

TANZANIA and ZANZIBAR 2018

The History of Tanzania

Tanzania's history begins with the dawn of humankind. It was here, in the 'cradle of humanity', that East Africa's earliest inhabitants lived. Over the millennia, what is now Tanzania became a backdrop for the great African population migrations, Arabic coastal settlement and European colonialism. The colonial era ultimately led to the growth of a strong independence movement before giving way to the modern-day United Republic of Tanzania.

Early Beginnings

About 3.6 million years ago, some of East Africa's earliest inhabitants trekked across the plains at Laetoli near Oldupai (Olduvai) Gorge in northern Tanzania, leaving their footprints in volcanic ash. The prints were discovered in 1978 by archaeologist Mary Leakey, who identified them as the steps of our earliest known ancestors, hominids known as *australopithecines*.

About two million years ago, the human family tree split, giving rise to *homo habilis*, a meat-eating creature with a larger brain who used crude stone tools. Its traces have also been found around Oldupai (Olduvai) Gorge. By 1.8 million years ago, *homo erectus* had evolved, leaving bones and axes for archaeologists to find at ancient lakeside sites throughout East Africa.

What is today Tanzania was peopled by waves of migration. Rock paintings possibly dating back 6000 years have been found around Kondoa. These are believed to have been made by clans of nomadic hunter-gatherers who spoke a language similar to that of southern Africa's Khoisan. Between 3000 and 5000 years ago, they were joined by small bands of Cushitic-speaking farmers and cattle-herders moving down from what is today Ethiopia. The Iraqw who live around Lake Manyara trace their ancestry to this group of arrivals. The majority of modern Tanzanians are descendants of Bantu-speaking settlers who began a gradual centuries-long shift from the Niger delta around 1000 BC, arriving in East Africa in the 1st century AD. The most recent influx of migrants occurred between the 15th and 18th centuries when Nilotic-speaking pastoralists from southern Sudan moved into northern Tanzania and the Rift Valley. Many of these people – ancestors of the Maasai – settled in the less fertile areas of north-central Tanzania where their large herds could have grazing space.

Monsoon Winds

As these migrations were taking place in the interior, coastal areas were being shaped by far different influences. Azania, as the East African coast was known to the ancient Greeks, was an important trading post as early as 400 BC. By the early part of the first millennium AD, thriving settlements had been established as traders, first from the Mediterranean and later from Arabia and Persia, came ashore on the winds of the monsoon and began to intermix with the indigenous Bantu speakers, giving rise to Swahili language and culture. The traders from Arabia also brought Islam, which by the

11th century had become entrenched. Over the next few centuries, the Arabic traders established outposts along the coast, including on the Zanzibar Archipelago and Kilwa Kisiwani. These settlements flourished, reaching their pinnacle between the 13th and 15th centuries, and trade in ivory, gold and other goods extended as far away as India and China.

Arrival of the Europeans

One of the first Europeans to set foot in Tanzania was Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama, who made his way along the coast in 1498 in search of the Orient. Portuguese traders kept to the coast until the early 18th century, when they were driven out by Omani Arabs. The Omanis took control of Kilwa and Zanzibar and set up governors in coastal towns on the mainland. Traders from the coast plied the caravan routes through the interior to the Great Lakes. They bought ivory and slaves in exchange for cheap cloth and firearms. The traders carried with them virulent strains of smallpox and cholera as well as guns. By the late 19th century, when Europe cast a covetous eye on Africa, East Africa was weakened by disease and violence.

European Control

The romantic reports of early-19th-century European travelers to East Africa, such as Richard Burton, John Speke, David Livingstone and Henry Morton Stanley, caught the attention of a young German adventurer in the late 19th century. In 1885, without obtaining his government's endorsement, Carl Peters set up a Company for German Colonization. From Zanzibar Island, he travelled into the mainland, collecting en route the signatures of African chiefs on a stack of blank treaty forms he had brought with him. In Berlin, Chancellor Bismarck approved the acquisition of African territory after the fact, much to the consternation of the British, who by now had established informal rule over Zanzibar.

In 1886 East Africa was sliced into 'spheres of influence' by the British and the Germans. The frontier ran west from the coast to Lake Victoria along the modern Kenya–Tanzania border. Needless to say, the Africans weren't consulted on the agreement, nor was the Sultan of Zanzibar. The Germans parked a gunboat in Zanzibar harbor until he signed over his claim to the mainland.

The Colonial Era

Colonialism brought western education and health care to German East Africa, as well as road and rail networks. However, these developments benefited relatively few Africans, and the German administration was unpopular. Harsh labor policies, the imposition of a hut tax and numerous other measures contributed to the discontent. Local opposition began in earnest with the Abushiri Revolt in 1888, and culminated in the Maji Maji rebellion of 1905 to 1907, which decimated much of southern Tanzania and is considered to contain the first seeds of Tanzanian nationalism.

