

The Heart of East Africa

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Tanzania covers 945,000 sq. km, the size of Denmark, France, the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland combined

On April 22, 1964, the Republic of Tanganyika and the People's Republic of Zanzibar entered into a union, creating the United Republic of Tanzania, with Julius Nyerere becoming president of the new state and Zanzibar's Sheikh Abeid Amani Karume taking on the position of Vice President.

The two countries already shared a long history: Zanzibar lies just 20 miles off the coast of Tanzania, and had been the gateway to Africa for centuries, first for Arab traders and slavers, and then used as a base by European explorers and colonizers.

By the late 17th century, Zanzibar, which had been Islamized by the 11th century, was under the control of the Gulf state of Oman. Zanzibar became the main slave market on the east coast of Africa and an increasingly important part of the Omani empire: so much so that in 1837, the sultan of Oman, Sa'id ibn Sultan, made it his main place of residence. Zanzibar flourished under Sa'id, who built impressive palaces and gardens, as well as improving the island's

economy by introducing the cultivation of cloves, sugar, and indigo.

But Omani rule began to wane with the sultan's death in 1856, and his elder son, Majid, was helped to power by the British – who had been making greater inroads into the island since the beginning of the 19th century.

In 1822, the Omani rulers of Zanzibar had signed the Moresby treaty, which made it illegal for them to sell slaves to Christian powers. The United States and Great Britain then established diplomatic relations with Zanzibar. However, the slaving restrictions were largely ignored for another 80 years until slavery was finally abolished.

Then, in 1885, Berlin announced it was claiming a protectorate in the interior of what is today Tanzania, sending five warships into Zanzibar's lagoon, demanding that the sultan cede his mainland territories.

Britain was keen to avoid conflict, and the next year reached agreement with Germany, drawing a line across East Africa to the Great Lakes giving Germany much of what is today Tanzania. The Sultan retained nothing more than a strip of land 10 miles wide along the coast of the mainland.

In 1890, Britain declared Zanzibar and the Sultan's mainland territories a protectorate.

The German presence in East Africa

Meanwhile, on the mainland, Germany had been busy developing its new African territory. In 1891, after an uprising that was put down with the help of the British, the German government took direct control of the territory.

The Germans built a railway from Dar es Salaam inland to Tabora and then to Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika. New crops, such as sisal and cotton, were introduced, as were coffee plantations on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro.

But local people soon grew tired of Germany's harsh methods, rising up in 1905 in what was known as the Maji-Maji rebellion. This was ruthlessly put down, and up to a quarter of a million Africans died in the resulting famine.

Within two years of World War I breaking out, the European conflict had spread to Africa, and in 1916 British forces moved south from Kenya to occupy German East Africa. The campaign in East Africa resulted in the forced conscription of hundreds of thousands of



Africans as porters and troops. The estimated number of African civilians who died is 350,000.

The 1919 Treaty of Versailles gave Britain a League of Nations mandate to govern the former German East Africa, now called Tanganyika.

The British encouraged indigenous African administration along traditional lines through local councils and courts. A legislative council was set up in Dar es Salaam, although African members were not elected until after World War II.

By then, the momentum for independence throughout Britain's overseas dominions was unstoppable. Tanzania's peaceful campaign for self rule was led by Julius Nyerere, who returned to his home country in 1953 after studying at Edinburgh University.

Nyerere founded TANU, or the Tanganyika African National Union, which soon established a strong presence in the legislative assembly. After independence in 1961, Nyerere became the new nation's prime minister; in 1962 Tanganyika adopted a republican constitution and Nyerere was elected president.

Zanzibar moves toward independence

Zanzibar introduced a new Constitution in 1960, providing for a legislative assembly. Politics was split along ethnic lines, and after much wrangling and disagreement between Arab and African interests, in December 1963, Zanzibar became fully independent and joined the British Commonwealth.

A coalition of Arab parties formed the first government, with the sultan as head of state. But in January 1964, a month after independence, a communist-led revolution toppled the regime, installing a revolutionary council and one-party state.

The revolution targeted the Arab and Indian communities, and many fled. Up to 17,000 people are estimated to have died.

One of Abeid Karume's first steps as president was to negotiate for union with neighbouring Tanganyika.

The creation of Tanzania was welcomed by the West, which supported Nyerere, seeing him as a bulwark against communism in Africa.

Nyerere guided the fledgling nation along utopian Socialist principles,

emphasizing self-sufficiency and tradition. At the same time, he kept Tanzania within the Western sphere of influence. As a British Foreign Office document put it in 1959, "...Pan-Africanism in itself is not necessarily a force which we need regard with fear and suspicion. On the contrary, if we can avoid alienating it and can guide it on lines generally sympathetic to the free world, it may well prove in the longer term a strong, indigenous barrier to the penetration of Africa by the Soviet Union..."

Meanwhile, with aid from Britain, Nyerere attracted many academics, teachers and aid workers from the West to assist in the training of new administrators and teachers.

From 1965 on, the two parts of the union each had the one political party: TANU in Tanganyika, and ASP (Afro-Shirazi Party) in Zanzibar. In 1977 they merged as the CCM, or Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Party).

Nyerere stood down in 1985, and by the early 1990s Tanzania had moved toward a multi-party system, although political parties must still be registered in both the mainland and Zanzibar, and must not be identified with specific religious, regional, tribal, or racial groups.

The first multi-party elections in the union were held in 1995, with the CCM narrowly winning in both Zanzibar and on the mainland, with Benjamin Mkapa leading the country into a period of economic and market reform.

The Williamson Diamond Mine, near Mwanza northern Tanzania, is one of the oldest continuously operating diamond mines in the world and is operated by Petra Diamonds in partnership with the Tanzanian government. It recently won Tanzania's Presidential Award on Corporate Social Responsibility and Empowerment. The photograph shows Ignas Balyoruguru (HR Manager) and Arlen Loehmer (GM) proudly holding the NSSF award

