

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

GJ-21
Fun and Games

12 August 1972
P.O. Box 4080
Dar es Salaam,
Tanzania.

Mr. R. H. Nolte,
Institute of Current World Affairs,
535 Fifth Avenue,
New York, New York 10017.

Dear Mr. Nolte:

The scope of leisure time activity in Tanzania is undoubtedly as varied and infinite as that in any other part of the world. In spite of an intense and concentrated devotion of the people towards nation building they nevertheless find time for amusement and recreation. The response to my question: "what do you do in your leisure time," has been most interesting--and involved. People have responded with answers which embrace almost every conceivable activity including a Masai chap who gets his exercise by chasing jack rabbits (wasungura) on foot and one great old timer who just smiled and said, "I have four wives." On the other hand, when I inquired about traditional activities which have survived, the response has been notably muted.

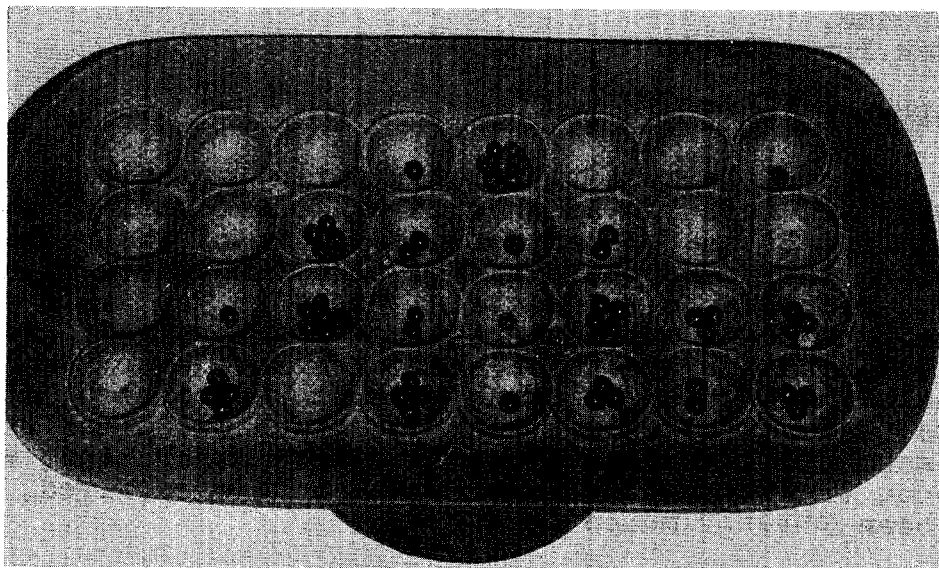
The very limited number of traditional activities described to me by local people have turned out to be regional in both origin and practice. As I repeated names and content of these traditional pastimes, i.e., m'kuta (a rope game), n'domwa (team rhythm game), oro (spear throwing contest) or simbe (a dice-like game), many Tanzanians were able to tell me not only what regions in which these activities originated, but also in which particular tribes the game is played.

Out of the mixture of activities, traditional and modern, in which people engage themselves however, it was possible for me to find only three activities which seem to enjoy a unanimous national following: one traditional game called bao, and two European influenced sporting events, football (soccer) and motor rallying.

Bao is said to have had its beginnings in Persia between 1580 and 1150 B.C. However, the majority of the people here argue that it originated in Tanzania. The locals look upon bao as a part of their cultural heritage. Most citizens are also quick to let one know: "why even the President, Mwalimu Nyerere, plays bao to relax." Sure enough just last week the President's picture was displayed on the front page of the daily paper playing the game with an elder from one of the local regions. Upon further inquiry I found that the President had also written a small pamphlet entitled, "The Rules of the Game of Bao" (February, 1965). Its original was in the form of a letter to His Excellency Mao Tse-Tung from the President.

Bao has been described as a game which is similar in complexity to chess and checkers while following the same pattern

of two opponents attempting to capture the possessions of the other. In bao however, the "men" are called "kete" (an acorn-size seed which comes from a tree called "m'solo"). The board on which the game is played contains four rows of well-shaped indentations, eight in each row. Two rows are owned by one player (the nearest two) while the remaining two are the possession of his opponent.