The German era lasted until the end of WWI, when German East Africa came under British administration as a League of Nations mandate and was renamed Tanganyika. This arrangement lasted until WWII, after which the area became a United Nations trust territory, again under British administration. To assist in its own postwar economic recovery effort, Britain maintained compulsory cultivation and enforced settlement policies. The development of a manufacturing sector was actively discouraged by

Britain, which wanted to maintain the Tanzanian market for its own goods. Likewise, very few Africans were hired into the civil service.

The Birth of TANU

In 1948 a group of young Africans formed the Tanganyika African Association to protest colonial policies. By 1953 the organization was renamed the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), led by a young teacher named Julius Nyerere. Its objective became national liberation. In the end, the British decamped from Tanganyika and Zanzibar rather abruptly in 1961 and 1963, respectively. This was due at least as much to a growing European sentiment that empires were too expensive to maintain as to recognition of the fundamental right of all people to freedom from subjugation.

Independence & Initial Optimism

Tanganyikans embraced independence optimistically. However, Tanganyika embarked on the project of nation-building with few of the resources necessary for the task. The national treasury was depleted. The economy was weak and undeveloped, with virtually no industry. In 1961 there were a total of 120 African university graduates in the country.

Faced with this set of circumstances, the first autonomous government of Tanganyika, led by the 39-year-old Julius Nyerere, chose continuity over radical transformation of the economic or political structure. TANU accepted the Westminster-style parliament proposed by the British. It committed to investing in education and a gradual Africanization of the civil service. In the meantime, expatriates (often former British colonial officers) would be used to staff the government bureaucracy.

As detailed by political scientist Cranford Pratt, the Nyerere government's early plans were drawn up on the assumption that substantial foreign assistance would be forthcoming, particularly from Britain. Yet this was not the case, and the new country was left scrambling for funds to stay afloat during the first rocky years of liberation. While grappling with fixing roads, running hospitals and educating the country's youth, the government managed to diffuse an army mutiny over wages in 1964. When Zanzibar erupted in violent revolution in January 1964, just weeks after achieving independence from Britain, Nyerere skillfully co-opted its potentially destabilizing forces by giving island politicians a prominent role in a newly proclaimed United Republic of Tanzania, created from the union of Tanganyika with the Zanzibar Archipelago in April 1964.

Rise of the Urban Elite

Nyerere grew dismayed by what he saw as the development of an elite urban class in Tanzania. In 1966, a group of University of Dar es Salaam students marched to the State House in their academic gowns to protest the compulsory National Service the government had introduced. It required all university graduates to spend two years working in rural areas following their graduation. As reported by William Edgett Smith in *We Must Run While They Walk – A Portrait of Africa's Julius Nyerere*, Nyerere was livid: 'I shall take nobody... into this National Service whose spirit is not in it... So make your choice....I'm not going to spend public money to educate anybody who says National Service is a prison... Is this what the citizens of this country worked for?' He ordered the students home to their rural areas for an indefinite period, which ended up

being five months. Before they left, he declared that, as an example to the educated elite, he was going to cut his own salary – and those of all senior government officials – by 20%, which he did.

Ujamaa – Tanzania’s Grand Experiment

The events of the first few years following independence – the lack of assistance from abroad, rumblings of civil strife at home and the nascent development of a privileged class amid continuing mass poverty – led Nyerere to re-evaluate the course his government had charted for the nation.

Since his student days, Nyerere had pondered the meaning of democracy for Africa. In 1962 he published an essay entitled *Ujamaa [familyhood]: The Basis of African Socialism*. In it he set out his belief that the personal accumulation of wealth in the face of widespread poverty was antisocial. Africa should strive to create a society based on mutual assistance and economic as well as political equality, such as he claimed had existed for centuries before European colonization.

The Arusha Declaration

In 1967 the TANU leadership met in the northern town of Arusha, where they approved a radical new plan for Tanzania, drafted by Nyerere. What became known as the *Arusha Declaration* outlined the Tanzanian government’s commitment to a socialist approach to development, further articulated in a series of subsequent policy papers. The government vowed to reduce its dependence on foreign aid and instead foster an ethos of self-reliance in Tanzanian society. To prevent government becoming a trough where bureaucrats and party members could amass personal wealth, Nyerere passed a Leadership Code. Among other things, it prohibited government officials from holding shares in a private company, employing domestic staff or buying real estate to rent out for profit.

The *Arusha Declaration* also announced the government takeover of industry and banking. It curtailed foreign direct investment and stated that the government would itself invest in manufacturing enterprises that could produce substitutes for imported goods. All land was henceforth to be common property, managed by the state. The government strove to provide free education for every child. School children were taught to identify themselves as Tanzanians with a shared language – Swahili – rather than just members of one of over 100 ethnic groups residing within the country’s borders.

Socialist Leanings?

