed on freedom of the press and freedom of movement. If Kajunjumele did have a preference for scholarships from IUSY over a Soviet-sponsored organisation, as his letter implies, then these are the issues that appear to have informed this inclination. Anti-colonial activists from across the region made frequent reference to the contradiction between Western critiques of Soviet denials of such freedoms and British failure to provide for these in their overseas territories. In the defence of individual civil liberties, Kajunjumele and IUSY found a meeting point.

Thus, while motifs of civil liberties have become inextricable from Cold War narratives, these must also be understood against a backdrop of *colonial* constraints within which individuals like Kajunjumele lived and worked (Hunter 2015: 145). Amid the frustrations of applying for permits to hold meetings, print newsletters or raise funds (regulations for which varied between the territories and years in question but were present throughout), applying for passports for study tours or conferences was a significant hurdle to forging contacts with INGOs. Colonial Office policy was particularly *ad hoc* in this area (FCO 141/13692), leaving activists unsure of which conferences would be deemed permissible. IUSY was not viewed by authorities to constitute a *communist* threat, and hence had an advantage over Soviet-sponsored organisations whose propaganda was routinely (if not always successfully) censored. Nevertheless, foreign travel in itself was viewed with suspicion. For example, Ugandan Paul Muwanga was refused a passport for IUSY's 1956 Tampere youth camp (IUSY 1357), while in the same year Ugandan student John Kale was granted a passport for a student conference in Vienna, only to cross the Iron Curtain overland to visit the headquarters of the *International Union of Students* in Prague, a decision that saw him expelled from Makerere College in Kampala – allegedly for missing the start of term (AR/MAK/54/4).

The difficulties faced by individuals wanting to go abroad for the purpose of study tours and conferences should be kept in mind when considering

that, as the 1960s dawned, IUSY and its contacts increasingly favoured projects based in East and Central Africa over sponsorship of European study tours. Already, Kajunjumele, on his return from Vienna, advised IUSY that the establishment of a Socialist Information Service in Dar es Salaam could transfer his own experience to a broader audience: 'A challenge to communism can only be constituted by contact through knowledge – that is if we know the practical aspirations of socialized democratic institutions in the free World and their achievements, our aspirations will not be lured' (IUSY 1348). This should be understood within the context of the late 1950s, when self-government in Tanganyika, followed by its neighbouring British-ruled territories, was being timetabled, and the challenge of the 'Africanisation' of the civil service saw leaders prioritise administrative training over academic degrees. In parallel, pan-African discussions around neocolonialism and the worth of indigenous knowledge frameworks saw INGOs increasingly favour locally-managed and 'self-help' education projects. The *International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*, for example, opened its Kampala college in 1958. IUSY's contacts in the region called for similar initiatives: after meeting IUSY's Sture Ericson at the 1962 Helsinki World Youth Festival (and its IUSY antifestival), Ugandan Amin Jamal suggested that IUSY 'give serious thought to setting up offices in various independent countries of Africa' (IUSY 1357). The shared prioritising of individual tours abroad by IUSY's early contacts was quickly giving way to an attitude that focused on breadth of impact.

One limiting factor in this turn to the 'local' was IUSY's own ignorance about political developments in the region and the priorities of local leaders. When an executive member returned from the 1960 *All-African Peoples Conference*, he still considered it worth reiterating to his colleagues that, to gain the trust of their African contacts, European socialists must not only provide material support but show unwavering commitment to national independence and pan-Africanism (SI 499). Correspondence with individual leaders could only tell IUSY so much: really, they needed to visit the region for themselves. Increasingly, then, IUSY executive members understood their own 'Africa tours' to be an essential counterpoint to the 'Europe tours' of their African contacts. In fact, in IUSY's applications for yearly UNESCO travel grants (which could be used for either type of tour) those for the IUSY executive were prioritised in the early 1960s (IUSY 1020).