Bao Board with Kete

Each player begins play by acquiring 32 kete which are placed by twos in each of his sixteen wells. The opening of the game comprises a series of grouping of kete by each player (I have yet to master this maneuver). After this shifting of kete to strategic positions among the wells, the routine play begins. The turn of each player involves one or more passes around his area of the board moving anti-clockwise. The player lifts the kete, one or more, from a selected well and places them one at a time in each adjacent well. If the final kete being placed falls into an unoccupied well, the turn of the player is ended and his opponent begins play. If the last kete falls into an occupied well the entire contents are withdrawn and the player continues to move around his side of the board. If when the player plays his last kete and it falls into a well in which the opposite wells of his opponent are filled with kete, he then "captures" those kete of his opponent and proceeds to place them in his own wells starting at the point where he began this particular move. The player continues until he can no longer capture or until no more moves around his area of the board can be made. At this point his opponent begins his movement. The idea of the game is to either capture all the kete of your opponent or leave him in a position where he can no longer move around the board. Strategy enters the game as one attempts to compute the number of permutations it will take to arrive at a certain well on the board so that one is in a position to capture or continue movement.

Bao is played in some form or other by almost every tribe in East Africa. Although each group has its own variation, the



Bao being played
by a central area
tribe during the
early 1900s.

(Picture taken at
the National Museum)

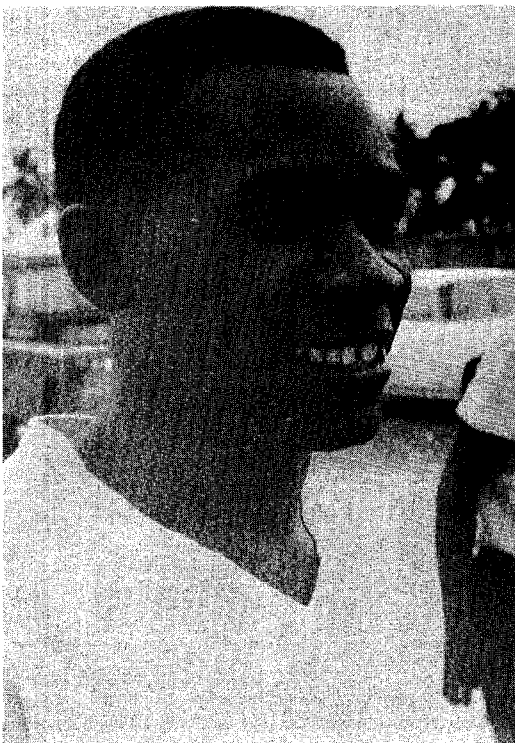
Bao is played by all age
groups with differing
levels of sophistication.



preceding explanation can be considered basic. Regional bao tournaments are held periodically at which time hundreds of wananchi meet in order to match their skill. During Tanzania's 10th Anniversary Celebration, key players from all regions convened in Dar es Salaam to participate in a national contest.

Whereas bao only involves two people during actual play, in football, two teams of eleven players participate. More people play and watch football than any other sport in Tanzania. At the last Sunday afternoon match I attended there were approximately 15,000 spectators. I have been told that for the top games of the year there have been as high as 30,000 fans crowded into the national stadium with at least one thousand loitering on the outside unable to get in.

Football associations in Tanzania are some of the most highly organized institutions of the country. Youngsters begin football at a very early age. As we would see children in the States dribbling a basketball or tossing a baseball, young people here are seen heading or kicking any object that will bounce or roll be it a tin can, a large wad of paper or an invisible ball. Very infrequently one might find a group of boys fortunate enough to have a regulation football--a prize possession, patches notwithstanding. Instructional football begins when a youngster enters elementary school or as he is picked up by a local team. Many of the national all-stars, who are accorded all the honors befitting a national hero, began to play for teams before their 10th birthday. Kitwana Ramadhani Mawara, a Tanzanian super-star who is considered the best header in East Africa, started his career in football at the age of nine. As he was tall but not physically strong enough to mix it up in down field scrimmages, Kitwana, known as "Popat" to his fans, was used as a goalie. The position of goalie requires agility and an unusual sense of timing. After only seven years of playing with a few minor league organizations, one of the class A teams decided he was ready for stronger competition. Now at age 26 and after having played the game for over seventeen years, Popat is considered one of the best all-around players. He, now as a forward, has helped his present team, The Young Africans, maintain the National Championship for 5 years running. Players such as Popat receive no pay for playing football but are given subsistence and travel expenses when engaged in a league tournament or international match.



Lft: Bwana Kitwana Ramadhani Mawara



Abv: Early morning practice
Abv left: Loyal Sunday afternoon fans.