Nyerere himself was fascinated by Chinese economic development strategies, but dismissed Western fears that Tanzania was toying with doctrinaire Marxism, either Chinese- or Soviet-style. He argued in *Freedom and Unity – Essays on Socialism* (1967) that Tanzanians ‘have no more need of being “converted” to socialism than we have of being “taught” democracy. Both are rooted in our own past – in the traditional society that produced us.’ Nyerere’s vision was enthusiastically embraced not only by the Tanzanian public, but by a body of Western academics and by aid donors from both East and West. Several of his policies nonetheless provoked the consternation of even his most ardent supporters abroad. In 1965 TANU voted to scrap the multiparty model of democracy bequeathed to it by Britain. As a consequence, Tanzania became a one-party state. Nyerere argued that democracy was not

synonymous with multiparty politics and that the new country's challenges were so great that everyone had to work together. He advocated freedom of speech and the discussion of ideas, but banned opposition parties. Voters were given a choice of candidates, but they were all TANU party members. Furthermore, Nyerere authorised the detention of some individuals judged to be agitating against the best interests of the state. His defenders say he did his best to hold together a sometimes unruly cabinet and a country at a time when all over Africa newly independent states were succumbing to civil war and dictatorships. Critics say he turned a blind eye to violations of fundamental civil liberties.

'Villagization'

Perhaps the most controversial of all government policies adopted post-Arusha was 'villagization'. The vast majority of Tanzanians lived in the countryside, and the *Arusha Declaration* envisioned agriculture as the engine of economic growth. A massive increase in production was to be accomplished through communal farming, such as Nyerere argued was the practice in the old days. Beginning in 1967, Tanzanians were encouraged to reorganize themselves into communal villages where they would work the fields together for the good of the nation. Some did, but only a handful of cooperative communities were established voluntarily.

In 1974 the government commenced the forcible relocation of 80% of the population, creating massive disruptions in national agricultural production. The scheme itself, however, suffered from a multiplicity of problems. The new land was often infertile. Necessary equipment was unavailable. People didn't want to work communally; they wanted to provide for their own families first. Government prices for crops were set too low. To paraphrase analyst Goran Hyden, the peasantry responded by retreating into subsistence farming – just growing their own food. National agricultural production and revenue from cash crop exports plummeted.

Summing up the results of the *Arusha Declaration* policies, Nyerere candidly admitted that the government had made some mistakes. However, he also noted progress towards social equality: the ratio between the highest salaries and the lowest paid narrowed from 50:1 in 1961 to around 9:1 in 1976. Despite a meagre colonial inheritance, Tanzania made great strides in education and healthcare. Under Nyerere's leadership it forged a cohesive national identity. With the exception of occasional isolated eruptions of civil strife on the Zanzibar Archipelago, it has also enjoyed internal peace and stability throughout its existence.

Aid Darling to Delinquent

Post-*Arusha Declaration* Tanzania was the darling of the aid donor community. It was the largest recipient of foreign aid in sub-Saharan Africa throughout the 1970s and was the testing ground for every new-fangled development theory that came along.

As the economy spiraled downward in the late 1970s and early '80s, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a growing chorus of exasperated aid donors called for stringent economic reform – a dramatic structural adjustment of the economic system. Overlooking their own failing projects, they pointed to a bloated civil service and moribund productive sector, preaching that both needed to be exposed to the fresh, cleansing breezes of the open market. Nyerere resisted the IMF cure. As economic

conditions continued to deteriorate, dissension grew within government ranks. In 1985 Nyerere resigned. In 1986 the Tanzanian government submitted to the IMF terms. The grand Tanzanian experiment with African socialism was over.

Structural Adjustment

As elsewhere on the continent, structural adjustment was a shock treatment that left the nation gasping for air. The civil service was slashed by over a third. Some of the deadwood was gone, but so were thousands of teachers, healthcare workers and the money for textbooks and chalk and teacher training. Economic growth rates slipped into the negative around 1974, where they languished for the next 25 years. In 1997 Tanzania was spending four times as much servicing its external debt than on healthcare, a situation that has improved only slightly during much of the past two decades.

Multiparty Democracy

In 1992, as part of a structural adjustment aid program, Western-style multiparty democracy was re-introduced, and the constitution was amended to legalize opposition parties. Since then, five national elections have been held, generally proceeding relatively smoothly on the mainland, less so in the Zanzibar Archipelago, where tensions between the CCM and the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) are strong.

In elections in 2015, Dr. John Pombe Magufuli (CCM) was elected president with 58% of the vote in a hotly contested election. His main opposition was former CCM Prime Minister Edward Lowassa of the Party for Democracy and Progress (Chadema), who garnered almost 40% of the vote – the most decisive opposition showing to date in Tanzania's history. Following the elections, Dr Magufuli moved quickly to implement his program, and just over a year into his presidency was receiving considerable acclaim – especially among Tanzania's large rural population – for his stiff anti-corruption measures and his determination to hold government officials accountable to their constituencies. At the same time, he was also receiving criticism for his stifling of open public debate and his stepped-up enforcement of restrictive laws governing freedom of the press. The next elections are scheduled for October 2020.