The idea of running IUSY seminars in East Africa had been discussed as early as 1957. When IUSY asked Joseph Murumbi's opinion on this, he was enthusiastic about the idea of initiatives 'on African soil' (MAC/KEN/82/7). However, it was not until 1963 that concrete planning began. IUSY's main partner in this endeavour was Joseph Nyerere (brother of Julius), who had participated with Kajunjumele in the 1959 Vienna World Youth Festival. Joseph Nyerere was now an IUSY bureau member and general secretary of the Youth League of the ruling *Tanganyika African National Union*, which had assumed vigilante-like functions in Tanganyika, independent since 1961 (Brennan 2006). The plans that IUSY sent to Nyerere in November 1963 outlined a three-week seminar to be led by Tanganyikan Moses Nnauye, in partnership with a Swedish youth leader. The desired outcome of the seminar was a manual for youth leadership, to be produced by thirty participants from across Anglophone East and Central Africa, who would work with youth movements during the subsequent year. As such, the seminar would cover practical topics such as book-keeping, minute-taking and speech-writing, but there would also be discussions about economic development in Africa, women in politics, the UN, Africa in the Cold War, pan-Africanism and East African federation, the problems of South Africa and the Portuguese colonies. This list of topics could have been extracted from any African-led seminar of the period: IUSY was, by this time, keenly observing such events and drawing on the themes prioritised local leaders. In preparation for the seminar, Nnauye would tour Scandinavia, and the Swedish youth leader would spend time in Dar es Salaam (IUSY 1349). This emphasis on 'partnership' in work and travel fitted firmly into IUSY's evolving vision for its projects, but it also had local champions: Murumbi in 1961 wrote about the 'great fund of latent goodwill among youth in Europe for Africa' and the need to 'canalize it towards some constructive effort' (MAC/KEN/79/1).

However, the additional costs of projects in Africa, compared to bringing a leader to Europe (where IUSY could make use of its affiliates' personnel and buildings) raised new questions about IUSY's involvement in the Cold War. These played out in correspondence between Joseph Nyerere and IUSY's Sture Ericson. Ericson had, he told Nyerere, heard about the establishment of an East African Institute for Social and Cultural Affairs. The institute was financed by West German and American private foundations, with 'a definite Social Democratic' (not, it should be noted, democratic socialist)

inclination and its 'honorary sponsors' were the three leaders of the now-self-governing mainland East African states. Ericson told Nyerere that '[p]olitically, these foundations are far more flexible' than INGOs, and suggested that Nyerere 'discreetly' talk to an American, George Gabor, to enquire about the Institute contributing to the IUSY seminar, reminding him to '[n]egotiate on behalf of IUSY as it is most likely that he prefers to deal with us instead of investigating [investing?] directly in a political youth movement in East Africa' (IUSY 1349). If Ericson's assumption was well-founded, then IUSY's self-fashioning as respectable yet progressive, neutral and youth-oriented would work in favour of private financial support.

In this regard, IUSY's relationship with the Socialist International is once again revealing. Shortly before these 1963 discussions, the International asked IUSY's (apparently better-placed) Heinz Nittel, an Austrian socialist, to assess the potential for a political training centre and seminars during his forthcoming East Africa tour. Again, the question of sponsorship arose. Interest had been expressed by British Labour MP Maurice Foley, the director of the educational Ariel Foundation, which benefited from covert CIA funding (IUSY 500; Dorril 2000). However, there was some disagreement about which names and sponsors should be attached to the proposed centre. When an Israeli representative in the International, Akiva Eger, sought backing from Julius Nyerere and Tom Mboya on the idea of an 'ideological' seminar, he was cautious to do so without mentioning the name of the International. In contrast, the Labour Party's John Hatch considered it preferable that the centre be established 'boldly' by the International, with its name attached (SI 500). Such exchanges indicate that the Socialist International as a sponsor was considered to come with political implications in a way that IUSY was not. Unbridled by the same considerations as was the International, IUSY was thus able to collaborate with local leaders in the framework of projects based in the region. Indeed, as non-Western investment in the region grew with each country's (impending) political independence (Friedman 2015; Brazinsky 2017), IUSY proved willing to have its name attached to projects that benefitted from funds from across the Cold War world: IUSY's Ericson was thanked alongside Chinese donors for the £21 000 raised by the Swedish youth member organisation at the 1965 opening of a centre for the youth league of the *Tanganyika African National Union* (IUSY 1349).



In many ways, the shift towards 'local' projects saw IUSY informing themselves about – and embracing – the concerns of anticolonial youth leaders. The rhetoric used in the seminar plans, for example, was moulded around these issues, just as the rhetoric used in Kajunjumele's letters spoke to the Cold War issues inherent in the youth festival a few years previously. But there were bigger changes afoot: with the approach of independence, many of IUSY's contacts in youth organisations were assuming government roles.