Abv: Confrontation!

Lft: To the victor...

Football in Tanzania falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and the National Sports Council. Direct control however, is delegated to the Football Association of Tanzania (F.A.T.). The principle aim of F.A.T., according to its constitution is: "to promote, control and sponsor football competitions within and outside the United Republic." The constitution further stipulates that F.A.T. with all its membership shall be guided by Tanzania Socialist principles in all its activities. In addition to national contests which culminate with the awarding of the two coveted trophies, the Taifa Cup and the Karume Cup, the Football Association makes provisions for five international events each year: 1. East African Challenge Cup: All-star teams from Kenya, Zanzibar, Uganda and Tanzania compete. 2. Friendship Cup: Participants include Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan. 3. Africa Cup of Champion Clubs: Regional teams of each country vie for this cup rather than the usual all-star delegations. 4. All Africa Games: To facilitate the crowning of an All African Championship team, the continent is divided into seven zones. Each zone participates in a series of football matches so as to select one country to represent the zone at the All Africa finals. Tanzania in its zonal play competes against Malawi, Zambia, Burundi, Rwanda, Swaziland, Mauritius and Madagascar. In October of this year, Tanzania has been chosen as the venue for the zone seven elimination finals. 5. World Cup: Sixteen international teams, world-wide, will gather in Munich in 1974 to compete in this prized contest. Tanzania will take on Ethiopia in September in order to start its bid to represent zone seven.

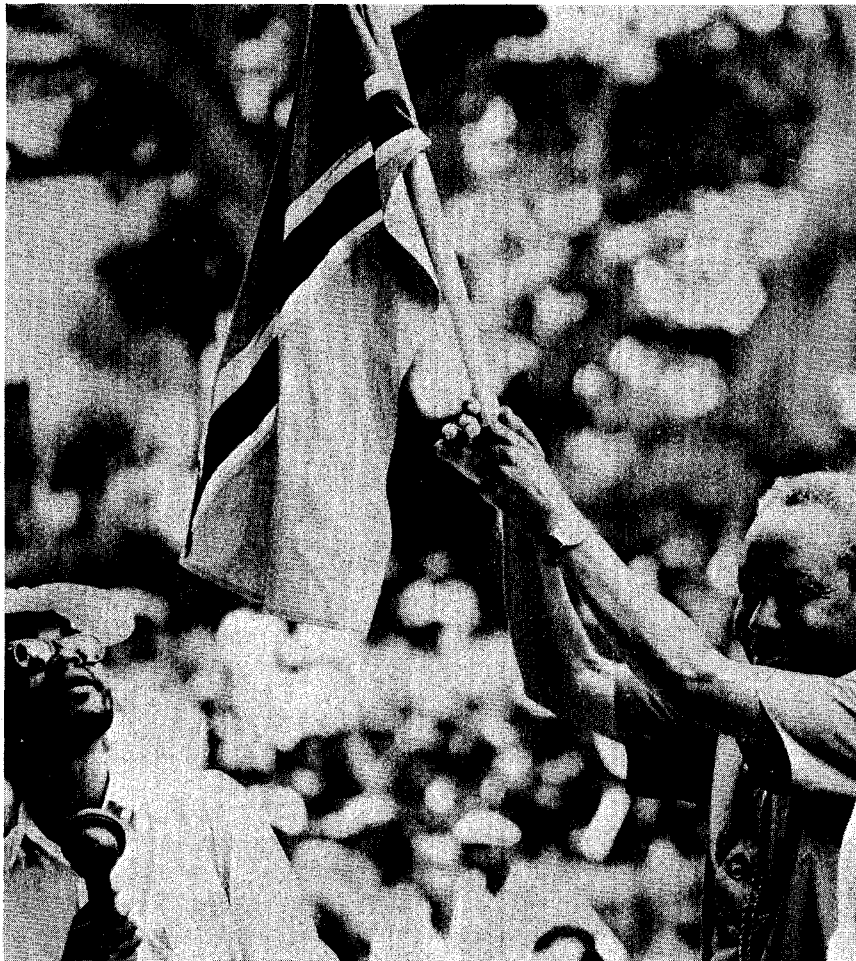
For most of the regular league games, spectators pay from three shillings (42¢) to ten shillings per match. For the international contest however, the costs range from three shillings to fifteen shillings. Tanzanians being such avid football fans make many monetary sacrifices to be at the stadium on Sundays in order to cheer for their favorite teams.