### **Self-government and a 'non-comital reception'**

On 20 July 1961, Milton Obote, then president of the *Uganda People's Congress* (UPC) and to become, nine months later, the first Prime Minister of independent Uganda, visited IUSY headquarters in Vienna. He arrived from a London Colonial Office conference on East African federation, and asked IUSY to arrange a meeting for him with a representative of the Austrian *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* (SPÖ) (not its youth wing) in order to discuss possibilities for financial assistance for Congress in the upcoming elections, given that he understood the party, like his own, to be 'democratic socialist'. He hoped to contact other European 'socialist' parties with the same purpose, as he explained to IUSY's Per Assen. Assen was somewhat surprised that Obote had not contacted the Austrian party through the Socialist International headquarters while in London, but Obote claimed not to have known about such headquarters – it was Vienna he knew about. A meeting was arranged and the SPÖ International Secretary promised to raise the issue at a forthcoming gathering of European socialist parties and inform Obote of the outcome in mid-August. Obote considered using the intervening weeks to visit Israel, a country he had recently heard had a strong socialist party, but, to Assen's surprise, knew little about. He would then travel to Ghana, where he assumed Nkrumah, as a patron of (pan-)African socialism, would pay for his ticket back to Europe. He asked Assen to help with these arrangements, offering in the course of discussions to commit to affiliation on behalf of the *Uganda People's Congress Youth*, an offer which Assen refused on the grounds that the application should come from the youth wing itself. Obote departed immediately to Israel, leaving Assen to write a letter of introduction for the Israeli labour party Mapai, who later sent IUSY a telegram to say that they were rather displeased to find somebody on their doorstep holding IUSY's recommendation letter

without adequate warning. After a short stay in Tel Aviv, Obote travelled to Sweden to pursue the possibility of funds for the UPC. On 8 August, IUSY received a phone call from Stockholm and on 10 August a telegram from Tel Aviv to the same effect: 'recent guest not who he pretends to be' (IUSY 1357; SI 833).

It emerged that the man travelling in possession of a recommendation letter from IUSY was not Obote at all. He was V. Serwadda, Obote's deputy and Congress vice-president. Serwadda had constructed various stories to avoid showing his passport to IUSY or Mapai and had provided IUSY with the sort of information that, they imagined, only Obote could know: details of the recent London conference, of a meeting between Nyerere and Obote, and of IUSY's contacts in Uganda. Serwadda was sent back to Vienna and explained to Assen that Obote truly had planned to visit European socialist parties but had been needed at home. He explained that he spoke on Obote's behalf and that using his name was the only way that Europeans would negotiate with him. Obote himself was probably ignorant of this identity borrowing; certainly, Serwadda feared the consequences of having embarrassed his party on an international stage upon his return to Uganda. To make matters worse, in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Serwadda feared that he had damaged his party's relationship with the UAR, who would have seen reports of Serwadda's trip to Israel and had previously made it clear that if Congress wanted support they should not approach the Israelis (IUSY 1357; SI 833).

For Serwadda, IUSY had come to be seen, by the 1960s, as a port of call for sympathetic assistance in general and an entry point to a network of potential material support. The fact that it was nominally concerned with youth politics hardly deterred him, and the affiliation of his own party's youth league was used as a bargaining chip in the cause of pursuits that, given the approach of decisive elections in Uganda, were considered more important. IUSY's independence from the Socialist International affiliates like the British Labour Party took on a new spin: Serwadda probably avoided going through the Socialist International because figures based in London would have known he was not Obote. Moreover, individual capacity to visit Europe relied less and less on INGO sponsorship. Given the assumption that Uganda would soon be self-governing, Serwadda and others of a similar rank could benefit from Colonial Office travel assistance

for official meetings, as well as the help of independent states like Ghana: IUSY could no longer use the promise of a trip to Vienna in negotiations. For IUSY, confining its activities to the sphere of 'youth' was becoming ever more difficult. In the hope of maintaining positive relationships with the ruling parties of independent states, it was forced to make concessions (writing the recommendation letter to Mapai without demanding identification, for example) and to face new questions about both official and unofficial affiliation. IUSY had always worried about whether an organisation was '*bona fide*' (IUSY 1508), but rarely broke contact with an individual. For example, in 1958 Titus Mukopo wrote insisting that correspondence concerning youth groups in Northern Rhodesia should henceforth be addressed to him rather than IUSY's previous contact, Munukayumbwa Sipalo, but IUSY continued to correspond with both individuals (EAP121/1/5/14). With the approach of self-government, however, even unofficial affiliation assumed new gravity. In the aftermath of the Obote fiasco, Assen wrote to colleagues in Israel reflecting on the appropriate response to the events of 'us as Socialists': he wanted 'the best of contacts with the UPC if our assistance could result in [them] winning these elections', whether this contact was through the youth league or otherwise (IUSY 1357).

The story reflects some of the broader shifts that occurred in IUSY's relations with organisations in East and Central Africa with the approach and advent of independence. As political parties in the region, each under its own timetable, began to be internationally recognised as legitimate bodies with broad popular support, party leaders became increasingly concerned with 'reigning in' junior (in rank as well as age) party members abroad, who could risk the party's reputation by 'networking' on its behalf, and might be more useful in understaffed offices at home (EAP 121/2/5/5/7; EAP 121/2/7/1/71). In turn, INGOs like IUSY found that concrete agreements regarding scholarships, tours or seminar projects could not be made other than through senior executive figures. When Sipalo wrote to IUSY in May 1961 saying that he was waiting for an air ticket from IUSY, he promised that the party was 'ready to send you a delegate with some executive powers' (IUSY 1364). With this in mind, Serwadda's belief that he would only be welcomed if he assumed the persona of Obote was not entirely unfounded. Indeed, just after Serwadda's 'unveiling', the Danish *Socialdemokratiet* party (apparently unaware of the events) phoned the

Socialist International to ask whether Serwadda was a reputable figure who should be received by the party. Having asked advice from the Labour Commonwealth Department, the International replied that the Danish party should give Serwadda a 'non-committal [sic] reception' (SI 833).

Thus, with the fact of official independence, one of IUSY's main concerns became the maintenance of harmonious relationships with the region's ruling parties, whose support was necessary to allow IUSY to work with respective youth wings. In September 1964, IUSY received a disgruntled letter from Moses Nnauye, Tanganyikan Minister of Defence (and IUSY correspondent since his involvement in the plans for the youth leadership seminars discussed previously). Nnauye, who had just returned from an IUSY executive committee meeting in West Berlin, stated his 'personal disappointment' that the ticket given to him by his hosts on departure left him waiting in Cairo for a week trying to solve visa issues, without any consideration by IUSY of this 'waste of [his] governments [sic] time'. Sture Ericson responded immediately, apologising for IUSY's 'stupidity' in failing to adequately arrange the return journey. He also wrote to the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* requesting that the West German embassy in Dar es Salaam meet Nnauye to apologise in person and refund any expenses incurred. The apology, Ericson wrote, should come from the government level 'as it is on that level that he is most touchy [...] Please act swiftly' (IUSY 1349). For new ministers, means to travel to IUSY meetings was an expectation more than a request, an expectation that IUSY was anxious to meet.

The pairing of education and mobility, it should be noted, did not disappear with independence. In 1963, Peter Wankulu wrote from independent Uganda to the Vienna headquarters asking, with echoes of the previous decade, for funds for travel within Africa for his newly-formed *All-Africa Youth League*, because 'travelling is knowledge' and the future of Uganda depended on its young people. He addressed the request to the non-existent IFWSY, conflating various INGOs in a context still defined by poorly circulated information and African leaders whose priorities extended beyond Cold War feuds (IUSY 1357). The letter also points to the fact that the region's youth wings were significantly affected by their 'parent' parties taking up government. An IUSY executive member who visited Uganda in 1965 reported that the state had created a *National Union of Youth Organisations* as an umbrella for all political and non-political youth groups,

the purpose of which was to effectively weaken the *Uganda People's Congress Youth*, which had on numerous occasions diverged from the party line. Nassau Opio, the Secretary for Youth Affairs, was responsible for organising this movement, and planned to do so along the lines of the *Israeli Youth Pioneers* (which had impressed him on a recent visit to Israel) as well as Tom Mboya's recent (and supposedly supra-party-politics) *National Youth Service* initiative in Kenya. Opio's new organisation would direct its energies into nation-building, as opposed to 'political' questions, he told IUSY (IUSY 1357). It is beyond the scope of the current article to do more than hint at what was to come: having spent the previous decade taking on board the anticolonial priorities of East and Central African youth wings, IUSY would face entirely new challenges in its relationship with the postcolonial state.