Although the number of active participants in motor rallying compared to football is negligible, this sport still generates the same amount of enthusiasm from the citizenry--especially during the annual East African Safari.

Motor car rallying is obviously an expensive sport. This fact alone is reason enough to account for such a small number of African participants in the past. In the East African Safari this year, which began and ended in Dar es Salaam for the first time in 20 years, there were fifteen African contestants out of a total of 170 drivers. Participants gather from all over the world to take part in this safari which is reported to be one of the toughest and roughest motor rallies in the world. The foreign countries which participated this year included: Britain, Australia, Poland, Italy, Zambia, Kenya and Uganda. In order to stand a chance of placing in this 6,000 kilometer endurance race, which is spread over a four day period, it is necessary to spend a considerable amount of money modifying ones car. In order to get an idea of the exact costs involved in entering the E.A.Safari I spent some time interviewing several mechanics who specialize in the preparation of safari cars.

One of the most popular cars to compete in the safari is the Datsun 1600ss. The basic cost of this vehicle is 38,000 shillings (\$5,430.00); but to this sum, the mechanics informed me, one must add another 10,000 shillings for the following, almost unending, list of items: extra fuel pump, heavy duty springs, extra lights, fire extinguisher, heavy duty rear and front suspension, heavy duty shock absorbers, rear spot light, exhaust modification, jack print, hydraulic jack, sump guard, roll bars, extra fuel tank, mud flaps, hanger bat and plate, trip master meter, navigator reading light, safety belts, extra ignition coil, cut out fixtures, laminated windscreen, special windscreen wipers, special head light wipers, mud grip spare wheels and chains.

EAST AFRICAN SAFARI



President Nyerere signaling the start.

After getting their car safari ready, owners must then make a final outlay for the following items: Insurance (220 shs), entry fee (550 shs) and petrol (1,000 shs). For the majority of the factory sponsored entries and for a few private individuals, there is also the added cost of service cars which are responsible for on the spot repairs throughout the race. They are hired to patrol the safari route continuously making contact with their charges at key loca-



Abv: Last
minute checks

THE EAST AFRICAN SAFARI RALLY

Shell Kwanza

POINTS LOST BY CAR NO.

| CONTROLS LEG - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 |
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Abv: Porsche
1st to arrive

gt: Fans ke-
eping close
abs on the
results.

lw: Peter
hiyukah--Ace
river from
enya

Blw: Ford,
winner of the
20th E.A.
Safari.



tions and immediately upon being notified of trouble. In order to maintain a very tight vigilance on their entries, The Ford Motor Company (England) hired a Cessna airplane. Its duty entailed following their four Fords from start to finish and reporting any difficulties by radio to service cars placed in strategic positions along the route. Ford's total cost for entering and competing with the four vehicles was computed to be close to one million shillings per car.

In 1963, eight American cars (Mercury Comets) entered the race with five finishing but none placing. The safari which winds through Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania not only consists of mud, dust, floods and a shortage of tarmac roads, but also involves maneuvering with, through and around a host of other road competitors be they bicycles, carts, pedestrians, domestic animals or herds of elephants. A few years back it was reported that one car collided with a hippopotamus and was rendered incapable of continuing (the hippo was uninjured).

In this years safari 18 out of the 85 cars made it successfully to the finish line in Dar es Salaam. None of the teams of Africans were in this group. One African crew, because of engine difficulties, barely made it to the first check point twenty-five miles from Dar es Salaam. The majority of African teams complained of not having sufficient funds to maintain the high standard of equipment which is a must for this gruelling competition. One of the safari reporters in Kenya announced that one African crew which had made it to Nairobi and was heading for Uganda was forced to stop momentarily in order to take up a collection for gasoline so that they might continue. Out of last years record entry of 37 Africans however, one team placed 22nd in the over all competition. Needless to say, the crew was given a hero's welcome upon its return. For the last 200 yards into the finish gate, their car was all but carried by the throngs of people.

It is the consensus of rallying enthusiasts that in two years time there will be many more Africans competing and hopefully placing in the E.A. Safari; especially, as they gain more experience in the smaller safaris and subsequently attract more manufacturers for sponsorship. A few of the African drivers however, are not as rather more impatient than many of their supporters seem to be. I overheard a few of them uttering at the end of this year's race that all too familiar phrase, "wait till next year."

Sincerely,



George Jones