### **Conclusion**

During the period of decolonisation, 'the scholarship abroad' assumed symbolic and almost mythical status among anticolonial nationalists in British East and Central Africa as a tool in the liberation struggle and a victory over a colonial system that typically worked to limit numbers of highly-qualified Africans and isolate aspiring political figures from global anticolonial currents. But the example of IUSY makes clear that this coming together of education and mobility stretched far beyond 'the scholarship' – and was constantly in flux. During the early 1950s, when few East and Central Africans had the opportunity to pursue education abroad, when the movement of information about political developments in the region was slow and obstructed, and when emerging political parties and their youth wings were reluctant to implicate themselves in Cold War rivalries, several factors enabled relationships between East and Central Africans and IUSY. On one level, organisations born out of a particular anticolonial climate (like the *Asian Socialist Conference* in Rangoon or the *Movement for Colonial Freedom* in London) saw networks of just a handful of individuals assume amplified importance. On another level, it was IUSY's evolving 'image' which mattered: its increasing willingness to support self-determination and pan-Africanism, without demanding official affiliation, made it an acceptable partner for African leaders, while its underlying anti-communism and interest in 'neutral' youth and education projects made it

more acceptable to the colonial state. IUSY being a non-state actor made this flexibility possible.

As the central section of this article advanced, the interest in individual study tours among IUSY's early contacts can usefully be understood as a nexus between Cold War and anticolonial discursive and structural frameworks: in the context of a colonial regime that repressed civil liberties, a group like IUSY that, by way of its own anti-communism, championed these freedoms (of association, of information, as well as of movement) provided a forum for anticolonial debate. Yet, as self-government became tangible, the importance of reaching (and educating) a larger audience, and of giving local leaders a greater say in planning, overtook the primacy of a journey to Europe. In any case, as independence was timetabled, such journeys were becoming rapidly more accessible to high-ranking leaders, who were more concerned about financing the last stages of the national struggle. Obstructed by ever-fluctuating colonial and Cold War constraints in their ability to move, debate and associate freely, young and not-so-young leaders from this region of the decolonising world forged networks which allowed them to circumvent these constraints – networks which, in part, granted INGOs their legitimacy.

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### **Zusammenfassung**

Am Beispiel der *International Union of Socialist Youth* (IUSY), einer Jugendorganisation, die 1946 in Paris gegründet wurde, untersucht dieser Artikel, wie junge Führungspersonen aus dem anglophonen Ost- und Zentralafrika transnationale Netzwerke aufbauten und nutzten, um zu reisen und an Debatten über die Entkolonialisierung und den Kalten Krieg teilzunehmen. Dies erlaubte ihnen, Einschränkungen durch den spätkolonialen Staat und die Welt des Kalten Krieges zu umgehen. Mit einer regionalen Perspektive und dem Fokus auf nichtstaatliche Akteure zeigt der Beitrag, wie mobile Personen aus Ost- und Zentralafrika es IUSY ermöglichten, nicht nur die eigene Mitgliederbasis zu erweitern: der spezifische Status als Jugendorganisation erlaubte es IUSY darüber hinaus, sowohl antikoloniale Führungsfiguren aus der Region als auch den Kolonialstaat und private Stiftungen mit verschiedenen Mitteln anzusprechen. Zwischen 1955 und 1965 änderten sich die Prioritäten von IUSY und den Kontakten dieser Organisation in Ost- und Zentralafrika. Kamen die verschiedenen Vertreter zunächst im Rahmen von Studienreisen zusammen, verlagerten sie ihre Aktivitäten zunehmend auf Initiativen in Afrika selbst. Diese Verschiebung und die politische Unabhängigkeit mehrerer Staaten führten bei IUSY zu Sorgen über finanzielle Belastungen, zumal die Aktivitäten zunehmend über die Kategorien „Jugend“ und „Bildung“ hinausgingen.